

Bhakti Master Class

Talks on *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

Part 1: Eastern Ocean, First Wave

— by —

Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī

— Published by —

Esoteric Teaching Seminars, Inc.

ISBN _____

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Table of Contents

Preface: About Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.....	3
Introduction: The importance of Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu	9
Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.....	11
Pure Devotional Service.....	13
Qualities of Pure Devotional Service	17
The importance of Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu	21
Chapter 1: Glories of Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu	26
Chapter 2: Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.1	43
Maṅgalācaraṇam Part 2.....	65
Chapter 3: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.2-4	89
Chapter 4: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.5.....	110
Chapter 5: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.6-9	131
Chapter 6: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.10-11	151
Chapter 7: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11 continued	178
Chapter 8: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11-12	201
Chapter 9: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.13-16	224
Chapter 10: Śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.17-20	256
Chapter 11: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.21-23	284
Chapter 12: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.24-25	302
Chapter 13: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.26-29	319
Chapter 14: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.30-32	336

Preface: About Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

Even though there are so many great *ācāryas*, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has been given honor of being that person who has established the *mano-bhiṣṭam*, the innermost heart's desire, of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. When Mahāprabhu came to the village of Rāmakeli-grāma, He met with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and told them, "You should leave your homes and be with Me."

After a short time they left their homes, and Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came from Vṛndāvan and met with Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī at Prāyag, the confluence of the rivers Yamunā and Gaṅgā. The Lord told him:

*pārāpāra-śūnya gabhīra bhakti-rasa-sindhu
tomāya cākhāite tāra kahi eka 'bindu'*

"The ocean of the transcendental mellows of devotional service is so large that no one can estimate its length and breadth. However, just to help you taste it, I am describing one drop." [*Srī Caitanya-caritamṛta*, *Madhya* 19.137]

Lord Caitanya gave one drop of the ocean of *rāsa* to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and that one drop was sufficient to inundate millions upon millions of universes. Later, He instructed Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in Varānaśī. Therefore, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's and Sanātana Gosvāmī's understanding of the mellows of devotional service, and specifically the mellow of conjugal love, was extremely exalted. When Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was in Purī with Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Lord was dancing at the Ratha-yatra festival and uttering a verse from a book of mundane poetry called *sahitya-dārpaṇa*:

*yaḥ kaumāra-haraḥ sa eva hi varas tā eva caitra-kṣapās
te conmīlita-mālatī-surabhayaḥ prauḍhāḥ kadambānilāḥ
sā caivāsmi tathāpi tatra surata-vyāpāra-līlā-vidhau
revā-rodhasi vetasī-taru-tale cetah samutkañṭhate*

"That very personality who stole away my heart during my youth is now again my master. These are the same moonlit nights of the month of Caitra. The same fragrance of *malati* flowers is there, and the same sweet breezes are blowing from the *kadamba* forest. In our intimate relationship, I am also the same lover, yet my mind is not happy here. I am eager to go back to that place on the bank of the Reva under the Vetasi tree. That is my desire." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya* 1.58]

No one could understand why Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu was uttering this verse and in what mood He was absorbed. There was one young boy there, however, named Rūpa, who later on became Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. There and then, upon hearing this verse from Mahāprabhu, another verse appeared in his own heart, and he wrote down that verse:

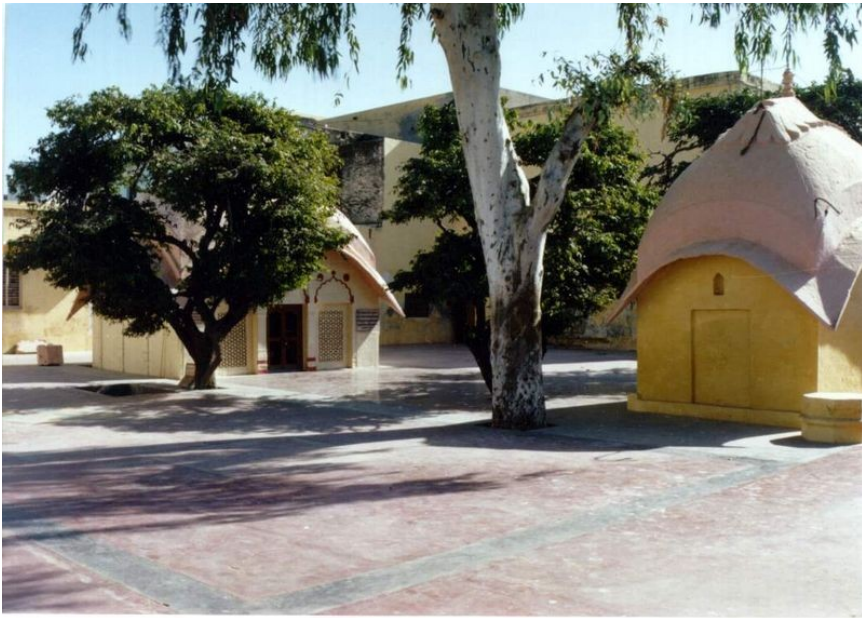
*prīyaḥ so 'yaṁ kṛṣṇaḥ saha-cari kuru-kṣetra-militaḥ
tathāhaṁ sā rādhā tad idam ubhayoḥ saṅgama-sukham
tathāpy antaḥ-khelan-madhura-muralī-pañcama-juṣe
mano me kālindī-pulina-vipināya sprhayati*

[Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī said:] "My dear friend, now I have met My very old and dear friend Kṛṣṇa on this field of Kurukṣetra. I am the same Rādhārāṇī, and now We are meeting together. It is very pleasant, but still I would like to go to the bank of the Yamunā beneath the trees of the forest there. I wish to hear the vibration of His sweet flute playing the fifth note within that forest of Vṛndāvan." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līla* 1.76]

In this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has clarified Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's inner meaning and thus he revealed to the world the importance of *pāraṅkīya-rāsa*, the mood of paramour love between Lord Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. Therefore Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is the very person who established within this world the innermost heart's desire of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

These deliberations and philosophical conclusions are extremely deep, and very difficult to understand. It is therefore essential that one come under the guidance of a self-realized *guru*, associate with advanced pure devotees, and give one's full time, energy and enthusiastic work in service

and in chanting the Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa. One should also make a great effort to understand and realize the reason for which Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī appeared in this world, and why he wrote so many wonderful transcendental books like *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, *Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, *Śrī Vidagdha-mādhava* and *Śrī Lalītā-mādhava*.



**The sacred Samādhi (tomb) of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī
Rādhā-Damodāra Temple in Vṛndāvan**

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

*śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhīṣṭaṁ
sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ
dadāti sva-padāntikam*

"I was born in the darkest ignorance, and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the torch of knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him. When will Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Prabhupāda, who has established

within this material world the mission to fulfill the desire of Lord Caitanya, give me shelter under his lotus feet?" [*Bhagavad-gītā*, Introduction]

We have chanted this prayer many times in our presentations; now by studying the ontological position of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, we start to really comprehend its meaning. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in this world for two principal reasons: the external, public presentation of the *yuga-dharma*, *harināma-saṅkīrtan*, and the internal, confidential reason of relishing the ecstatic moods of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī.

*anarpita-carīm cirāt karuṇayāvatīrṇaḥ kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasām sva-bhakti-śriyam
hariḥ purāṭa-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandīpitaḥ
sadā hrdaya-kandare sphuratu vaḥ śacī-nandanah*

"May the Supreme Lord who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali by His causeless mercy to bestow what no incarnation has ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant mellow of devotional service, the mellow of conjugal love." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 1.4]

*rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtīr hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakaṭam adhunā tad-dvayam caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*

"The loving affairs of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are transcendental manifestations of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency. Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one in Their identity, They separated Themselves eternally. Now these two transcendental identities have again united, in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. I bow down to Him, who has manifested Himself with the sentiment and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 1.5]

*śrī-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā kīdrśo vānayaivā-
svādyo yenādbhuta-madhurimā kīdrśo vā madīyah
saukhyam cāsyā mad-anubhavataḥ kīdrśam veti lobhāt
tad-bhāvādhyah samajani śacī-garbha-sindhau harīnduḥ*

"Desiring to understand the glory of Rādhārāṇī's love, the wonderful qualities in Him that She alone relishes through Her love, and the happiness She feels when She realizes the sweetness of His love, the Supreme Lord Hari, richly endowed with Her emotions, appeared from the womb of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī, as the moon appeared from the ocean."
[Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 1.6]

The fact that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was able to understand the confidential heart's desire of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and even express it in Sanskrit poetry at an early age, indicates that he is an eternal associate of the Lord, specifically empowered to reveal this great teaching to the denizens of Kali-yuga. Whenever the Lord descends, He brings His eternal associates with Him, because factually only they can understand and help Him in His pastimes.

"When we speak of a king it is naturally understood that the king is accompanied by his confidential associates, like his secretary, private secretary, aide-de-camp, ministers and advisers. So also when we see the Lord we see Him with His different energies, associates, confidential servitors, etc. So the Supreme Lord, who is the leader of all living entities, the Lord of all devotee sects, the Lord of all opulences, the Lord of sacrifices and the enjoyer of everything in His entire creation, is not only the Supreme Person, but also is always surrounded by His immediate associates, all engaged in their loving transcendental service to Him." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.9.15, Purport]

So Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, as an eternal confidential associate of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, was able to understand His deepest intentions and also explain them in logical and highly poetic *śloka*s. This is the transcendental significance of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*; therefore, all sincere devotees in the line of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu must study it carefully and scrutinizingly to understand His real mission. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared to teach the remarkable process of pure *bhakti*, *uttama-bhakti* or pure devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, whose benefits are inconceivably greater than even mixed devotional service to the Lord. But to appreciate this, one must understand the distinction between mixed and pure devotional service. In my experience, most devotees are in the neophyte stage of *bhakti*, laboring under the

misconception that if somehow or other they perform enough mixed devotional service, they will attain the incomparable benefits of pure devotional service. However, this attitude is a misunderstanding:

sudurlabhā —

*sādhanaughair anāsangair alabhyā sucirād api
hariṇā cāśvadeyeti dvidhā sā syāt sudurlabhā*

“Pure *bhakti* is rarely attained. *Bhakti* is difficult to attain in two ways: if undertaken in great quantity but without attachment (*āśakti*), *bhakti* cannot be attained even after a long time; and even if practiced with attachment, Kṛṣṇa does not give *bhakti* to the practitioner immediately.”
[Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.35]

The stage of *āśakti* is actually very high, beyond even *anartha-nivṛtti*. If one cannot rid himself of all material desires, both gross and subtle, there is no question of attaining the benefits that result from pure *bhakti* alone.

The talks in this book were originally delivered as a part of a video *darshan* series broadcast to our worldwide community of students. We do not want them to repeat the error of our Godbrothers and others who think that the exalted qualities of pure *bhakti* are obtainable by casual, neophyte or even offensive service. That is why we are taking up this great study, and all of our students should follow along, not missing anything, and get the incomparable benefit of transcendental confidential pure loving service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī

January 13, 2010

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, India

Introduction: The importance of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

*tad aśma-sāraṁ hṛdayaṁ batedaṁ
yad gr̥hyamāṇair hari-nāma-dheyaiḥ
na vikriyētātha yadā vikāro
netre jalam gātra-ruheṣu harṣaḥ*

"Certainly that heart is steel-framed which, in spite of one's chanting the holy name of the Lord with concentration, does not change when ecstasy takes place, tears fill the eyes and the hairs stand on end." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 2.3.24]

Sometimes devotees question why we have chosen to focus on the study of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. After all, Śrīla Prabhupāda preached mostly from *Bhagavad-gītā* and *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; his classes on *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* are comparatively rare. The short answer is that without a deep understanding of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, our knowledge of *bhakti* is insufficient to attain the higher stages of the path chalked out by Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Prabhupāda gave great mercy to the fallen inhabitants of the West, bringing them to the authentic Vaiṣṇava path and revealing the confidential methods that lead to the highest attainments of *bhakti*. However, very few of his disciples have trod that path to its ultimate conclusion. Many of them have become attached to management and politics; too much dollars and not enough good sense. Thus many have fallen down, if not into sinful activities then into the misconception that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is just another mundane religion. Thus their spiritual lives remain incomplete.

If, however, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is understood properly as a transformation of consciousness and meaning from the mundane to the transcendental ontological platform, then *anāṛthas* (polluted desires in the heart), even subtle ones like *pratiṣṭhā* (attachment to religious honor and position) are easily vanquished and the stage of ecstatic devotional service

described in the *śloka* above is easily reached. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is not just a collection of stories; it is an ontological literature designed to lift us from the mundane to the transcendental platform of consciousness.

"The human society, at the present moment, is not in the darkness of oblivion. It has made rapid progress in the field of material comforts of life, education and economic development of the entire world. But it suffers a pin-prick somewhere in the social body at large and therefore there is large scale quarrel even on less important issues. Therefore there is the want of the clue as to how they can become one in peace, friendship and prosperity by the common cause. **Srimad Bhagwatam will fill up this gap by ontological aspect of human education.** It is therefore a cultural presentation for re-spiritualisation of the entire human society." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, original Delhi edition, Preface. Emphasis added.]

Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu is the ontological analysis of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī shows how all the categories of ecstatic spiritual consciousness are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and backs up all of his points by extracting authoritative quotations from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vedic literatures. His style of presentation, which he himself called "quiet conviction" is very powerful, and is also the manner of exposition followed in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books and our own writings.

Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu details all the steps from ordinary material consciousness through the highest perfection of *prema-bhakti*. Therefore every devotee who sincerely wants to attain the highest perfectional stage of Kṛṣṇa consciousness must study this great transcendental literature. My concern has always been that devotees do not give enough attention to *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Actually, it is very difficult to understand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* properly without it. The fact that so few of my Godbrothers have attained the authentic transcendental consciousness is proof of this.

Hopefully, this detailed program of studying *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* will bring some balance to the devotional society. As usual, all the videos

from this series will be posted on YouTube and anyone will be able to see them. But the members of this site will have the additional advantage of being able to post questions on this forum. Please take full advantage of this discussion group to clarify your understanding of *uttama-bhakti*, pure devotional service as described in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. This will certainly provide a powerful impetus to make your life and consciousness perfect.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

Generally devotees concentrate on Kṛṣṇa, chant the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa, think of Kṛṣṇa and consider Kṛṣṇa as the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But many devotees, especially in India, do not realize the importance of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu reveals Kṛṣṇa to the aspiring devotee. In fact, were it not for Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu we would not even know the places of Kṛṣṇa's earthly pastimes in Vṛndāvan, because they had become covered over by the passage of time (over 4,000 years) since His appearance. Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu went to Vṛndāvan, remembered and rediscovered the locations of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and instructed His disciples to renovate them. Thus today we are able to visit these places and experience the transcendental bliss of Vṛndāvan-dhāma.

More than that, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu also revealed the inner moods of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees to an unprecedented extent. Normally the transcendental pastimes of the Lord and His intimate devotees are very confidential. When Kṛṣṇa was present on this planet, not even the Yadu dynasty, Kṛṣṇa's family members, knew of them in detail. But Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu revealed these pastimes, explaining their deep meaning through His disciples like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, thus opening these pastimes to all sincere devotees.

*sei pañca-tattva mili' pṛthivī āsiyā
pūrva-premabhāṇḍārera mudrā ughāḍiyā*

*pāñce mili' lute prema, kare āsvādana
yata yata piye, tṛṣṇā bāḍhe anukṣaṇa*

"The characteristics of Kṛṣṇa are understood to be a storehouse of transcendental love. Although that storehouse of love certainly came with Kṛṣṇa when He was present, it was sealed. But when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came with His associates of the Pañca-tattva, they broke the seal and plundered the storehouse to taste transcendental love of Kṛṣṇa. The more they tasted it, the more their thirst for it grew." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 7.20-21]

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself:

*yad advaitam brahmopaniṣadi tad apy asya tanu-bhā
ya ātmāntar-yāmī puruṣa iti so 'śyāmśa-vibhavaḥ
ṣaḍ-aiśvaryaḥ pūrṇo ya iha bhagavān sa svayam ayaṁ
na caitanyāt kṛṣṇāj jagati para-tattvaṁ param iha*

"What the *Upaniṣads* describe as the impersonal Brahman is but the effulgence of His body, and the Lord known as the Supersoul is but His localized plenary portion. Lord Caitanya is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa Himself, full with six opulences. He is the Absolute Truth, and no other truth is greater than or equal to Him." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 1.3]

Although Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself, He has appeared in the mood of His greatest devotee, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī:

*rādhā kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvī purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyam prakāṣam adhunā tad-dvayaṁ caikyam āptam
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitaṁ naumi kṛṣṇa-svarūpam*

"The loving affairs of Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are transcendental manifestations of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency. Although Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are one in Their identity, They separated Themselves eternally. Now these two transcendental identities have again united, in the form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. I bow down to Him, who has manifested Himself with the sentiment and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Ādi 1.5]

Kṛṣṇa appears in the form of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to understand Himself from Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's point of view:

*śrī-rādhāyāḥ praṇaya-mahimā kīdrśo vānayaivā-
svādyo yenādbhuta-madhurimā kīdrśo vā madīyaḥ
saukhyam cāsyā mad-anubhavataḥ kīdrśam veti lobhāt
tad-bhāvādhyāḥ samajani śacī-garbha-sindhau harīnduh*

"Desiring to understand the glory of Rādhārāṇī's love, the wonderful qualities in Him that She alone relishes through Her love, and the happiness She feels when She realizes the sweetness of His love, the Supreme Lord Hari, richly endowed with Her emotions, appeared from the womb of Śrīmatī Śacī-devī, as the moon appeared from the ocean."
[Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 1.6]

All of these important concepts are explained in detail in the first few chapters of *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*; I am only giving a summary here. But before beginning our detailed study of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, we must understand the ontological significance of this book. For *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is the ocean of immortal nectar itself, issuing from the lotus mouth of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. He is giving the esoteric key to unlocking the mysteries of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and relishing the sweetness of *rasa* ourselves.

Therefore it is stated in the *śloka* quoted above, "...when Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came with His associates of the Pañca-tattva, they broke the seal and plundered the storehouse to taste transcendental love of Kṛṣṇa." If we follow the process of pure devotional service (*uttama-bhakti*) with the understanding of *rāsa-tattva* given in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, then we shall certainly be successful in reaching the highest spiritual perfection.

Pure Devotional Service

The most important *śloka* in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, which Śrīla Prabhupāda summarized in the *Nectar of Devotion*, gives the definition of *uttama-bhakti*: pure devotional service, which is the subject of the work.

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

"When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action. The devotee must constantly serve Kṛṣṇa favorably, as Kṛṣṇa desires." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11]

Each word in this definition is significant in describing the characteristic of pure devotional service. The characteristics given in this *śloka* are divided into *svarūpa-lakṣana*, essential or primary characteristics, and *tatastha-lakṣana*, secondary characteristics.

Svarūpa-lakṣana:

There are three primary characteristics of pure devotional service:

- Pure devotional service is for Kṛṣṇa.
- Pure devotional service is an active engagement.
- Pure devotional service is executed with positive intent.

Tatastha-lakṣana:

There are two secondary characteristics of pure devotional service:

- Pure devotional service is free from ulterior motive.
- Pure devotional service is not covered by *jñāna* or *yoga*.

Kṛṣṇa—Pure devotional service is for Kṛṣṇa

The most essential of the attributes of pure devotional service is that it is performed only for the benefit of Kṛṣṇa, and no one else. In other words, only Kṛṣṇa and His direct expansions (*viṣṇu-tattva*) are appropriate objects of our devotional service. Other living entities may also be Kṛṣṇa's expansions, but those expansions are indirect. His differentiated parts and parcels (*jīva-tattvas*) and various energies (*śakti-tattva*) are also servants

of Kṛṣṇa and as such, not eligible to receive our devotional service. Pure devotional service can be offered only to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, because He is constitutionally the beneficiary of all kinds of sacrifices.

*bhoktāraṁ yajña-tapasāṁ
sarva-loka-maheśvaram
suhṛdaṁ sarva-bhūtānāṁ
jñātvā mām śāntim ṛcchati*

"The sages, knowing Me as the ultimate purpose of all sacrifices and austerities, the Supreme Lord of all planets and demigods and the benefactor and well-wisher of all living entities, attain peace from the pangs of material miseries." [Bhagavad-gītā 5.29]

***Anuśīlanam*—Pure devotional service is an active engagement**

Anuśīlanam means ‘cultivation by following the previous teachers.’ There are two aspects to this following: *pravṛtti*, or activities favorable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and *nivṛtti*, avoidance of activities unfavorable to Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Pure devotional service is possible only by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees; thus in the *śloka* under discussion, the prefix *anu* (by following) links *śīlanam* (activities) to Kṛṣṇa. Thus initiation by a bona fide spiritual master is an indispensable feature of the spiritual path.

All the activities in Kṛṣṇa’s service are directly under the control of His internal pleasure potency. Therefore the spiritual masters of the lineage descending from Kṛṣṇa are all servants of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. To reach success in attaining pure devotional service, we must connect ourselves with Her by accepting initiation into the *guru-paramparā*. In this way all our life energy can become spiritualized by connection with the original source.

***Ānukūlyena*—pure devotional service is executed with positive intent**

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa derives pleasure from fighting with demons, but the activities of the demons is not considered devotional service because of

their inimical intent. Therefore Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī qualifies his definition of pure devotional service with *ānukūlyena*, positive intent. It indicates that a favorable attitude toward Kṛṣṇa is an essential attribute of pure devotional service.

Whereas the demons' activities sometimes please Kṛṣṇa, they are not accepted as devotional service because of lack of positive intent; yet sometimes Kṛṣṇa's devotees perform activities that apparently displease Him, yet are accepted as devotional service because they are performed with love. For example, Mother Yaśodā sometimes chastises her son, but this is accepted as pure devotional service because it is done out of love for Him.

***Anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*—pure devotional service is free from ulterior motive**

Anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam means 'devoid of any other desire.' Any desire except for the devotional service of the Lord is material desire, even if it is apparently spiritual, such as the desire for liberation, because the motive of such desire is selfish benefit and not devotional love. Ordinary desires such as the instinct for self-preservation, to eat or take reasonable care of the body are not out of the range of devotional service, as long as they do not become the main motivational focus of our life. The body must be kept fit to engage in meaningful service to Kṛṣṇa. The point here is that the objective even of ordinary desires must ultimately be the pleasure of the Lord.

Jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*—pure devotional service is not covered by *jñāna* or *yoga

It is not that we must completely abstain from all philosophical speculation or rational thought, as long as the aim of such reasoning is to confirm the conclusions of the *śāstra* and the instructions of the spiritual master and other great souls. Philosophical defeat of opposing systems of

thought is also valuable in preaching, although not necessary for pleasing Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Similarly we can engage in ordinary social and religious activities (*karma*), as long as these engagements do not become more prominent than our direct engagements in *bhakti*. One should not be a full-time fruitive worker, philosopher or speculator and a part-time devotee, but a devotee who occasionally engages in karmic activity to maintain himself and his family responsibilities.

In conclusion, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's definition of *uttama-bhakti* is perfect. Each word is so precise and exact that once we understand it, we cannot mistake anything else for pure devotional service. His definition is neither overly exclusive nor overly inclusive, and it applies perfectly to all stages of devotion, from the neophyte stage of practice to the exalted stage of *prema-bhakti*. The entire content of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is based upon this scientific definition of pure devotional service. Every bona fide student of the Esoteric Teaching must be completely familiar with it and also be able to apply it in practice.

Qualities of Pure Devotional Service

In Chapter 1 of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that there are three categories of pure devotional service:

- *Sādhana-bhakti*: devotional service in practice
- *Bhāva-bhakti*: devotional service in ecstasy
- *Prema-bhakti*: devotional service in pure love of Godhead

It is also described that pure devotional service displays six transcendental qualities:

- *Kleśaghñī*: pure devotional service brings immediate relief from all kinds of material distress.

- *Śubhadā*: pure devotional service is the beginning of all auspiciousness.
- *Sudurlabhā*: pure devotional service is rarely achieved.
- *Mokṣa-laghutākṛta*: Those in pure devotional service deride even the conception of liberation.
- *Śāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā*: pure devotional service automatically puts one in transcendental pleasure.
- *Śrī kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī*: pure devotional service is the only means to attract Kṛṣṇa.

Each category of devotional service displays two of these transcendental qualities.

- *Sādhana-bhakti*, in its pure stage, displays the qualities of *kleśaghnī* and *śubhadā*.
- *Bhāva-bhakti* displays the same qualities as *sādhana-bhakti*, plus *sudurlabhā* and *mokṣa-laghutākṛta*.
- *Prema-bhakti* displays all the previous qualities, with the addition of *śāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā* and *śrī kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī*.

This explains the statement of Śrīla Prabhupāda at the beginning of Chapter 2 of *Nectar of Devotion*,

"Generally it is understood that in the category of devotional service in practice there are two different qualities, devotional service in ecstasy has four qualities, and devotional service in pure love of Godhead has six qualities."

Earlier we introduced the definition of pure devotional service. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11 defines pure devotion, *uttama-bhakti*, thus:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

"One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa favorably and without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation. That is called pure devotional service."

The Lord fulfills the desires of everyone. Pure devotees are interested in achieving the transcendental service of the Lord, which is nondifferent in quality from Him. Therefore, the Lord is the only desire of the pure devotees, and devotional service is the only perfect spiritual process for achieving His favor. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11 (quoted above) that pure devotional service is *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*: pure devotional service is without any tinge of speculative knowledge and fruitive activity. Such devotional service is able to award the pure devotee the highest result, namely direct association with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa.

According to the *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad*, after Brahmā's extensive *tapasya*, the Lord showed him one of the many thousands of petals of His lotus feet. It says:

*brāhmaṇo'sāv anavarataṁ me
dhyātaḥ stutaḥ parārdhānte
so 'budhyata gopa-veśo me
purastāt āvirbabhūva*

"After penetrating meditation for millions of years, Lord Brahmā could understand the original form of the Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa as a transcendental cowherd boy, and thus he recorded his experience in the famous prayer *Brahma-saṁhitā*, *govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi*."

Devotees whose objective is to associate personally with the Lord have no desire to accept the activities of *karma-kāṇḍa* or *jñāna-kāṇḍa*, for pure devotional service is above both. *Anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam* [*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11]. In pure devotional service there is not even a pinch of *jñāna* or *karma*. The devotees accept only the *upasana-kāṇḍa* process of pure devotional service.

*iti bhāgavatān dharmān
śikṣaṇa bhaktyā tad-utthayā
nārāyaṇa-paro māyām
aṅjas tarati dustarām*

"Thus learning the science of devotional service and practically engaging in the devotional service of the Lord, the devotee comes to the stage of love of Godhead. And by complete devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Nārāyaṇa, the devotee easily crosses over the illusory energy, Māyā, which is extremely difficult to cross." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.3.33]

Simply executing the duties of the regulative principles of the scriptures, all the *varṇas* and *āśramas* of external religious duty, is not as good as offering all the results of one's activities to the Lord. When one gives up all fruitive activity and fully surrenders to the Lord, he attains *sva-dharma-tyāga*, wherein he abandons the social order and takes to the renounced order. That is certainly better. However, better than the renounced order is cultivation of knowledge mixed with devotional service. Yet all these activities are external to the activities of the spiritual world. There is no touch of pure devotional service in them.

Pure devotional service is the highest transcendental platform. It cannot be attained by empiric philosophy, nor can perfection be attained simply by good association. Devotional service by self-realization is a different subject matter. It is untouched by fruitive activity, for one surrenders the results of activities to the Lord, abandons prescribed duties and accepts the renounced order of life. Such devotional service is situated on a higher platform than that of empiric philosophical speculation with a mixture of *bhakti*.

Without coming to the stage of *prema-bhakti*, pure love of Godhead, the whole process is a failure. Therefore the path of devotional service must not be reduced to an external religious process based on the rules and regulations of the scriptures; although it may begin from regulated *vaidhī-bhakti*, it must help the aspiring devotee advance to *rāgānugā-bhakti*, spontaneous loving service, and ultimately reach the perfectional stages of

bhāva and *prema*. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* gives this progressive path, beginning from the regulative principles of scriptural injunction up to the highest platform of pure devotional service. Therefore it is unique, even among the Vedic literature, for it educates the devotee in the highest and most esoteric science of *rāsa-tattva*, or how to satisfy Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

The Importance of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

In *Jaiva-Dharma* by Śrīla Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura, Chapter 31, it is stated:

Now I can truly realize the importance of these wonderful words composed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in the Southern Division, Fifth Wave, Verses 78-79, of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*sarva thaiva durūho 'yam abhaktair-bhagavad-rasaḥ
tat pādāmbuja-sarvasvair bhaktair evānurasayate
vyatītya bhāvanā-vartma yaś camatkāra-bhāra-bhuḥ
hr̥di sattvojyvale bāḍhaṁ svadate sa raso mataḥ*

"Those who are convinced that the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are the summum bonum of life are the purest of devotees, and they alone are capable of relishing *bhakti-rasa*. Those whose hearts are bereft of *bhakti* and rampant with mundane emotion are generally contaminated by impure habits and are fond of logic and argumentation. They can never perceive this transcendental *rasa*. The person who has transcended the noumenal plane and whose consciousness and heart have been enlightened by the brilliance of pure goodness that ushers the dawn of magnificent transcendental *bhāva* is alone able to experience *rasa*."

True *rasa* is not available upon the material plane; it is of the spiritual world. As the *jīva* is *cit-kaṇa*, a spark of spiritual energy, *rasa* manifests within his consciousness. *Rasa* appears only in deep *bhakti-samādhi*, devotional meditation. Those who have received the grace of Śrī Gurudeva and have realized the distinction between *śuddha-sattva*, pure goodness, and *miśra-sattva*, mixed goodness, are free from all doubts. There is a profound difference between the ordinary goodness in the material world and the pure goodness of the transcendental plane of

consciousness. The root of this difference has to do with our intentions. When our intention is to benefit ourselves, we are capable of action in the mode of goodness, but such action is still contaminated with the conception of selfishness. Pure goodness, on the other hand, is bereft of all sense of self-benefit, and seeks only to benefit the beloved or object of service, namely Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself.

We cannot understand this subtle distinction, nor purify ourselves from the desire for self-benefit, by any other process than pure *bhakti*. *Karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga* are all predicated on the assumption of activity for the purpose of benefiting oneself. Pure *bhakti* is the only platform of actions performed in pure loving service without any desire for oneself. One only desires more and more service for the beloved, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa reciprocates this service by arranging more and more facility for the devotee to engage in His transcendental loving service.

This process of pure devotional service is a very confidential subject matter, and it is the principal subject of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Although pure devotional service is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, it is not explained in detail there. But *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* discusses *uttma-bhakti*, pure devotional service, more elaborately than any other Vedic literature. *Vaidhi-bhakti* is devotion inspired by following scriptural rules, whereas *rāgānugā-bhakti* is devotion inspired by *lobha*, or greed. While there is ample explanation of *vaidhī-bhakti* (regulated devotional service) in other works, spontaneous devotion (*rāgānugā-bhakti*) and the higher stages of devotional service such as *bhāva-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti* are discussed in detail only in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

To be inspired towards *bhakti* means to be single-minded in executing all the different processes of *bhakti*. Therefore the two ways to foster *bhakti* are first by strictly following scriptural rules, and second, through developing intense greed (*lobha*) to serve the Lord. Of these two methods, Śrīla Rūpa Goswami gives more importance to *lobha*, as he expresses in his *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

*tat tat-bhava-ādi-mādhurye śrute dhīr-yad-apekṣate
nātra śāstram na yuktim-ca tallobhotpatti-lakṣaṇam*

"After the devotee has heard the detailed descriptions of the sweetness of Lord Kṛṣṇa's loving spiritual sentiments (*bhava-mādhurya*) with His associates, he is spontaneously drawn towards those sentiments of Kṛṣṇa's beloved associates. Such a devotee, desiring to possess those feelings, shakes free the shackles of logic and scriptural bindings. Liberating himself from these bonds is the devotee's first symptom of *lobha*."

When a devotee becomes greedy for Kṛṣṇa while hearing about the different ecstatic emotions displayed by a *parikāra* (confidante) participating in Kṛṣṇa's Vraja pastimes, the devotee thinks, "Let this spiritual emotion also bloom in my heart." Such meditations are never interrupted by a need to seek consent from either the scriptures or logic. If by chance a devotee feels any uncertainty, then his desire to possess the spiritual emotions of a Parikāra cannot be called *lobha*. No one can ever develop *lobha* from following scriptural injunctions, nor can one obtain the desired spiritual object if the mind is endlessly analyzing whether or not one is eligible. Real *lobha* appears spontaneously when one sees or hears about Kṛṣṇa.

Lobha has two divisions according to the two sources from which it may develop: the pure devotee's mercy and the Supreme Lord's mercy. The first division of *lobha*, that which is owing to the devotee's mercy, is of two kinds: ancient and modern. Ancient *lobha* appears by the mercy of pure devotees steeped in the same sweet, eternal devotional mellows the constant associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa relish. When *lobha* originates from the grace of pure devotees in the present time it is known as contemporary, or modern. When *lobha* starts from the previous birth and begins to bloom in the present life, then the devotee must take shelter of a *guru* who is a *rāgānugā* pure devotee. The second kind of *lobha*, or *modeni-lobha*, is developed only after the devotee takes shelter of his spiritual master. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* confirms:

*kṛṣṇa tat-bhakta kārūṇya-mātra lobhaika hetukā
puṣṭi-mārga-tayā kaiścid iyaṁ rāgānugocyate*

"*Lobha* is produced solely by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His pure devotees. Devotion initiated by such *lobha* is defined as *rāgānugā-bhakti*; sometimes it is termed *puṣṭi-mārga-bhakti*."

When both kinds of devotees, the one yearning for ancient *lobha*, the other for modern *lobha*, hear how to acquire the devotional mellows possessed by Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates, or *nitya-parikāra*, they seek guidance from the proper scriptures. This is because the authorized method for attaining *bhāva* is delineated in scriptural injunctions and purports; no other sources for receiving this information are indicated anywhere.

The following analogy illustrates this point: A person becomes greedy for milk and its products, but first he must want to know how to procure milk. He then has to seek advice from a trustworthy person conversant with the subject who will tell him how to purchase a cow and how to take care of her properly. In other words, knowledge on a subject cannot be simply invented—proper guidance is necessary. As Lord Brahma explains in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 8.6.12:

*yathāgnim edhasy amṛtaṁ ca goṣu
bhuvy annam ambūdyamane ca vṛttim
yogair manuṣyā adhiyanti hi tvām
guṇeṣu buddhyā kavayo vadanti*

"As one can derive fire from wood, milk from the milk-bag of the cow, food grains and water from the land, and prosperity in one's livelihood from industrial enterprises, so by practice of *bhakti-yoga*, even within this material world, one can achieve Your favor or intelligently approach You. Those who are pious all affirm this."

For a *rāga-bhakta* (the devotee who is following the path of *rāgānugā-bhakti*) this intense eagerness for hearing and chanting about the all-purifying qualities and activities of Kṛṣṇa begins with the *rāga-bhakta*'s surrender to the lotus feet of his *guru*, and continues to flourish until he attains his spiritual goals. The more a devotee is purified by hearing and chanting, the more spiritual realizations he will have; just as medicine

applied correctly to diseased eyes cures them, so hearing and chanting cures the devotee of material ignorance.

The formula for this concentrated medicine is found in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and nowhere else. It is described very nicely in the five Waves of the Southern Ocean as a combination of five *bhāvas*: *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika-bhāva*, *vyabhicārī-bhāva* and *sthāyi-bhāva*. This transcendental prescription coming from the original physician, Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, is powerful enough to cure all our material diseases and restore us to full spiritual health.

Chapter 1: Glories of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, October 8, 2009

I want to talk about *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, because this *darshan* series, *Ocean of Nectar* is going to be a detailed study of the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. We know *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* in the West as *Nectar of Devotion*. Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't have time to translate the entire *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* like he did with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Bhagavad-gītā* and so many other books; so he simply made a summary study. Now he also did this with *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, it's called *Teachings of Lord Caitanya*; and he did the same thing with the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which is called *KṚṢṆA Book*, or *KṚṢṆA, the Supreme Personality of Godhead*.

So, unfortunately Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't have time to finish translating *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. There were more books that he wanted to finish, like *Vedānta-sūtra*, but now gradually his disciples are finishing the work for him. So now some of his disciples have come out with *Mahābhārata*, some of have come out with translations of different books of the Six Gosvāmīs. We ourselves did *Vedānta-sūtra*, someone else is translating *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, and another disciple has done the complete *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. So this is a great contribution to the Vaiṣṇava literature. We're going to use this translation by Bhanu Svāmī and go through the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* verse-by-verse. And there are also two commentaries: one by Jīva Gosvāmī and one by Sanātana Gosvāmī, that we will study in this series.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu was written by Rūpa Gosvāmī. And Rūpa Gosvāmī got the instructions recorded in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* directly from Lord Caitanya. The story is that Rūpa Gosvāmī was a high-ranking minister in the government of Bengal, which was run by Nawab Hussain Shah at that time. However, although he was a cabinet minister, and he was involved in so much political and government activity, at home he

was studying *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. So he and his brother, and some devotees, some very advanced devotee *brāhmaṇas*, were going through *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and at the same time they were corresponding with Lord Caitanya. I just read in *Bhakti-ratnākara* that Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī were corresponding almost daily, because they had lots of resources; they were very, very wealthy men. They could afford private mail service, back and forth with Lord Caitanya. They were not at all strangers to Lord Caitanya, but they were writing Him personal letters back and forth, practically daily. So Rūpa and Sanātana Gosvāmī wanted to leave the government service and retire from material life and join Lord Caitanya, and Rūpa left first.

When Rūpa Gosvāmī retired from government service, he had twenty-two boatloads of gold coins, wealth that he had accumulated in his service of the Shah. He divided this wealth in a way which is very exemplary for all Vaiṣṇavas. He donated half of his accumulated wealth freely to the *brāhmaṇas* and the Vaiṣṇavas. And, although they're not named, I assume that they were the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas who were tutoring him in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In any case they were certainly qualified; because in *Bhagavad-gītā* it's stated that the proper way to give charity is to the proper person, a qualified person at the proper time. One should give freely out of one's own heart's desire because they have such nice qualifications and activities that you want to support them, you want to help them. We follow this same principle. We don't ask anybody for money. But if someone wants to give—and many, many nice devotees have given wonderful donations—that's how we support our mission. We don't ask, but people give out of their own free will. So he gave fifty percent of his accumulated wealth like that. Then twenty-five percent he gave to his family members—his wife, children, and other family members—for their maintenance. And the other twenty-five percent he kept in a bank, which in those days they didn't have banks but they had grocers. So he deposited the gold coins with a grocer. And the idea is that these grocer families were all over India, and so you could deposit a certain amount with a grocer in one part, and then go to another place in

India and present his note, and actually withdraw the cash from another member of this family. And this system actually is still going on today.

Rūpa Gosvāmī deposited all this money and gave some to his family, took care of the *brāhmaṇas* and Vaiṣṇavas and then he left the world. He took *sannyāsa*. And he gave up all his government salary and position and nice clothes and everything, and he just dressed like a mendicant and went to Allahabad. Allahabad is sometimes known as Prayāg, a very important holy place where the rivers Ganges and Yamunā come together. Sarasvatī River is also there, but in a virtual form. So it's called *triveṇī*; the three rivers come together there at Prayāg. Every twelve years, there is a huge festival held there called the Kumbha-Mela. Anyway, Rūpa Gosvāmī met Lord Caitanya at the house of a devotee. And then Lord Caitanya instructed him continuously for eleven days. Can you imagine? Night and day, day and night, continuously for eleven days. Rūpa Gosvāmī sat with Lord Caitanya, and Lord Caitanya revealed to him the most intimate secrets of *bhakti*, devotional service to the Lord. So, this transfer of wisdom is extraordinary because up until this time, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had not written anything, had not given any instructions in a written form. Later on He composed eight verses called *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. But the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* are the only written verses that we have. Just eight verses—very, very important verses—from Lord Caitanya. Everything else He gave to Rūpa Gosvāmī. Rūpa then later on gave it to his brother Sanātana Gosvāmī, who was also personally instructed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu at Varāṇasī. So Rūpa Gosvāmī heard everything from Lord Caitanya. And then Lord Caitanya instructed him to write books and propagate this Esoteric Teaching, which is the essence of *rasa*.

As you know, if you've been following our *darshans*, *rasa* means taste. It means like nectar, spiritual nectar. What is this nectar? It is the flavor of ecstatic love between the Lord and His devotees. So, the relationship between the Lord and His devotees is very sweet, very affectionate, very ecstatic; it's full of charged energy of devotional service. It's not at all static. It's dynamic, it's evolving, it's growing all the time. And it's always

changing, going through different phases, changes, and moods, always expanding. Therefore Rūpa Gosvāmī titled his analysis of Lord Caitanya's teachings the *bhakti-rasa-amṛta-sindhu*. *Bhakti* of course is devotional service. And *rasa* I just explained as the taste of this devotional service, or this devotional relationship between the devotee and the Lord. And *amṛta* is a special word, it has two meanings. It means *a-mṛta*: no death, immortal. Also, *amṛta* refers to the nectar of immortality. The nectar of immortality is drunk by the demigods. Although it doesn't give them actual immortality, it gives them a lifespan equal to the entire duration of material creation. So the demigods are drinking this *amṛta*. But even better than this *amṛta* is the nectar of this devotional service, *rasa*. And there is so much of this nectar. It's just unlimited, therefore it's called an ocean, *sindhu*. So *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is the ocean of the nectarean taste of the immortal eternal relationship of devotional love between the devotees and Kṛṣṇa; and that's exactly the subject matter of this book. The title is very descriptive. You may think “Oh it's poetic, it's metaphorical.” No, it's an exact description of the contents. And now that I have read a lot of these original verses from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, I understand where Śrīla Prabhupāda gets his style of writing. His style of writing is coming exactly from Rūpa Gosvāmī. Rūpa Gosvāmī, although he used poetic metaphorical statements at times to describe things that are very difficult to describe in ordinary words, he always does so with great precision, great exactitude. Every word means exactly what it needs to mean, to contribute to describe that particular phase of consciousness.

And of course, since we are talking about the relationship between the *jīva* or spirit soul, and the *Īśvara*, the Lord, the Controller—or the *ātma* and the *Paramātmā*—everything in this relationship is on the spiritual platform, nothing is on the material level. Of course the conditioned soul has a material body, but the instructions and the philosophy in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* include how to engage the material body in the transcendental service of the Lord, actually how to spiritualize the material body so it doesn't hold us back in our spiritual quest. So this is the secret or the precise meaning of *The Nectar of Devotion*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and

this *rasa-tattva*. *Tattva* means a division of knowledge or a certain set of truths. Like you have *viṣṇu-tattva*, *guru-tattva*, *śakti-tattva*, *śiva-tattva*, so many different *tattvas* in Vedic knowledge. But the most important one is *rasa-tattva*, because *rasa-tattva* describes completely the possibilities of relationship between the soul and the Lord.

There's nothing more important than this *rasa-tattva*, because this is the actual substance of our eternal life. In *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa reveals that the soul is eternal:

“Never was there a time when you and I did not exist. Nor in the future shall we ever cease to be. The soul is immortal, unchanging and indestructible. He does not die when the body dies.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.12]

So we know that right from the beginning of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Yet in *Bhagavad-gītā* Kṛṣṇa is giving a summary. He doesn't describe all the details or all the possibilities of this relationship. He just gives a very basic summary, a basic explanation of the principle:

*man-manā bhava mad-bhaktō
mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi yuktvaivam
ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ*

“You think of Me all the time. Absorb your mind in Me. Become My devotee. Bow down to Me. Offer your service and your love to Me.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.34]

That's what Kṛṣṇa says. And He doesn't want us to divide our attention between Him and other things. He says:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*

“You give up all other kinds of religiousness and just surrender unto Me.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66]

That is the qualification. If you want Kṛṣṇa's mercy, that's what you're going to have to do. So then once a devotee passes that point of total surrender, pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then what? Well, that's described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is like a vast encyclopedia of *bhakti*. And it gives so many examples, in story form, of relationships between pure devotees and the Lord. How they became a devotee, what kind of *sādhana* they did, how long it took, what was the result, how did they develop, where did they go afterwards, what was their destination. So many, many, many things. But this is all presented in story format because it's a *purāṇa*, *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*. *Purāṇa* means history. So *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa*, or *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, is the history of the different appearances of the Lord (Bhagavān) throughout the material creation. And what is striking is that every single appearance of the Lord, is part of the relationship between the Lord and His devotees. The Lord doesn't just show up somewhere, some arbitrary place and say, "OK, here I am!" No; He comes into this world through His relationship with His devotees. He executes His pastimes in relationship with His devotees. And then even when he leaves this world, it's still in relationship with His devotees; and then He goes back to the spiritual world where—what does He do? He has eternal relationships with His devotees.

So the Lord is always in relationship with His devotees, and many, many types of relationships that the devotees have with the Lord are described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But these relationships are not described analytically, they are presented in the form of stories. What Rūpa Gosvāmī has done, on the instructions of Lord Caitanya, is to take these stories and analyze them, and to give an ontological system by which we can understand the different classifications of these transcendental relationships. Rūpa Gosvāmī, in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, gives an ontological system of classification by which all different types of relationship with the Lord are described, and the different varieties and permutations and even the different methods of attaining the relationship

are all explained in tremendous detail, with support and examples from many different Vedic scriptures.

Ontology is very important, crucially important to understanding. The value of ontology is illustrated by one experience we had in Chile, where we were trying to get our truck repaired. And I don't speak Spanish very well. Uddhava would say that I don't speak Spanish at all. So Uddhava had to manage the relationship with the mechanics, and he kept getting cheated. And so, finally I said to him, "Look, you have to learn the ontology of car repairs. You have to learn all the terminology referring to the different parts of the motor and how they work, their relationships with one another, and what kind of processes are required to repair and fix them. You have to learn this background knowledge; otherwise, every time you go to the mechanic they will cheat you."

In New York we have joke that, "Oh, we gotta respline the franistat." Because if somebody doesn't know anything about cars the mechanic will say some nonsense double-talk like that, "It's very serious, we gotta respline the franistat otherwise it's gonna blow up on ya." But actually he takes one spark plug out and then turns on the engine, "Oh yeah, see it's running real rough, the franistat is desplined, it's almost finished." So then he'll charge you a big bill. They were doing the same thing to Uddhava until he actually learned the language of car repairs, and then he could speak with the mechanic and he could tell "Oh, this guy knows what he's talking about, so we can't cheat him." From that point on we got very good results from the mechanics.

Similarly, in spiritual life, you have a situation where you're trying to change your consciousness. And specifically you are trying to establish a devotional relationship, a service relationship, a loving relationship with the Lord. How are you going to do this unless you know the terminology? How are you going to do it unless you know how the thing works, unless you have an ontological background with which to understand the

meaning of the different things that happen in this process? If you don't have this background, you can very easily be cheated.

Some so-called spiritual teacher can come and say, "Oh yeah, just give us money and everything will be OK." They can quote *Bhagavad-gītā*, "If you can't follow these principles of devotional service, then just work for me, for by working for Me you will purify your existence." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.10] Yes, Kṛṣṇa says that in *Bhagavad-gītā*, but that's taking it out of context. Actually, He says:

“Just think of Me, become My devotee, love Me with all your heart. **And if you can't do that**, then follow the regulative principles of devotional service, for by doing this process you will develop the desire to love Me. **But if you can't do that**, then work for Me because by working for Me you will purify your existence. **And if you can't even do that**, then just try to cultivate knowledge and try to be self-situated. For by cultivating knowledge you will eventually come to the platform of spiritual knowledge, spiritual wisdom.” [*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.8-12]

If someone takes one of these statements out of context and just presents it as ‘this is what you should do,’ you don't realize you have a choice of which level you can engage in.

Just like if the car mechanic says, "Oh yeah, we gotta do this, we gotta replace that, we gotta do this." If you don't know what that part does and how it works, what the context is and what the different options are, you can very easily be cheated. So similarly, if you're in spiritual life and some spiritual authority or some organizational authority says to you, "Yeah you have to do this, you have to come to this service, give money and do like this and like that and then we'll let you know, we'll take care of everything, don't worry about it," it's just like the mechanic talking to the naive customer and saying, "Yeah that's OK, we'll just replace this and that and everything will be fine." And usually what they'll do is put some sawdust in the transmission or whatever, and five thousand miles later it breaks down again, and then of course what are you going to do? Come to the same guy and get cheated all over again. That's their game.

So similarly, in spiritual life there's a bunch of unscrupulous, ignorant people who are representing themselves as great authorities on spiritual life. And because they don't really know the science, they're presenting their neophyte level of understanding as, "This is it." So what happens when people go to them, they'll tell the people what's good for them: "Yeah, just give money to our temple, come every Sunday for the feast and don't worry about it. Chant a little Hare Kṛṣṇa, this and that, now and then read *Bhagavad-gītā*, and just do your work at home and don't think about it because we'll take care of everything." That sounds very good; just like it sounds really good to the people who go to the church and they say, "Just believe in Jesus Christ and you'll be saved." That's it; that's all you have to do: just believe. You don't have to know anything; you don't have to do anything. There's no process, there's no nothing. Just believe. And of course, actually it turns out there's a lot more required, but "Just believe and give money, and be a loyal member, and do this and do that and you're going to heaven." That's the sales talk.

So this kind of cheating business is going on only because people do not know the science of spiritual life. They don't know the ontology, the science of consciousness. They don't know how to change their consciousness. They don't know the methods, they don't know the expected results and so many other things. But all this knowledge is given in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. I would go so far as to say that even if you read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, if you haven't read *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, it's very likely—almost certain in fact—that you'll misunderstand it. You'll misunderstand *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* because you don't have the background knowledge, the transcendental ontology of *rasa*.

For example, let's say you don't know anything about cars, and you're reading some story about cars, and they make some technical statements: "We increased the horsepower and the foot-pounds of torque 61% by tweaking the fuel injector." Huh? Oh, sounds great. But you don't really understand it. And you wouldn't be able to apply it; you wouldn't be able to install the same equipment in your own car, or tune up your own car to

have the same performance, because you don't have the background knowledge to fully understand the description. So even though the technical description is accurate and truthful, because you lack the background knowledge you can't apply it.

The same is true of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there are so many statements, very, very exact, high, complete technical statements about devotional service; but because they're in the form of stories, if you don't have the background knowledge you won't be able to understand it to the degree that you would be able to apply it in your own life. So although *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is certainly not a cheating process—in fact the specific quality of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is that it kicks out all cheating processes. There's a nice *śloka* right in the beginning of the First Canto that says,

dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām

"Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* propounds the highest truth, which is understandable by those devotees who are fully pure in heart." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.1.2].

The specific standard of this scripture is that it kicks out all cheating processes of religion based on material considerations. In other words, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is purely spiritual, and this is based on Nārada's instruction to Vyāsadeva. Up until that time Vyāsadeva had written many Vedic scriptures. But the principle of all of them was based on *karma-kaṇḍa*. *Karma-kaṇḍa* means you do your material activities very nicely according to Vedic instructions, and from that you will get spiritual advancement and you'll be able to go somewhere where you'll be in a better condition than you are now. And that's all true, but it does not give the instructions for attaining the highest stage beyond all material engagement, which is pure devotional service, or *uttama-bhakti*.

Uttama-bhakti is so powerful that Kṛṣṇa Himself becomes controlled by it. Therefore, He does not give it out very easily. *Uttama-bhakti* requires

some knowledge, some technical skill, and then it requires great personal dedication, personal practice over a long span of time. But what's the alternative? Being cheated; being engaged in some materialistic process of religion. And almost all of the devotees we meet are like that. They have this attitude of, "Kṛṣṇa, please help me with my fruitive activities so that my business goes very smoothly and I make a lot of money. Haribol!" That's really their attitude. They're praying to Kṛṣṇa, they're chanting Kṛṣṇa's name, but actually their desire is, "Kṛṣṇa please help me with my work, please help me with my business, please help me with money, please help me with my family problems. Kṛṣṇa do this for me, Kṛṣṇa do that for me." What's the difference between that and the naive Christian who approaches Jesus and asks for some material benediction? They make fun of this. There's a song, "O Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes-Benz." They're making fun of this very materialistic approach to religion. But actually most devotees aren't a whole lot different.

Most devotees are in the neophyte stage where they maintain some material attachment. And they perform their devotional service in order to further their material process. This is going on. We see it everywhere. But this is not pure devotional service. This is not how Kṛṣṇa becomes satisfied. In fact, even ordinary pure devotional service is not enough to satisfy Kṛṣṇa:

*sakala jagate more kare vidhi-bhakti
vidhi-bhaktye vraja-bhāva pāite nāhi śakti
aiśvarya-jñānete saba jagat miśrita
aiśvarya-śithila-preme nāhi mora prīta*

"Everywhere in the world people worship Me according to scriptural injunctions. But simply by following such regulative principles one cannot attain the loving sentiments of the devotees in Vrajabhūmi. Knowing My opulences, the whole world looks upon Me with awe and veneration. But devotion made feeble by such reverence does not attract Me." [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi 3.15-16]

Even if a devotee is following all the rules and regulations of the scriptures very strictly, and even if he is successful in being promoted to

the Vaikuṇṭha planet, that's no guarantee that he can actually satisfy Kṛṣṇa. That's why there's always a little bit of distance between Kṛṣṇa and His Vaikuṇṭha devotees. He is on a higher platform: He's *Īśvara* and they are the *jīva*. He's the leader and they're the followers. Even though they have all opulences, great mystic powers, and great attainment of spiritual life, and even though they're engaged in pure devotional service without any material activities, still because they have some selfish desire for opulence, Kṛṣṇa is not fully satisfied.

Kṛṣṇa is fully satisfied with the residents of Vṛndāvan who are in pure love with Him, who have no desire for material opulence, no desire for personal benefit, no desire even for spiritual opulences. They just live very simply, very naturally, very close to the Earth, and they just naturally love Kṛṣṇa. They love Kṛṣṇa without any feeling of awe and reverence. This is the key: the love of the residents of Vṛndāvan for Kṛṣṇa is devoid of any hint of fear. And what is awe and reverence but a certain flavor of fear, "O God, You're so great and I'm nothing, please help me." It's kind of pathetic actually. But the devotees in Vṛndāvan are completely in love with the Lord in whatever mood, whether it's servitude, friendship, parenthood, or conjugal love. They're completely in love with the Lord. There's no feeling of awe that, "O, You're God and I'm nothing." The friends even think of Kṛṣṇa as being their equal; and in parenthood, the devotees actually think they're Kṛṣṇa's superiors. And Kṛṣṇa loves this. He enjoys it. Why?

Because nothing can threaten Kṛṣṇa. Nothing can detract from His supreme position. He is constitutionally the Supreme Personality of Godhead, eternally in the past and eternally in the future. Nothing could ever change that. He can never lose His position; He can never be dethroned. So He doesn't mind taking a subordinate position, even to the rascal living entities in this material world. We see so many times in this material world that someone desires to enjoy some material position and Kṛṣṇa fulfills his desire—whether they're pious or not, whether they're worshiping Him or not, even they can be atheist. But Kṛṣṇa, as the dearest friend of every living entity, He gives the desire, He gives them

whatever they want. Of course they have to accept the *karma*, that's another thing. But as it says in *Upaniṣads*:

*nityo nityānām cetanś cetanānām
eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān*

“The one supreme conscious living entity is fulfilling the desires of all the other conscious living entities, all the other eternal souls.” [*Kaṭha Upaniṣad* 2.2.13]

That's the difference. That's the difference between *jīva* and *Bhagavān*: *jīva* is desiring and *Bhagavān* is fulfilling that desire. *Jīva* has some need and God is fulfilling that need, as a friend. This is His unconditional love for His creations. We're all like sons and daughters of God. So whatever desires we have, He's fulfilling. He may not fulfill it right away, but eventually He fulfills. What's the difference between the nondevotees and the devotees? The devotee recognize this.

So devotees in the beginning state are in the mood of awe and reverence, because they realize this tremendous difference between themselves and the Lord, “Oh, I'm nothing and He's everything.” And this is true. But then—now think about it—the Lord is always going to be the Supreme Personality of Godhead. There's nothing that can unseat Him from that position. There's nothing that can threaten His supremacy, His absolute mastery of everything and everyone. So what does He gain by someone being in awe and reverence to Him? And what does He lose if they are in a more familiar mood of worship to Him? Nothing: He can't gain, He can't lose. He already has everything, constitutionally, by His Absolute nature. So He doesn't lose anything if the devotee relates to Him as an equal, or even as an inferior.

He can't lose anything, and He can't gain anything; He already has everything. So it's no problem for Him if the devotees are in a mood where they're not giving Him respect and reverence. Respect is automatically there because of love. The pure devotees love Kṛṣṇa so much that they would never do anything to hurt Him. Not that they could hurt Him, but

you understand the attitude: their attitude is always positive, it's always favorable towards the Lord. And this is part of one of the integral qualities of pure devotional service. And we'll go into that when we go into the actual *śloka*s themselves, once we have set up the preliminaries and we can go into deeper, more confidential talks.

The nature of devotional service is that it's always favorable, and it's always from the intention to benefit the Lord, to help Him, to give Him pleasure, to give Him service. All the devotees in Goloka Vṛndāvan have this feeling toward the Lord that, "Oh, the Lord is my best friend." And the Lord **is** our best friend, the Lord is everyone's best friend; but only the devotees have realized it because only they have given up all distance or separation and have become intimate devotees of the Lord.

So *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* gives the process for reviving this close devotional relationship with the Lord. It gives the process which is based on this transcendental knowledge, this transcendental ontological analysis of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. This is the key. This is the secret. Everyone wants to know the secret of spiritual life. And the secret of spiritual life is that you must have a transcendental ontology. "Huh? A what? Can't I just give money?" No. That won't get you where you want to go. You have to change your consciousness; you have to change your mood. You have to have a mood of pure love towards Kṛṣṇa; and when you have this mood of pure love, then Kṛṣṇa reciprocates that mood. It's simple for the simple. If one's heart is very simple and pure then it's simple: just love Kṛṣṇa. Love Kṛṣṇa in whatever mood that you want to love Him, and He will respond. It's very simple for those who are simple. For those who are still very complicated, sophisticated people, well, there's more to it. You have to purify yourself. And there's some preliminary process that you have to go through to get to that stage. We want to teach devotional service on this platform of spontaneous love for Kṛṣṇa, because this is the actual platform of devotional service: pure devotional service, *uttama-bhakti*. This is the actual kind or style of devotional service that's pleasing to Kṛṣṇa. So we want to please Kṛṣṇa; we want Kṛṣṇa to be pleased with our service.

We want to teach how to satisfy Kṛṣṇa on this platform of *uttama-bhakti*. But before we can do that, there's some preliminary knowledge which is necessary. This preliminary knowledge is given in the first few chapters, the Eastern Division of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Rūpa Gosvāmī gives all these preliminary qualifications, *vaidhī-bhakti*. And when you have mastered all of these preliminaries, then you can enter into the Southern Ocean, which is about the actual transcendental devotional service itself. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is divided into four divisions or four oceans: the eastern, southern, western and northern. And within each of these oceans there are several waves. Each wave is a specific topic in the study of devotional service; each wave has a specific content which brings us closer to Kṛṣṇa. So by reading, by studying the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, we're surfing on these waves in the ocean of ecstatic bliss. And these waves are bringing us closer and closer to Kṛṣṇa. So this is our mood as we study this great scripture which is the foundation of our lineage, the foundation of the Esoteric Teaching.

There's nothing higher than this; there's no higher knowledge, no higher topics, even in all the *Vedas*. If you understand this, then you can understand everything else. And if you don't understand this, then everything else will be a mystery to you, because you won't have the background knowledge, you won't have the ontology to decode the meaning properly.

Question from Mukuteśvara: “Should we read *Nectar of Devotion* before *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* then? I have been reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in the morning but would you recommend I concentrate on reading *Nectar of Devotion* and carefully following along with your *darshans* on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* before proceeding with *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*?”

Bābājī: Well, we already went through the first half of *Nectar of Devotion* in previous *darshans*. If you have been following the *darshans*, then you probably have enough background to read at least the first nine Cantos of

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Tenth Canto is very high. But what we've gone over is probably enough. We will go back over these same subjects again, but this time we'll do it scrutinizingly instead of in summary form. So I think you have enough background to read *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Question from Mukuteśvara: "What do you mean by Sarasvatī being at the Ganges and Yamunā in virtual form?"

Bābājī: Previously there were three great rivers in north India. The Sarasvatī River was in the northwest near Rajasthan. And then there was an earthquake in the Himalayas about four thousand years ago, and the Sarasvatī River dried up because the earthquake diverted the water that was feeding it to another channel. The so-called scholars, academic scholars, used this absence of the Sarasvatī River as "proof that the *Vedas* are mythology." But when the United States mapped the surface of the world using radar from space, then the channel of the Sarasvatī River was discovered by this radar mapping, exactly where it's described in the *Vedas*. You see, the rascals always try to say the *Vedas* are mythology. But actually they're history, they're fact; and if you follow the instructions of the *Vedas*, then you get the results. That's our experience. So yes, Sarasvatī River is there in virtual form. It's one of the seven sacred rivers of India. So even though now it is dry, still it merges into the other two great rivers, Yamunā and Ganges.

Question from Marino: "What are the preliminary studies and preparations one must have before begin to approach *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*?"

Bābājī: Well, I would say a general background in Vedic philosophy, *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*; if you know *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyana* that's better. But really the main thing is to have a desire to be a devotee. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* teaches us how to be devotees. So if you have a desire to be a devotee, if you have some taste for *bhakti*, then it will be meaningful for you, it will have value for you; if you don't then you will be like, "Why are they talking about all this stuff?" It won't make sense; it

will be like, “What’s the application of this?” or “What’s the meaning of this?” But if you want to be a devotee and you read *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, then it’s like a manual, step-by-step: “Here’s how you do it. You want to satisfy Kṛṣṇa, you want to please Kṛṣṇa? Here’s how you do it, 1-2-3.” Everything is there. So the best background is to have a desire to be a devotee; then it will be very meaningful, very valuable for you.

Chapter 2: *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.1

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, October 11, 2009

Today we're going to begin the study of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* with verse 1.1.1, the *Maṅgalācaraṇam*. The *Nectar of Devotion*, which Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote, is a summary study of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. By good fortune, one of my Godbrothers has translated it, so we now have access to the original text.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu is very, very important. We've often discussed ontology, which is the science of meaning, and epistemology, which is the science of knowing. How do we know what we know? And the shortest path to knowing something is to hear from an authority. That's the best way of learning, by hearing. Second-class way of learning is by seeing another person's example. Third-class way is by trying it yourself, trial and error—mostly error. But hearing is perfect. Because if you hear from the qualified person, you can learn everything perfectly immediately. No need for trial and error. You can immediately do, and get good result.

So if we want to know about devotional service, if we want to know about Kṛṣṇa, then who should we hear from? We should hear from Lord Śrī Caitanya Māhaprabhu and the people who have heard from Him. That means Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī: the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvan. These six Gosvāmīs were Lord Caitanya's most intimate disciples for preaching. He had other intimate disciples like Rāmānanda Rāya and Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Śikhi Māhiti. Nobody has ever heard of these people, because they weren't preachers. They were His intimate associates, and they accompanied Him in His most confidential pastimes, the *Antya-līlā*. But Rūpa Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, these were His preaching associates and they took up His preaching work.

Caitanya Māhaprabhu left only eight verses. *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. *Śikṣā* means instruction, *āṣṭaka* means eight. So He left these eight instructions so that everyone could attain love of Godhead. But these eight verses are very condensed, very powerful, very confidential; you have to be very intelligent, very advanced, to understand them. So for the rest of the people who are not so advanced—still advanced, you have to be somewhat advanced to be engaged in devotional service at all—Caitanya Māhaprabhu instructed Rūpa Gosvāmī especially to write. And actually all the Six Gosvāmīs, at one time or another, cooperated in this writing business. They all worked together; so even though one Gosvāmī's name may be on the book as the author, still all of them working cooperatively together produced the book.

Just like when I was writing my commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, the devotees were cooking and cleaning, going to the market and doing so many things to support me while I was writing. You can't say that any book is a product of just one person. That's why every book begins with acknowledgements. In the Preface usually the author acknowledges, "So many people helped me with this book." Because nobody can write a book all by themselves; it's too much work; it's a great deal of work.

So Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī had the help of the other Gosvāmīs in Vrindavan, and cooperatively they would search the *śāstra* for the appropriate verses to support the points made by Caitanya Māhaprabhu, and to explain His philosophy and methods. And the result was this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and so many other books; but *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is the best. Now why do I say that, even though there are so many wonderful books by the Gosvāmīs like *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, *Bhakti-ratnākara*, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* and so many other wonderful books?

Because if you understand this one book, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, you can understand everything else: *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, even the most esoteric books by the Gosvāmīs on the science of spiritual life. You can understand everything. Why? Because *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-*

sindhu gives the background ontology, the background philosophy, the terminology, the structure of *bhakti* itself. And since the conclusion or the aim of these other scriptures is *bhakti*, if you understand *bhakti* you automatically can understand all of them. If you don't understand *bhakti*, even if you study all these books, you won't understand them properly. You'll take them in the wrong way; you'll think that they are promoting some mixture of *karma*, or *dharma*, or *jñāna*, or *yoga*, or something other than pure *bhakti*: mixed devotional service. But no; the actual aim of all the *Vedas*—and this is stated very clearly in *Vedānta-sūtra*—the actual aim of the *Vedas* is pure *bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti*, *prema*. The actual aim of the *Vedas* is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Kṛṣṇa states this in *Bhagavad-gītā* [6.14, 9.18, 12.20], but unless you have the background you won't understand the meaning.

We've gone over this so many times: how the background that you have when you approach an experience will determine the meaning that it has for you. So the experience of studying *Vedas*, or the experience of performing devotional service has to happen against the ontological background of the understanding of pure *bhakti* given in *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Otherwise you'll misunderstand, and you'll get some different result. You won't get pure love of Godhead, you'll get something else. Some mixed result.

We don't know what that will be. But generally, there's pure devotional service, *uttama-bhakti* and there's mixed devotional service, *miśra-bhakti*. And devotional service can be mixed with various different things: *karma*, fruitive activities; *jñāna*, transcendental or speculative knowledge; or it can be mixed with religiosity, the urge to accumulate pious activities so that we get rewards in the heavenly planets later on; *yoga*, the acquirement of mystic powers—see through walls, read peoples' minds, whatever—woo-woo stuff, magic. So when people approach devotional service with these different motives, different purposes, this is called mixed devotional service. And actually it's a kind of offensive devotional service, the beginning stage or neophyte devotional service. Whereas, once we really

understand the meaning of *bhakti*, then we're in a position to perform *uttama-bhakti*.

Uttama-bhakti means pure devotional service. Pure devotional service is the fundamental quality of *bhakti*, when it has no mixture with any other process. It has no contamination of *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* or any other kind of fruitive activity or self-realization. Pure devotional service is defined in the very first chapter of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and then the succeeding chapters explain that definition and give innumerable examples. Anyone who studies this book will have a very clear idea of what is meant by *bhakti*. Not just any kind of *bhakti*, but pure *bhakti*. So this pure *bhakti*, being the aim of all the *Vedas*, is the key to understanding all the *Vedas*. If you have this key, you can read any Vedic literature and immediately understand.

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena tasmai śrī-gurave-namaḥ
śrī-caitanya-mano-'bhīṣṭaṁ sthāpitaṁ yena bhū-tale
svayaṁ rūpaḥ kadā mahyaṁ dadāti sva-padāntikam*

“I was born in the darkness of ignorance and my spiritual master opened my eyes with the light of transcendental knowledge. I offer my respectful obeisances unto him. I also offer my respectful obeisances unto Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, and the other Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan who actually manifested the desire of Lord Caitanya Māhārabhu. May they have mercy upon us.”

*akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrtiḥ prasṁmara-ruci-ruddha-tārakā-pāliḥ
kalita-śyāmā-lalito rādhā-preyān vidhur jayati*

“Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of all sin and the bestower of all bliss, the very form of the highest bliss, filled with all *rasas*, excels all others in glory. He brings Tārakā and Pālikā under His control by the diffusion of His beauty; He accepts Śyāmālā and Lālītā as His equals; and gives pleasure to Rādhā by His excellent qualities.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.1]

Now this verse also has an alternate translation:

“The full moon, which destroys suffering and creates happiness by its cooling rays, shines everywhere with its excellent qualities and beauty. It is the very form of nectar, filled with all tastes. It eclipses the host of stars by its light, accepts the playful gestures of the night, and fondly enters the Viṣākā constellation in the spring season.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.1]

Such nice poetry. Very, very nice. Tasty, this is all tasty. Everything, from the *kīrtana* to all the verses, everything in the process of *bhakti* is very, very tasteful and the highest standard of artistic expression. So now let's read Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary. Jīva Gosvāmī was Rūpa Gosvāmī's nephew. And he came to Vṛndāvan as a young boy. He was like Rūpa Gosvāmī's research assistant. Rūpa Gosvāmī had him looking up all these verses in *śāstra*, and then incorporating them into his different works. And he liked Jīva Gosvāmī so much that he ascribed the authorship of some of his books to him: “Actually Jīva Gosvāmī wrote this book.” So even though Rūpa Gosvāmī may have actually compiled the book, Jīva Gosvāmī did all the research work, and so he gave him the credit. Jīva Gosvāmī then wrote commentaries on many of Rūpa Gosvāmī's books, because he was in an excellent position to know Rūpa Gosvāmī's intention.

So here is Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary on this verse:

“Śrī Rūpa, eternal peace incarnate, identical in mood to Sanātana, [who was his elder brother] and whose younger brother was Śrī Vallabha, is the means of my success and the good fortune of all the *jīvas*. Obsessed by the desire to benefit all the devotees of the Lord, the esteemed author Śrī Rūpa compiled this remarkable work, the scripture called *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, using the *rasas* presented in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.”

In other words, this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is a derivative work. It's derived from the material presented in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And what is that material? The transcendental pastimes of the Lord in relationship with His devotees, and that relationship is called *rasa*: the sweet taste of transcendental love in different flavors. So there are innumerable varieties

of *rasa*, and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* will describe all the different categories of *rasa* and how to attain them.

It's a very important book. “So Śrī Rūpa compiled this remarkable work.” He calls it remarkable. “The scripture called *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* uses the *rasas* presented in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* which appeared within the lotus bud of his heart.” In other words, he realized all these *rasas*. He's not just writing a theoretical work; it's not just a work of philosophy. It's not an ordinary literary work, but a reflection of these *rasas* which were realized in his heart, which is compared with a lotus bud. A lotus bud is very beautiful, and it's the precursor of the lotus blossom, which is considered the most beautiful thing in nature. So Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's heart was lotus-like, and also a bud, and this was an oblique reference to his eternal identity as Rūpa Mañjari. We will explain this esoteric meaning later.

“Discerning that what will be described is the most exalted among all topics, he adds the introductory *maṅgala* verse to indicate this, and thus announces that the whole of this work is auspiciousness incarnate.”

The opening verse of any Vedic work is called *maṅgalācaraṇa*. *Maṅgala* means auspicious, and *ācara* means a ritual worship that you perform for self-purification. So a Vedic author beginning any auspicious work purifies himself by means of writing a certain kind of verse, which is usually intended as a glorification of the main Deity described in his work, which of course here is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. So this verse, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.1, is the *maṅgalācaraṇa* verse for this *śāstra*.

Why did he write this verse? Well, Jīva Gosvāmī explains that “discerning that what will be described is the most exalted among all topics.” This isn't any ordinary book. It's not even an ordinary Vedic literature; but it describes the most exalted topic that there is. In other words, if you can understand this, you can understand everything.

This *rasa-tattva*—the truth of *rasa*, or transcendental ecstatic relationship with the Lord—this truth underlies all of the different truths in the Vedic

scriptures. There are many, many Vedic scriptures on many, many topics. But the ultimate goal of all of those topics is *rasa*: ecstatic devotional relationship with the Lord. If you can understand this topic, then you understand everything. So he announces to the whole world by this verse that his purpose is to describe these different relationships between Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

Now Jīva Gosvāmī goes on to describe each and every word in this verse, one by one. And the first word that he describes is *vidhu*. It's near the end of the verse: *vidhur jayanti*. Of course *jayanti* indicates auspiciousness and victory, it also indicates the birth, like Kṛṣṇa-*jayanti* means the appearance of Kṛṣṇa. He's indicating the birth of this knowledge into the world, for previously this knowledge had become forgotten. It became obscured, and nobody could understand it. It became secret by neglect of the people.

Just like today, we go down the street to these temples in Kumbakonam, and we see that many of the temples are in a state of neglect. People are allowing them to decay because they don't realize their value. Similarly, the value of this science of *rasa-tattva* was not properly appreciated, and so after Kṛṣṇa's disappearance it was allowed to decay to the point where it was practically forgotten. But then when Lord Śrī Caitanya Māhāprabhu appeared, He injected this same knowledge back into the human society by His own pastimes and teachings. So now this book is going to explain that teaching. I explained before that Rūpa Gosvāmī sat with Lord Caitanya for eleven days at Prayāg, and Lord Caitanya directly instructed him; so this book is that instruction, being written down for the benefit of all the devotees.

So anyway, *vidhu*: “*Vidhu* refers to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. *Vidhu*, or Kṛṣṇa, excels all in excellent qualities: *vidhur jayati*. *Vidhu* means ‘He who is marked with the *Śrīvatsa* symbol.’” *Śrīvatsa* is a curl of hair on the chest of the Lord where the Goddess of Fortune places her head, and this is how the Lord is recognized in the Vaikuṇṭha planets. I'm having to explain these things because this is very, very high philosophy; and you can get confused and

lost, so I'm being very careful. Some readers may know these things already, but I would rather go slow and explain everything.

“*Vidhu* meaning ‘He who is marked with the *Śrīvatsa* symbol,’ indicates a general form of the Lord who makes successive appearances in the world.” In other words, Māha-Viṣṇu. “It also indicates specifically Kṛṣṇa. The reason is this: *vidhu* stands for *vidhunoti*, which means ‘He defeats.’ It indicates that the person who transcends all suffering, or the person who surpasses all other things. *Vidhu* can also stand for *vidhudatti*, which means ‘He produces.’ This indicates the person who produces all happiness or the person who causes everything. In this way, the meaning of *vidhu* can be derived. Considering these factors, one can come to a conclusion of the meaning of *vidhu*. One must conclude that *vidhu* means Kṛṣṇa. He alone is famous for His ability to liberate even the demons, and thus destroys even their suffering. He alone is famous for His ability to surpass all others by His power. He alone is famous for bestowing happiness up to the greatest happiness found in His most astounding *prema*.”

Prema is defined elsewhere in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* as "super-concentrated loving happiness." It's so concentrated that it's like a solid; so concentrated that it's impenetrable, like a diamond. When one is in this state of *prema*, nothing else can reach him. His concentration on this point of relationship with the Lord is absolute, and his bliss is so intense it's impenetrable. Nothing can cut his mood of bliss. He is so completely enjoying; just like in this *kīrtana* today, we had a little drop of bliss. But Kṛṣṇa is an ocean of bliss. So, if we have access to this ocean then why would we want some river of liberation or some other small body of water: the lakes of material knowledge or the puddles of material sense gratification?

“He alone is famous for bestowing happiness, up to the greatest happiness found in his most astounding *prema*.” If you taste this *prema* even one time, you will be astounded. Astonished; flabbergasted. You can't imagine that such happiness could exist. It's so much beyond any other kind of happiness that you can't even measure it in terms of some other kind of happiness. You can't even say “Well, it's ten million times better than sex

life,” or something like that. There's no comparison; there's just no comparison. Because this *prema*, once it takes root in the heart, is eternal. That means nothing can destroy it, nothing can change it, nothing can make it go away. So, once you taste this *prema* even one time, there is no question of any other kind of happiness. It's just all insignificant.

“He alone is famous as *svayam bhagavān*, the original cause of everything. Therefore His names are particularly mentioned in the *Amara-kośa*.” The *Amara-kośa* is the standard Sanskrit dictionary. See, all this is coming from authorized sources. People think that when I say that scrutinizing study means “You have to look up every word in the dictionary,” that I'm making some absurd rule, that I'm just speculating. No, this is actually coming from Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, the originators of our disciplic lineage. That you must look up every word in the dictionary and know the normal meaning of the word, the derivation of the word and so many things. “Therefore, His names,”—Kṛṣṇa's names—“are particularly mentioned in the *Amara-kośa* with great prominence, with such statements as *vāsudevasya-janaka*.” His father is Vasudeva. “All these meanings of *vidhu* are made clear by the word *jayati*: He excels all others.” But there's a note here: “A list of names of Viṣṇu is given in the *Amara-kośa*, and among them, many of them specifically refer to Kṛṣṇa.” So he's giving one of the names on this list, *vāsudevo janaka*, His father is Vasudeva. “He excels all others, *jayati*. This means He exists with all the most excellent qualities. That indeed only refers to Kṛṣṇa. The present tense is used to dispel the conception of common people that He cannot be perceived now, since He was visible only for the period of His descent.”

So you see the meaning of every word, every single word in this *śloka* is absolutely significant. If we are studying the history of Kṛṣṇa as one who appeared a long, long time ago and can never be seen again, then it becomes dry, academic, useless; just something to pass the time of people who are bored, or something like that. But no; we can see Kṛṣṇa now. We can be in love with Kṛṣṇa now. We can have so many pastimes with Kṛṣṇa

now. Crucial to attaining this love of Kṛṣṇa is perfect understanding of the philosophy and the method of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, *bhakti-yoga*. So, you will find that the Gosvāmīs, when they do these commentaries—Jīva Gosvāmī here, Sanātana Gosvāmī in other places, there's another commentary by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa, which is also included here when it makes different points that aren't in Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary—they all refer to the *Amara-kośa* dictionary as the authority for the meaning of the words.

Now, why is this? Why don't they just use the derivation of Sanskrit roots to make any meaning that they want? Well, this is explained by Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa in his introduction to *Vedānta-sūtra*. He says:

*upakramopasaṁhārāv abhyāso 'pūrvata-phalam
artha-vāḍopapattī ca liṅgaṁ tātparya-nirṇaye*

“The factors to consider in interpretation of obscure passages are the beginning, the ending, what is repeated again and again, what is unique and novel, the general purpose of the book, the author's statement of his own intention, and appropriateness.” [*Govinda-bhāṣya*]

If we apply these criteria to the different Sanskrit *ślokas*, we will see that they cannot be interpreted whimsically or speculatively, they have to be interpreted according to the original meaning, and especially according to the author's intention, what he repeats again and again and so on. And we'll find in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, in *Bhagavad-gītā*, and in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, that Kṛṣṇa is repeated again and again and again and again. So this can only refer to Kṛṣṇa. Now the proofs are as follows.

“That Kṛṣṇa destroys all suffering:

*vijaya-ratha-kuṭumba ātta-totre
dhr̥ta-haya-raśmini tac-chriyekṣaṇīye
bhagavati ratir astu me mumūrṣor
yam iha nirīkṣya hatā gatāḥ sva-rūpam*

“At the moment of death, let my ultimate attraction be to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. I concentrate my mind upon the chariot driver

of Arjuna who stood with a whip in His right hand and a bridle rope in His left, who was very careful to give protection to Arjuna's chariot by all means. Those who saw Him on the Battlefield of Kurukṣetra attained their original forms after death.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.9.39]

So Kṛṣṇa destroys all suffering. “Surpassing all others.”

*svayam tv asāmyātiśayas tryadhīśah
svārājya-lakṣmy-āpta-samasta-kāmaḥ
balim haradbhiś cira-loka-pālaiḥ
kirīṭa-koṭy-eḍita-pāda-pīṭhaḥ*

“Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all kinds of threes and is independently supreme by achievement of all kinds of fortune. He is worshiped by the eternal maintainers of the creation, who offer Him the paraphernalia of worship by touching their millions of helmets to His feet.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.2.21]

“Bestowing the greatest happiness:”

*yasyānanam makara-kunḍala-cāru-karna-
bhrājat-kapola-subhagam savilāsa-hāsam
nityotsavam na tatṭpur dṛśibhiḥ pibantyo
nāryo narāś ca muditāḥ kupitā nimeś ca*

“Kṛṣṇa's face is decorated with ornaments, such as earrings resembling sharks. His ears are beautiful, His cheeks brilliant, and His smiling attractive to everyone. Whoever sees Lord Kṛṣṇa sees a festival. His face and body are fully satisfying for everyone, but the devotees are angry at the creator for the disturbance caused by the momentary blinking of their eyes.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.24.65]

Ah, what a wonderful verse. See what you're missing by not reading Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam? Another one:

*kā sṛy aṅga te kala-padāyata-veṇu-gīta-
sammohitārya-caritān na calet tri-lokyām
trailokya-saubhagam idaṁ ca nirīkṣya rūpaṁ
yad go-dvija-druma-mṛgāḥ pulakāny abibhran*

“Dear Kṛṣṇa, what woman in all the three worlds wouldn't deviate from religious behavior when bewildered by the sweet, drawn-out melody of

Your flute? Your beauty makes all three worlds auspicious. Indeed, even the cows, birds, trees and deer manifest the ecstatic symptom of bodily hair standing on end when they see Your beautiful form.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.29.40]

*yan martya-līlaupayikaṁ sva-yoga-
māyā-balaṁ darśayatā grhītaṁ
vismāpanaṁ svasya ca saubhagarddheḥ
paraṁ padaṁ bhūṣaṇa-bhūṣaṇāṅgam*

“The Lord appeared in the mortal world by His internal potency, *yoga-māyā*. He came in His eternal form, which is just suitable for His pastimes. These pastimes were wonderful for everyone, even for those proud of their own opulence, including the Lord Himself in His form as the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. Thus His [Śrī Kṛṣṇa's] transcendental body is the ornament of all ornaments.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.12]

Every word in these scriptures is significant. Every word is chosen exactly for its precise meaning. They're not accidental; they're not simply poetry or metaphor, they're not exaggeration, they're more like scientific formulas where every letter, every symbol, every operation is carried out with great precision and exactitude. And if you follow the formula, you get the same result, a standard result: pure *bhakti*.

Just like the other day we bought some gold. When we got the gold, our friend the gold-wallah was with us. He works with gold every day. This is what he does all day, every day, his whole life; this is his business. He knows every kind of gold just by looking. And so he showed us, "This is 24-karat gold, this is 22-karat gold, this is 20-karat gold, this is gold mixed with silver, this is alloy gold..." He has all these different kinds of gold just sitting there in his shop. So he showed us all the different types of gold. Then we went to the place where the gold is sold, and the man came and showed us this nice piece of gold, 100 grams. And so the gold-wallah took one look at it and goes, "Ah yes, pure gold." He doesn't have to take chemical analysis. He doesn't have to scratch it on the stone or any of the other tests. He knows just by looking: "This is pure gold; this is *pakkā*, you buy it." He recommended it.

Similarly, a devotee who really understands these scriptures will know automatically what authentic spiritual life is. You will know because you have the description, the formula, the scientific specification there in your mind. And then when you actually encounter it in your devotional practice, you can recognize “Ah, yes, this is it; this is the real thing.” And you'll also recognize the bogus thing, the impure thing, when you have some other thing masquerading as *bhakti*. Just like there's something called pyrite which is called fool's gold. Many people get deceived by this fool's gold. They spend a lot of time digging it up, and then they take it to the place to sell it, and the assayer says “Oh that's pyrite; worthless.” An expert can know just by looking, “This is pyrite.” It has a particular shine to it, a particular plasticky texture. It's too shiny; real gold isn't that shiny.

Similarly you can have *yoga*, or *karma*, or sense gratification, or *jñāna*, speculative knowledge, or other things masquerade as *bhakti*. Some people think—in fact this is very, very common—“If I worship God very nicely, then all my business will go very, very well. I'll make good profit, I'll get a better job or I'll be able to sell my house,” or whatever it is that they want. Their idea of religion is that “I go to God and pray, and He gives me what I want.” Great. Super. Except the problem is that God isn't like that. God is not a businessman; He doesn't say in *Bhagavad-gītā*, “You come and pray to Me and I'll make your business go very well.” No, He says, “You come and surrender everything, then we'll talk. Then we'll see. First come and surrender.” He wants to give you something much better than this nonsense materialistic business.

Just like the other day, someone came to me and said, “Bābājī, can you help me with my marriage? Can you help me get reunited with my wife?” And I said, “Oh boy, you're talking to the wrong guy. You come and talk to me when you want to get away from your wife forever. Come and talk to me when you're ready to give up this family life, this material life, and simply surrender to the Lord.” Because that's what Kṛṣṇa asks for. He says, “Just think of Me all the time, become My devotee, bow down to Me, worship Me, love Me with all your heart. And then if you can't do

that, then you follow the principles of regulated devotional service because that way you will get a desire to attain Me. But if you can't do that, then work for Me.” In other words, “Don't expect Me to give you the results of your fruitive activity, but you give the results of your fruitive activity to Me.” You see, they have it exactly backwards. And they're thinking, "Oh, if I give the results of my fruitive activity to Kṛṣṇa then He'll make it go nicely so I can give Him more." No, no; they don't understand Kṛṣṇa. They don't understand.

Another devotee asked me a question last night, "Why is it that devotees of Śiva are very materially opulent; and the impersonalists and the Māyāvādīs and Buddhists, they all have material opulence, but the devotees of Kṛṣṇa are impoverished, living very simple?" And this same question, Māhārāja Parikṣit asked to Śukadeva Gosvāmī in the Tenth Canto, 88th chapter; then Mahārāja Parikṣit referred back to a previous discussion between Nārada and Kṛṣṇa. Nārada asked Kṛṣṇa the same question and Kṛṣṇa replied,

*śrī-bhagavān uvāca
yasyāham anugṛhṇāmi
hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya
svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam*

*sa yadā vitathodyogo
nirviṇṇaḥ syād dhanehayā
mat-paraiḥ kṛta-maitrasya
kariṣye mad-anugraham*

The Personality of Godhead said: “If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another. When he becomes frustrated in his attempts to make money and instead befriends My devotees, I bestow My special mercy upon him.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.88.8-9]

Kṛṣṇa is trying to arrange and give us His special mercy. What is that? Simply Him, Himself; He gives Himself to His devotees. And this is so

much better than any material reward. It's so much better than any mystic power or any speculative knowledge or anything else whatever. Anything else that you can imagine is going to be inferior to the taste of this eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Try to understand: this is what we keep trying to tell everyone, and they keep misunderstanding it. You imagine that “Oh, if I get this, if I get that, then I'll be happy and everything will be wonderful.” But even if you get that, compared with this happiness of being in love with Kṛṣṇa in pure devotional service, it's just nothing.

Somebody might say, “Well, is it ten times better than my material happiness? Is it a hundred times better? Or a thousand times?” It's the wrong question. That's called ‘frog philosophy.’ Dr. Frog is living in the well, and all he sees is his little puddle at the bottom of the well. And then his cousin comes from the ocean and he says, “Hey Doc! I just went and saw the ocean.” And Dr. Frog says, “Well, how big is it? Is it bigger than my well?” And the frog says, “Dude, you can't imagine; it's just so big, I mean it's enormous.” And so Dr. Frog said, “Well, is it ten times as big as the well? A hundred times as big as the well?” You see, it's the wrong question. No. Among bodies of water, the ocean is in a class by itself. You cannot measure the ocean in terms of the well; the comparison would be meaningless.

Similarly you cannot measure the happiness of being in touch with Kṛṣṇa by any material standard. You can't say, “Oh it's a hundred times better than getting a new job.” Or “It's a thousand times better than having a million dollars.” Or “It's a million times better than being elected President.” These are all, actually, very nasty things; but people are so impure that they think that they are nice. Just like our neighbors downstairs. Every day they cook with garlic and onions, and they think it is very nice. They can't imagine the taste we get when we honor *prasādam*; the taste that we get is so pure. Like today's *prasādam* was very wonderful. The devotees are finally getting the hang of this South Indian style cooking, and it's coming out very, very nice. So we're all happy by taking this *prasādam*. If we went downtown in the market and

went to the sweet stalls and the commercial restaurants and we ordered the same dish, it wouldn't be anywhere near as nice. It wouldn't be nice at all, actually we would probably be disgusted. We'd probably get sick, that's really what would happen; especially if we looked in the back and see how they cooked in the kitchen. You cannot measure the quality of material happiness versus spiritual happiness, material food versus spiritual food, material music versus spiritual music. The *kīrtana* we had tonight was totally astonishing, even to me. So if you try to measure Kṛṣṇa by your current standard of happiness, then you're asking the wrong question; you're trying to do the wrong thing, and you'll get the wrong answer. Kṛṣṇa is in a class by Himself, He's unique; and so to be in relationship with Kṛṣṇa is also in a different class than being in relation with anybody else. You can't imagine it, and you can't measure it in terms of any other kind of relationship. The only way you can understand is by actually following the process. And to follow the process, first you have to understand it properly.

So it comes back again to the terminology, the philosophy, the logic, looking up words in the dictionary, finding the exact definition; not any old speculative understanding, but the precise mathematical understanding. What is really the meaning? Once you know the actual meaning of the scriptures, then you can follow the process properly, and by following the process you will get the experience of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Kṛṣṇa consciousness is an experience; it can't be explained. Just like if I have some wonderful dish and I'm tasting it and I'm going "Mmm-mm, this is really good, mm-mmmm" and you say, "What does it taste like?" Like this morning we had this—oh I can still taste it—we had this bitter melon. It's very, very bitter, and it has thick skin. When you cut it in slices and deep-fry it in ghee—everybody's salivating, just thinking about it—it stimulates your appetite and helps with your digestion. And they also made these fried potatoes, taking the vegetable peeler and cutting the potato with it, making very very thin slices, then deep frying in ghee with

salt, and the combination of these two things was like... I can't even explain it. You can't even get this vegetable in the West, so how can I explain the taste? It's not possible. I can sit here all night attempting to explain, but it won't do justice to the taste. So similarly, I could spend hours and days trying to explain the taste of devotional service to Kṛṣṇa, but ultimately you just have to try it yourself; you just have to experience it for yourself. This is the only way you are going to understand. Just let me tell you, let me say that it's fantastic. It's unprecedented; it's astounding. It's awesome. No. It's more than awesome. Flabbergasting! Awe and reverence is far less than this.

Question from Nitya Anu: It's in the context of him traveling to Chennai, and Vṛndāvan and Hṛīṣīkeśa. He went there and he developed a deep feeling for Kṛṣṇa. He's asking that “Since going to India, has your *bhakti* increased? How has it increased? And which aspect has given you the most bliss?”

Bābājī: I've been to India about ten times already, and it's not that my *bhakti* increases. but that it comes out more; it's easier to express it. In the West I always feel inhibited somehow. It's not OK to actually express it, bring it out. But in India, it's just like “Oh, what the heck!” So, in India I always feel more at ease to express my feelings of *bhakti*, rather than keep them all bottled up inside. The nature of the culture, I think, it makes it easier. It makes it less of a problem and I feel less awkward and less inappropriate.

Anytime you go to place of pilgrimage, your *bhakti* automatically deepens. We came to Kumbakonam because it is one of the places where Lord Caitanya came on His South India tour. We came here specifically because the culture is so nice. And there are no tourists; I mean zero tourists, it's great. So it's authentic, completely untouched. It's original. When we first came to India in 1974, it was like this everywhere. Now if we go to Vṛndāvan this winter, you'll see the whole bus of tourists from LA coming in, and it really affects the atmosphere; whereas here,

practically everyone is a practicing devotee. So the atmosphere, you can't compare it with any place in the West.

Uddhava, do you want to say something? How has your *bhakti* increased since you came to India?

Uddhava dāsa: For me, well I'm still adapting in terms of the body, and it's very hot out here. One thing that's very noticeable is the temples that I went to. Rāmasvāmī and all these temples are incredible. The energy there is just very, very special. They're just amazing, just incredible.

Bābājī: You can feel Lord Caitanya's presence there. He visited this temple Rāmasvāmī and another temple, Kumbheśvara, that are literally a five-minute walk from our house. So who knows, maybe Lord Caitanya walked down this street. He was here. And when you go to these places you can feel His presence. Similarly, Vṛndāvan, Māyāpur, Haridwar, Hṛīṣīkeśa, all these holy places have thousands of years of sacred energy.

Uddhava dāsa: Yes, and for example, today I went to the Rāmasvāmī temple. I went for the Darshan and the Brāhmaṇa there was like doing his job like everyday, he did the same thing.

Bābājī: They are all government employees.

Uddhava dāsa: So he just said “Oh, come here, come here to the front.” I was like a meter from the Deities. The energy was so powerful, I was completely blown away.

Bābājī: The Deities in this temple, by the way, are maybe a hundred thousand years old, made of black stone, about they're about eight or ten feet high. You can't believe some of these temples. We have to go again to Thanjāvur to the Nṛsimha temple; the Lord Nṛsimha is like twelve feet tall.

Uddhava dāsa: Wow!

Bābājī: He's got a big smile and His tongue's out, and He's got the His arms this way, and that way, every which way. We had a *kīrtana* there that was unbelievable.

Question from Mukuteśvara dāsa: “Please accept my humble obeisances. Why are there two translations of the *śloka*?”

Bābājī: OK, we're getting to that. The commentary will explain that later on. It gets into a whole technical discussion about Sanskrit and derivations of words and stuff. The important point is what I made tonight: that the derivations that we accept as devotees are always based on the dictionary meaning of the words. This is very important because the Māyāvādīs, the impersonalists, will take the words of the scriptures, break them up into their roots, and then speculate some completely fantastic meaning based on the word roots that has nothing whatsoever to do with the context. What Baladeva was saying that the principle of interpretation is:

“The factors to consider in interpretation of obscure passages are the beginning, the ending, what is repeated again and again, what is unique and novel, the general purpose of the book, the author’s statement of his own intention, and appropriateness.” [*Govinda-bhāṣya*]

What is an obscure passage? An obscure passage is defined as a *śloka* whose dictionary meaning does not make sense in the current context. That means you have to interpret it somehow as a metaphor. And so what is giving us guidance as to how to interpret? The beginning, the ending, the statement of the author's intention, what is repeated again and again, what's unique and novel to this particular book. All these factors must be considered, not some speculative meaning based on word roots. The *nyāyikas* who use, or I should say, misuse logic, say that “Logic alone is the means for interpreting any text.” But logic which is separated from the context or the intention of the work can do a disservice, because it can lead us down the wrong path and it can make us read some meaning into the text that's not there in the original. The intent, the purpose, the declaration of the author's intention are all very, very important factors in

considering the meaning of obscure passages. Now, if just by looking up the meaning of the words in the dictionary, the passage is perfectly clear, then there's no need even for this kind of interpretation. There's no need for interpretation at all. Simply take the meaning that's in the dictionary and that's fine. But in this case, in this particular *śloka*, it was written intentionally with a double meaning. And Jīva Gosvāmī is going to explain exactly why this happened and how it happens, and the whole thing. Don't worry, you'll get all the details; just tune in tomorrow for the next episode and you'll hear all about it.

Question from Arun: “Please accept my humble *danḍavats*. How to achieve balance of devotional service plus chanting each day?”

Bābājī: What's the difference? Why are you making a distinction between chanting and devotional service?

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanam dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*

*iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇau
bhaktiś cen nava-lakṣaṇā
kriyeta bhagavaty addhā
tan manye 'dhītam uttamam*

“Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words)—these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service. One who has dedicated his life to the service of Kṛṣṇa through these nine methods should be understood to be the most learned person, for he has acquired complete knowledge.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 7.5.23-24]

All the processes of devotional service are as good as the others. Why make a distinction between chanting and hearing and serving and any of the others? They're all on the spiritual platform. Prabhupāda says that any one of them can give the perfection that we're speaking, what to speak of all nine of them. The question is that it's really a matter of taste. Some people like chanting more. In South India, they really like to hear. They'll sit there and hear all night. Won't chant a word. Other people like serving. There's this one lady down at the ISKCON temple here who is always in the kitchen; in fact, you can't get her out of the kitchen. Even if she does come out of the kitchen, it's to serve. She's amazing, and she was the hostess of that festival that we took the video of that was so nice. That was really a wonderful welcome to South India. So anyway by serving, by becoming Kṛṣṇa's friend, by offering everything to Him, these are all different methods of devotional service; why try to make a distinction in quality between them?

Uddhava dāsa: He's saying "Regulative *bhakti* principles before Deity while chanting could be at work or driving."

Babaji: No. Don't chant at work. Don't chant while driving. That's horrible. No, no, no. If you're going to chant, give your chanting your full attention, otherwise it's offensive. The tenth offense against the Holy Name is not giving your full attention to your chanting. How can you give your full attention to chanting while you're driving or doing anything else?

Sometimes I'll chant while walking up and down on the roof, but I've got the walking down to a total robotic thing. I just tell my body "Walk up and down," then I'm just chanting, I don't have to think about walking. For driving you have to think, for doing any other kind of work you have to think. That means it's offensive chanting; don't do it. Then you wonder why you're not making so quick advancement? Arun, you've been reading these ten offenses for how long now? Come on.

We have to avoid the offenses in chanting, no matter what. It's almost better not to chant than to chant offensively; because if we are making any of these offenses and we know that we are being offensive, then we are making an additional offense of chanting offensively and thinking that Kṛṣṇa or the Holy Name is going to purify us. That's the seventh offense against the Holy Name. So, by not chanting with full attention, that's one offense, the tenth offense; and by knowingly chanting without full attention, that's another offense, that's the seventh offense. And then if you don't follow the spiritual master's instruction, that's the third offense. So this chanting means regulative devotional service. We should chant a certain number of rounds each day. That's regulative devotional service. When you chant spontaneously, that's *rāgānuga-bhakti*. But even then, you don't want to chant in such a way that your intention is split between chanting and something else. Why would you want to do that? I don't understand these devotees. I really don't get it. I could never do that.

I see devotees, driving, "Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare, Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma," I mean, how could they do it? It's horrible. Singing *kīrtana*, doing a little *kīrtana* that's not so bad, but chanting *japa* while driving is absolutely prohibited; don't do it. It's very offensive. We should strive to chant offenselessly. Offenseless chanting is the beginning of *madhyama-adhikārī*. If you want to be *madhyama-adhikārī*, you have to chant offenselessly. Then you get to chant pure *nāmābhasa*. Up until that point it's impure, and you're in the offensive *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* stage. Ninety-nine percent of my Godbrothers are still in *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī* stage, even big-big *gurus*, big-big Temple Presidents, all these people. Prabhupāda says in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, "Temple construction is meant for the general populace and neophyte devotees, but the business of advanced and empowered devotees is to write books, publish them and distribute them widely." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya* 19.132 Purport] Neophyte devotee means *kaniṣṭha*. So if you're *kaniṣṭha*, offensive, not following, then OK, collect some money and build some temples; that will help you advance. But if you really want to learn devotional service, you must perform offenseless chanting. That's the

beginning of real devotional service. That is the process that leads to realization. As long as you permit yourself to keep making offenses in chanting, you're not going to get out of the offensive stage. You're not going to get out of the neophyte *kaniṣṭha* stage. So, you have to rethink this whole thing, your activities.

Comment from Nitya Anu: "Thank you Bābājī and the devotees. I am blissful that you are all in South India. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says it will be the only place in *kali-yuga* to maintain the *sanātana-dharma*."

***Maṅgalācaraṇam* Part 2**

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, October 25, 2009

The qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa are extremely elevated; and the qualities of *bhakti* are really very amazing, especially pure *bhakti*. Pure *bhakti* is the solution to all problems, the cure for all suffering, the path of liberation and so many other things. So where does *bhakti* get these qualities? Well, *bhakti* itself gets these qualities from Kṛṣṇa. So, we're going to look into the qualities of Kṛṣṇa here in the purport of the *maṅgalācaraṇa* verse which you all remember, of course, from the last *satsang*:

"Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of all sin and the bestower of all bliss, the very form of the highest bliss, filled with all *rasas*, excels all others in glory. He brings Tārakā and Pālikā under His control by the diffusion of His beauty; He accepts Śyāmalā and Lālītā as His equals; and gives pleasure to Rādhā by His excellent qualities."
[*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.1]

Now we're discussing the purport; proofs from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, that Kṛṣṇa destroys all suffering:

"At the moment of death, let my ultimate attraction be to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Personality of Godhead. I concentrate my mind upon the chariot driver of Arjuna who stood with a whip in His right hand and a bridle rope in His left, who was very careful to give protection to Arjuna's chariot by

all means. Those who saw Him on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, attained their original forms after death." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.9.39]

So Kṛṣṇa destroyed the suffering of every soldier on the battlefield of Kurukṣetra, whether friend or foe, just by His presence there.

Surpassing all others—there's another quotation from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

"Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Lord of all kinds of threes. And is independently supreme by achievement of all kinds of fortune. He is worshiped by the eternal maintainers of the creation, who offer Him the paraphernalia of worship by touching their millions of helmets to His feet." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.21]

Who else can say that? Or who else can demonstrate that? That the millions of creators of the different universes all come and place their heads at His lotus feet? Bestowing the greatest happiness:

"Kṛṣṇa's face is decorated with ornaments, such as earrings resembling sharks. His ears are beautiful, His cheeks are brilliant, and His smiling attractive to everyone. Whoever sees Lord Kṛṣṇa sees a festival. His face and body are fully satisfying for everyone to see, but the devotees are angry with the creator for the disturbance caused by the momentary blinking of their eyes." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 9.24.65]

Kṛṣṇa's form is so beautiful that when you see it—or when you see Him, because unlike ourselves, His form is non-different than Him—when you see Kṛṣṇa then you don't want your eyes to blink even for a moment, because His beauty is so attractive. Here's another verse about the Lord bestowing the greatest happiness:

"Dear Kṛṣṇa, what woman in all the three worlds wouldn't deviate from religious behavior when bewildered by the sweet, drawn-out melody of Your flute? Your beauty makes all three worlds auspicious. Indeed, even the cows, birds, trees, and deer manifest ecstatic symptoms of bodily hairs standing on end when they see Your beautiful form." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.29.40]

Kṛṣṇa's form is so beautiful that just to see Him immediately puts you in ecstasy, even the animals. Here's another one from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

"The Lord appeared in the mortal world by His internal potency *yoga-māyā*. He came in His eternal form, which is just suitable for His pastimes. These pastimes were wonderful for everyone, even for those proud of their own opulence, including the Lord Himself in His form as the Lord of Vaikuṇṭha. Thus His [Śrī Kṛṣṇa's] transcendental body is the ornament of all ornaments." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.2.12]

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is so beautiful that even when Nārāyaṇa sees Kṛṣṇa, He's amazed; He's just blown away by Kṛṣṇa's beauty. Now another quality of Kṛṣṇa that's discussed in this *maṅgalācaraṇam* verse, is that Kṛṣṇa is the source of all others. And here's that famous verse from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*ete cāmśa-kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam
indrāri-vyākulaṁ lokam
mṛdayanti yuge yuge*

"All the lists of incarnations of Godhead submitted herewith are either plenary expansions or parts of the plenary expansions of the Supreme Godhead, but Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28]

Plenary means equal, on the same plane. So the plenary expansions of Kṛṣṇa are Lord Balarāma, His first plenary expansion and then the *catur-vyūha*: Saṅkarṣaṇa, Aniruddha, Vāsudeva and Pradyumna. These are the plenary expansions and they have potencies equal to Kṛṣṇa, and then Their expansions are on the level of Mahā-Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī-Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and so on. They're considered parts because they don't manifest the full potencies of Godhead, or all the qualities of Godhead, and we'll get into that very deeply in this book, in the Southern Ocean. Another quality of Kṛṣṇa is that He exists eternally with all excellences:

"Lord Kṛṣṇa lives eternally with all excellences among the cowherd men and the Yādavas and is conclusively both the son of Devakī and Yaśodā. He is the guide of the Yadu dynasty and the cowherd men, and with His mighty arms He kills everything inauspicious in Vraja, Mathurā, and Dvārakā. By His presence He destroys all things inauspicious for all living entities, moving and inert and the suffering of separation of the inhabitants of Vraja and Dvārakā. His beautiful smiling face always increases the desires of the *gopīs* of Vṛndāvan and women of Mathurā and Dvārakā. He remains eternally in this situation." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.90.48]

So Kṛṣṇa has all excellences, and He remains eternally with all those excellences. He's never bereft of any of them, and He never loses any of His powers or any of His opulences. All His excellent qualities are a permanent feature of His transcendental form. Another quality of Kṛṣṇa is called *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*, that He is the source of all the forms of the different *rasas*. *Rasas* of course means ecstatic moods of loving enjoyment.

“And the cause of all these outstanding qualities: destroying all suffering, surpassing all, bestowing the greatest bliss, and being the source of everything, is His unique feature which is the cause of all qualities: His form of supreme bliss, *amṛta-mūrti*, since He contains all twelve *rasas*, *akhila-rasa*, starting with *śānta*.”

So whatever there is that's enjoyable, *rasa* means the taste of its enjoyment. Everyone has some taste, some mood that they enjoy, and then all of the things that they enjoy—the activities, the paraphernalia, the different objects of enjoyment that they try to collect—are all based on this fundamental mood. And there are five basic moods: neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parenthood and conjugal love. Those are the five main moods, and then there are seven other indirect moods beginning with *hāsyā* (laughter), and Kṛṣṇa is the source of all of those. All of those moods are found in His pastimes and in His form. So now here's some evidence from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

"Taking Him into their hearts through their eyes, they embraced Him, the embodiment of all ecstasy, and as their bodily hairs stood on end, O

subduer of enemies, they forgot the unlimited distress caused by His absence." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.41.28]

Here's another one:

"This universe appears real because it is manifested by the potency of illusion emanating from You, whose unlimited transcendental forms are full of eternal happiness and knowledge." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.14.22]

Here's a really good one:

“The various groups of people in the arena regarded Kṛṣṇa in different ways when He entered it with His elder brother. The wrestlers saw Kṛṣṇa as a lighting bolt (*vīra-rasa*), the men of Mathurā saw Him as the best of males (*viṣmaya-rasa*), the women as cupid in person, (*mādhura-rasa*), the cowherd boys as their relatives (*sakhya-rasa* and *hāsyā-rasa*), the impious rulers as a chastiser (*raudra-rasa*), His parents as their child (*vātsala-rasa* and *karuṇa-rasa*), the king of the Bhojas, Kāṁsa as death personified (*bhyanaka-rasa*), the unintelligent as the Supreme Lord's universal form (*bībhatsa-rasa*), the *yogīs* as the Absolute Truth (*śānta-rasa*), and the Vṛṣṇis as their supreme worshipable Deity (*dāsyā-rasa*).” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.43.17]

Describing when Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma entered the wrestling ring of Kāṁsa, and so all the *rasas* are present in this one verse. Because all the different devotees who were present there saw Kṛṣṇa in their own way. So even in the same scene Kṛṣṇa can manifest all *rasas* simultaneously. This is His great excellence. And nobody else is capable of this, not even the other personalities of Godhead, because none of them have the particular special glories of the *mādhurya-rasa*. Kṛṣṇa only manifests that; no other form of Godhead manifests this *parakīya-rasa*. *Parakīya* means unmarried conjugal love. Only Kṛṣṇa manifests that. *Svakīya* means married conjugal love, and of course we see many other forms of Godhead manifesting that *rasa*, but only Kṛṣṇa manifests the *parakīya-rasa*, therefore His glories exceed all the other Personalities of Godhead.

And here is a quote from *Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad* 1.48:

"Therefore, Kṛṣṇa is the Lord beyond the material modes. One should meditate upon him, relish Him, serve Him, and worship Him."

So now the next line of this *maṅgalācaraṇam* is:

prasāra-ruci-ruddha-tāra-kā-pāliḥ
[Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.1]

This gets a little esoteric so stay with me here.

One sees the through the superiority of Kṛṣṇa's appearances in this world through the supreme position of His follows who are endowed with the highest quality of *rasas*. This reaches its highest degree with those persons endowed with the supreme conjugal *rasa*, and thus the *maṅgalā* verse depicts Kṛṣṇa's relationship with the *gopīs*. Here's a quote from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.44.14:

"What austerities the *gopīs* must have performed! With their eyes they always drink the nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa's form, which is the essence of loveliness and is not to be equaled or surpassed. That loveliness is the only abode of beauty, fame, and opulence. It is self-perfect, ever fresh, and extremely rare."

So the *gopīs* have this special position where they can perceive all of Kṛṣṇa's opulences. Nobody else gets to see these things. That's confidential; it's only within the groves of Vṛndāvan. Even the other inhabitants of Vṛndāvan don't get to see these pastimes, only the *gopīs* and their servants. So to see the full, complete opulences of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, one must be, one must enter into these pastimes of Goloka Vṛndāvan. This is why the conjugal *rasa*, especially in Vṛndāvan is praised so greatly; because only in these pastimes are the complete glories of Kṛṣṇa revealed. So if we want to relish the highest bliss, that *rasa* which includes all others, which is the origin of all others, *ādi-rasa*—the *mādhurya-rasa* is also known as *ādi-rasa*, the original *rasa*, because it includes the qualities of all the other *rasas* and all the other *rasas* can be found within it. So here's another one, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.32.14:

"His transcendental body, the exclusive abode of beauty and opulence within the three worlds, shown brilliantly as the *gopīs* worshiped Him. In the midst of the dancing *gopīs*, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared most brilliant, like an exquisite sapphire in the midst of golden ornaments."

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is telling us that "If you want to see the greatest beauty, then you have to approach Lord Kṛṣṇa in this conjugal mood." And if you do this, if you become a servant of the *gopīs*:

gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ
[*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madya-līlā* 13.80]

My name comes from this verse. It means one should aspire to become the servant of the servant of the servant of the *gopīs*. This is the best position, because in that position only one gets to see Kṛṣṇa in His original form, His complete opulence, without any covering, without anything left out. That's Kṛṣṇa. And all other manifestations are derived from that view of Kṛṣṇa. So that original view of Kṛṣṇa in the *mādhurya-rasa*, this is the most coveted thing, the most rare thing, the most amazing and astonishing thing, the highest experience of any spiritual path. No other spiritual path can offer this. Even other Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas* don't give this. They give maybe up to *vātsalya-rasa*, parental relationship; but they don't give this conjugal relationship. This is very, very rare. It's only by the mercy of Lord Caitanya that we have access to this. Just like in South India we see many nice Vaiṣṇavas, but none of them are in this conjugal mood; they're all in *dāsyā-rasa*, which is nice but when you have a higher position, it seems to be, well, kind of boring. *Dāsyam* is nice, but it's not as nice as the conjugal mood. So now let's talk about *gopīs*. The chief ten among all the *gopīs* are described in the *Uttara-khaṇḍa* of the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*:

"The ten chief *gopīs* are Gopālī (head of a group friendly with Candrāvalī), Pālīkā (who's a friend of Candrāvalī), Dhanyā (an unmarried *gopī*), Viśākā (Rādhā's *sakhī* with her own group), as well as Dhaniṣṭha (Lālītā's friend), Rādhā (of course we know who Rādhā is, Rādhārāṇī), Lālītā (also known as Anūrādhā), Candrāvalī (also known as Somabhā, Rādhā's chief competitor), Tārakā (a distant friend of Rādhā) and Daśamī."

So these ten *gopīs* are the leaders of the groups, the groups of *gopīs* that all serve Kṛṣṇa in the forest of Vrindavan. These groups are called *pālyas*. Sometimes they're called *gana*, *gopī-gana*, groups of *gopīs*. And they each have a slightly different mood within the conjugal mood. And they each have different functions, a different service that they perform. So then there's some very technical discussion about the *gopīs*.

"But the point here is with the intention of showing the devotees with the highest *rasa*, and in order to show the successive superiority of *rasa* in pairs of chief *gopīs*, Rūpa Gosvāmī first mentions the two *gopīs*, Tārakā and Pālī, who are of lesser stature of the chief *gopīs*, and points out the excellence of *rasa* by their example. Kṛṣṇa controls Tārakā and Pālī by His beautiful features, which radiate outwards."

The two *gopīs* first mentioned are under Kṛṣṇa's control; Kṛṣṇa controls Tārakā and Pālī with His beauty. Then he mentions two chief *gopīs* of medium status, that Kṛṣṇa accepts Śyāmalā and Lālītā, making them like His very Self. That's an expression meaning that they're like bosom friends, very dear friends. So Kṛṣṇa accepts these *gopīs* as equal to Himself. Why? Because they have a deeper understanding, or deeper realization of the conjugal *rasa* and they help Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa meet their desires, realize their desires in conjugal love.

"And then finally, the supreme among the chief *gopīs* is mentioned. Kṛṣṇa gives most pleasure to Rādhā, *rādhā-preyān*."

So then, this technical stuff...

"In consideration of Rādhā's most extraordinary nature, she is not described in a similar way as the two other pairs of *gopīs*. In the first two pairs of *gopīs*, Kṛṣṇa is the agent of enjoying (He's the enjoyer) but in the case of Rādhā, He gives pleasure to Her (She becomes the enjoyer). Therefore, she must be considered to be the chief *gopī*. This fact is mentioned in the *Padma Purāṇa*, *Kārtika Mahatmya*, describing *Rādhā-kunḍa*. Rādhā's *kunḍa* is as dear to the Lord as Rādhā Herself. She alone among all the *gopīs* is dearest to the Lord. The *Matsya Purāṇa* and *Skanda Purāṇa* also show Her as the main *gopī* in Vṛndāvan. Though the statement is made considering Her non-different from Rukmiṇī."

But, anyway, this is very technical, and I don't want to confuse everybody.

"In the sense that just as Rukmiṇī is the chief queen of Dvārakā, Rādhā is the chief *gopī* of Vṛndāvan."

That's the point that they're trying to make here.

In the *Bṛhad-Gautamīya Tantra* it is stated: 'Radhika is the Supreme *devatā*, non-different than Kṛṣṇa, She is the embodiment of all opulence and all beauty, She is the supreme enchantress.'

In the *Ṛk-pariśiṣṭa* it is said:

"Among all people, Kṛṣṇa eternally shines with supreme qualities in the company of Rādhā. And Rādhā shines with supreme qualities only in the company of Kṛṣṇa."

It is Rādhā, therefore, who it is described in the following *Bhāgavatam* verse:

"Certainly this particularly *gopī* has perfectly worshiped the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, Govinda, since He was so pleased with Her that He abandoned the rest of us, and brought Her to a secluded place"
[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.30.28]

This is a verse from the description of the *rasa* dance, where the *gopīs* and Kṛṣṇa were dancing and then suddenly He left with Rādhā alone, and the rest of the *gopīs* were wondering, "Oh, why did Kṛṣṇa leave with Rādhā?" And the answer is that She has perfectly worshiped Him. Kṛṣṇa gets complete satisfaction only from Rādhā. She is the chief among all devotees. The *gopīs* are very, very exalted devotees, what to speak of the other residents of Vṛndāvan. But even among the *gopīs*, Rādhā is the topmost, the best, and the other *gopīs* are considered expansions of Her. They reflect various different qualities of Rādhā.

We are going to discuss all these technical aspects of *rasa* in great detail. By the time we're finished studying this book, *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, we will go through the complete study of *rasa*. I'm not going to

discuss the explanation of the second meaning of the verse. There's an alternate translation of this verse but it's very technical, it's all full of Sanskrit grammatical terms, and it probably would just confuse everybody so I'm not going to discuss this. What I would rather do is talk about the general structure of *rasa*, which after all is the subject of this First Wave, or actually the whole Eastern Ocean of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu is divided into four main sections called oceans. The first is the Eastern Ocean, then there's the Southern Ocean, Western Ocean, and finally the Northern Ocean. This subject of *rasa* is so extensive that it's like an ocean. The qualities of *rasa*, and the amount of *rasa* that one can relish are just unlimited. It's eternal, ever-expanding and ever-fresh. So it requires quite an extensive explanation to understand *bhakti-rasa*. The first ocean, the Eastern Ocean, actually describes in general what is *bhakti* and what is *rasa*. And then each ocean in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is divided into waves; the first ocean, the Eastern Ocean is divided into four waves; the Southern Ocean is divided into five waves, and so on. So the first part that we're going to study is the Eastern Ocean, and the First Wave of the Eastern Ocean is an overview of *bhakti*.

What is *bhakti*? And then what is *rasa*? Well, *bhakti* is the way of reviving our eternal relationship with Supreme Lord. We're all spirit souls, we're not these bodies. And we come from, we're emanated by the Supreme Lord. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Kṛṣṇa. And the proof of this is explained in the first verse, the *maṅgalācaraṇam* verse, that He has so many exalted qualities that even other personalities of Godhead don't display, because They're simply expansions of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead from which all others are derived. Just like Rādhā is the original devotee from which all other servants of God come, including ourselves. Therefore, our relationship is with Kṛṣṇa, and specifically with Rādhā because we're all servants of Rādhā; we're all trying to follow in the footsteps of Rādhā. We're trying to please Kṛṣṇa in the same way as Rādhā. And this is the best way to approach Kṛṣṇa, the best way to please Kṛṣṇa, because Rādhā's servants' service is the best

among all the different devotees of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, we want to follow in Her footsteps. This is the meaning of *dāsānudāsa*. Rādhā is a servant, *dāsa*, and we're also servant, *dāsa*. But we're not independent servant, we're *dāsānudāsa*, following in the footsteps. So if we follow in the footsteps of Rādhā then we're going to be very successful in pleasing Kṛṣṇa, and we're going to get a relationship with Kṛṣṇa which is of the same quality, or similar quality as Rādhā. This is the meaning of *bhakti*.

So obviously *bhakti* is not a thing of this world; it's not material at all. Although in the beginning, in the very neophyte stage of *bhakti*, we perform actions with our senses—various services in the temple and to the Lord and among the devotees and so on. But even these services have to be accompanied by some spiritual quality. And that spiritual quality means love. Spiritual life and love are virtually synonymous. You can't have love without spiritual life, and you can't have spiritual life without love. Any attempt to do so is very misguided and will be unsuccessful, a failure. Because what about Kṛṣṇa? Is He sitting up on a cloud, hurling thunderbolts at people and condemning them to hell and destroying planets and stuff? No; He is simply playing in the spiritual world with His eternal devotees. He has nothing to do, everything is automatically done by His potencies, simply by His desire. All He has to do is desire, and then everything happens automatically as a natural matter of course. Because, being the all-powerful Personality of Godhead, He has set things up in such a way that simply by His desire everything is going on automatically. This is the meaning of omnipotence—omni-potent: all powers. All powers means that He doesn't have to do any work personally, He simply wishes it to be so and then it happens automatically, without any further effort or involvement on His part. That's God, He's all-powerful.

So then what is Kṛṣṇa doing? Well, He is simply enjoying pastimes of love with His beautiful devotees. Just like a very rich man. You can imagine, if someone has millions or billions of dollars, they hire people to take care of all their business affairs. They never go to the office; just once a month or so, they pick up the phone and say, "How many millions of dollars did we

make this month? Oh yeah, great, keep it up, bye." And then what do they do? They're engaged in whatever their pleasure is, whatever they like to do. So if this is true even here in the material world, just imagine in the spiritual world with God. He doesn't have anything to do. He doesn't have any work to perform. He doesn't have to go to the office. He doesn't have to show up anywhere. He does whatever He likes to do. So what does He like to do? He likes to love people. He likes to engage in pastimes of love. This is God. God means the highest aesthetic person, the most creative person, the most beautiful person, the most loving and beloved person. Otherwise what meaning is there to God? So *bhakti* is the art of loving relationship with God. Actually, love means relationship with God. You cannot have love in the material world. You cannot have love with other living entities devoid of a relationship with God.

Why is that? Because all those kinds of relationships are going to be imperfect. At the very least, they're going to be temporary. And of course in this material world everything is imperfect, there's always some kind of mistake, we have imperfect senses and mind, and of course we have the cheating propensity, the well-known human tendency to cheat. Therefore, every relationship in this material world is covered by these four erroneous or illusory qualities of existence. How can you have love in an atmosphere like that? You can only have love when the relationship is based on or related to our original eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Because first of all, to be satisfying, our relationship has to be eternal. If we really have love, then we don't want it to end. But any relationship in this material world is bound to end, so that can't really be love. It could be some reflection or imitation of love, but it's not real love. Real love is eternal. It's also perfect; it doesn't have any flaw. It's not like one day you're in love, and the next day you're fighting, like in this material world. No. Real love is always sweet, it's always beautiful and it's always growing. It's perfect. That's what love means, a perfect relationship: perfectly beautiful, perfectly pleasing, perfectly aesthetic. So in this material world there are no relationships like that. We can dream about it

but that's all, it's just a dream, just a desire. If we really want to enjoy perfect loving relationships, then we have to approach Kṛṣṇa.

So *bhakti* means the art of reviving our original relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and *rasa* is the particular taste of that relationship. And as we have spoken many times, there are five main flavors of neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parenthood and conjugal love. And of those, conjugal love is the highest because it contains all the others. Therefore, our particular mood is that we want to approach Kṛṣṇa in the mood of conjugal love. Now you notice all of us are celibate, we're all *brahmacarīs*. So you might say, "Well what do you know about conjugal love?" Well actually, quite a bit. For example, if a couple is engaged to be married and they're expecting to become a married couple and live together for the rest of their life, then you don't expect that one or the other is going to go out and have an affair during the engagement. That would ruin everything, wouldn't it?

Similarly, when we're trying to approach Kṛṣṇa in *bhakti*, this is called *sādhana*. *Sādhana* means that we're working on reviving this relationship, we're trying to develop our spiritual qualities, we're trying to purify our consciousness and approach Kṛṣṇa in different ways according to this *bhakti* science. We're doing our *sādhana* and we're trying to approach Kṛṣṇa because we want to live with Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world eternally. So we're in the same position as someone who's engaged to be married. Now if we go out and we have an affair with somebody else while we're engaged to be married to Kṛṣṇa, what kind of an engagement is that, what kind of love is that? What kind of dedication is that? What kind of commitment? That's not spiritual love; that's not eternal. That's not perfect. So if we're really serious about conjugal love with Kṛṣṇa. it means we're going to be become celibate, we're going to be *brahmacarīs* in this world. And in the spiritual world, we'll, that's a different story. But I'm getting ahead of the story.

The process of reviving this relationship with Kṛṣṇa is called *sādhana*. So *sādhana* begins with different bodily activities. Like you see us playing

musical instruments, and after a while you'll probably see us dancing and so on. And of course, we do Deity worship and many other things using these physical bodies, these material senses. And we also use the mind. We engage the mind in study, in contemplation, in memorizing the different prayers and stories about Kṛṣṇa and thinking about Kṛṣṇa's qualities, thinking about our service to Kṛṣṇa, and so on. So even though they're material, the body and the mind should be engaged in Kṛṣṇa's service, because they're Kṛṣṇa's energy. This is the principle of *sādhana*. Then as we become developed in *sādhana*, we get past the neophyte stage and we start the real *bhakti-sādhana*, in which we begin to cultivate a particular mood of love towards Kṛṣṇa; and this mood is called *rasa*. So the specific *rasa* that each of us has with Kṛṣṇa is already there. It's existing eternally. Eternally means without beginning and without end. Now in material existence, it has become covered over by this material body and mind. But by performing *sādhana*, we cleanse this contamination. Especially by chanting the Holy Name of the Lord, we cleanse the contamination of the mind and heart, and we revive our original relationship, our original understanding, our original mood of love towards Kṛṣṇa. This is the second stage of *sādhana*, which is called *rāgānuṅga-sādhana*.

So, the beginning stage of *sādhana* involves the material body and senses. But the middle stage, or the higher stage of *sādhana*, involves this cultivation of mood, of *rasa*, and in the highest stage when it becomes mature, the *sādhana* is called *bhāva*, *bhāva-bhakti*. *Bhāva-bhakti* means that one develops an ecstatic mood, a transcendental ecstatic feeling toward the Lord. And by cultivating this feeling only, one achieves the highest perfection of *prema-bhakti*. So this is the aim, this is the goal toward which all *bhakti* is developed.

If we don't have the conception of *bhakti* based on this goal of attaining *prema*, then our *sādhana* will fail. We will not attain the goal. And we have seen this happen many, many times; that's why I mention it. We've seen many devotees who begin the process of *sādhana*, but they get some

misconception. They start thinking that success in devotional service means attaining a high position in some religious organization, or collecting many followers, or a lot of money, power or fame. They want influence over other people, they want some kind of recognition. And they start to pursue these things with more enthusiasm than their actual relationship with Kṛṣṇa. And we see that because of this they eventually fall down from *bhakti*. Actually, their *bhakti* is only a shell. They're faking it, they're pretending to be a *bhakti-yogi* but on the inside they're actually trying to get fame, and money and power and all these things. Of course what happens when something is just a shell and it has no substance inside, it's hollow, so it eventually falls apart. It's not solid, it's not substantial. So we see that over a long period of time, these people cannot continue.

For devotees to be successful in reviving their eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa they have to reach the second stage of *sādhana*, *rāgānuga-bhakti*. *Rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* is attained when one reaches the stage of *anartha-nivṛtti*. *Anartha-nivṛtti* means that all of the material desires and material activities and imperfections of the mind and heart are cleansed. One has no more material desires. All his desires are for satisfying Kṛṣṇa. Now does that mean that we just sit in a corner and chant, and we never go anywhere and do anything? No, but it means that we perform all of our activities with the aim of satisfying Kṛṣṇa. We're not performing our activities for our own satisfaction, but we're doing them out of love. Love means service. If we really love somebody, then of course we're going to want to please them by service. It's not just sentimentalism—saying, “Oh, I love you”—but then I don't do anything. No. Love means practical service. As any of my students can tell you, I'm always engaged in service. I get up in the morning and I immediately check my messages and reply to the people who have written me with questions. Then I'll do some chanting or I'll get involved in study. Right now I'm going through this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. I'm actually transcribing every single translation and verse in the whole book. And there's thousands of verses. Why am I doing this? So that I can present it nicely, so that I can discuss it nicely, so

that I can give an accurate presentation of the content of the book. Why am I doing this? To serve the devotees. This is my service. Being *guru* doesn't mean that you get to tell people what to do; being *guru* means that you have more service than anybody. Being *guru* means you have more experience in service, more expertise, more different things. All the devotees here learned to cook from me. All the devotees here learned to play musical instruments from me. All the devotees here learned how to teach different courses on the Internet, and preach and do all these things from me. I taught them. This is my service.

My service, *guru's* service is teaching, but don't get teaching confused with authoritarianism. Western education has those two all mixed up, because they use education in a political way to teach people, or train people actually, to be submissive and follow orders. The teachers have way more authority over the students than their knowledge or their personal development actually justifies. So when a person who has had this kind of education thinks about a teacher, they usually think, "Oh this is the guy yelling at me, telling me what to do, making me stay after school," or something like that. But actually, it's not like that at all. My job is to show an example that will inspire my students, will inspire my devotees to do something similar. That's the meaning of *ācārya*. A bona fide *guru* is called *ācārya*. *Acar* means activities. *Ācārya* is one whose activities are exemplary; he teaches by his activities, by his example. So I'm trying to show my students how to preach by my example, because the great need in this world at this time is for people who can teach and present this science of *bhakti*, this science of *rasa*. That's why we're focusing on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Because even among devotees, there is a great misunderstanding of this particular topic: what is *bhakti*, and what is *rasa*? And because of this, we see some very strange things. One older devotee from India is claiming to teach *rāgānuga-bhakti*. But if you go through their whole organization and pass all the tests and get into the inner circle and you find out, what is this teaching of *rāgānuga-bhakti*? Well, it has more rules than the standard *bhakti*. But *rāgānuga* means

spontaneous. How can it be spontaneous if it's rule-based? This is a fundamental misunderstanding of what *rāgānuga-bhakti* is.

Rāgānuga-bhakti means you're so competent that you become free from the rules. Let me give you an example of a great composer. I happen to be a little familiar with the subject of music. So when a composer begins to study music, in the beginning he has to write music following many rules, because if you don't follow those rules the music will sound bad. It will be very weak, and it won't be very pleasing. But once you understand what the purpose of all those rules are, then you actually get the license to break the rules. Just like a great artist like Picasso can draw a woman's head with two eyes on different sides and different colors, it looks like a box, and everybody goes, "Oh that's great!" But if you or I were to do that, then people would say, "Oh this is junk!" What's the difference? That Picasso was such a great artist that he can even start a whole new school of art. He can make up new rules, start a whole new style. Miles Davis, another personality like this, knows the rules and has become such an expert performer of these rules that he can break all of them, throw them all out and start a whole new style, a whole new school; and he did that several times. So a real expert is someone who knows the rules, is so competent at following the rules that he can go beyond them, he can transcend the rules and still attain the purpose of those rules. And in *bhakti*, the purpose of the rules is very simple: always remember Kṛṣṇa, never forget Kṛṣṇa. Very simple. If you simply remember Kṛṣṇa, constantly, consistently, and favorably, for a long time, then you will develop *bhakti*. Sounds simple, doesn't it? Well, it might be simple but it's not easy, because in this world there are so many distractions.

People are always interrupting and they have all these different purposes that they're trying to establish and so on, and they don't care if they interrupt you or break your train of thought or deviate you from your work or whatever you're doing. So this is the material world, and we have some real rascals who are now interrupting everybody with this idea of having to work for living and earn money. Where did this come from? Well, some

people developed it so that they could bring other people under their control—that's all.

Money does not have to exist. Ancient Egypt worked just fine without money. In Vedic society, the only people who have money are the merchants and the kings. Everybody else got along just fine without money. Ninety-five percent of the Vedic society never touched money in their whole life. *Śūdras* and *brāhmaṇas* never touched money: *śūdras* because they're too stupid, *brāhmaṇas* because they're too smart. And so maybe four or five percent of the Vedic civilization were involved with money. But even then it wasn't used for control, it was used for service. And that's the fundamental difference between the use of money and economics in Vedic society, and the society that we have now. The society that we have now is basically an excuse for exploitation. And so you wonder why economics is so confusing, you wonder why economists are so often wrong, because the economy is manipulated by the people who want to control others. And they don't care about making money, because they're the ones who print the money. What do they care about making money? Their aim is not profit; their aim is control. Their aim is to manipulate people. So money has become a major distraction; a major interruption in the normal healthy lives of people everywhere.

Somehow or other we have to get free from this yoke, this burden of money, because it's simply a method of control. We can do that by forming communities. And in communities individuals don't need money; the community as a whole uses money to create a space where we can perform devotional service without distraction. So this is my service; I manage the money, I'm the treasurer. Nobody else needs any money. It's very nice: they don't have to think of money, they don't have to work, they don't have to do so many things; they're freed from all these considerations of money so that they can concentrate on worshipping Kṛṣṇa. In a devotional *saṅga*, devotional society, all these distractions are minimized and one can actually focus one's attention on remembering Kṛṣṇa. Because remember it's all about "Always remember Kṛṣṇa, never forget Kṛṣṇa."

The easiest way to do this is to always chant Kṛṣṇa's name, Hare Kṛṣṇa. Or *om namo bhagavate vāsudevāya*. Vāsudeva is another name for Kṛṣṇa. So many names of Kṛṣṇa. We often chant *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma*, the Thousand Names of Lord Viṣṇu, but these are also names of Kṛṣṇa. Where do you think Viṣṇu got them?

So there are many, many ways to remember Kṛṣṇa: doing service for Kṛṣṇa, hearing about Kṛṣṇa, reading about Kṛṣṇa, worshiping in the temple, doing service, cleaning, cooking, painting, doing so many things, even with computers; we use computers quite creatively to serve Kṛṣṇa. Whatever a person's interest is, there is a way to engage that activity in service of Kṛṣṇa. So it doesn't matter what our interest or what our intelligence is, or what our activities are, those activities can be engaged in serving Kṛṣṇa, and that's devotional service. That's the beginning of devotional service, *karma-yoga*. But then after a short period of time one begins to think of Kṛṣṇa favorably, because he starts getting the results of the *karma-yoga*. The results of *karma-yoga* include a relief from material distress, economic development, various kinds of blessings, auspiciousness—we'll discuss auspiciousness extensively when we talk about the qualities of *bhakti*. Any engagement in *bhakti-yoga* bestows so many benefits, that it requires an entire chapter, an entire wave of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* just to list them. Actually there are far more that can be listed in any one book. And the greatest benefit of Kṛṣṇa consciousness of all, is Kṛṣṇa consciousness itself. Because simply by thinking of Kṛṣṇa, one experiences so much pleasure. Just like all these verses that we quoted tonight from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* describe how wonderful Kṛṣṇa is, how beautiful His form is, how wonderful His activities are, how He's full of all *rasas*, He's full of all flavors of enjoyment, He's on the topmost level of artistic aesthetic craftsmanship, His relationships are so beautiful and so aesthetic and so wonderful and so true. Now who would not want to be in relationship with a person like Kṛṣṇa? Only a fool, right?

So this world is full of fools; fools and rascals who don't want to be in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, but who want to try to imitate the qualities of

Kṛṣṇa as the enjoyer, the owner, the creator, controller, the doer, the knower and so on. Of course they're not very good at it; especially when they try to imitate Kṛṣṇa as a lover, they're usually completely unsuccessful. I have experience. So, when we give up this foolish, futile imitation of Kṛṣṇa, and instead we begin to serve Kṛṣṇa, then we begin our engagement in *bhakti*. This *bhakti* can go from the beginning stage up to a very, very high stage of realization; so high that actually it never ends, it continues forever.

And that's another quality of *bhakti*: it's eternal. *Bhakti* is never exhausted; you never reach the end. You never get to the point where you say, "Yeah, yeah, I've been here, I know this." No. It's always ever-expanding and increasingly astonishing at each turn. You can't believe how wonderful *bhakti* can be. You think that, "Oh, that last one was just too much. It can never get better than this." And then it does!" So *bhakti* is the eternal engagement for the eternal spirit soul. If we really want pleasure—even if you want material pleasure—*bhakti* is still the best approach, because *bhakti* will get you material pleasure almost effortlessly. And then you'll see actually how insignificant material pleasure is, compared with spiritual pleasure. So the real enjoyment of life, or the real purpose of life, is to taste this spiritual pleasure of *bhakti*: *bhakti-rasa*. *Rasa* means taste. And of course we know that someone who has taste means someone who knows about aesthetics, who knows what's pleasing, and they exercise this taste in their activities, and because of this they enjoy life more than the typical person. So we should endeavor to get taste. If we don't have it, then we should want to acquire it. We should desire good taste. And the best taste, of course, is the appreciation of the qualities and activities of Kṛṣṇa.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: Earlier on in the lecture you mentioned the verse of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* where Kṛṣṇa enters the arena of the wrestlers, and different people see him in different moods and different *rasas*, from the cowherd boys, and the *gopīs* and like that, all the way to Kāṁsa, who saw Kṛṣṇa as death personified, and that was also mentioned as one of the *rasas*, *bhayankār*. So in that sense is it correct to say that everybody, that

even the atheists in the world are experiencing some kind of *rasa* in relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Bābājī: Yes. But not all of those are considered devotional service, because devotional service requires that we have a positive attitude toward Kṛṣṇa. Just like, for example, Kāṁsa was thinking of Kṛṣṇa night and day. He was intensely absorbed in thought of Kṛṣṇa, but he was thinking of Kṛṣṇa as death personified. So he was not considered a devotee, even though he got liberation from Kṛṣṇa. Or similarly, Pūtanā also got liberation and even devotional service from Kṛṣṇa, but her activities are not considered devotional service because she was trying to kill Kṛṣṇa. But simply because she had some activity in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, even though it was inimical, she got elevated to a very, very high position, and this is wonderful. And even though Kṛṣṇa may have enjoyed killing Kāṁsa, still his activities don't count as devotional service because they were not done with the intention of pleasing Kṛṣṇa. There's another example given that Mother Yaśoda, when Mother Yaśodā put Kṛṣṇa down to stop the boiling pot of milk from boiling over, Kṛṣṇa was not pleased; He started to cry. But Mother Yaśodā's action is considered devotional service because her intention in doing that was to serve Kṛṣṇa nice sweet rice. So because her intention was to please Kṛṣṇa, her activity is accepted as devotional service even though actually it didn't please Kṛṣṇa. And even though Kāṁsa pleased Kṛṣṇa by allowing Kṛṣṇa to kill him, the activities of Kāṁsa are not considered devotional service because he didn't have that intention.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: Why does Pūtanā get devotional service compared to the other demons?

Bābājī: Ah. Because she fed Kṛṣṇa from her breast milk.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: Was that considered as something positive?

Bābājī: It was because when Kṛṣṇa sucked out her life airs, she became purified. So she performed a little tiny bit of devotional service, and that

was enough to get promoted to Vaikuṇṭha as one of Kṛṣṇa's mothers. It doesn't take much pure devotional service to gain all kinds of wonderful benedictions. Our problem is that our devotional service is not pure. It's always mixed with other things, different motives and different desires, like I was saying earlier about people who get all caught up in religious politics. Our devotional service is mixed; we want some material benefit from Kṛṣṇa, subtle or gross. But the demons, by contact with Kṛṣṇa they became purified and then they got their original position, whatever it was. Maybe merging into Brāhman in most cases. Any questions from online?

Question from Mukuteśvara dāsa: "Please accept my humble obeisances. What is the significance of Kṛṣṇa's shark earrings? Are there pastimes with sharks?"

Bābājī: It must have been the style that year. He has these little earrings in the shape of sharks and they swing back and forth. No, the significance is that the devotees, especially the close devotees of Kṛṣṇa, are considered the sharks in the ocean of bliss, because the shark is very powerful and eats all other kinds of fish too. So similarly, the highest devotees are very, very strong like that. And they engage all these other devotees by their influence, because of their strong love of Kṛṣṇa. So these devotees are known as the sharks; the sharks in the ocean of bliss.

Question from Robin: "Where can we find more information on the *gopīs*?"

Bābājī: In *Kṛṣṇa Book*. We have an online library on our site with all my spiritual master's books. The best way to find out would be to read *Kṛṣṇa Book*, also known as *KṚṢṂA, The Supreme Personality of Godhead*. *Kṛṣṇa Book* is a summary study of the Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*.

Another question from Robin: "Why is Kṛṣṇa often displayed with a peacock feather or a peacock?"

Bābājī: Because when a peacock dances in the forest there is one male peacock and many females, and that's also Kṛṣṇa's style. So he always wears the peacock feature as a reminder that that's Kṛṣṇa's style.

Question from Marino: "What's the reason why different people on battle arenas saw Kṛṣṇa differently?"

Bābājī: Their consciousness is different. This happens all the time anyway. People in this world see the same thing but they see it differently according to their desires, according to their mentality. A passerby will see a car crash and think, "Oh that's terrible, what a tragedy." An ambulance driver will think, "Oh, I have to get to work now!" A lawyer will see a car crash and think, "Ah, I can make some money." The relatives will see the car crash and be stricken with grief because their loved one got injured. Everyone sees everything differently according to their desire. So how is it that one would not see Kṛṣṇa that way also? That's natural. The thing that's striking about that particular verse is that one Kṛṣṇa in one activity demonstrated or manifested all the twelve *rasas* that are possible, all the twelve basic moods that are possible for human beings in one activity. That's why Kṛṣṇa is so wonderful. Any more?

Question from Draviḍa-rāja: "I have been pondering what I should have as my purpose and identification when telling my mind or others the answer to the question, 'Who am I?' Am I the servant of Śrī Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī and my purpose is to serve him to the best of my ability?"

Bābājī: Sounds like a good start. Just like when we first begin a *kīrtana*, we always begin with obeisances to the spiritual master. This is our principal identity, our principal identification, that we are disciples of a particular spiritual master. Then beyond that, we're servants of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitāi, Pañca-tattva; then beyond that, we're servants of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The point is that our relationship with the spiritual master makes all these other relationships and these other identifications possible. If I wasn't a disciple of Śrīla Prabhupāda, I wouldn't know anything about

Lord Caitanya or Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Lord Caitanya reveals Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, otherwise only maybe a few people up in Vṛndāvan would know about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. If it wasn't for Lord Caitanya, Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa would have already been forgotten in this whole world. So the spiritual master is revealing the Lord, and then the Lord is revealing Himself progressively, higher and higher. So there are different levels. There's no one simple answer to 'Who am I?' Although you could say, 'I am servant.' But a servant of whom? Who am I servant of first and foremost? Always my spiritual master, and then I am a servant of Lord Caitanya Māhāprabhu and then I'm a servant of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and a servant of all of their devotees.

Question from Ronald Singh: "Please accept my humble obeisances. Is Kṛṣṇa the only incarnation that displays all the twelve *rasas* or is Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya part of it also?"

Bābajī: I think you have a confusion about what *rasa* is. Kṛṣṇa does not display *rasas*. Devotees display *rasas* in relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's qualities reflected in the consciousness in the devotees is what gives rise to *rasa*. You have to clear this term *rasa*. *Rasa* is a relationship, just like in music, a interval like *ṣa*, *ṛ*, *gā*, *mā*, *pa*, *dha*, *ni*, is a relationship. *Rasa* means the relationship of the spirit soul with the Lord. Kṛṣṇa can walk into a room and there are twelve devotees there, and they have twelve different relationships. So *rasa* is not something that is intrinsic in the Lord, but rather it's a reflection of the Lord's qualities in the consciousness of the individual devotees. You have to get really, really clear on that so you know how it works. Kṛṣṇa has all qualities so depending on which of those qualities are attractive to a specific devotee, then the devotee will put themselves into a certain relationship with Kṛṣṇa. So depending on which of Kṛṣṇa's qualities that they're attracted to, their relationship, they'll manifest a relationship in one of the five principal *rasas*. And then the other decorations of the seven indirect *rasas* will be manifested around that. So try to think over this question and we can discuss it on the forum, because it's a bit of an extensive discussion.

Chapter 3: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.2-4

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, October 27, 2009

Let's continue with Evening Darshans based on *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. We're going back to the beginning and studying the original text, which we were able to get a hold of as soon as we came to India, so that was no doubt Kṛṣṇa's arrangement. And so we'll take the hint. Because really the editing on Prabhupāda's *Nectar of Devotion* leaves a great deal to be desired. And this is the original text. So today we'll try to go over a few verses. The first verse was so long and the commentary was also quite extensive. So today we'll do two or three verses starting with the second verse:

*hṛdi yasya preraṇayā pravartito 'haṁ varāka-rūpo 'pi
tasya hareḥ pada-kamalaṁ vande caitanya-devasya*

"I offer my respects to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord in the form of Caitanyadeva. Though I am a vile person by nature, by His inspiration within my heart I have undertaken this work." [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.2]

Now this is Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

“In this verse, the author offers his respects to the *avatāra* who delivers the people of *kali-yuga* by spreading devotion to Himself, Śrī-Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyadeva, the Supreme Lord, and particularly to His lotus feet which have become his shelter. ‘By His inspiration within my heart I have been able to accomplish this work.’ He addresses himself as low, *varāka-rūpa*, out of humility. Goddess Sarasvatī however cannot tolerate that. Therefore she produces another meaning. *Varā* also means the best. *Ā* combined with *ka* becomes *ākāṭi* which means ‘boldly indicates.’ Therefore *varāka* stands for *varām ākāṭi*, she praises him as the person who is clearly indicated as the best. The word *api* in the verse indicates that only by the inspiration of the Lord, and not otherwise, will the person be able to dedicate himself to writing a worthy literary work.”

There are so many points here. This second verse is the opening of the whole book; so Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī here is trying to set the mood and the tone for the whole work. And we discussed in earlier segments of this series how this book came to be written by the inspiration of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu. That Śrī Caitanya Māhaprabhu, being the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, for this *kali-yuga*, instructed Rūpa Gosvāmī at Prayāg, Allahabad, here in India. And He instructed him continuously for eleven days, and then He commanded him, "You write books on this subject." So these instructions are the highest, most complete exposition of devotional service to the Supreme Lord because they're given by the Supreme Lord Himself, who appeared as His own worshiper. And of course God can do anything, so He can also do that. Don't worry about how it's possible; He can do anything by His internal potency, *yoga-māyā*. So Lord Caitanya appeared as His own devotee. But of course being the Supreme Lord, He appeared as the Supreme devotee, the highest devotee, the most empowered devotee, and He gave His personal example on how to preform devotional service.

Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself only wrote eight verses, the *Śikṣāṣṭaka*, which we'll study in due course. But He instructed His close disciples, like Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Sanātana Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Dāsa and Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmīs, Jīva Gosvāmī and Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, that they should write books. And so the Six Gosvāmīs got together at Vṛndāvan and they worked together to write many, many wonderful books. This is one of them, and perhaps the most important of all of them, because it gives the ontology, the background philosophy by which all the other *rasa-śāstras*, including *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, must be understood.

It's just like if you were to go into an engineering school and just pick a book off the shelf in the library and start reading about it, it might be a book on power transmission, or it might be a book on microcircuits, or it might be a book on logic, or computers, or radios, or some other technical subject. And the average person reading this book would be very

confused; but if you have the basic knowledge of electricity and electronics, and how circuits work and electrical physics, then you can bring that knowledge to the subject at hand and figure it out somehow or other, based on this background knowledge. So devotional service to the Supreme Lord is the same; it's a very, very technical subject: a very high subject that requires a lot of education, training and experience to master it.

So if you just pull a book like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* or *Lalitā-Mādhava*, *Vidagdha-mādhava*, *Kṛṣṇa-Karṇāmṛta*, or so many devotional works like that, off the shelf and you start reading, there are going to be so many expressions related to *rasa*. *Rasa* means the sweet emotional relationship between the soul and the Lord. This is the essence of *bhakti*. So if we are to become advanced in *bhakti* we have to learn how to cultivate this *rasa*. This is a great science, and *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* explains this science step-by-step. It's just like in electrical engineering, to use one example, it would be like the explanation of electrical physics and theory, basic electronics, the basic physical theory of electrical knowledge. Or let's say we're studying music. Then the comparable thing would be a learned work on musical theory that explains the scales, the notes, the intervals, rhythms and many other fundamentals of music. If you don't have those fundamentals of music, and you take some piece by some great composer and you try to play it, you won't be able to understand anything. It will be completely misunderstood. And the same goes for devotional service: without this understanding given in this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* or some similar work, like the *Nārada-bhakti-sūtras* or something like that, you won't be able to understanding anything.

It's a fact that when Westerners came to India and tried to understanding the Vedic culture, they looked at some of these books and they couldn't understand anything, they got it completely wrong. They thought that Kṛṣṇa was some village god and that His activities were all mythology and so on, all this nonsense. Because they could not understanding the nature of the sweet relationship between the soul and God, or *rasa*. And this book

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu is the key to understanding *rasa*, the key to practicing *rasa* and experiencing it for yourself. So it begins with a statement of the author's feeling of humility. That “I am a low, vile person by my very nature. I have no qualification for understanding this *bhakti*; but somehow or other by the inspiration of Mahāprabhu now I have been engaged in this task of spreading this knowledge.” And we all feel like that; it's the nature of a *bhakta* to feel very low and unqualified. We also feel unqualified for the work that we're doing, spreading this very, very high knowledge. But our spiritual master Śrīla Prabhupāda engaged us in this work, so somehow or other by his inspiration and mercy, we're doing it and it's turning out successful.

Now the second part of the purport is interesting, because Jīva Gosvāmī being younger, the nephew of Rūpa Gosvāmī, he was always defending Rūpa Gosvāmī because Rūpa Gosvāmī's knowledge and understanding of *Vedas* was quite controversial in his time and there were many challenges. And Jīva Gosvāmī many times became the defender of his uncle, so here he says, "Even after he addresses himself as low out of humility, Sarasvatī cannot tolerate that." Sarasvatī is the goddess of learning and also of course she's in charge of Sanskrit, grammar and like that. He takes the same words and interprets it in a different way by means of Sanskrit roots, *dhātus*. *Dhātu* means a root word. So by dividing the words differently and using the meanings of the roots of those words, he comes out with actually the opposite meaning, which is that his uncle Rūpa Gosvāmī is the best of men and that he boldly indicates the actual truth. And so the disciple is always looking at his *guru* like that. *Guru* looks at himself as being very low and unqualified. But disciple always looks at *guru* as being the most qualified. So this is a perfect example of this mood of *bhakti* and the relationship between the *guru* and disciple.

And finally, the conclusion is that the only way that someone can write a worthy literary work—and by that is meant a book about transcendental knowledge—the only way this can happen is by the direct inspiration of the Lord, and not otherwise. If we try to write something or speculate

something from our own opinions, our own knowledge, it will fail. We may be able to get some little influence temporarily but then it won't last; it won't have any potency and it certainly won't go on into the future. So instead we should try to find a higher standard: try to find actually the highest standard, and situate ourselves on that standard. And that means we will actually come to a better understanding of these subjects. Better than what? Well, when Śrīla Prabhupāda came to the West he introduced this subject of *bhakti*. *Bhakti* had not really been studied or understood very well in the West. Up until then there had been teachers from India coming to the West who had explained *yoga* and meditation and different types of liberation and things like that, but their orientation was mostly impersonalist. In impersonalism there cannot be any *bhakti* because *bhakti* means love, and love can only happen between persons.

So the Supreme Lord is a person. And of course, the worshiper is also a person. And when these two persons have a wonderful sweet relationship based on transcendental love, this is *bhakti*. But none of the teachers who came from India before Śrīla Prabhupāda were *bhaktas*; they were all impersonalists—or voidists or Buddhists, or people like that—trying to say that nothingness is the Absolute Truth. And of course there's no question of love in the nothingness or void. It means actually extinguishing one's individuality and one's personality, and so of course in that event there's no question of love. So Śrīla Prabhupāda was actually the first teacher to come from India and give the means by which we can experience transcendental love. And that's *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is the actual conclusion of the *Vedas*. And if you study the *Vedas* properly, you will come to the same conclusion. And you will also engage yourself in cultivating this kind of transcendental relationship.

*viśrāma-mandiratya tasya sanātana-tanor mad-īśasya
bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhur bhavatu sadāyam pramodāya*

"May this work named 'the ocean of nectar composed of *bhakti-rasa*' always serve as the recreation hall of my Lord, manifested in the form

called Sanātana [Gosvāmī] for His pleasure." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.3]

Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

"Praising his *guru* Sanātana as the *avatāra* of his worshipable Lord, the author makes a prayer. This scripture is called 'the ocean of nectar,' in which the nectar is *bhakti-rasa*. May this work serve as the resting place of my Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa who, although always situation in His own form, *sanātana-tanoh*, manifests many other forms including the body Sanātana. In addition, the ocean is the resting place of another eternally perfect form called Nārāyaṇa. In this case the normal meaning of *sanātana*, eternal, is taken. Thus the verse is a metaphor. As Nārāyaṇa, with His eternal body lies down on the milk ocean to take rest, may Sanātana, the empowered expansion of Kṛṣṇa, lie down and take rest in the work called 'the ocean of *bhakti-rasa*.' [*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*]"

This is another example of the disciple worshiping the *guru*. In this case he's worshiping Sanātana Gosvāmī. Sanātana Gosvāmī was the eldest of the six Gosvāmīs and this book in its present form was actually his idea: maybe the title *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* came from him. Certainly the concept to make an ontological analysis of *bhakti* came from him; to give the complete explanation of the terminology, the concepts, and the classifications of different types of *bhakti*. And that way everyone who wants to cultivate *bhakti* would have the necessary background knowledge, and the scientific explanation of what is *bhakti*; and they would be able to approach this great science without any confusion or misconception.

*bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhau carataḥ paribhūta-kāla-jāla-bhiyaḥ
bhakta-makarān aśīlita-mukti-nadikān namasāmi*

"I offer my respects to the devotees who are like *makaras*, kings among fishes, frolicking in the sweet ocean of devotional *rasa*; who disregard the insignificant rivers of liberation, and who are free from fear caused by the net of time." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.4]

So here's another metaphor. He's comparing the great devotees with *makaras*. The *makaras* are great fish, even greater than the *timīṅgala* fish.

A *timingala* fish can swallow a whale just like a snack. So in this ocean, in the ocean of this world, we don't see such fish. But in the Causal Ocean, the ocean of the higher world, there are many fish that are too big to live in this worldly ocean; and some of these fish are enormous, indeed. So just because we don't experience this kind of fish in this world, or in this ocean, that doesn't mean that it doesn't exist someplace else in the great creation of God.

Similarly, just because we don't normally experience pure love of God, pure *bhakti*, that doesn't mean that it doesn't exist somewhere. In other words, we may not have it in our tiny experience, but that doesn't mean that someone else, somewhere else is incapable of that experience. Let's use another musical example. Someone who is just beginning to learn an instrument, they cannot or should not attempt to play some great concerto, because they'll certainly fail. And if they fail then they may say, "Oh, nobody can play this! It's impossible. Nobody can do it." So they don't understand: somewhere there is a great musician who can play this, that's why the composer wrote it. He wasn't about to write something that no one could play. So he made the arrangement so that someone, maybe a very great musician, someone can certainly play it. Just because **you** can't play it doesn't mean that **no one** can play it. Similarly, just because we are fallen and unintelligent, contaminated and degraded, and as a result we can't imagine pure love—pure unconditional, unselfish, eternal love and service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead—just because we don't have that experience doesn't mean that someone can't have it, somewhere. No. If we can write about it, if we can imagine it, if we can think about it, then somewhere it must exist. And actually this experience, or this kind of love exists in great personalities.

These great personalities are compared to the great fishes that exist in the ocean of higher planets, higher worlds than our own. And he also makes another nice comparison that the great fishes who live in the open sea don't go into the rivers, because the rivers are insignificant. The rivers aren't big enough for these great fishes. So similarly, the rivers of

impersonal liberation, *mokṣa*—and what to speak and voidism and all kinds of nonsense impersonal speculation—these are too small for the great devotees. The great devotees need more facility than that. They need more space than that, they need a bigger game. These very, very small insignificant philosophies like impersonalism and voidism and like that, can't hold the interest of a truly spiritual developed person for very long. Actually, as soon as we hear about them we reject them, just like a great fish coming to the mouth of a river and seeing, "Oh it's so shallow and so small," they would immediately reject and simply go back into the open sea.

Similarly the devotees, the great souls, reject these impersonal and actually materialistic ideas. Because they're not big enough, they're not complex enough, they're not rich enough, they're not beautiful enough, they're not satisfying to the soul. So if the great souls have rejected this nonsense idea, then we should also follow in their footsteps, and we should not entertain this idea that God is all one, or that we are God, or that God is nothingness, or something like that. These are all very, very poverty-stricken ideas compared with *bhakti*. And if you will kindly remain patient and go through this whole science of *bhakti-rasa* with us, you will also see what a great science it is, how complete and how extensive it is. And how actually, it's so huge and unlimited that you could never find the limit of it, even in a thousand lifetimes or a million years or ten million years. And that's the way it has to be, because spiritual life has to be unlimited, eternal. Never find any end, never find any border, never find any insufficiency in it. It's ever-expanding, ever-fresh, always beautiful, more and more interesting and satisfying. That's *bhakti*. So all these things are true of *bhakti*.

Now let me read Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary on this verse. I think that's about all we'll be able to handle today:

“Having offered his respects to Śrī Sanātana by name through a literary device, the author offers his respects to all the other devotees who are also dear to him without specifying particular names. The devotees are

compared to *makaras*. The *makara* is an aquatic animal and is called the king of fish. The devotees are similar to the *makara* in three ways. Firstly, the devotees as *makaras* joyfully swim in unlimited *bhakti-rasa* which is compared to an ocean of nectar which is the final shelter of various types of rivers of liberation and is full of the highest bliss. Secondly, they ignore liberation which is compared to a river—*aślīta mukti nandīkān*—the happiness of merging in Brahman, even though that happiness cuts the bondage of birth and death, and even though that happiness flows eternally, just as a river provides relief and flows constantly without ever stopping. Sometimes the word *ānāḍṛta* is seen in place of the *aślīta* in this verse. The devotees ignore liberation because they prefer to play in the ocean of *bhakti-rasa*. This is illustrated in the following verses:

*sālokya-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya-
sārūpyaikatvam apy uta
dīyamānaṁ na grhṇanti
vinā mat-sevanaṁ janāḥ*

“A pure devotee does not accept any kind of liberation—*sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, *sāmīpya*, *sārūpya* or *ekatva*—even if they are offered by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, if they do not include service to Him.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.29.13]

*mat-sevayā pratītaṁ te
sālokyādi-catuṣṭayam
necchanti sevayā pūrṇāḥ
kuto 'nyat kāla-viplutam*

“My devotees, who are always satisfied to be engaged in My loving service, are not interested even in the four principles of liberation [*sālokya*, *sārūpya*, *sāmīpya* and *sārṣṭi*], although these are automatically achieved by their service. What then is to be said of such perishable happiness as elevation to the higher planetary systems?” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.67]

Sālokya is to reside on the same planet as the Lord. *Sārūpya* is to have the same form as the Lord. *Sāmīpya* is to have the personal association of the Lord, and *sārṣṭi* is to have the same opulences as the Lord. These are the four types of liberation that devotees can sometimes accept if they include devotional service to the Lord. But they never accept the fifth kind of

liberation, impersonal liberation, or merging into the existence of the Lord, because that means the extinguishing of their personal existence. And without personal existence there can't be any service, there can't be any love, and these are the things they desire. So the devotees never accept impersonal liberation, and they only sometimes accept these four other types of liberation: to have the same form as the Lord, to live on the planet of the Lord, to have similar qualities and opulences, or the personal association of the Lord. Only when they can go and be in the spiritual world and offer the Lord their service, then they might accept. But the interesting thing about these four kinds of liberation is that they are automatically given to the devotees who attain pure devotional service. The devotees automatically go to the planet of the Lord. They automatically get a form similar in quality to the Lord, and they engage in wonderful pastimes eternally in the spiritual world in those forms.

People are struggling so hard to gain liberation; but actually we see that the impersonalists are unable to gain it. If they were able to get it, then they wouldn't be going and opening hospitals and starting different charitable organizations. They would be so satisfied with their spiritual relationship with the Lord that they wouldn't have any need for all these things. It's just like you see some devotees working very hard to open big, big temples and engage thousands of people in these huge events and festivals. But this means actually that they're in the neophyte stage of devotional service.

In the advanced stage of devotional service, the devotees are so satisfied that all they want to do is engage in their beautiful loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa or one of His expansions, whoever they are in relationship with, whoever their *bhakti* is for. They don't want to get involved in big, big projects that distract them from their sweet relationship with the Lord. That's not their mood at all. So if these things come by themselves, then they're very happy. If someone comes and says, "I have ten million dollars, I want to build a big temple." The devotee is very happy to say, "OK, go and take these other men here, and start the project and take care of it.

Hare Kṛṣṇa!" Not that the pure devotees themselves want to get involved in all these complicated big, big projects. They want to advise and inspire those kind of projects, yes. But they don't want to personally get involved because that would distract them from their real engagement.

“Thirdly, in the ocean of *bhakti-rasa* they disregard the fear arising from time, which causes a succession of miseries through bondage of birth and death. Just as fish swimming in the deep ocean are free from the fear of the fisherman's nets. *Paribhūta-kāla-jāla-bhīyaḥ*. This is understood from the following verse.

*te deva-siddha-parigīta-pavitra-gāthā
ye sādhaḥ samadr̥śo bhagavat-prapannāḥ
tān nopasīdata harer gadayābhiguptān
naiṣāṁ vyaṁ na ca vyaḥ prabhāva-nāma*

“My dear servants, please do not approach such devotees, for they have fully surrendered to the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.”

This is spoken by Yamarāja. It's part of the story of Ajāmila.

“So please do not approach such devotees for they have fully surrendered to the lotus feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They are equal to everyone and the demigods and the inhabitants of Siddhaloka sing their narrations. Please do not even go near them. The club of the Supreme Personality of Godhead always protects them and therefore, Lord Brahmā, I, and even the time factor are not competent to chastise them.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.3.27]

So the verse under discussion, text four, compares the different miseries caused by time to fisherman's nets. In the ocean, fisherman go out and throw their net, but in the deep ocean, what is the range of the fisherman's net? It's insignificant. The ocean is miles deep in places. And their net is maybe, you know, a hundred feet or so, at the most. So the devotees escape this net of time and suffering by diving deep into the ocean which is beyond the reach of the net.

This ocean is an ocean of nectar: *Bhakti-rasāmr̥ta-sindhu*. *Bhakti-rāsa-amṛta*; *bhakti-rāsa* nectar. *Rasa* means that which is relishable, that which is tasteful. When we see someone who is enjoying life, who is very expert in different tasteful arrangements for enjoyment, we say, "Oh, he has taste. He has style." What is this taste? Taste means a knowledge of what is enjoyable. And *rasa*, this is the prime subject matter, or the prime process for enjoying life. Because it's *amṛta*. *Bhakti-rāsa-amṛta*, *amṛta* means nectar but it also means deathless, eternal. If we really want to enjoy, we have to enjoy something which is eternal. If we try to enjoy something which is going to die, then what kind of enjoyment is that? Because we always have the specter of death hovering over our enjoyment. We know that someday in time this method or this object of enjoyment is going to be destroyed. So why should we accept this kind of enjoyment, which is simply temporary and conditional and someday it's going to end? Because we are eternal; we are spirit souls. We are pure consciousness, so why should we accept a form of enjoyment which is inferior to our own self? This body, the mind, the intelligence, the ego, all these things are inferior to the soul.

If we try to enjoy a big-big ego, "Oh yes, I am the enjoyer of all I survey," or some nonsense like this; or if we try to enjoy the mind, different kinds of speculation and thinking and different things; what to speak of trying to enjoy the material bodily senses. All these things, all these types of enjoyment are inferior, they're low taste. They're in bad taste, because they are not on the same level as our real self; they are not on the same level as the soul. The soul is eternal, transcendental, subtle. So all these things in the material world can never satisfy the soul. And you'll see this manifested in people's behavior. They enjoy something for a little while, and then they give it up and go enjoy something else. People will have sex life for some time, a few minutes, and then they'll light up a cigarette. If sex life was really that enjoyable, then why don't they just go on doing that? Why do they do something else? This is called *bhoga-tyāga*. *Bhoga* means sense enjoyment and *tyāga* means renunciation. So everyone is going through *bhoga-tyāga*, *bhoga-tyāga*, where they're trying to enjoy

one thing, and then they're giving it up and then enjoying something else. The businessman works hard all week in the office; but he can't enjoy that perpetually, so on the weekend he gives up his office work and tries to enjoy in some club, or takes a holiday or something. But then that's too expensive, so he has to give that up and go back to work and save more money. This is going on; this is life in the material world. But the devotees, every day they're doing the same thing: chanting the Holy Name of the Lord, preaching, studying, playing beautiful music—all for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa. We have the best food, the best music, the best knowledge, simple life, very nice, clean, pure.

For example, we've fixed up our place here and cleaned everything out. This used to be a silk factory, winding silk threads on these spools. I guess they sell them or make them into cloth or something. So anyway, that was going on. When we came here the whole place was full of silk fibers. It took three or four men a whole day to simply clean the silk fibers off the walls, the ceiling, the floor, the windows, everywhere. And then finally we moved everything in, and we painted the walls a very nice white color. And now we're getting curtains. We got a whole bulk of cloth here, thirty meters, and will make that into curtains for behind the altar, and the side, and it's going to make everything look very, very nice. So devotees are always making beautiful arrangements for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, and consequently we get to live in beautiful surroundings, beautiful circumstances. And even so, we live very simple; we don't care for elaborate arrangements for our sense gratification. This is actually more pleasurable, because then we don't have to spend so much time taking care of all of our stuff. There are so many practical advantages to being a devotee. And that's the least of it, because the real pleasure we experience is internal due to our wonderful relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

We're not trying to squeeze every little drop of enjoyment out of this material world. We simply do our duty externally, but internally we relish this relationship with Kṛṣṇa. This is the real taste; this is the real source of enjoyment. This is the *Bhakti-rāsa-amṛta*, the deathless nectar of

devotional relationship, ecstatic love, *bhakti-rasa*. So there are more flavors, just like when you go into an ice cream store, and one says, "We have twelve flavors", and the other one says, "We have twenty-seven flavors", and the other one says, "We have a hundred and seventy-three flavors." But *bhakti-rasa* has unlimited flavors, and they can be put together in all kinds of combinations; and if you know what you're doing you can make very harmonious mixtures of these different flavors and they're very, very tasteful and relishable.

So, the devotees are always relishing these beautiful tastes of relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and as a result they don't feel compelled to try to seek inferior forms of enjoyment in the material world. You see, this is real happiness; this is real enjoyment, real pleasure because it's spiritual. It's internal. You can't see it, you can't touch it, you can't measure it with some kind of instrument, but it's there. It's there, just as certainly as when you sit down to a nice meal and you eat your fill, afterwards you feel, "Ah, I'm satisfied, I'm full." Just as certain as that kind of satisfaction, is the satisfaction we get internally from our engagement in *bhakti-rasa*. If we didn't have that we couldn't keep doing this. I've been doing this since 1967. What's that, forty-two years now? And I can't imagine doing anything else. And even I had a life that would be considered desirable. I was a successful musician. I was a composer. I was traveling with a great jazz band, doing gigs, and you know, all of that stuff. But I gave it all up to become a devotee. I would never go back to that life now. Why? Because I wasn't getting the taste that I was after. I wasn't getting the full enjoyment from these material activities that I got from spiritual activities in the service of Kṛṣṇa.

We have to understand what is real enjoyment. What we're doing in the material world by trying to enjoy sense gratification is simply a substitute for real enjoyment; a very poor substitute, because it really doesn't satisfy us, that's why we always go through *bhoga-tyāga*. We want something that will satisfy us eternally, will never wear out, always be fresh and new, ever-expanding, ever-deepening and that's only *bhakti*. There's nothing

else like it. We have looked through the philosophies and the religions and the practices of all these different groups all over the world, and we've never found anything even close to the wonders of *bhakti*. And not just armchair exploring, reading books. I've gone to the East and studied with Taoist masters and have gotten quite far into their whole trip, and I've gone different places and studied martial arts, and Tarot and all these different things, and there's nothing like this devotional service. There's just nothing like it. Even here in India there are many, many different arts and sciences derived from Vedic knowledge, but most of them are not pure. They have some contamination or distortion introduced by people with less understanding, less realization. Fortunately, we are a student of a perfectly self-realized soul, Śrīla Prabhupāda. He revealed all these things to us, and we're similarly passing these things on to you. But you have to have the patience and the discipline to absorb and apply all this knowledge, and then you can benefit from it.

We're offering this pure *bhakti*; this is our service. You should keep up with these as we go through this whole book. And after you understand what *bhakti-rasa* is, then you won't want any other enjoyment. You won't need any other enjoyment. *Bhakti* is self-sufficient. *Bhakti* is its own cause, and it's its own result. So *bhakti* is completely self-referential and independent. It does not depend on anything else: knowledge, renunciation, or fruitive activity, or liberation, or any other form of spiritual life. It's completely independent. That's why when people come to us, "Well I studied this and this and this and that." I tell them, "Just forget all that stuff. You're not going to need it here. It's just going to become extra complication and you'll become confused. So just drop all that other stuff and concentrate completely on *bhakti*, and then you'll get the highest result." That's the message of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: When you were talking about the verse where the devotees don't go to the rivers of liberation, you're talking about the impersonalists, and these rivers of liberation are considered not satisfying enough, not beautiful enough, and not complex enough for the devotees to

relish and enjoy. So the impersonalists are actually willfully choosing an ontology that is unnatural to their own situation, as persons having some kind of aesthetic sense, so they're denying their own aesthetic appetite?

Bābājī: That's one way to look at it. Everyone wants love. And the impersonalists have reached the conclusion that “Love is phony; love is false. Let's just deny it; let's just get rid of it.” But love is based on being a person. Because a person has desire for relationship with other persons. So “Oh, then we have to get rid of being a person also.” You see, it's like they're cutting off their nose to spite their face, as the expression goes. It's like a kind of suicide, a kind of self-destructive thing. It's like, “Oh, I can't have love in this material world? Then I'm not going to love anybody at all. Nyaaah! I'm just going to become nothing! Hah! That'll teach ya!” I really think their motivation is a bit spiteful like that. I think they're bitter; very, very bitter. And so they perform self-destructive activities as a way to punish the other people who didn't love them the way they thought they deserved to be loved. Well, guess what? Nobody in this material world is going to love you the way you think that you deserve to be loved; because, frankly, we're not capable of it. We're just fallible, limited human beings. Tiny, very ignorant, selfish, foolish human beings. So human beings cannot really give the kind of love that the soul wants and needs. Only God can give that kind of love. So He remains in the background until we approach Him:

ye yathā mām prapadyante
[*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.11]

How many times have I quoted that verse? That He responds in kind to the way we approach Him. So if we ignore Him, He just merges into the background and you don't see Him at all. But if we approach Him with love, He responds with love. And of course, His love is unlimited and perfect. Not like the love of these human beings. So yes, we love our fellow human beings. It's not that we don't. We love them to the best of our ability. But we don't make false claims like, “I'm gonna love you forever.” But what we say is that “We will try to give you the best service

by introducing you to this highest knowledge and this highest practice. That if you pursue it, if you develop this in your own life, it will make you very, very happy. But **I'm** not gonna make you happy. What use you make of this *bhakti* is what will make you happy, because Kṛṣṇa will reciprocate your service.” The impersonalists don't believe that. They've been cheated by everyone else, and now they've lost all faith and they're disgusted by the whole world, and they just want to end it all. "OK, I'll just become zero or merge into nothingness or everythingness,” or whatever their misconception is. It's very sad.

Question from Mukuteśvara: "Please accept my humble obeisances. If one achieves one of the personal liberations at death, but does not attain pure devotional service, are they then able to develop devotional service in their liberated state?"

Bābajī: Why on Earth would you want to do that? It's far better to stay on this planet, in this world and develop pure devotional service. From the very beginning we should have our aim as pure devotional service. Then all the different kinds of liberation that are acceptable to a devotee will manifest automatically without any separate endeavor. To attain some kind of liberation—like *sarṣṭī*, *saṁīpya*, *salokya* or *sārūpya*—before becoming a pure devotee, means you would have to earn that liberation, and that would be a huge undertaking that would last many lifetimes. Whereas you can have pure *bhakti* now, simply by desiring it. The trick is that we don't know how to desire pure devotional service; so that way we cheat ourselves by desiring something inferior, like liberation. You wouldn't want to accept liberation because it means that would divert so much time and energy from pursuing pure *bhakti*, and the rewards of pure *bhakti* automatically include all those other kinds of liberation.

So why would you want anything other than pure *bhakti*? Why would you strive for anything other than pure *bhakti* once you know this? If you didn't know this, then it might make sense to pursue one of these kinds of liberation or more. But once you know that you automatically get these

liberations by cultivating pure *bhakti*, then that's kind of it, you know. That's all we really need. Is there more to the question? If you make a false assumption and then you base a question on that false assumption, the whole question is invalid.

Uddhava dāsa: At the end he asks, "If one is promoted to the Vaikuṅṭha planets could they then develop the relationship."

Bābājī: No, because if you go to the Vaikuṅṭha planets, that means you're eternally in the Vaikuṅṭha mood. The way you get to the Vaikuṅṭha planets is by having that type of *bhakti*. And if you have that kind of *bhakti*, that is your type of *bhakti* eternally. And of course it will be perfectly satisfying to you, and you'll be perfectly happy there in Vaikuṅṭha. But you could have something so much more than that, you could be in Goloka Vṛndāvan and have an even higher type of *bhakti* with Kṛṣṇa. But you can't develop that in Vaikuṅṭha, you can only develop that here. Once you get liberation, that's it: that's eternal. You have had to develop that particular flavor of relationship with the Lord to get that liberation. So instead of developing an inferior flavor, why not develop the highest flavor and then you get the highest liberation automatically?

Uddhava dāsa: So in his question he continues, "...or would the Lord keep the aspiring devotee in the material world in a favorable family because they desire the ocean rather than the river?"

Bābājī: Yes, generally the Lord doesn't even offer his devotees liberation. If we desire, He'll actually give us whatever we desire. So if we desire some kind of liberation then He'll give it to us. But we could have something even better than that: pure devotional service. Pure devotional service automatically includes all kinds of liberation. So why not just go for the highest? Any other questions? That's it?

Nava-yauvana dāsa: In the material world, we find that usually we need to have many different kinds of relationships to have like a balance, and like, we have friendships, parenthood, servitorship, conjugal love, with

different living entities and that, the whole all of them come together and either create a lot of trouble or they handle nicely sometimes it's like somewhat balanced. In the spiritual world is there just one of these relationships, or are there other relationships as well?

Bābājī: Our principal relationship is with the Lord, but we have other relationships with His devotees. When a living entity attains the spiritual world, someone becomes his mother, his father, someone becomes his brothers and sisters, some other devotees become his friends, and then he has his relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is the center and everything else is around that. But certainly he has relationships with other devotees as well. That's what we're training for, that's why we have *saṅga*. *Saṅga* means association of devotees, and that's a way to practice having devotional relationships. We have relationships that don't include karmic entanglement. All these relationships in the material world that you mentioned include karmic results. Every action gets an equal and opposite reaction. Every time we have an activity in a relationship that's on the material bodily platform, that means we have to stick around to accept the *karma*. So it just pushes our liberation back, back, back until it's not gonna happen. But when we get out of this cycle of *karma* and birth and death, we substitute relationships with other transcendentalists that are on the spiritual platform where Kṛṣṇa is the center. No human being is the center; we're all servants of Kṛṣṇa. So we relate to each other as servants of Kṛṣṇa rather than as our material identities. That does not create *karma*, that doesn't include *karma*. So these devotional relationships are practice for the spiritual world, where we have similar relationships with other devotees in association with Kṛṣṇa and there's no *karma*.

Those relationships are also eternal. The devotees in the spiritual world, especially, have the first fifty-five of the qualities of Kṛṣṇa. I was just reading that this morning in the Western Ocean of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. The first fifty-five qualities of Kṛṣṇa are shared by the devotees in the spiritual world. So they also have these qualities of having an eternal spiritual form and having ever-expanding blissful pastimes, and many

other qualities. So it's very nice, that's why it's called an ocean. The ocean of nectar of *bhakti-rasa*. It's not just the puddle of nectar. Not just a glass of nectar; it's an **ocean** of nectar. So we never run out wonderful relationships to explore in the spiritual world; but they're all centered on Kṛṣṇa. Just like our relationships here are all based on satisfying the Deities and Śrīla Prabhupāda. Similarly, in the spiritual world, our relationships are based on directly satisfying Kṛṣṇa, so it's very pleasing, very nice.

Uddhava dāsa: "Does the *sādhana-bhakti* have any sweetness like *rāgānuga-bhakti*?"

Bābajī: *Rāgānuga-bhakti* is *sādhana-bhakti*. He's confused, the question is confused. *Sādhana-bhakti* has two stages: *vaidhī-bhakti*, which means devotional service according to the rules and regulations of the scriptures; and *rāgānuga-bhakti*, which means spontaneous devotional service. The dividing line between those two is called *anartha-nivṛtti*. *Anartha-nivṛtti* means all of the material desires and activities are purified from the heart, and there is no more desire for anything material. But that's still a part of *sādhana*. Even *bhāva-bhakti*, even *rati*, until it becomes perfectly pure is still a part of *sādhana-bhakti*. Not until someone reaches *prema*, are they considered to be considered a perfect devotee. This is very, very, very high. Usually the shift from *bhāva* to *prema* occurs in the next lifetime when the devotee takes birth in a material universe where Kṛṣṇa is appearing. And then by Kṛṣṇa's own personal association their *bhāva* grows into *prema*. Then they go back to the spiritual world with Kṛṣṇa. Prabhupāda gave that explanation.

So *sādhana-bhakti* starts with following scriptural rules; then when one becomes a pure devotee, it continues with attachment, and taste and so many things, higher stages up to *bhāva*, or *rati*, or *rāga*: *rāgātmikā-bhakti* is the *bhakti* that is displayed by the devotees in Goloka Vṛndāvan. The eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa: the *nitya-siddhas*. Their *rāgātmikā-bhakti*, when we follow that, it becomes *rāgānuga-bhakti*. *Rāg-anuga*. The *rāga* stands

for *rāgātmikā*. And *rāgānuga* means following those *rāgātmikā-bhaktas* in the spiritual world. So we're following them not by identifying with them or thinking, or imitating them, but by trying to enter into their mood, trying to enter into a similar relationship with Kṛṣṇa, service relationship, in the internal realm, in our *siddha* body, in our spiritual body. This is *bhāva-bhakti*. When that *bhāva-bhakti* becomes ripe, becomes complete, then we go to a different situation where we get to associate with Kṛṣṇa directly. That's how *bhakti* develops. So yes, *sādhana-bhakti* is full of nectar; it's full of nectar from the very beginning. And when one becomes a pure devotee then all of special qualities of *bhakti* begin to manifest, like a complete cessation of material miseries, tremendous auspiciousness, transcendental knowledge being awakened in the heart automatically, and so many other qualities that manifest automatically when one attains pure devotional service.

Uttama-bhakti means pure *bhakti* without any mixture of any *karma*, *jñāna*, liberation, fruitive desire, or *yoga*, mystic powers, or any other process. So we should aspire for *uttama-bhakti*. *Uttama-bhakti* means pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service, and we can have that even before we reach the stage of *rāgānuga-bhakti* by our desire. The sole cause of advancement in *bhakti* is our desire. If we desire pure *bhakti*, then we'll get it. We have to have the intelligence to know that our greatest benefit is to desire this pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service, and not think that “Oh, if I get some mixture of devotional service then I'll enjoy,” or something like that. No. That will just complicate things needlessly. Just stay in pure devotional service, and then you'll get everything.

Chapter 4: *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.5

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, October 29, 2009

We are studying *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and this is going to be our topic for quite some time; going verse-by-verse, and discussing all of these different points about pure *bhakti*, *uttama-bhakti*. *Uttama-bhakti* is a special kind of *bhakti*. *Uttama-bhakti* means pure *bhakti* without any mixture of anything else: no *karma*, no *jñāna*, no *yoga*, no other activities which would distract us from the real purpose of *bhakti*, which is simply to love Kṛṣṇa. There are so many ways to love Kṛṣṇa, and this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* will discuss all of them. This is a huge, unlimited field; that's why it's called *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. *Sindhu* means ocean. You can get lost in this ocean of *bhakti*, this ecstatic loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa, and never come back. That's the whole point. Don't come back to this nasty material world, stay in *bhakti-rasa* and you'll be saved.

*mīmāṃsaka-ḥaḍavāgneḥ kaṭhinām api kuṇṭhayann asau jihvām
sphuratu sanātana suciram tava bhakti-rasāmṛtāmbhodhiḥ*

“O Sanātana, may your ocean of *bhakti-rasa* remain for a long time, restricting the harsh arguments of the proponents of *karma* and *jñāna*, just as the ocean restricts the flame of the *vaḍabā* fire.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.5]

Rūpa Gosvāmī here is addressing his *guru*, Sanātana Gosvāmī. And apparently, the idea for this work was Sanātana Gosvāmī's. So, this ontological analysis of *bhakti-rasa* was written by Sanātana Gosvāmī's mercy. This *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is very, very special because it's based on all the wonderful stories contained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* recounts the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa. And there are many other scriptures which recount the same topics, but they don't do so in an analytical way, they present it in a narrative way. But they don't discuss the deep meaning of these pastimes. The deep meaning is *rasa*.

Rasa means the emotional taste. Just like *rasa*, the same word can also mean a flavor of a drink or something like that. If you go on the street here in India, there will be someone with bottles of flavoring. And they will put some in a glass and add water, and then you have a flavored drink. It's like soda pop without the pop—without the carbonation—and when it's done nicely this is very nice. I remember one time I went to Calcutta, and it was very hot. We were buying things for the temple. And we went to a shaved ice place, where they made these exquisite flavored drinks, using essential oils of sandalwood, camphor, *khus*—oh *khus* is wonderful. If you've never had it, you can't imagine how good something can taste. So these good tastes, these natural tastes, make the drink very enjoyable. This enjoyable taste is *rasa*. Similarly in a relationship, there is some emotional taste. We all have different kinds of relationships in life; sometimes with our parents, sometimes with our children, or with friends or with lovers or with other people who we serve; for example, bosses or employees or like that. These different relationships have different tastes; nobody can say they're all alike. They're not the same. And our behavior is different too, in different relationships. Things that we would say to a friend we would never say to our parents, and so on. Similarly, in relationship with God, there are many different tastes. And depending on the particular type of relationship that we have with God, we will experience a particular taste.

So this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is the ocean of *bhakti-rasa*. There are many, many tastes, many different flavors of relationship. It's actually extremely complex, and it has to be that way because this is going to be our engagement for eternity. So there has to be enough variety of tastes that we can continue to explore and experience this ocean of tasteful relationship with the Lord without ever becoming bored, tired, or running out of different varieties of things to experience. So this is the ocean of *bhakti-rasa*. Now the characteristics of this ocean, one of the characteristics is that it restricts the harsh arguments of the *karmīs* and the *jñānīs*. What does that mean? Well, just go down the street or open up a web page anywhere and you'll see some advertisement: "Eat this, buy this, smoke this, do this, go here, go there, watch this show, watch that, listen to

this, blah, blah, blah." Everyone's telling us, "You should enjoy this material world." This is the essential flavor of karma. Karma means I do some work. "Enjoy! It's a wonderful life. Isn't it great?" So actually they're putting forward these very harsh arguments that, "You should serve this material taste. You should give up this spiritual life. You should give up this transcendental philosophy and you should become like us and enjoy with us. Join the party!" And of course there's always a price of a ticket. You have to buy something or you have to join something or do something that limits your freedom. That's why these arguments are called harsh.

And then there are the *jñānīs*. The *jñānīs* are also arguing, "You should believe this, you should think this. You should accept this argument and you should accept this story why the world is the way it is, and then you should base your activities on that. Join our church, join our religion, join our political party," or whatever. So they're arguing like that. And their ultimate argument is that you should accept this philosophy that everything is nothing and the only meaning of existence is liberation—impersonal liberation, just merge into oneness of everything. This is their argument, their ultimate argument. So by accepting these arguments a person always limits their freedom. It never expands their freedom; it always limits their freedom. If you join this company then you can't work for any other company. If you marry this girl, you can't marry any other girl. If you accept this religion or that philosophy, then that restricts your choices insofar as to what you're going to believe or what you're going to do in life.

Ultimately, if you actually accept this nonsense idea that everything is nothing and we will merge with everything at the end of this life, that really restricts your choices, because in that philosophy there is no *bhakti*, there is no God and there is no love of God. So actually the only thing that's eternal in that philosophy is nothing, oneness. Oneness means nothingness, because perception is based on contrast. The reason you can see my hand in front of the wall is because my hand is a different color than the wall. If my hand was exactly the same color as the wall, you

wouldn't see anything. So contrast has to be there to have perception. Without perception there is no consciousness because there are no impressions, no *samskāras*. So the *jñānīs* are actually arguing that you should give up experience, you should give up perceptions, you should give up consciousness, become unconscious and just merge into oneness of everything and stay like that forever. This is the ultimate restriction: you have to give up everything, you even have to give up existing. So needless to say these are very harsh arguments, very nasty. They're attacking our very nature, our very humanity, our very spirit. The *karmīs* want us to become a slave of material enjoyment, and the *jñānīs* want us to become a slave of some kind of fictional liberation which they cannot show that anybody has ever attained, incidentally.

So if we accept these arguments—which are basically lies—and if we give up our freedom to serve these lies, then we are defeated in our purpose of life. What is the purpose of life? It's simply to enjoy. This is so natural, this is so obvious. The thing is, when we restrict our choices of enjoyment to simply materialism, and we don't consider the fact that we are a being of pure consciousness—soul, *ātmā*—then we restrict our choice of enjoyment simply to the tastes of this material world, which are limited. They have a beginning and an end. They're imperfect; and so many other problems are there. But when we accept that “Actually I am a spiritual being. I'm a soul, I'm a pure conscious being, a pure conscious entity; I'm eternal,” now I open myself to a whole range of choices of enjoyment which are based on my spiritual existence, which means a relationship with God. Because if I'm a spiritual being then what is my source? What is my origin? It has to God; it can't be anything else. It's not possible for a spiritual being to be born from matter. It's not possible for a more intelligent being to be born from a less intelligent being; rather, the other way around. We see all the time that children are less intelligent than their parents. Therefore the natural thing is to assume, or to conclude that if I exist and I'm an intelligent being, then there must be a super-intelligent being that is my source. That is God. So now, what is my relationship with God? This is the subject of this book.

Here's the purport:

Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary on this verse is that he [meaning Rūpa Gosvāmī] prays to the lotus feet of *guru* for the continued presence of his scripture which will eliminate the criticisms of challengers. The challengers, *mīmāṃśaka*, are of two types: those who deliberate on *karma*, and those who deliberate on *jñāna*. *Jihvām*, referring to fire, means a flame as well as a tongue. This flame or tongue is described as belonging to the *vaḍabā* fire, *vaḍabāgne-jihvām* to distinguish it from the well-known seven flames or tongues which are used to consume the sacrifices. Just as the ocean always remains present to restrict the flame of the *vaḍabā* fire, this work, the ocean of *bhakti-rasa*, should always remain present to restrict the power of speaking, in other words the tongues, of the *mīmāṃśakas*.

So the *vaḍabā* fire represents the fire of material existence:

saṁsāra-dāvānala-līḍha-loka-trāṇāya kārūṇya-ghanāghanatvam

"The spiritual master extinguishes the fire of this material existence."
[*Śrī-Śrī Gurv-aṣṭaka*]

Therefore it's distinguished from the fire of sacrifice. The fire of sacrifice is when we offer our material existence to Kṛṣṇa, to God. But the other fire that's burning in this world is the fire of suffering, of *saṁsāra*, repeated birth and death, and this *bhakti* process extinguishes that fire. So here he's talking about how the ocean of *bhakti-rasa* restricts that fire of material existence:

From taking the whole meaning of the verse it should be understood that his desire is not just restriction but extreme restriction: complete extinction of their criticisms. In the case of the ocean, restriction of the fire occurs because of the ocean's natural possession of huge quantities of water, which is one type of *rasa* or liquid. In the case of the present work, the restriction of the criticism takes place because of the natural sweetness (*rasa*) of the work.

Another meaning is that by the metaphor he is pointing out the difference between this work—an ocean of *rasa*—and the regular ocean. The *vaḍabā* fire is present permanently in the regular ocean. However,

he is expecting that somehow or other the protests of the *mīmāṃśakas* will be very transitory because of the presence of this work. With that in mind, he makes his request that the work remain permanently. Thus the meaning of the verse would be, "Though the ocean restricts the *vaḍabā* fire but does not extinguish it, may this work somehow completely extinguish the criticisms of the *mīmāṃśakas*."

By the way the *mīmāṃśaka* are the followers of the *Mīmāṃsā*, a class of Vedic literatures dealing with logic and arguments. And of course, the people who study this are very argumentative, they like to debate; they like to use logic. They like to apply logic to everything. However, logic is actually not a very good way to ascertain the conclusions of the *Vedas*. Actually the last verse of this First Wave of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* states that:

"Even if one has a little taste for this topic of *bhakti*, he can understand it. He who tries to understand *bhakti* by dry logic cannot understand it, because logic is insubstantial." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.45]

Logic is insubstantial. What does that mean? That:

"A person more skillful at logic can bring about a conclusion different from what was carefully proven previously by another skillful logician." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.46]

I can establish one argument, and then someone can come along who is a better debater, a better logician, and they can establish the opposite conclusion. We see this happening all the time. A person will have one opinion, and then they'll listen to some arguments opposing their opinion, and then they'll change their mind and accept this other opinion. Someone can be a member of one religion, and then they get converted and join another religion. But in the case of *bhakti*, logical arguments are inconclusive, because *bhakti*—just like anything that has taste—*bhakti* depends a great deal on the person who is tasting.

I often give the example that I may like vanilla ice cream, and somebody else may like chocolate ice cream. They are both flavors of ice cream, but they look different, they taste different, and who can say which one is

better than the other? It's a matter of taste. So similarly, *bhakti* is also a matter of taste. Some people's taste in *bhakti* is for servitorship: "O God, You're so great and I'm so small, all I can do is try to serve You with my mind, words and actions." That's their mood. But then other people have a friendly relationship with God, and their mood in relationship with God is, "Come on, let's You and I play. Let's have engagement in pleasant pastimes, like friends." And their mood is like of an equal. Then there are even devotees whose mood is of a superior, that Kṛṣṇa is their son. So Mother Yaśodā will say, "Kṛṣṇa come here! It's time for You to take Your bath." Maybe Kṛṣṇa doesn't want to take His bath. Maybe He's out playing, doing something. She'll grab Him by the ear and pull Him in. "Come on!" Because she is in a superior position, and the Lord accepts her in that position because of her love. And then there are the lovers of the Lord, the *gopīs* and others who love the Lord in conjugal mood. And of course this subject is way beyond any other spiritual path, and is known only to the real insiders: the cognoscenti, the people who know the real esoteric meaning of the scriptures.

So when we understand these different tastes or flavors, then we start to get a taste for the subject of relationship with God itself. And once we do that, then we can understand this *bhakti-rasa*, because *bhakti* is on its own platform. It's completely transcendental. No other thing is the cause of *bhakti*; only *bhakti* is the cause of *bhakti*. And the example given is that a person who is attracted to *bhakti* in this life feels that attraction because they had some contact with it in the previous life. Maybe they met some devotees, or somehow they chanted the Holy Name of the Lord, or maybe they studied some of the scriptures that talked about *bhakti*. So in this life they have a taste for *bhakti*, and they can understand it. Others cannot. It doesn't matter how many logical argument you make, "Chocolate is better than vanilla." "No, I still like vanilla." You see? So a person who has a particular taste for *bhakti*, they can never be dissuaded, they can never be convinced that their taste for *bhakti* is false.

Just like Prabhupāda used the example, if someone sits down at full plate of *prasādam* and they take very nice *prasādam* offered to Kṛṣṇa, very tasty, nicely cooked, served beautifully, and everything is first class, then they're going to feel so satisfied. And no one can convince them that they're not satisfied, that they should go out to some restaurant. They're going to say, "No, no, I don't want to. I'm full, I'm satisfied, I don't need to go out." So similarly, someone who has tasted this *bhakti*, this relationship with God, is going to be so satisfied by that taste that if somebody tries to convince them with arguments, "Oh you should become a *karmī*, you should become *jñānī*. You should go out and taste these different things outside of *bhakti*." The *bhakta* is going to say, "No, no, no; I'm fully satisfied by my taste of *bhakti*. I don't need that. I'm fully satisfied by my taste for *bhakti*. I don't need any of these other things."

Because *bhakti* is its own cause, only *bhakti* can cause *bhakti*. And similarly, the only result of *bhakti* is *bhakti*. Just like today, we got up—it's *Ekādaśī* today. So we got up early in the morning and we were chanting the Holy Name, and then we took *prasādam*. And we had very nice, very simple *prasādam*, just vegetable soup and potatoes, and like that. And then whole day we were doing different services around the *āśrama*: cleaning, making everything very nice for Kṛṣṇa. And then in the evening we get together with our friends and chant the Holy Name. So this is very satisfying; and what's the result? It deepens our taste for *bhakti*. Our taste for *bhakti* becomes even stronger, more established. So by this means, *bhakti* begets *bhakti*. *Bhakti* does not give fruitive results, it does not give speculative knowledge; it gives transcendental results. It gives spiritual knowledge. It deepens our relationship with God. And although sometimes Kṛṣṇa may give some material opulences to a devotee, He only does so when He knows that the devotee will not be deviated from *bhakti* by receiving those blessings. Kṛṣṇa is very kind.

Kṛṣṇa Himself exists completely on the platform of *bhakti*. He never goes outside of His relationships with His devotees. That's what God does all day. It's not like He's sitting up there on a cloud with a thunderbolt, "Let

me see if I can get this one. Ha!" That's not God. That may be one of God's servants. But God Himself is always on vacation. All He's doing is enjoying with His devotees. And these pastimes are recounted in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* especially, and many other scriptures, *Padma Purāṇa*, so many other scriptures. So we should take shelter of this knowledge and of these practices, and mold our life in such a way that we gradually reduce our entanglement in *karma* and *jñāna* and increase our activities in *bhakti*. Because *bhakti* is nothing but pure happiness; it's nothing but pure bliss. And the more that we engage in *bhakti* the more of this bliss that we feel. Everybody here can tell you that this is true. We all have this experience. Just like the person who's eating a nice plate of *prasādam*. He automatically feels full; nobody has to tell him, "OK, now you're full." He knows, simply by tasting. So similarly, simply by tasting this *bhakti* process, we know, "Oh, this is very sweet. This is very satisfying." And the more we taste it, the more our appreciation for it grows.

So this is *bhakti*: the result of *bhakti* is more *bhakti*. Increasing taste, ever-increasing, ever-growing. We made this point several times, that people who are engaged in *karma*, they cannot remain continuously engaged in *karma*. You see the people who are working, they go to the office, to the factory, to their job; and then at the end of their day, they go home and relax. Well, why don't they just stay in the office if it's so nice? Because it's not really very nice. This taste is not something you can relish twenty-four hours a day; you need a break. But *bhakti* is a taste that you can relish twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, three hundred and sixty-five days a year for your whole life, and you never get tired of it. In fact, it just becomes more and more and more tasteful the more you engage in it. So this is the transcendental mystery of *bhakti*: that *bhakti* is not dependent on the three modes of material nature: goodness, passion and ignorance. Although things like transcendental knowledge of the scriptures, renunciation and performance of pious or religious activities are helpful to **approach** *bhakti*, once we are actually on the platform of *bhakti*, we don't need any of these other things. Because *bhakti* is its own source of knowledge, *bhakti* is its own cause of renunciation, *bhakti* is its own

generator of pious activities, and then we don't need anything outside of *bhakti* to sustain our *bhakti*.

Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, a great devotee and *ācārya* in the line of the devotees, says:

*sandhyā-vandana bhadrām astu bhavato bhoḥ snāna tubhyaṁ namo
bho devāḥ pitaraś ca tarpaṇa-vidhau nāhaṁ kṣamaḥ kṣamyatām
yatra kvāpi niṣadya yādava-kulottāmsasya kaṁsa-dviṣaḥ
smāraṁ smāraṁ aghaṁ harāmi tad alaṁ manye kim anyena me*

"O my prayers three times a day, all glory to you. O bathing, I offer my obeisances unto you. O demigods! O forefathers! Please excuse me for my inability to offer you my respects. Now wherever I sit, I can remember the great descendant of the Yadu dynasty [Kṛṣṇa], the enemy of Kaṁsa, and thereby I can free myself from all sinful bondage. I think this is sufficient for me."

So here's a person who is very learned, very cultured, extremely pure, very religious, very civilized, and because of this taste of *bhakti* he's saying, "Oh, all this that I was doing previously, all this knowledge that I had, and all of this religiosity, is just useless. Second class. All I want is to taste this sweet name of Govinda, and that's the only thing I want to be engaged in for the rest of my life. So I'm giving up this designation of *brāhmaṇa* or whatever my material position is; I'm giving up this relationship of family, religion, this country, political designation, all these different material labels that in the past I accepted thinking that, 'Oh, this is my self.' No, no. Because I have discovered that now really who is my self: my self is that spiritual being who engages in constant, ever-increasing pastimes of love with the Supreme Lord. That's my real being; that's my real nature. How do I know it's real? Because it gives me continuous pleasure."

I cannot engage in anything in this world continuously. Even sex life, which is supposed to be the biggest pleasure in life. You cannot engage in it continuously; only for a few moments, and then it's finished, it's gone; it becomes distasteful. You wonder, "Why did I do that?" But when you

taste this *bhakti-rasa*, it's ever increasing, ever-fresh, always tasteful, and you can engage in it continuously, *ahaituky apratihata*:

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihata yayātmā suprasīdati*

“The supreme occupation [*dharma*] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendent Lord. Such devotional service must be **unmotivated and uninterrupted** to completely satisfy the self.” [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6]

This is the standard of pure *bhakti*: *ahaituky apratihata*, which means that constant practice, constant engagement, without any motivation.

Motivation means that “I'm going to get something else out of this. By chanting this *mantra*, I'm going to get money or I'm going to get fame, strength or mystic powers or something like that.” No, we don't think like that. We think, *ahaituki*: without any motivation. “I'm doing this just because it tastes good. Just because it's wonderful, just because it's beautiful.” This is love. And the mind is more attracted by love than anything else. The problem in the material world is that we have chosen the wrong objects of love. We have chosen to love persons and things that are impermanent. And then when they go away or change, or they leave us or reject us or whatever, then we're very disappointed; then we become cynical, and then we say “Oh, love is just a myth.”

No, it's not a myth. The fact that there is a false kind of love means that somewhere there is a real love. Just like you can go to some shop and they'll sell you some jewelry that looks like gold. But actually it's not gold at all, it's just some cheap alloy. And you may say, “Oh, this is nonsense, this is junk, I've been cheated again. So there is no real gold.” But oh yes, there is. That's why the imitation has any value at all: because there is real gold, and by being deceived people think that it's the real thing. Similarly, people become deceived about the love, the enjoyment, and the work of the material world thinking “This is going to satisfy me.” And when they don't, they feel cheated: “Oh, why didn't that work out?” Well, because the material world is intrinsically disappointing. We want something that is

permanent, eternal, changeless, ever-fresh, and always satisfying to the soul. And the only thing like that is *bhakti*.

So you can try many, many other spiritual paths, you can try many religions, you can go to this church and that temple and this synagogue, and that mosque, and this teacher, something-*ānanda* Svāmī, and they'll give you all kinds of mumbo-jumbo. But then finally, just by chance, maybe you will try this *bhakti*. And if you do, you'll see that the taste of this *bhakti* is out of this world—literally, out of this world. So we invite you, and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* invites you, to taste this ocean of *bhakti* and you'll never be disappointed.

Uddhava dāsa: Just a little technical question. The fire we were talking about is the fire of material existence?

Bābājī: Let me read the footnote. There's a technical footnote explaining.

"Under the ocean, near the South Pole, a fire from the lower regions emerges from a hole called 'the mouth of the mare', *viḍabā*. Aruva, born in the Bhṛgu Dynasty, when about to be killed by the sons of Kartavīrya produced a fire out of his wrath. This fire threatened the whole world. The Bhargavas persuaded Aruva to cast it into the ocean, where it remains concealed with the face of a horse."

Aren't you glad you asked? It must be some *Purāṇa* that we don't know, that we don't have adequate translation of in the West. There are many Vedic scriptures that have not properly translated. But what do we mean 'properly'? That means by a self-realized soul who is situated in the disciplic succession from Kṛṣṇa. And also the getup of the translation has to show the original text. If it doesn't show the original text, you can be sure that there's some cheating going on. The translator is giving his own opinion. He's not giving the opinion of the *Vedas* but he's interpolating the scripture to match his own ideas. In my experience, Śrīla Prabhupāda is the only author of Vedic works, or translator of Vedic works, who provides the original text. And this is very, very important. Because it means transparency. If I want I can go get a Sanskrit dictionary and I can look up

all the words, and I can do my translation and check his work—to make sure that it's actually saying the same thing as the original work. But if you look at books by these different *svāmīs* and *yogīs* and whatnot, they never provide the original text. Maybe a little quotation here and there, that they pick out of context, and then they twist it and do whatever they want to it make it mean whatever they think it should mean.

We don't accept this. The *Vedas* have a standard philosophy, which is summarized in the *Vedānta-sūtra*. The *Vedānta-sūtra* has four parts called *Adhyāyas*. In the first *Adhyāya*, the Vedic background philosophy is explained. In the second *Adhyāya*, all the competing philosophies are defeated. That includes Buddhism, Jainism, Voidism, and different kinds of man-made religions like *Śaktism*, and Sahajīyāism, and so many others. You'll find in those types of false religion, every type of religion and every type of philosophy that exists outside of pure *Vedānta*. And then in the Third *Adhyāya*, the author gives the spiritual path of *bhakti*. And finally in the Fourth *Adhyāya*, he describes the results of practicing *bhakti*. So fully half of *Vedānta-sūtra* is about *bhakti* directly, and the other half is the preliminaries to *bhakti*—which is very interesting because if you look up *Vedānta*, most of the writers on *Vedānta* come to the opposite conclusion, that *bhakti* is not a big deal. *Bhakti* is just something that might help you attain liberation. So they get it completely wrong. How is that possible? Because they don't go back to the original text, and they don't take the commentaries coming from the lineage of Kṛṣṇa. They take some other opinion; some modern opinion, some recent speculation. This idea of oneness and all this, this started with Buddha, Buddhism.

So Buddhism has given this voidism or nothingness, the idea that everything is ultimately nothing. And then there are innumerable variations on that same theme. It's very popular because if everything is nothing, then it doesn't matter what we do, the end is always the same, "All paths lead to the same place." They're very fond of saying this. "So whatever we do doesn't matter. There's no standard of morality. There's no Absolute Truth. **Do whatever you like!**" So people like to hear this very

much, "Oh, I'm free, I can do whatever I want!" No you're not free, now it means you're a slave of your senses; you're a slave of your mind. But because they're given this teaching in very high-sounding words, "Oh now this is ultimate freedom!" They accept that. It's just like if someone tells you, "This is pure gold!" Then you say "Oh really!" "Yeah, buy it!" and you buy it without even looking at it. So they're taking poison. This is poison, the idea that everything is nothing. It will destroy your intelligence; it will destroy your discrimination. You will not be able to tell what is good or bad, what is right or wrong. If you accept this idea, your intelligence is ruined. But they present it very nicely, "Oh, this is freedom! See, you don't have to follow any rules, isn't that great!" So people accept it, and then they create their path to hellish existence by doing all nonsense, following the senses. The senses will be very happy to engage you in all kinds of nonsense, twenty-four hours a day, if you follow them. Intelligence is required to say to the senses, "No, this is wrong, we're not going to do this"; or "This is right, this is OK, because it's part of *bhakti*." We have to have discrimination; we have to have intelligence. That intelligence comes from the *Vedas*. And if we pervert the conclusions of the *Vedas*, then we ruin our intelligence because we cut ourselves off from the original source.

So the original conclusion of the *Vedas* is *bhakti*, nothing but *bhakti*. *Vedānta-sūtra* closes on that theme. And then the commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*—which is another great secret—the actual original commentary by the original author of *Vedānta* is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And what is *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* but the narration of so many stories about the Lord and His devotees. And it supports the same conclusion as *Vedānta-sūtra*. And our *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is the ontological analysis of the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, of the pastimes presented. So the whole Vedic literature actually presents a single, unified philosophy, a single theory; and if we accept that theory and then we act according to it, we get the results.

The *yogīs* and *jñānīs* and speculators are struggling to attain renunciation. But the devotees attain renunciation without any struggle. In fact, we're even enjoying. The *yogīs* are so dry, the *jñānīs* are even drier, because they have to forcibly give up the objects of the senses. But the devotees take those things which are in the mode of goodness, offer them to Kṛṣṇa and then they enjoy Kṛṣṇa's remnants.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: As devotees many times we engage in preaching and that involves descending into logical arguments to defeat atheistic world views and like that, but that doesn't really even touch *bhakti* right?

Bābājī: Right. All we can do is motivate people to try *bhakti*. You know, I always preach, "This is science. You want to talk about science? OK. This is science, the science of consciousness. If you perform the experiment, you will get the result. But you have to follow the instructions. Just like you don't go in the chemistry lab and start mixing stuff together; you don't know what the result is going to be. But if you follow the procedure, then you'll get the result very reliably. So similarly, the instructions for *bhakti* are given in the scriptures and if you follow them, you'll get the result. And the results are given in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. First of all, you get relief from material suffering, you get happiness, your whole life becomes auspicious, you become indifferent to liberation, Kṛṣṇa is attracted and this is very rare. These are the six main qualities of *bhakti*. But to experience this you have to come onto the *bhakti* platform."

This is another criticism that I have of my Godbrothers that, in the name of preaching they have encouraged mixed devotional service. Mixed devotional service means there's some *bhakti*, and then there are some fruitive activities: raising money, building temples, printing books, doing all these worldly activities. These are actually religious activities. They come under the mode of goodness. And people get entangled in them, thinking "This is *bhakti*," but actually it's not. Actually they're still thinking, "I am doing this for my benefit." And as long as you're thinking like that it's not *bhakti*, it's fruitive activity. Because the nature of fruitive

activity is that one performs activities for his future benefit. As long as you're thinking "I'm going to do this and get some benefit," that's not *bhakti*, that's fruitive activity. It may be in the mode of goodness; it may be pious; it may be in relation with Vedic knowledge. It may be all those things, but it's not accepted as pure *bhakti*.

Pure *bhakti* begins when we develop the intention that **we want to please Kṛṣṇa**. When we perform activities—and it could be the very same activities—but when the motivation is not to please or benefit ourselves but to please Kṛṣṇa, that's *bhakti*. And they have not made this distinction very clear. Again, in the name of "preaching." But the result is that the whole path of *bhakti* then becomes subverted or compromised with material activities. And nobody's saying anything. Instead they say, "Oh yeah, as long as you keep working and give donations to the temple you will advance in devotional service." But one day you're going to wake up and realize, "Oh man, I've been wasting my time! I could have been engaged in loving pastimes with the Lord directly." But nobody tells them that, or shows them how to do it.

So they go along day after day, year after year, not knowing the difference between mixed *bhakti* and pure *bhakti*; but it's only pure *bhakti* that gives the astonishing results of *bhāva* and *prema*. That's our aim. Our aim is not simply pious activities that lead to material benefits and promotion to higher planets or ultimately liberation or anything other than pure *bhakti*. All of that is selfishness. All of that is in the mode of goodness. It's religion. No, we're talking about something higher. We're talking about *śuddha-sattva*. *Śuddha-sattva* means pure goodness. On that platform of pure goodness is pure devotion, pure devotional service, pure *bhakti*. That is real *sāttva*. And then we get *sāttvikā-bhāva*. We automatically feel so many ecstatic symptoms in the body, we have to hold them back, otherwise we won't be able to do any service, and people will think we're nutcases. But real *bhakti* means that we're not thinking of any benefit for ourselves. And this is why the attitude of service is so important. If one

becomes a servant, he should become a servant first of Kṛṣṇa, then of his *guru*, then of the other devotees, then of all the people of the world.

So the devotee does the best service for everyone in the world simply by propagating this devotional service. Now this phase change that we're going through in our devotional community right now—which has a lot of people confused—is that we are going off the platform of mixed devotional service, where it's OK to look at *bhakti* as a way to benefit yourself. We've been preaching like that just to assemble a group of devotees, because that's preaching. You have to do that if you're preaching, because people can't understand anything else. They have to think, "Ah, what's in it for me? What's in it for number one?" So somehow you engage them in performing some kind of *bhakti* activities. And then they begin to get a taste.

So now we're saying, "OK, now you got some taste." Like that *śloka* that I quoted above [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.45], a person who has some taste for *bhakti* can appreciate *bhakti-rasa*. "So now, let's let go of this mixed *bhakti* and simply engage in pure devotional service, with no mixture of any other process of *karma*, *yoga*, or *jñāna* or whatever. That's out. Now only *bhakti*, pure *bhakti*." And that means to think of Kṛṣṇa's benefit, to think of Kṛṣṇa's happiness. That is the specific qualification of the pure devotee. The pure devotee thinks, "How can I please Kṛṣṇa?" And we **trust** Kṛṣṇa. Now here's where the self-benefit comes in. We trust Kṛṣṇa, that Kṛṣṇa's character is so high, Kṛṣṇa is so pure and so loving, Kṛṣṇa is so generous and kind, that if I dedicate my life to pleasing Him, I don't have to worry about anything: Kṛṣṇa will take care. And it's a fact; He does it. We're all experiencing that; that's why we're here. So now we want to encourage the other people who are part of our community to come onto this platform of pure *bhakti*. That's why we're studying *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and that's why we're doing so many things now, just to establish this platform of pure *bhakti*. And any taste that you want, any flavor of *bhakti* that you want, that's fine. You have complete freedom in how you approach Kṛṣṇa. He doesn't mind. He will accept everyone.

He says, that "However they approach Me, then I'll reciprocate." That's His promise, and He makes good on that promise, we know.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: Just a comment. You mention sometimes that people do things that they do just because they feel like it. You know, all kinds of people: materialists, spiritualists, whatever. And even something like this, someone who's engaged in *bhakti* is not swayed by any kind of logical arguments or whatever, because he enjoys what he is doing and nothing else really matters. I remember once I was talking with someone and having some argument about evolution or some material science nonsense. And finally the guy was frustrated and said, "And someday if I'm able to like prove to you that your theory is not correct, would you stop being a devotee?" And I thought about it and I was like, "Actually no. I like it; it doesn't matter what you prove or whatever. Actually I like doing this."

Bābājī: Well what can prove? That if you like something and you get pleasure from it, then how can anybody prove that it's wrong?

Nava-yauvana dāsa: It's completely subjective. You can't prove that I don't feel what I feel.

Bābājī: And consciousness **is** completely subjective. That's the nature of consciousness. That's why each individual has their own separate consciousness. And nobody can know the contents of another person's consciousness unless they reveal it. So this means that actually nobody can present a convincing argument of why you should give up *bhakti*; on the other hand, nobody can present a convincing argument of why you should take up *bhakti*. You just have to try it. "Try it, you'll like it." That's really the only argument. And all these other philosophical, complex entanglements and all that, we really have no taste for that. We don't like this debating mood. We just want to please Kṛṣṇa, and if Kṛṣṇa is pleased then we're pleased.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: Even if you like spend time learning logic and how to present arguments and all that, that's completely dry compared to us having *saṅkīrtana*. It's something that we have to do as devotees to get other people out of material existence. Right?

Bābājī: It's part of our compassionate nature. But you know, it's far better to engage people directly in *bhakti* by hearing and chanting *māha-mantra*.

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*

“Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words)—these nine processes are accepted as pure devotional service.” [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.23]

So if we give directly the Holy Name, this was actually the most successful preaching program that we ever had in the West or in India here, was to go out on the street and do real *saṅkīrtan*. Prabhupāda set this up. He would have the devotees put down a nice oriental rug, and then one devotee with the harmonium would lead, there would be *tāṇpura*, and *mṛdaṅga*, *kartāls*, on one side there would be a food table, *prasādam* table, and the other side there would be book table. This was a dynamite program, and so many devotees were made that way in New York, in California, in Canada, everywhere. This was **the best program** because it directly gave people, without any argument, without any philosophy, the sound of the Holy Name being chanted very nicely. And Prabhupāda even taught them how to dance the *svāmī* step. We're learning how to dance now, a little bit.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: It's like a little piece of the spiritual world, right there on the street.

Bābājī: It's a little play; it's a little street theater of Caitanya-*līlā*. This is what we're working toward. We're working toward being able to present Caitanya-*līlā* in a very attractive way, a very powerful way, that everyone can appreciate. But anyway, I'm getting off the subject.

Uddhava dāsa: I don't know if this has ever happened. I'm sure [it's] very likely, if a devotee only focuses all his energy to serving his *guru*, is that considered pure *bhakti*?

Bābājī: Oh, of course. Because what is a *guru* going to tell you? Chant the Holy Name, take *prasādam*, serve the Deities, observe four regulative principles, study scriptures. I mean, actually, actually *guru-sevā* is everything. By *guru-sevā* we become advanced in devotional service. If we make any offense to the *guru* that's always a cause of falldown. So, *guru-sevā* is the most powerful method of advanced and also the most powerful method of offense. So we should be very, very cautious about serving *guru* nicely. But *guru* is not going to say "Serve me," he is going to say "Serve Kṛṣṇa in this way, in that way, in so many ways." And, in this way, automatically, all of our best purposes are served. Because all the things that the *guru* instructs us to do are good for us and good for everyone. This highest service is done automatically by serving *guru*, because *guru* is representative of Kṛṣṇa.

Uddhava dāsa: Yes sometimes when we get University students, we encourage everyone to render service. So I asked myself "What is better, if we do some service to Bābājī, or do some service to Kṛṣṇa by setting up an altar and like that?" and sometimes I don't know what to say. Usually I end up saying "Do some service to Bābājī, and you'll get a taste."

Bābājī: Well, if they do service to *guru*, *guru* is going to tell them, "Set up an altar at home, cook some nice *prasādam*, offer it to Kṛṣṇa, distribute it to your friends." He will tell them to do all these things. It's not that we

want people, coming and giving us things or sending us money; we don't need any of that. We want them to engage in Kṛṣṇa's service and then Kṛṣṇa will take care of all these things automatically. This is why I keep telling people who write me about their material problems to just chant *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma*. Somebody was writing the other day, "Oh I had this operation and it wasn't done properly and now my leg hurts and it's so much trouble and I can't work and *di di di di da*, this and that—can I come to Kumbakonam?" Your leg is still going to hurt when you come to Kumbakonam, it's not going to change that. But, if you please Kṛṣṇa from wherever you are, then automatically your attention will go away from the body and you won't feel these physical problems. You won't be subject this material suffering, because you'll be engaged in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, transcendental consciousness. And this body will become so insignificant because Kṛṣṇa is so unlimited. So actually this is the solution to all problems, but people want to get some benefit on the material platform, so they don't recognize the benefits of *bhakti*, even though they're absolute and transcendental. So this is their misfortune, what can I say?

Chapter 5: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.6-9

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, October 30, 2009

*bhakti-rasasya prastutir akhila-jagaṇ-maṅgala-prasaṅgasya
ajñenāpi mayāsyā kriyate suhrdām pramodāya*

“Though I am ignorant, I have undertaken this work concerning *bhakti-rasa* related to Kṛṣṇa, who is auspicious for the whole world, for the joy of my friends.” [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.6]

This is a very nice sentiment that he's expressing, and every devotee feels this. Because when we encounter Kṛṣṇa, or anything related to Kṛṣṇa, this is so high, so pure, and so beautiful that when we consider our own faults and our own ignorance, then we feel very unqualified. This is a *rasa* called *dainya*. *Dainya* means humility. And this is one of the chief features of the *śānta-rasa*. *Śānta-rasa* means the neutral adoration in awe and reverence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. And so the platform of actual religious life, actual spiritual life begins from this feeling of *dainya* that, "O my dear Lord, You're so wonderful, You're so magnificent, You have so many beautiful qualities, so many transcendental potencies, so many wonderful pastimes, and so many great devotees, and I'm just nothing. I really don't know anything, I just have this desire in my heart, somehow or other, to advance in spiritual life." So he's saying, "Therefore, even though I'm ignorant, I've taken up this work concerning *bhakti-rasa* to Kṛṣṇa for the joy of my friends." In other words, "Even though I'm unqualified, even though I'm a rascal, even though I'm fallen, I'm fool number one; still for the pleasure of the other devotees I'm taking up this work." This should be our attitude, that "I don't know anything, I'm just fallen and rascal in so many ways; but to please my spiritual master and the other devotees, I'm taking up this service even though I don't know how to do it, even though I'm unqualified to do it." And of course the implication is there that "Kṛṣṇa will somehow give His mercy and enable me to complete this work, because I'm doing it for the pleasure of His devotees."

So we all feel like that. We've discussed so many times how I feel very unqualified for this work. It was not my desire actually to do what we're doing now. But to please Śrīla Prabhupāda, I had to take this up, because I could see that nobody else was actually following his instructions. Therefore, out of a desire to please Śrīla Prabhupāda, and actually any devotees who are sincere, I took up this work, simply because nobody else was doing it. Really that was the only reason. And that feeling has motivated me for many years now; has motivated my service and my preaching activities. So recently now that has changed a little bit, because by Kṛṣṇa's grace now we have some devotees who are actually serious, dedicated and ready to go into pure *bhakti*. This is what we've been aiming at all this time. Very soon in the eleventh verse will come the definition of pure *bhakti*, and of course we'll go into that very deeply, maybe for several days just to make sure that everybody perfectly understands what pure *bhakti* really is. Because this is the whole point; this is why we started our own *saṅga*. This is why we developed our own line of preaching. This is why we created a small organization dedicated to this Esoteric Teaching of the *Vedas*. Because we could see that even though there are so many devotees who are engaged in devotional service to some degree, that there wasn't anyone who was engaged in **pure** *bhakti*. And mostly what they were doing was **mixed** *bhakti*—*bhakti* mixed with something else—usually fruitive activity. This is very common. Someone will join a group or organization of *bhakti* simply because they want some benefits. Kṛṣṇa says:

"Four kinds of people surrender unto Me: those in need of money, those who want relief from distress, those who are curious, and (the rarest of all) those who have knowledge of the Absolute Truth." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.16]

Now those four kinds of men, He calls them pious. They're pious, but He doesn't call them transcendental. They're not on the transcendental platform because they're motivated by their own personal benefit. They want something for themselves. They're engaging in devotional service with the hope that they will get some relief from their distress, or they'll

get some economic development, they'll get some knowledge that they didn't have before, or because they know they have to do it as their duty. So all of these motivations are less than the motivation required for pure *bhakti*. The motivation for pure *bhakti* is simply that "I want to please Kṛṣṇa. I want to love Kṛṣṇa. I want to give Kṛṣṇa pleasure." That's all. Pure *bhakti* does not have any relation to this material world. It does not have any effect on this material body. It doesn't have any material benefit. It doesn't give any blessings that you can take to the bank. Pure *bhakti* is completely transcendental, completely spiritual. Therefore, when we talk about pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service, we're saying—and we're really serious about this—that we want our disciples and our students to rise to this same standard.

Now notice when we talk about pure *bhakti*, we don't talk about a **quantity** of *bhakti*. It's automatically assumed that a pure devotee is going to be engaged twenty-four hours a day in *bhakti* and they're not going to be doing anything else. Some devotees think, "Well, if I do more service then I'll make more advancement. So if I'm engaged in six hours a day, if I engage twelve hours a day then I'll make more advancement." But first you have to consider the **quality** of your devotional service; not just the quantity, but the quality. If someone is engaged in mixed devotional service... let's say they are collecting money. That's their main service. So they think, "Well, if I go out and I collect money twelve hours a day, that'll be more service and I'll make more advancement." But actually it doesn't work that way. We make advancement in devotional service not by the quantity but by the **quality** of our service. There's that famous verse in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* that:

"Even if a dog-eater chants the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa without offense one time, he immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices."
[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.33.6]

And we'll discuss that verse deeply in this work; it's coming up later on in the First Wave. Because it is very important to understand that the **quality** of devotional service is much more important than the quantity. You can

chant a hundred rounds a day of offensive *māha-mantra*, and you will not get the advancement that you get by chanting even one name of Kṛṣṇa offenselessly. Because of course, to chant one name of Kṛṣṇa offenselessly, the rest of your life has to be offenseless as well. But if you're chanting with offense, or if you're doing service that's contaminated by some desire for fruitive activity, mental speculation, mystical powers or any kind of selfish desire whatsoever, then you will not get the same benefit; you'll not get the same level of reciprocation from Kṛṣṇa as if you chant or serve purely, with no selfish desire. People can say, "Well, I get up early in the morning and I follow all these rules and then I'm engaged according to the order of my spiritual master and he's in the *paramparā* and so whatever he says, that should be pure devotional service, right?" Well, maybe it is and maybe it isn't. You have to look into your heart. This is on the honor system; this is not something that we can judge externally. We have to look into our hearts, each and every one of us and say, "Am I doing this devotional service really for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, or is it really for my pleasure somehow or other? Am I expecting some material return or reciprocation from Kṛṣṇa, or am I just doing this because I want to give Kṛṣṇa pleasure, and there's no other reason for it?"

It all boils down to: how much do we trust Kṛṣṇa? Do we trust Kṛṣṇa that He's going to reciprocate with us spontaneously in an inconceivable and astonishing and wonderful way? Or do we want to make a deal with Kṛṣṇa? "Kṛṣṇa, I'll tell you what, I'll chant sixteen rounds a day and then You solve my material problems." See, that's making a deal with Kṛṣṇa; and that's *karma-yoga*, that's not devotional service. That's activity in the mode of goodness, it's not transcendental activity. Transcendental activity means that we perform service for Kṛṣṇa out of a desire to please Kṛṣṇa alone, and we don't expect any particular result from that service. We're detached from the result because we understand that Kṛṣṇa is so intelligent, and so resourceful and so insightful and so loving, and so wonderful and kind, that He will arrange some benediction for us that's beyond our ability to even imagine. Why should we ask trivial material things from Kṛṣṇa? Kṛṣṇa can give anything. He can give something that's

beyond our ability to imagine; beyond our ability to understand. Something that's so wonderful that we could never anticipate it, we could never speculate it, we could never imagine it. He can give Himself. And if Kṛṣṇa gives Himself, then who cares if we're in the material world or the spiritual world, or in heaven, or hell or wherever we are, or what situation were in? We will be in so much bliss that we won't have time to notice. So the real reward that we get from loving Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa Himself. And that really should be all that we desire. After all, if we get Kṛṣṇa we get everything. So we should let go of these petty desires for material things, or even spiritual things like liberation, and just trust Kṛṣṇa, that He is going to reward our service in such a way that is so wonderful and astonishing that we won't be able to even imagine it.

Look at the story of Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa. Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa was Kṛṣṇa's class friend, so He was already a pure devotee, he was already an associate of the Lord. But later on he had some problem with economics: he was very, very poor. And so he went and visited Kṛṣṇa and offered Kṛṣṇa just a couple of palms of chipped rice. Chipped rice is the lowest quality of rice. It's not even considered offerable in many temples. So, somehow or other, Sudāmā offered Kṛṣṇa this chipped rice and then he forgot to ask for a benediction. He didn't ask for anything; he just said, "O Kṛṣṇa, thank you for being so kind to me." Kṛṣṇa received him very nicely, and sat him on His own bed, washed his feet and so many other things. And then Sudāmā went home and when he got back to his place he said, "Well, what's going on here?" There were all these heavenly buildings and beautiful people dressed in wonderful garments and jewels and everything. His own wife came out and she was so beautiful, she was in the spiritual body, he couldn't even recognize her. She had to say "I'm your wife." And then they embraced, and as soon as she embraced him he regained his spiritual body. And then they lived in this wonderful opulence, but who knows where they were: the material world, the spiritual world, it doesn't matter. Because if we have Kṛṣṇa's association, if we have Kṛṣṇa's pure devotional service, it doesn't matter what situation we're in. We'll be so happy, we'll be so overwhelmed with bliss, because *bhakti-yoga* is pure

concentrated bliss: pure *bhakti*. That's the nature of pure *bhakti*. That's what it is. Pure *bhakti* is so wonderful that it attracts even Kṛṣṇa.

We'll go into all these qualities of pure *bhakti* as we study this book, but I just want to summarize them so you understand the importance of pure *bhakti* versus motivated *bhakti*: *miśra-bhakti*, mixed *bhakti*, or *bhakti* that has some other goal other than satisfying Kṛṣṇa. That's certainly pious activity, and it's in the mode of goodness, and it will lead to so many good things. Whatever you desire you can get from *bhakti*; but the point here is that whatever you can desire is going to be less than the ultimate benefit attainable by *bhakti*, which is Kṛṣṇa Himself. Kṛṣṇa's body is made of pure transcendental bliss. So if we get Kṛṣṇa then, who cares where we are? Who cares who we are? It's explained that the devotees in Kṛṣṇa's association, His direct companions, are filled with so much bliss they even forget their own names, and where they are and what they're doing. They just become completely overwhelmed, because Kṛṣṇa's body is pure ecstasy. So this is our desire: we want Kṛṣṇa. We want Kṛṣṇa, and He is attainable only by pure love.

So let me read the commentary. Jīva Gosvāmī is commenting on his uncle's book, and he says:

"The meaning of this verse is 'I do not really have the power to bring about conciliation between scholars who are favorable and unfavorable to spiritual *rasa*.'"

In other words, "We don't want to get into debates with different scholars. We don't want to try to prove that we're right and they're wrong, and get involved in all this entanglement and debates and arguments, making logical constructions from the scriptures and so on and so forth. Because all this logic and argument is very insubstantial. You'll hear someone argue a particular point and you'll say, "Yeah, that makes sense. Yeah, that's right." And then you'll take up that opinion. Then later on you'll hear another logician, who may be better than the first one, and he'll argue an opposing point and you'll go, "Huh, well you see, I never thought about it

that way. I guess that's right!" And then you'll change your opinion. So what use are all these opinions and logic and argument?

We talked about this last night, that *bhakti* is ultimately depending on taste. And if we have a taste for *bhakti*, then we'll recognize the beauty of *bhakti*, and if we don't have any taste for *bhakti*, it doesn't matter how many logical arguments we make, we won't get it. It's something that you have to 'get,' like a joke. Did you hear that one about the horse, walked into a bar? [laughs] See, I don't even have to tell the rest of the joke, everybody knows it already, you know? It's a standard joke, right? So they get it; they have a sense of humor, so they get it. Somebody else without a sense of humor might be listening to this, saying "Well, then what happened?" But if you have to explain the joke, it loses its humor, its taste. "Horse walking into a bar," that's funny all by itself, because it never happens. So in the same way when we say that *bhakti* is about pure love of the Supreme Personality of Godhead—if you get it, you go "Wow! That's astonishing. That's great. That's terrific. I want to hear more." And if you don't get it, you're like, [in a square announcer's voice] "Well, why would anyone want to do that?" [to the square:] "That's OK, just go back to your TV and forget this. This is not for you."

So if you can understand, if you can get the significance of pure love of the Supreme Lord, then *bhakti* is for you. To the degree that this makes sense to you, or to the degree that you have taste for it, then that is the degree that you have had previous contact with *bhakti*, either a previous life or this life or somehow or other, by mercy, by practice, or by taste.

This verse expresses the sentiment of humility, just as in verse two he calls himself ignorant, *ajñā*, out of humility; however, there's another meaning of *ajñā*, a positive meaning, which means, "With whom no wise man can compare." In that case, the word *āpi* would function as an expletive with no particular meaning. *Ajñenāpi*, in the second line, beginning in the second line, *ajñenāpi*, *ajñā-ena-āpi*, if you separate the words.

So in that case it means that Rūpa Gosvāmī, actually he's not ignorant, actually he's a scholar beyond compare, no one can compare with him. Why? Because he sees clearly to the essence of the *Vedas*, and he speaks from that place. He speaks from the highest conclusion of the Esoteric Teaching of the *Vedas*, which is pure love of Godhead without any motivation, without any cessation. Because when we love God purely, it's so ecstatic that we don't want to do anything else. We don't feel like doing anything else. We don't have to do anything else. We don't have to break our devotional service to do other things.

Now we had an incident the other day where somebody was saying, "Well, I'm engaged in so many business affairs that I don't have time to chant sixteen rounds of *māha-mantra*, so I'm chanting this other *mantra* that takes less time." And you see, this is a problem. One should not chant a *mantra* because it takes less time. You see how that is a completely mixed-up kind of logic? Because the *mantra*, the very nature of a *mantra* is beyond this material world, beyond time. It's eternal, it's part of the spiritual world. So there should never be any consideration of time in the chanting of a transcendental *mantra*.

Either the time of day, or the order or sequence of events that has to take place, or the amount of time required to chant a specified number of repetitions of the *mantra*—these should not be any consideration. If they are, then we're placed in the absurd position of putting material limitations on a transcendental process—which is absurd. The whole point of chanting the *mantra* is to transcend material limitations. So if we then put material limitations on the *mantra*, then that's a *reductio ad absurdum* which nullifies the whole point of chanting the *mantra*.

Man means mind and *tra* means free or deliver, it comes from the word *trayate*; *trayate* is a Sanskrit verb meaning to free or deliver. So *mantra* means to free the mind. From what? From the qualities of material existence. So if we then try to impose qualities of materialism on the *mantra*, or the chanting or the practice of the *mantra*, or the meaning of

the *mantra*, or anything having to do with it, that's absurd. That's a logical contradiction. So this is materialistic thinking. We don't admit, or we don't accept this kind of materialistic logic in devotional service. Devotional service is completely transcendental. That means *bhakti* has no conditions that apply to it.

For example, it's stated in the *Padma Purāṇa*—also in the *Ādi Purāṇa*—that there is no qualification or limitation on who can practice *bhakti*. It's not that one has to have a certain kind of birth, or a certain kind of body, or a particular level of intelligence or any other material quality; anyone and everyone can practice *bhakti*. For example, the first item of devotional service is hearing; and anyone can hear, especially the *kīrtana* of the Holy Name. Even a dog and cat, they can hear, and they actually make advancement by that hearing. In the next life, in their human life, they get an opportunity to meet with devotees and to practice devotional service. So we can understand that this devotional service is so auspicious because it has no material limitations. Even the type of body that we have is not a consideration at all. Anyone and everyone, even animals can practice *bhakti* by hearing. And any human can chant the Holy Name; anyone can go “Hare Kṛṣṇa” or “Hare Rāma.” *Rāma* is a very common sound in many different languages. So, we can understand that anyone who thinks the *mantra* should be subject to some material conditions has misunderstood the whole point. This is what inevitably happens when we try to mix a lifestyle that contains both spiritual and material activities. Because material activities are contentious and competitive by their very nature. As soon as I try to do something in the material world, there's somebody who'll oppose me, somebody who'll try to stop me. There'll be some friction, there'll be some resistance. And as soon as I try to accomplish anything in this world, there's going to be some competition. Somebody else is going to try to do it better, faster, cheaper, or whatever.

So, material activities are competitive, and when we try to mix them spiritual activities then there's going to be some competition or some contention between our spiritual life and our material life. And usually this

manifests in the form of time. Because trying to make a living by performing fruitive activities is very time-consuming. It takes many hours a day, many hours a week. But because we are conditioned by the idea that we are the doer, we are the owner, we're the controller, we're the knower, the enjoyer, and so many other things which are false—we think that "I have to take care of myself; I have to make my living, otherwise I won't be able to maintain my life." We don't understand that Kṛṣṇa is not a poor man. And that Kṛṣṇa promises in the scriptures that He will maintain the souls that are surrendered unto Him.

So if we trust Kṛṣṇa, if we really understand Kṛṣṇa and trust Him, then as soon as we understand the importance of pure devotional service, we'll give up all these material activities, and trust that Kṛṣṇa is going to maintain us somehow or other. We don't know how; how He does it is very mysterious. But somehow everything is coming because we are engaged on this platform of pure devotional service. We're not doing any material activities. For a while we thought we would have to raise money by our own independent work, and we were trying stock investments and so many other things. But as soon as we did that then Kṛṣṇa showed us, actually no, He doesn't want us doing that. And so as soon as we gave it up, and we stopped doing this investment, more money came to us than we ever made in investments, just by preaching.

So if one becomes a pure devotee of the Lord, the Lord will certainly meet His promise to maintain His devotees: those who are surrendered. Now if you're not surrendered, if you're not following all the principles, or if you're not fully hundred percent engaged in devotional service, then there's no guarantee that Kṛṣṇa is going to maintain you. Because to the degree that you want to act for your own benefit, then you're not engaged in pure devotional service; you're not surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. It's just like as if, let's say you get married to somebody and they say "Well, six nights a week I sleep with you, and then the other night I sleep with somebody else." Are you going to accept that? You'd have to be a fool to accept that. So similarly, if we are giving some part of our time to Kṛṣṇa, and then

another part of our time we're acting for our own benefit, in fruitive material activities, then what is Kṛṣṇa going to think? "Oh this nonsense, he's not really surrendered to Me. He's just pretending to be a devotee. He's a very, very neophyte devotee. He doesn't even trust Me to take care of him. I the Supreme Lord, the Creator of all the universes, and he thinks I cannot maintain My own devotee. Ha!" Kṛṣṇa's just going to laugh. It's like, "Hey, let Me know when you get serious, OK?"

Then you're on your own; well, that's where you wanted to be, wasn't it? So Kṛṣṇa gives you the result of your desire, and there you are on your own, having to make your own way in the world. And that necessity of making your own way is going to conflict with the time that you want to invest in *bhakti*, and that's going to reduce your advancement, reduce your consciousness, and so many other things. That's why it's so critical that we propagate the understanding of pure devotional service. *Uttama-bhakti*: pure *bhakti*, with no mixture of fruitive activities, or speculation, or mystic powers, or any other thing, or any other desire. If I'm engaged in devotional service and I have some other desire, "Oh I want this, I want that, I want to do this, go here, whatever." Then we're cheating ourselves.

We're not cheating Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa can't be cheated; He's the Supreme, He knows everything that's going on. But we're cheating ourselves, because if we have the opportunity to engage in pure devotional service—and anyone hearing this has that opportunity, by our association—then if you still are maintaining some other desire in your heart, you're simply cheating yourself. You're simply delaying your engagement in pure devotional service. Now why would anybody want to do that? I can't understand. Maybe I have limited intelligence. That must be it. I can't understand why anybody who has the opportunity to engage in activities of pure bliss twenty-four hours a day, would want to do anything else! It's like the little men in the black coats in that cartoon you know, "I don't want to be happy, I want to be sad." Remember that? "Sunshine Makers?" Beats me.

So now the next few verses, 7 through 10 talk about the structure of the book, structure of *bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. And I'm not going to read the Sanskrit because it's not really that significant. Verse seven translation is:

"The divisions of the book: In this sweet ocean of *bhakti-rasa* offered to the Lord, four sections, starting with the eastern section, will be expounded one after another." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.7]

There are four divisions: the Eastern, the Southern, the Western, and the Northern. He calls them divisions, which I find rather dry. Even though the word is there, *vibhāga*, or *bhāgā*, I like to call them oceans. Just like we have the Pacific, the Atlantic, the Arabian Ocean, and so many other oceans. So I call them the Eastern Ocean, the Southern Ocean, the Western Ocean, and the Northern Ocean. So verse eight:

"The Eastern Ocean defines the different types of *bhakti*. This will be discussed in four successive waves. [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.8]

Every ocean has waves. And it's a wonderful metaphor that Rūpa Gosvāmī is using, because *bhakti* is just like an ocean of nectar. And in any great ocean there's bound to be successive waves, one after another. So in the Eastern Ocean there are four waves, or chapters. And in verse nine he says:

"The first wave of the Eastern Ocean is concerned with *bhakti* in general. The Second Wave describes *sādhana-bhakti*, the Third Wave describes *bhāva-bhakti*, the Fourth Wave describes *prema-bhakti*." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.9]

Let's talk about that a little bit. Now, when he says *bhakti*, he means pure *bhakti*. And actually the only section in which he discusses anything that is outside of pure *bhakti* is in the Second Wave on *sādhana-bhakti*, because *sādhana-bhakti* also includes the stage of mixed *bhakti*. And basically all he is going to say about mixed *bhakti* is that it exists; and some people—**who knows why?**—think that they have to do it. But our actual focus, our actual interest is in pure *bhakti* only. Pure *bhakti* begins in the second stage of *sādhana-bhakti*. *Sādhana-bhakti* is divided into two

stages: the stage of *vaidhī-bhakti*, which means devotional service according to the rules and regulations of the scriptures, and *rāgānuga-bhakti*. *Rāgānuga-bhakti* means devotional service by the potency of spontaneous love. Then the next stage is *bhāva-bhakti*; and in *bhāva-bhakti* the ecstatic emotions begin to manifest. And in *prema-bhakti* these emotions reach tremendous concentration and power, and that's the actual stage of perfection.

So the First Wave of the Eastern Ocean describes pure *bhakti* in general, the characteristics of pure *bhakti*. Then the Second Wave describes *sādhana-bhakti*, which means practice. Practice means you're not perfect. Every musician knows about practice. Actually anyone who has acquired any kind of skill, whether it's sports, or mechanics, or any kind of knowledge or anything, they know that you have to practice; if you don't practice, then you can't reach the expert stage. So the three stages of *bhakti* are: *sādhana-bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti*, and *prema-bhakti*. And *sādhana-bhakti* is divided into *vaidhī-bhakti* and *rāgānuga-bhakti*. We'll explain all these terms very, very thoroughly. So don't get confused just by hearing it. Then in the tenth verse, he opens the subject of the First Wave. Up until now this has been like the introduction, like the, almost like the invocation and then the table of contents. And finally in the tenth verse, he describes the actual subject:

"In the First Wave or chapter, in order to describe clearly the superiority of *bhakti* to other processes, the unique characteristics of *uttama-bhakti* will be related as approved by the *ācāryas*." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.10]

I'm not going to go into this verse deeply now because I want to spend a lot of time on the tenth and eleventh verses. The eleventh verse has a very extensive purport. But we've talked about this: the actual subject of this book is pure *bhakti*. He does mention the preliminary stage of *bhakti* practice in the chapter on *sādhana-bhakti*, but he doesn't spend much time on it, and he basically says that it is the introductory stage. When a person first comes to *bhakti*, then in the beginning they have to follow the rules

and regulations. But as soon as one gets a taste for *bhakti*, then the rules and regulations become subservient to one's taste or desire to perform *bhakti*. And this is known as *rāgānuga*, spontaneous attraction. *Rāga* comes from the term *rāgātmika*. *Rāga* means "a very strong emotional attachment." And *ātmā*, of course, is the soul. So *rāgātmika* means "a person whose soul has a very strong emotional attachment to Kṛṣṇa." We see this in the liberated souls, the eternal associates of the Lord, and His companions and servitors who accompany Him when He appears on different planets. And these are all described very elaborately in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And many examples are given in this book, and you'll see so many examples from different stories of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*; and of course we're going to take the opportunity to relate some of those stories so that you will hear the context in which the examples that are given actually take place. But what I want to talk about tonight, is the fact that the theme of the whole first chapter is how **pure *bhakti* is superior to any other practice**. And of course we already talked about the basic principle of that superiority is the fact that *bhakti* is completely transcendental. It does not rely on any material situation, or qualities, or activities.

Then the question may come up, "Well, we have to perform the activities of *bhakti* with our material bodily senses, so then how can you say that *bhakti* is not dependent on any material conditions or activities, because we have to use the body in order to perform these activities?" Because the activities of *bhakti* can be performed just as easily with the spiritual body as with the material body; in fact much easier, because the spiritual body is naturally inclined towards *bhakti*. Whereas the material body is conditioned by material nature, and we have to overcome that conditioning before we're able to actually perform *bhakti* in the material body. So, no, it's not dependent on the material body. The material body is simply an instrument. If we happen to be identified with the material body, then that's the tool that we use to do these activities of *bhakti*. But the activities of *bhakti* can very easily be performed in the spiritual body as well. So there is no material impediment, no material condition, no material requirement or resources necessary to perform *bhakti*. *Bhakti* can

be performed even in the mind by visualization. It doesn't require anything. You could be totally paralyzed in the hospital, and you could perform the activities of *bhakti* by your imagination only, and that's perfectly valid. It has just the same effects as performing those activities physically, or in the spiritual body; it doesn't matter. Whatever body, whatever vehicle, whatever form of existence you have available to you, you can engage that in *bhakti*. You could be in heaven, in hell, on Earth, in the spiritual world, in the material world; it doesn't matter. You can perform *bhakti* **simply by desiring to**. That's the great and wonderful thing about *bhakti*, is that there's absolutely nothing that can stop anyone from performing *bhakti*. Because **everyone can speak, everyone can hear, so everyone can chant and hear**. And you might say, "Well, the people around me don't like this idea of *bhakti*; so I have to do it only when I'm alone." Well why are you associated with people who are against *bhakti*? That's actually one of the principles of *bhakti*, that we give up the association of people who are against *bhakti*, because they're demons. And why should we live with demons? We don't want to live with demons. In fact, there's even a *śloka*:

"It's better to live within a cage of fire, or embrace a snake or tiger, than to keep association with materialistic people who are against the chanting of the Holy Name, against the practice of *bhakti*, or engaged in materialistic religion (worship of the demigods, and fruitive activities, stuff like that). What to speak of sinful activities. One should not associate with those kind of people." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.111-112]

So this is one of the big stumbling blocks on the path of *bhakti*, is that in the beginning, we tend to regard it as another material activity which is subject to all the limitations and conditions of material life. But it's not. *Bhakti* is completely unconditioned and unconditional; it's eternal, it's spiritual, it's transcendental. Just like Kṛṣṇa; you never find Kṛṣṇa being limited by the modes of material nature. And similarly, you can never find a situation where *bhakti* is limited either. *Bhakti* is of the same quality as the Supreme Lord. So by associating with the activities of *bhakti*, one associates with Kṛṣṇa directly. Because all these activities of *bhakti* have

the same quality as Kṛṣṇa, they're completely transcendental, completely unconditioned.

So try to understand this platform of *bhakti*, how wonderful it is; how special it is, how unique and rare it is. That is one of the qualities of *bhakti*: pure *bhakti* is very, very rare. Even among thousands of people—this is no exaggeration—even among thousands of people who know the Absolute Truth of the *Vedas*, you might find one or two who are actually practicing pure *bhakti*. So, even those people who are in a liberated condition, due to their Vedic knowledge and so on like that, they may not be practicing pure *bhakti*, probably not. Even though they may say, “Oh I'm a devotee, and I've been chanting for so many years, and I'm doing this and I'm doing that,” we generally find that there is some mixture of material desires, they want to have a good name or a nice position, or they want to be famous or powerful, or there's some politics involved or something is going on that's not pure *bhakti*. So we have to be very careful to know the symptoms of pure *bhakti*, and all these things will be described in such tremendous detail in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, that simply by following this series, by the association of hearing these topics, you will also become situated on that platform. That's our aim, and that's the purpose of this series.

Question from Gopal: "Hare Kṛṣṇa! Please accept my humble obeisances, Bābājī and the monks. Could you please give some more examples of the quality of *bhakti* and how can one improve the quality? How does one know that his quality of service is improving?"

Bābājī: Well, how do you know, when you eat a nice meal, that you're full? Because you feel satisfied. Similarly, how do you know that your quality of *bhakti* is improving? Well, how much do you love Kṛṣṇa? How much of your life do you act simply for the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa? That's your *bhakti* quotient. So if you're spending ten percent of your time trying to please Kṛṣṇa, then you're ten-percent *bhakti*. If you're spending hundred-percent of your time trying to please Kṛṣṇa, then you're hundred-percent

bhakti. We're aiming at hundred-percent. Anyone who is on that platform is very advanced and they're going to a very, very nice place. Actually they're already there; anyone who is fully, hundred-percent engaged in pure *bhakti*. Now, you have to examine your own heart; you have to be very honest with yourself: "Am I doing this devotional service because I want something? Or am I doing this devotional service because I want to please Kṛṣṇa?" What is your desire? You can't fool Kṛṣṇa. You can fool us maybe, but you can't fool Him. So, Kṛṣṇa knows; so you also, you should judge yourself by the degree to which you honestly desire to please Kṛṣṇa, to give Kṛṣṇa your love. This is real *bhakti*. It's very easy actually, and there are also different criteria mentioned in the scriptures, and we'll get to those one-by-one, one. But first of all, one should be completely free from material activities. That's the standard of pure *bhakti*. If you're still engaged in material activities, then there's no question of being in pure *bhakti*. So you have to inspect yourself, you have to be honest with yourself. And say, "How much of my life, how much of my energy is actually engaged in pleasing Kṛṣṇa?" And that's the degree of your advancement in pure *bhakti*.

Uddhava dāsa: Another question from him, "Are there any ways to know that Lord Kṛṣṇa is feeling pleased with our service? Any examples?"

Bābajī: Well again, if you're pleased, if you're satisfied, if you're happy, if you're in bliss, if you're feeling detachment, if you're feeling peace, and especially if you're feeling transcendental emotions, *bhāva* and the symptoms of *sāttvika-bhāva*, then you're certainly feeling *bhakti* and Kṛṣṇa is certainly pleased. So all these things will be discussed in tremendous detail in this series. But in brief, if Kṛṣṇa is really pleased, then you will be experiencing ecstatic emotions, spiritual emotions, and especially spiritual bliss, and you'll be experiencing *sāttvika-bhāvas*. There are eight *sāttvika-bhāvas*: tears, choking of the voice, standing of the hair, shaking of the body, fainting, changing of the complexion, and so on. These *sāttvika-bhāvas* are intense experiences of ecstasy. And those who are in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness feel all these things internally all the

time, and sometimes when they're especially intense, they'll also manifest outwardly in the body. So that's how you can know. It's similar to what we were talking about before: If you eat a nice full meal then you'll be very satisfied; nobody has to tell you. You don't have to ask anybody else, "Am I satisfied?" Remember that joke? Two psychiatrists are walking down the hall, and one says, "Good morning Doctor," and the second one says, "Good morning Doctor, how am I?" and then the third, the other doctor says "You're fine, how am I?" It's ridiculous, right? Because nobody needs someone else to tell them how they are. Of course psychiatrists don't know that, because they're too intelligent. But any normal person, they know if they're happy or sad or satisfied or unsatisfied; we also know. So if our spiritual desires are satisfied—if we're feeling bliss, if we're feeling happiness—to the degree that we're feeling unhappy in any way, that means we are imperfect in our spiritual practices. Because one who is practicing *bhakti-yoga* very nicely is always in bliss, always happy. Because that's what *bhakti* is: pure bliss. Concentrated, full-strength bliss. So anyone who practices this *bhakti-yoga* even for a little while, they know this, they feel this. So if you're feeling sufficient bliss, that means you're happy, then you're well situated. But if you're still feeling like, "No, actually, I want more," then you have to increase your standard of practice. And again, it's not the **quantity** of practice, it's the **quality** of practice. Every time we talk about degree of advancement in *bhakti*, we assume that you're a hundred-percent engaged in devotional service without any other activities. If that's not there, then you're not even in the ballpark. But assuming that you are fully engaged twenty-four hours a day in *bhakti-yoga*, then the quality of that practice becomes the determining factor. So, any more questions?

Question from Gopal: "Hare Kṛṣṇa! How does one overcome the material body conditioning so that the senses can be used for *bhakti*?"

Bābajī: Well, Śrīla Prabhupāda always gave the example of a cup of coffee. You know coffee is nasty stuff, right? Very material. So you take your cup of coffee, and you begin to pour milk into it; and then gradually

the color becomes lighter. And then if you continue pouring milk, even the cup of coffee overflows, but you continue pouring; after some time there won't be any coffee left in the cup, it'll be all milk. So similarly, in the beginning, the mind is full of material impressions; this is the cup of coffee. But then we begin to add spiritual impressions, by practice of *bhakti-yoga*. This is the same as pouring milk into the cup. And then we get to a stage where all we're doing is practicing *bhakti-yoga*, and that's like pouring the milk even after the cup begins to overflow. And if we keep doing this for a long enough time, then gradually all the impressions in the mind will be cleansed, will be purified. And there will be nothing but *bhakti* impressions in the mind. This takes some time, this takes a few years. Because we're in this material world for many lifetimes, and the mind is full of all kinds of material impressions. So we have to fill the mind with so many impressions; that's why we chant again and again, and again. That's why we read the verses over and over and over again, see? That's why we do our service, like Deity worship, over and over and over and over. To make as many impressions as possible of spiritual quality in the mind; and just by flooding the mind with these spiritual impressions, we gradually purify it, and we get rid of these material impressions and the tendency to engage in material life. That's the way that this thing works. We've discussed this in many earlier podcasts and *darshans* where we talk about the nature of consciousness. So if you just look up on our site, any of the podcasts that talk about consciousness, you'll get the background where you can understand this very easily.

Question from Thomas: "Kṛṣṇa is known as the Supreme Controller; He would then control our actions, how then can we have free will?"

Babaji: He always gives us free will, and He never takes it away. Kṛṣṇa is already the controller, but He loves each and every one of us so much that He gives us our desires, even when they're opposed to Him. For example, the people in this material world don't want to see God, they don't want to be in relationship with God. So when they come to this material world, Kṛṣṇa hides Himself; He doesn't show Himself outwardly. But He hides

within the heart as *Antaryāmī*, or Supersoul. So, as *Paramātmā*, or Supersoul, He guides the conditioned soul throughout every moment of life. He beats our heart, he digests our food, He operates our minds and senses, all according to our desires, even if our desire is against Kṛṣṇa's instructions. Because once He grants us free will, He does not ever take it back. We even have the ability to come to this material world and be apparently separated from Him. Actually of course, we're never actually separated from Him, even for a moment. The real truth is that Kṛṣṇa, God is present everywhere and in everything and He knows everything that's taking place; He knows our own minds and hearts better than we do. So we can't fool Kṛṣṇa. We can even fool ourselves, but we can't fool Him. He knows everything; He knows our past also. So Kṛṣṇa is observing everything, and as soon as we desire to come to Him, then He makes that possible. He facilitates our devotional service but still, even though we completely surrender to Him, He never takes away our free will. He's the Controller, yes. But He controls according to the desire of His devotees. That's love; that's Kṛṣṇa's unconditional love for all His created creatures. Just try to understand how elevated Kṛṣṇa's character is. That once He grants this freedom, once He grants us life and consciousness, He never withdraws it. Once He gives any of His gifts, He never takes them away. We can misuse them and abuse them and go contrary to His desires; but that's our own loss; we're cheating ourselves, because His desire is actually the best thing for us. He loves us so much that He wants the best for all of us, and we are so rascal that we don't want to follow His advice. But we're only cheating ourselves. So, we always have free will. We're never bereft of free will.

Chapter 6: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.10-11

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, October 31, 2009

*tatrādaṁ suṣṭhu vaiśiṣṭyam asyāḥ kathayitum sphuṭam
lakṣaṇam kriyate bhakter uttamāyāḥ satām matam*

“In the First Wave or chapter, in order to describe clearly the superiority of *bhakti* to other processes, the unique characteristics of *uttama-bhakti* will be related as approved by the *ācāryas*.” [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.10]

Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

“In the First Wave of the Eastern Ocean (*tatrā*) the verse begins with the word *tatrā*. First of all (*ādau*), the characteristics of *uttama-bhakti*, or pure *bhakti*, will be dealt with, (*kriyate*).” *Kriyate* means action, or work. “The whole of *bhakti* will not be discussed. The reason is given: “This is in order to describe clearly the supreme position of *bhakti*.” When *bhakti* is not pure, and is covered by other desires in the form of *jñāna* and *karma*, its strength is not full. With such impure types of *bhakti*, the characteristics appear only partially, thus **mixed *bhakti* cannot be used to show the superior nature of *bhakti***. This is understood from the following verse, from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

"One who has unflinching devotion (*uttama-bhakti*) unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead must have all the good qualities of the demigods and contrarily, one who is not a devotee of the Lord must be hovering over the darkness of mental speculation and thus, must be engaged in material impermanence." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 5.18.12]

That puts it pretty clearly. Pure *bhakti* is the only spiritual path, the only spiritual method that is purely spiritual. All other spiritual methods, including mixed *bhakti*, are covered by some fault, or defect, in the form of some material process. That could be karmic activity, fruitive activity,

where one engages in work in order to attain some selfish benefit. Or it could be *jñāna*, mental speculation, where one tries to juggle words and concepts in order to attain some kind of liberation; or it could be *yoga*, where one does different manipulations of the breath and the mind and so on to attain mystic powers. Or it could just be that a person is so conditioned by material nature that they cannot perform pure *bhakti* and they keep getting sidetracked into material desires. That's the case with most people who attempt the *bhakti* path; they suffer from *hṛdāya-daurbalyam*, weakness of the heart. In other words, they cannot bring themselves to make a hundred-percent, total commitment to *bhakti*.

So they do a little *bhakti* and then they do a little *karma*, they do a little *bhakti* and then they do a little *jñāna*, they do a little *bhakti* and then they do a little *yoga*. Their *bhakti* is covered by fruitive activities in the form of Vedic rituals, in the form of big, big temple projects, and big societies and assemblies, and all the politics and all the nonsense that goes on in them. Their *bhakti* is covered by desires for sense gratification, all the way from gross to subtle. From gross sex life and sense enjoyment all the way up to subtle things like pride, jealousy, the desire for position and prestige and recognition and things like that. But this is not pure *bhakti*. This is going to Kṛṣṇa and trying to make a deal: "Hey Kṛṣṇa, I'll worship you a little bit, now give me my sense gratification." And the thing is, they attain their sense gratification; or even if they want liberation, they attain liberation; even if they want heavenly enjoyment in the heavenly planets, they get it; but they don't get pure *bhakti*.

Pure *bhakti* is so powerful that even Kṛṣṇa becomes controlled by it. So Kṛṣṇa does not give it very easily. He places many obstacles, many tests, in the path of the aspiring devotee. And we've seen some of this in our own *saṅga* in the last few months. Many tests—and many of the devotees, many of the students couldn't pass these tests, so they fell down or they fell away from the path. This is going on. It's very rare that someone can attain pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service; but that's our standard. That's why we study *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, because *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is

on the platform of pure *bhakti*. Why? Because it's only by investigating pure *bhakti* that we can clearly see the superiority of the *bhakti* path. The pure *bhakti* path is the only spiritual method that is completely spiritual. It has no material qualities at all. And because of this, even Kṛṣṇa is attracted by it. It's completely pure and it springs from the spiritual platform.

golokera prema-dhana, hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana

"This process of chanting the Holy Name of the Lord is coming directly from the spiritual world." [*Hari-Hari Biphale*]

This process of chanting, this *nāma-saṅkīrtana*, was introduced by the Supreme Lord Himself in the form of Lord Śrī Caitanya Māhaprabhu, the incarnation of Kṛṣṇa as His own devotee. Therefore, it is immediately, from the very beginning, totally spiritual. It's not coming from this material world; it's coming from the spiritual world, from the Supreme Person Himself. He Himself is showing us how to be His devotee. Therefore we should receive this knowledge, this understanding of pure devotional service with great attention, and very carefully put it into practice in our own lives. And we shouldn't be concerned with these material obstacles, like "I don't have any money," or "I have some medical condition," or "I have so many sense desires, I can't control my senses," or "I have no time," or any other material obstacle that you can imagine. All these things are simply material impediments, but *bhakti* is completely spiritual.

So if you really want to engage a hundred percent in the service in the Lord, there's nothing stopping you. You could just sit, go inside, and perform all kinds of *bhakti* practices within. If the material situation you're in is not harmonious with *bhakti*, you can go somewhere else. You can get out of that situation and go to another one. What's stopping you? What's stopping you is only your self-imposed limitations, your self-imposed material desires. These are called concoctions. They're concoctions because they're not at all necessary. If you completely surrender to Kṛṣṇa

and become His devotee, He has promised that He will protect you; He promises this in several places in the scriptures. And Kṛṣṇa is good to His word, He does not break His word, He does not break His promise to the devotees; and we all experience that here, every day. So, what we're doing is, we're following up on Kṛṣṇa's promise, and we're saying "OK, I'll make a promise of my own: that I'm going to engage one-hundred-percent in your service, and I'm not going to do anything else; and now it's up to You to maintain me." Now this may mean that we go through a period where we have to live very simply, very austere, where we do not have the level of sense gratification that the demons have trained us up to expect in material life, but what's the value of that?

We have to somehow or other detach ourselves from this concocted need for too much material pleasure. And the best way to do that is to experience spiritual pleasure. Spiritual pleasure is there automatically when we give Kṛṣṇa pleasure, because Kṛṣṇa is the root of our own existence. So if we give Kṛṣṇa pleasure, then we'll automatically feel pleasure. I don't know why, but this seems really hard for people to understand. They think that they have to go on taking so much material sense gratification, but actually this is the poison that is the cause of all their suffering. Suffering is the result of sinful activities, and sinful activities come in the form of sense gratification. Because of sense gratification, we're willing to perform so many sinful activities, and then the result is we have to suffer. So this chasing after sense gratification is actually the cause of all our suffering. Just like, if a person goes to the doctor and says, "You know Doc, I'm having trouble with my liver." "Oh really, what's your lifestyle?" "Well, I drink a bottle of scotch everyday." And the doctor's going to say, "Well, you have to stop that. You have to stop drinking before you can expect your liver will get better. I can treat it, but what's the use of treating it if you continue drinking?"

So, devotional service is the cure of the poison of material life. But if we continue to engage in material sense gratification, then how can we expect our devotional service to counteract it? How can we expect to be cured if

we keep on taking the poison? See, this is the conflict between material life and spiritual life. And in the beginning of devotional service, every devotee gets to work through this conflict; and let me tell you from personal experience, the best thing is not to try to sit on the fence. The best thing is to just jump into devotional service with both feet and learn how to swim. This is an ocean of *bhakti*; so it's very deep and you might feel overwhelmed, but it's good. You cannot drown in this ocean, this ocean will actually will give you perfect health, and spiritual life and everything you've ever dreamed of. We want pure love; we want unending enjoyment. That's the nature of the spirit soul, because Kṛṣṇa is like that. He also wants pure love and He wants unending enjoyment too. So as His spiritual sons and daughters, we also want the same thing. But we cannot get these things in the material world, because everything in the material world is temporary. Because of that it has to change, and when it changes, we lose it; or it goes away, or they, the object of our affections rejects us or whatever. In any case, this material enjoyment is not satisfying to the soul; only spiritual enjoyment is.

So when we give that spiritual enjoyment to Kṛṣṇa, because He is at the center of our being, we also get enjoyment. It's so simple. It doesn't require faith, outside of enough faith to simply try the process. If you try this process you'll see that it works; but you have to follow the process, you have to follow the rules. We talked about this many times. It's like a lab. You go in the lab and you mix the chemicals together according to the procedure, and you get the result. If you don't follow the lab procedure, then who knows? Maybe the thing will blow up in your face. So similarly, one has to follow the rules and regulations of this devotional service, and then you will certainly get the result. So, what are the rules? Basically this is discussed in the eleventh verse. And this verse is very important so we will spend, actually, several days on it.

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttama*

“The highest *bhakti* is defined as continuous service or emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, His expansion forms or others related to Him, with a pleasing attitude towards Kṛṣṇa. It should be devoid of desires other than the desire to please the Lord, and unobstructed by impersonal *jñāna*, the materialistic rituals of *karma* or other unfavorable acts.” [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11]

So now, in the commentary, Jīva Gosvāmī is going to give the meaning of each of the words of this verse.

Anuśīlanam. Śrī Rūpa begins the book by describing the characteristics of *uttama-bhakti*. Just as a verb is only understood through the sense of its verbal root (*dhātu*), so the word *anuśīlanam* must be understood through the sense of its verbal root. *Śīl* means to act, to practice, to serve, to worship, and to meditate. *Anu* means continuous, or with devotion. Words can usually be resolved into verbal roots after removing the affixes. The senses of the roots are found in the *Dhātu-patta* of *Pāṇini*. By studying the sense of the *dhātu* of a word, one can understand the full scope of meaning in the derived word. Some roots may have only one meaning and some may have several. Some of the meanings may be active and some may be inactive. *Śīl* has two distinct meanings. One is inactive. *Samādhi* or contemplation. The other meaning is active. *Upadhāraṇā*: to hear attentively, to perceive, or to cultivate.

Inactive, in this case, refers to a passive, passive action, or receiving action.

So the significance of the verbal root *śīl* is twofold: *pravṛttyātmikā*, expressing action: to worship, practice and serve; and *nivṛttyātmikā*, expressing inaction: to be intensely absorbed. Thus *anuśīlanam* or continuous service has an active form, *ceṣṭā-rūpa*: using the body, words or mind, and an emotional form: *bhāva-rūpa*, consisting of affection, *prīti*, and despair of the mind, *viṣāda*. However (there's a footnote on that too) meditation using the mind with conscious intention would be included in *ceṣṭā-rūpa-anuśīlanam*. (In other words, the *anuśīlanam* of active form.)

But the emotional states in the mind, either temporary, as *vyabhicārī-bhāvas*, such as *viṣāda*, or permanent *sthāyi-bhāvas* such as *prīti-rati*, are *bhāva-rūpa*. This *bhāva-rūpa-anuśīlanam* takes place on attaining

bhāva and *prema*. Thus the activities of *sādhana-bhakti* are classified as *ceṣṭā-rūpa*. At the level of *bhāva* and *prema*, *ceṣṭā-rūpa-anuśīlanam* takes the form of *anubhāvas*. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary also mentions that the avoidance of *sevā* and *nāma-aparādhas*, and other *aṅgas* mentioned in the section on *sādhana-bhakti*, should be included in another class called *abhāva-rūpa-anuśīlanam*.

In other words, these are activities of *bhakti* which are not accompanied by ecstatic feelings of love. Normally in pure *bhakti*, it's very hard to distinguish between the *ceṣṭā-rūpa*, or the active part of the service, and the *bhāva-rūpa*, or the feelings derived from that activity. When we are engaged in pure devotional service the two of them seem to merge into one thing, one forgets one's physical existence, and the body becomes spiritualized and one's *siddha* body, or spiritual body, and material body actually act together. Like when we're in a roaring *kīrtana*, very, very sweet *kīrtana* and it's intense, the feelings that we have, which are *bhāva-rūpa*, and the activity of chanting, which is *ceṣṭā-rūpa-anuśīlanam*, become merged; we can't really, experientially, we can't tell the difference between the two. The physical act of chanting seems to be the source, or the embodiment of, the bliss derived from the process. But for purposes of analysis, Rūpa Gosvāmī distinguishes the two of them because actually, one, the *ceṣṭā-rūpa* part of *anuśīlanam*, or continuous service, is done by the body and the *bhāva-rūpa*, or the ecstatic emotional part, is done by the spiritual body. You follow?

Nava-yauvana dāsa: These two parts that he's split up for analysis, one is the experiential aspect and one is the physical aspect of devotional service, is it correct that the experiential, that the experience, the inner feeling can also be had without the physical aspect of it?

Bābājī: Yes, but that is a much, much higher stage, see? When a person reaches a stage of *bhāva* and *prema*, whether or not they're engaged in external physical activity, they still feel these ecstatic emotions within. At that point, the relationship, the service relationship has become completely spiritualized. But in the beginning, especially in the stage of *sādhana-*

bhakti, the *anuśīlanam*, the continuous devotional service is done mostly with the body. And then as time goes on and the devotee advances, more and more of the service is done internally in the spiritual body.

However, emotional states of *sattva* are included in *ceṣṭā-rūpa-anuśīlanam* because both are expressed by action. *Sattvas* are intense emotions which overcome the heart, but under the pressure of a limited body, they spontaneously manifest bodily transformations called *sāttvika-bhavas*. Even though the action is unconscious and the origin is emotion, it is classed as a *ceṣṭā-rūpa* because of the consequent and obvious active bodily element.

To understand this you need a little background on the *sāttvika-bhāvas*. The *sāttvika-bhāvas*, as we've discussed previously in our series on *Nectar of Devotion*, are the eight ecstatic symptoms such as: tears, choking of the voice, shaking of the body, raising or standing of the hair on end, fainting, rolling on the ground, becoming stunned. These are symptoms of the external body in response to some internal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. And later on Rūpa Gosvāmī will explain that the mechanism of the *sāttvika-bhāvas* is that the *prāṇa* becomes excited by the ecstatic emotions. And then the *prāṇa* contacts one of the elements of the body. For example, when the *prāṇa* contacts the water element, there is tears. When the *prāṇa* contacts the air element, there's choking of the voice. When the *prāṇa* contacts the ether element, space, then there's fainting, and so on. There's actually quite an elaborate explanation of this in the chapter on *sāttvika-bhāva*, which we'll get to as we go deeper into the work. So in other words, because of the limitations of the material body, the material body cannot take a whole lot of energy running through it. And if a lot of energy comes through the material body from the spiritual platform, then the material body begins to express these symptoms, depending on which way the *prāṇa* is directed and which element of the body the *prāṇa* is in touch with. And it may be in touch with multiple elements, in which case multiple *sāttvika-bhāvas* will manifest at the same time. That's when things get really interesting.

So there's five or six different levels of *sāttvika-bhāva* depending on how many elements and how intense and it's a very, very complicated, very elaborate science. In the West we have no terminology to describe these symptoms of ecstatic love, probably because given the limitations of Western religion, people just don't experience it, except under very, very rare circumstances; and then it's almost always misunderstood as some kind of physical affliction. So in fact even Lord Caitanya, when He would get some of these symptoms, such as shaking of the body and fainting, He used to say, "Oh, I have epilepsy." And just explain it away so He wouldn't have to explain "You see, there's Kṛṣṇa, and then..." because that would get Him into the whole mood all over again. So He used to just explain it away by saying, "Oh, I have epileptic seizures now and then." And then they would give Him different medicines and He would say "Oh, thank you." And of course it didn't change anything.

So even though the action of *sāttvika-bhāvas* is unconscious and the origin is emotion, it is classified as a *ceṣṭā-rūpa*. Other emotions which are not so intense and are not classified as *sattvas*, if they are similarly eclipsed in favor of conscious actions are called *anubhāvas*.

In other words, *anubhāva* comes after contact with the Lord. First comes the contact, the inspiration, the original feeling in the heart toward the Lord, *vibhāva*. And then the *anubhāva* is a feeling or emotion that comes after that, and which is expressed as different activities done according to the will—such as dancing, singing, shouting, like shouting in praise of the Lord; different kinds of services manifest in the body of the devotee, like going to the temple, meeting other devotees, enjoying *prasādam*, giving so much service to the Lord in the temple and so many things like that. These are all *anubhāvas*, meaning after the original *bhāva* takes place. So those are under the control of the will. But when the emotion becomes so strong that it's no longer controllable, then the *sāttvika-bhāvas* manifest. Do you understand the difference now?

So let's go back again and look at this word *anuśīlanam*. So *śīlan*, the verbal root *śīl* means the action of service, to practice, to serve, to

worship, to act and to meditate. All these things are *śīl*, or *śīlanam*. And *anu* means continuous or with devotion. So, like in my name, *dāsānudās*. *Anu* means continuously, continuously serving or with devotion. So that's very nice. And in this case, *anuśīlanam* it means to serve, to act, to practice, to worship, or to meditate with devotion or continuously. Both are applicable, both meanings of the verbal root *anu* and all the meanings of *śīl* are valid here, including the one of meditating or contemplating. So that becomes the root, actually, of the conception of *bhakti*. Thus *bhakti* means to serve, to practice, to act, or to meditate continuously with devotion. That's the first thing. Continuously, without a break. Not that we get tired of doing *bhakti* and then we go off and do something else. No; that's not real *bhakti*. That's just the very, very, very most neophyte stage of *bhakti*. Real *bhakti* starts as soon as we reach *anuśīlanam*, continuous service without a break. Maybe I will change the mode of my service; like sometimes we're chanting, sometimes we're discussing philosophy, sometimes we're cooking *prasādam*, sometimes we're cleaning the temple, sometimes we're discussing among ourselves, sometimes we're going out and shopping, doing different activities, but all of these activities are service. Even sleeping, because we have to take care of the body. The body has to rest, it has to be healthy. So even our sleeping, in that sense, or eating is taking care of the body for Kṛṣṇa. We're not taking care of the body for our sense enjoyment. We're not taking care of the body for use in our own service, but for use in Kṛṣṇa's service, you see? This attitude of service, *anuśīlanam*, continuous service, devotional service without a break; and not only continuous but also unmotivated. Unmotivated in the sense of being for our selfish enjoyment. *Ahaituky apratihātā* [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.6]. We want to serve continuously, without a break, and we also want to serve without any selfish desire. The desire should only be for Kṛṣṇa's benefit, not for our benefit, otherwise that's not pure *bhakti*, that's mixed *bhakti*; *bhakti* mixed with fruitive activities.

The next word that Jīva Gosvāmī examines is *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*. First we looked into *anuśīlanam*, and now we look into *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, the whole construction there in the second line of the verse.

With this consideration of *ceṣṭā-rūpa*, which means activities of the body, and *bhāva-rūpa*, which means activities of the heart, both being engaged in *bhakti*. *Anuśīlanam* means service for person related to Kṛṣṇa or service for Kṛṣṇa directly. That is the meaning of *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*. Because this definition also includes persons related to Kṛṣṇa as well as Kṛṣṇa Himself, it avoids the fault of being too narrow. Thus, *aṅgas* of *bhakti* such as taking shelter of the *guru's* lotus feet may be included in *bhakti*, even in *bhāva-rūpa-anuśīlanam*.

In other words, the scope of *bhakti* is now being described. It's not only *anuśīlanam*, it's *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, service either to Kṛṣṇa directly or to those who are related to Kṛṣṇa, such as Kṛṣṇa's devotees, Kṛṣṇa's family members, Kṛṣṇa's cows, Kṛṣṇa's qualities, His philosophy, His way of life, His instructions and so many other things. Anything that's related to Kṛṣṇa can also be an object of devotional service.

*sa vai puṁsām paro dharmo
yato bhaktir adhokṣaje
ahaituky apratihātā
yayātmā suprasīdati*

"The supreme occupation [*dharma*] for all humanity is that by which men can attain to loving devotional service unto the transcendental Lord. Such devotional service must be unmotivated and uninterrupted to completely satisfy the self." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6]

That verse expresses the same thought as the verse currently under discussion here. So, the *aṅgas* of *bhakti* are mentioned. *Aṅga* mean limb. *Bhakti* has many limbs, many *aṅgas*. In fact, sixty-four *aṅgas* of *bhakti* are given in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. And if we count the different *bhāvas* and different types of emotions, and different states of ecstatic love and so on, it becomes hundreds, hundreds of limbs of *bhakti*, and they're all offerable either to Kṛṣṇa or to Kṛṣṇa's devotees, especially the pure devotees and the *gurus*.

So, the *aṅgas* of *bhakti*, such as taking shelter of *guru's* lotus feet, may be included in *bhakti*, even in *bhāva-rūpa-anuśīlanam*. In other words, we can also feel ecstatic emotions in relation to these *aṅgas* of *bhakti*. Why?

Because they're of the same quality as Kṛṣṇa. They're all pure; they're all transcendental.

Therefore, of course we have to watch out when it comes to things like mixed devotional service, then we have to be a little careful. We should not become emotionally attached, for example, to an organization. Because religious organizations are mixed devotional service; they include a material component by their very nature. They're not fully transcendental. They contain some transcendental elements, but they're also covered over by some material energy. So we have to be a little cautious about developing devotional sentiments or attachments toward those things. But as far as things which are completely spiritual and eternal, like Kṛṣṇa's flute, Kṛṣṇa's land of Vṛndāvan, Kṛṣṇa's cows, Kṛṣṇa's devotees, that's OK; we can form nice devotional relationships with them. At the stage of *bhāva*, for example, *sthāyi-bhāvas* and *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* may be expressed in relation to *guru* within this definition of *bhakti*. So in other words, this definition of *bhakti* is not too narrow, it's not so focused only on Kṛṣṇa but also to things that are related to Kṛṣṇa; but it's not too broad either, because it insists that the object of our service, our *anuśīlanam*, must be purely spiritual.

But it does not actually include mixed *bhakti*. The definition of *bhakti* given in this verse only accepts objects which are completely spiritual. That means it rejects mixed *bhakti* as being part of pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service. Devotional service is acceptable as pure *bhakti* only when its object and methods are completely spiritual and eternal.

This service, or *anuśīlanam*, obtainable only by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, is a transformation of the Lord's *svarūpa-śakti*, and thus is not material but spiritual. However, one should understand that though it is purely spiritual, it makes its appearance. It's not created; it's eternal.

It's not being made or manufactured, but it simply appears, just like Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is not born, nor does He die; but He appears in the material world through His devotees, and then He again leaves this material world. Just

like the sun rises at a certain point in the horizon and it sets at another point on the horizon, and then apparently we can't see the sun. But that doesn't mean the sun doesn't exist; the sun is always existing. It just appears at a certain point and disappears at a certain point. So Kṛṣṇa and His devotional service are also like that. Kṛṣṇa's devotional service is actually eternal; it simply appears at a certain place or point in time according to our vision, but actually the service is eternal. So it makes its appearance in the body, mind, and words by taking over the functions of the body, mind, and words. This will be clarified later on, how *anuśīlanam*, at the stage of *bhāva*, displays transformations of the *svārūpa-śaktī*.

Svarūpa means the eternal form. The eternal form of Kṛṣṇa is manifested by the *svārūpa-śakti*. *Svarūpa-śakti* is the means by which Kṛṣṇa manifests His eternal form, and the *bhakti* is also manifested by the same potency. That means *bhakti* is an inseparable part of Kṛṣṇa's form. *Bhakti* and Kṛṣṇa's form are basically one thing, they're manifested by the same potency as Kṛṣṇa. So wherever Kṛṣṇa's form is present, *bhakti* is also there. Kṛṣṇa is very beautiful, so wherever Kṛṣṇa appears, people are going to admire His beauty; this is *bhakti*. And this *bhakti*, this admiration of Kṛṣṇa's beauty and His form, and His many wonderful qualities, this completely takes over the functions of the body, mind, and words; one becomes fascinated. Just like if you have ever been in the presence of a very beautiful or very wise or very intelligent or powerful person, then there's no question about what is going to be the center of attention, and the subject of any conversation or activities that go on. It's going to be this very powerful, very beautiful, very wise, or very intelligent person. Because the nature of a person who has extraordinary qualities is that they tend to dominate the context around them, because of the attractive features of their qualities. Kṛṣṇa has unlimited attractive qualities; so Kṛṣṇa becomes the center of attention when His form manifests in any way—either by the form of the Deity or by the description of the form. For example, Rukmīṇī fell in love with Kṛṣṇa simply by hearing narrations about Him. She had never met Him, never seen Him, but simply by

hearing about Kṛṣṇa she became so attracted that she was ready to give up everything to marry Him. Similarly, the devotees hear so many narrations about Kṛṣṇa from *śāstra*, and because of these narrations, Kṛṣṇa's form actually manifests within their hearts. And because Kṛṣṇa's form is there, *bhakti* is also there. As soon as we begin to appreciate Kṛṣṇa's qualities, as soon as we begin to serve Kṛṣṇa in any way, even by contemplation, that's immediately *bhakti*. So Kṛṣṇa's form and *bhakti* are manifested by the same spiritual potency, the *svarūpa-śakti*. This is a wonderful thought; this is a very, very wonderful idea. It means that what we have done, actually, by surrendering our lives and our time and energy to this *bhakti* process, is that we have actually become part of the form of Kṛṣṇa.

One, one time a spiritual master was asked, "What is your identity in the pastimes of Lord Caitanya?" And he went, "You're looking at it." This is still the pastimes of Lord Caitanya. Why? Because Lord Caitanya gave this process of *bhakti*, and we are engaged in that process of *bhakti* following His descriptions, His instructions. So we are actually participating in the pastimes of Caitanya Māhāprabhu. It's pretty awesome. Even five hundred years later, but there's no consideration of time in *bhakti* because Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa*, just like our *svarūpa*, is also eternal. So there's no consideration of time. These activities are beyond time. And even if we go to the spiritual world and we stay there for millions and millions and millions of years and then we come back to this world, we will see Vṛndāvan will still be there, Māyāpur will still be there. All these activities of devotional service are eternal. It may be a different *yuga*, it may be a different creation even, doesn't matter. These activities of devotional service will still be going on just like they are now. People will still be studying Vedic scriptures, reading Sanskrit, chanting *mantras*, doing Deity worship, the whole thing. The circumstances may change; language may change, times may change, even the planet or who knows, everything could change. And everything **will** change in this material world, but the one thing that never changes is *bhakti* because it is part of Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form. That's an astonishing thought, I just can't get over that.

This service, or *anuśīlanam*, obtainable only by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees, is a transformation of the Lord's *svarūpa-śaktī* and thus is not material but spiritual. However, one should understand that though it is spiritual, it makes its appearance in the body, mind, and words by taking over the functions of the body, mind, and words. In this verse, Kṛṣṇa also indicates *bhakti* for other forms of God. Because Kṛṣṇa is *svayam-bhagavān*—including all other forms including Nārāyaṇa and Nṛsiṃha and so on. Gradation of these forms will be considered later.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: I'm not sure if I heard you read correctly but in that, did it say that when you're taking about *bhakti*, it can also be directed to things related to Kṛṣṇa, there's also mention that *sthāyi-bhāvas* can be directed towards the spiritual master?

Bābājī: Yes. I'll quote: "At the stage of *bhāva*, *sthāyi-bhāvas* and *vyabhicārī-bhāvas* may be expressed in relation to *guru* within this definition of *bhakti*."

Nava-yauvana dāsa: How would that work?

Bābājī: Well, everyone—no matter what *bhāva* you're in—everyone is a servant. The relationship with the *guru* is one of servant, master and servant. So, even if one's *sthāyi-bhāva* in relation to Kṛṣṇa is something else, the *sthāyi-bhāva* of servitude may be manifested in relationship with the *guru* at any time, at all times actually.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: In one of the earlier parts in Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary, on the difference between *bhāva-rūpa* and *abhāva-rūpa* emotions, he mentions two things that he said do not produce ecstatic emotions. He said *sevā* and *nāma-aparādha*, *sevā*, like *sevā-aparādha*, or just *sevā*...

Bābājī: That was earlier, when he was talking about "When *bhakti* is not pure, its strength is not full, thus, mixed *bhakti* cannot be used to show the supreme nature of *bhakti*."

Nava-yauvana dāsa: Yes. He mentions these two things.

Bābājī: Well *sevā-aparādha* is an offense performed in the performance of one's service. For example, to disobey the order of the spiritual master, or think that he's an ordinary human being. This is the third offense against the Holy Name. So, if one minimizes the orders of the spiritual master, even though he may think that he knows better, he may think that maybe the spiritual master doesn't understand something, or whatever he may think; he should still follow the order of the spiritual master, because to do otherwise is an offense and this will kill the creeper of *bhakti*. The spiritual master's order should be accepted simply because he is on the transcendental platform, and he knows what will satisfy Kṛṣṇa. It may not be, materially, a perfect understanding. From material point of view there may be some flaw; but *bhakti* is not material, because *bhakti* is only pure love for Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's form, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, Kṛṣṇa's devotees, Kṛṣṇa's qualities, and so on. That way, if we have real *bhāva* for these things, then we'll want to serve them nicely. So in the presence of *aparādha*, offenses, then all of the wonderful qualities of *bhakti* disappear because it's not pure *bhakti*, see? And the point that he's making here is that in the presence of coverings, such as *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga* and so forth, then the *bhakti* is not pure, so its wonderful qualities don't manifest completely either. And we know from studying the ten offenses against the Holy Name, that the Holy Name is completely spiritual and fully potent, so as soon as anyone chants the Holy Name of the Lord, all the benefits of chanting the Holy Name are there; but in the presence of offenses, the person cannot receive those benefits because they are not pure. If something is given to me but I don't have the ability to receive it, then I can't accept it; I can't take it.

So in order to receive the benefits of *bhakti*, the real qualities of *bhakti*, we ourselves have to be perfectly pure. And if we're not pure, we may even perform this devotional service that has so many wonderful benefits and qualities, but we won't be able to receive them; and they'll remain in virtual form but they won't manifest. As soon as we become pure, they will immediately manifest. So chanting the Holy Name, doing all different

kinds of devotional service, are all very wonderful activities and they all lead to spiritual emancipation and ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa; but because of our offenses, we may not be able to realize those benefits until we take care of those offenses and we purify ourselves properly. That's the point he's trying to make here. And for the purpose of this particular discussion, he's talking about the difference between pure *bhakti* and mixed *bhakti* in terms of demonstrating the superiority of *bhakti* to all other paths. That superiority is only there when the *bhakti* is completely pure. Otherwise, because it becomes covered by these other qualities, these lower qualities of *karma*, *yoga*, and *jñāna*, it appears to be like them. And this is how people, for example, *jñānīs* can say, "Oh yes, we're doing *bhakti*. We go to the temple and we offer incense and other things. So this is *bhakti*." No it's not *bhakti* because the ultimate aim of their so-called devotional service is to attain liberation. Because the motivation is impure, then the whole thing becomes spoiled. Or take another very common example, where a person will enter into *bhakti* and try to perform devotional service for some material benefit: relief from some suffering, or economic development or sense gratification or something. So, as soon as that *bhakti* becomes covered over by these material qualities it's not pure anymore, and therefore it does not demonstrate or does not manifest the exalted qualities of pure devotional service.

Everyone wants this supreme attractive quality of *bhakti*. When we see it in a pure devotee like Śrīla Prabhupāda, everyone's amazed. Everyone is very much attracted and wants this for themselves, but at the same time they're often unable to give up their attraction to all these material things or subtle things like *karma*, *jñāna* and *yoga*. So because of this, their *bhakti* does not manifest the supremely attractive qualities that are true of pure *bhakti*. And in that case, it may look superficially like *bhakti* is pretty much equal to other spiritual processes, or religious processes like *karma* and *jñāna*. But that's only because the persons themselves are covering it up with their impurities. When the person's... their motivation becomes completely pure, that they just want to serve Kṛṣṇa, they just want to please Kṛṣṇa, or Kṛṣṇa's devotees; then, in that case all the attractive

features of *bhakti* automatically manifest in them. It's not like they have to try to manifest, you know? It's not like Śrīla Prabhupāda was sitting there thinking, "OK now I'm going to attract everybody." Sometimes the parents of the devotees would criticize Śrīla Prabhupāda, "Oh, you've hypnotized my son." And one time he said, "Yes, it's something like that." But actually it is that these beautiful qualities, these attractive qualities of Kṛṣṇa are also manifest in *bhakti*; because again, *bhakti* is coming from the same *svarūpa-śakti* that manifests Kṛṣṇa's wonderful form, which is very attractive to everyone. So those qualities also manifest in the person who is performing pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service. And people are attracted, even though they can't even understand why they're being attracted. They just know that "somehow or other this person has something special, some attraction." They can't even define what it is, but we know what it is: pure devotional service. So, the standard of pure devotional service is given in these verses. That's why we're spending so much time, going deep into the meaning of these verses.

Uddhava dāsa: The, when we talk about pure *bhakti*, we talk from the platform of *anartha-nivṛtti* and higher, correct? The understanding I have so far is that there's three stages of this *bhakti*; and first stage is, more or less, from *anarta-nivṛtti* before *bhāva*, and then *bhāva* is another stage, and then *prema* is another stage.

Bābājī: Yes; pure *bhakti* has three stages: *sādhana-bhakti*—but only the *rāgānuga* part of *sādhana*—and then *bhāva* and then *prema*.

Uddhava dāsa: When you mentioned about your own experience and while going through all these stages I remember you said that *bhāva* and *prema*, the end stages went very fast, or you went through them very quickly, and I wonder if this makes it a whole category, this stage of *bhāva*, it's a big category, why is there this difference?

Bābājī: Ah, because the degree of manifestation of *bhakti*'s qualities is different in that stage. In the stage of *sādhana*, the qualities are still developing. And they develop actually quite slowly over maybe twenty-

thirty years of practice. But then once *bhāva* is attained, it's maybe another ten or twenty years, and then you're in *prema*. It's comparatively much quicker. Even though *bhāva* is more complex—because by this time the devotee has gotten so much experience and confidence in their practice that even though *bhāva* is very complex, they can advance through it very quickly. They finally have the transcendental logic, the emotional logic, that drives *bhakti*. They finally have that figured out. Usually by that time they have realized their *sthāyi-bhāva*, and they basically know their role in relation to the Lord, and so many things. And then at the conclusion of the *bhāva* stage, Kṛṣṇa will manifest to the devotee and accept their service, and that's the beginning of the *prema* stage. But even the *prema* stage takes some time to manifest fully. It doesn't happen just instantly. All these things take time because they're very, very complicated and subtle. And it takes your mind and heart some time to process all of the emotional implications of each level of realization. But there are definite boundaries between them. Because even in the *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* stage, you are still driving by a map that is largely intellectual in nature; a mental picture of what *bhakti* is according to your understanding. In the neophyte stage, your mental picture is defective. You don't understand *bhakti* properly, and that's why you make so many offenses. Then in the *rāgānuga* stage you're past *anartha-nivṛtti*. *Anartha-nivṛtti* means all these material things—*karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, sense gratification, offenses—all these things finally go. And then, *rāgānuga* means "Now I get it. I get it. I want to do this service from myself, but I still have this mental map of how, how it all works." Once you attain *bhāva*, by that time it's not mental, it's all in the heart. Everything has been internalized. All the *śāstras*, all the complicated structure of *bhāvas* and everything, has all been internalized, and one has realized a personal vocabulary of emotional states that is satisfying both to the devotee and to Kṛṣṇa. And I would say that's the main differentiation between *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* stage and the *bhāva-bhakti* stage. And then in the *prema* stage, this *bhāva* that one discovers in the *bhāva-bhakti* stage becomes extremely condensed, extremely potent, and one begins to operate on a whole new level,

completely trusting Kṛṣṇa. And then, somehow or other, everything is going on, and there's a lot of bliss.

Uddhava dāsa: I've seen, in my experience so far and in all religious organizations, that the *anartha-nivṛtti* stage is a huge brick wall. I see that most people fear changing themselves because they think "I am like this," although they are not; it's just false ego, this idea that "I am so-and-so," and they can't renounce that. So we're basically going to attempt that all of us here overcome this *anartha-nivṛtti* stage very soon.

Bābājī: Oh, I thought you were already past it. You're all pure devotees, aren't you? What are you doing here if you're not pure devotees?

Uddhava dāsa: I don't know. I still see so many fears and like that.

Bābājī: Well some uncertainty is going to be there until the day that Kṛṣṇa appears to you and blesses you and accepts your service. There's always going to be some question, "Am I doing this right, is this, you know..."

Uddhava dāsa: Is it offensive?

Bābājī: Yeah. See, that's the way Kṛṣṇa is, He's very shy, He doesn't just come out and, you know, give you a reading. He leaves it up to you. You have develop the expertise to understand whether your service is pleasing to Kṛṣṇa or not. And it's actually very simple: you just have to look within your heart. The thing is, we're so used to using these mental models, and we're so conditioned by this material existence that even in the case of these devotional things, we don't have the trust in our own intuition to look within our heart, and our heart will tell us everything we need to know, once our heart is pure. So in the beginning you have to constantly check your mental map, "Is my heart pure, is my heart pure? Am I going off here? Is this actually material?" There's a lot of hesitation there, "Uh, is this right, should I be doing this? Babaji!" If you're intelligent you'll ask your *guru*. Then you will find eventually there's certain things that are very reliable, and you'll begin to build on those things, and those things

will become the core of your service. And then when those particular kinds of service become just so second nature, so natural, so easy though repetition over years, that becomes the foundation of your *bhāva*. So this is why we're studying *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, so that we can understand the structure of *bhāva*: *vibhava*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika-bhāva*, *vyabhicārī-bhāva*, *sthāyī-bhāva*—five kinds of *bhāvas* that go together to form *rasa*. And *rasa* is what Kṛṣṇa enjoys, and what the soul enjoys. And when we actually know how to make this mysterious *rasa*, then we can enjoy unlimitedly, because we can give Kṛṣṇa pleasure eternally, and we have the confidence that we know: we know we can do this, we know how to do it. We're not going to fall down or make an offense. When we have that confidence, then that's smooth sailing.

Uddhava dāsa: Today we had our dance class, and we were noticing how much different the whole approach of any Western sport or activity versus this dancing in South Indian style. And, well the first thing that you, watch any of the YouTube videos, anyone that's watching the broadcast, if you try to dance for an hour the routines that we're doing every day, then you'll get to see how hard it is just to warm up; it's really a challenge. So that at most, if you would dance in the West it would be more like "First enjoy, and then get tired of enjoying," or something like that.

Bābājī: *Bhoga-tyāga*.

Uddhava dāsa: Yes, but in this approach first you basically challenge your senses, your body, your mind, everything. Then the teacher today mentioned today that the success of dancing is when one relishes the dancing even though it might be very difficult, technically speaking or externally speaking. But there's a very strong relish inside.

Bābājī: *Rasa*.

Uddhava dāsa: *Rasa*. So it's basically the same thing he's talking about, that once you know this formula for *rasa*, even though externally it might

be... in the body, it might be very tiring and like that, you relish the whole thing and this becomes very beautiful and that's the mastery.

Bābājī: Kṛṣṇa is the original dancer, the original dance teacher also. He teaches the *gopīs* how to dance. And by teaching them how to dance, He teaches them how to relish *rasa*, how to create this mystical drink with five transcendental ingredients. So by Kṛṣṇa teaching the *gopīs* like that, they also become expert in *rasa*, just like Him. And then they can teach others, and so on. That's why, in general, the spiritual masters in our line are considered to be either *gopīs*, or assistants to the *gopīs*: *mañjarīs*. And they have this mood of, "Oh, this is all about making *rasa*, making lots of *rasa* for Kṛṣṇa." Just like the *gopīs*, the image of the *gopīs* churning the butter, well what does churning the butter mean? Churning the butter means extracting the essence from the milk, right? So the very powerful image there of the *gopīs*, by this churning process, they are extracting the essence. Milk means religiosity. Milk is the symbol of religion, sometimes called "liquid religion," because milk is completely pure. So by churning the milk into butter, they're extracting the essence of that purity from the milk. So in the same way, by mixing *rasa*, by this dancing process with Kṛṣṇa—music and dancing, these are the two most important devotional arts—that what they're doing is extracting the essence from all practices of religion. Because all practices of religion are ultimately aimed at developing love of God. This love of God is perfectly expressed in the *rasa* dance. So the *gopīs* are the masters of the *rasa* dance, and then they or their assistants can instruct the conditioned souls then how to engage in this dance.

This is why in devotional service we see that there's so much repetition and there's also so much following involved, *anuśīlanam*. *Anu* also means following. So *anuśīlanam* also means serving by following in the footsteps of the previous *ācāryas*. Like the end of the last verse, verse ten was: "As approved by the *ācāryas*." We don't make up our methods of devotional service, we don't speculate anything; we follow in the approved process shown by the *ācāryas*. That way there's no guesswork, and we don't make

any mistakes either. Learning by hearing is the perfect way of learning. Because if we hear from someone who's perfect and then we just do that, then the whole thing is solved automatically. We don't have to go through a bunch of painful mistakes. So that's the preferred way of learning, and we should emulate the *gopīs* and try to take this process of religion and churn out the essence, extract the real essence, which is love of Godhead, and then put that into practice in our lives and everything will be successful.

Uddhava dāsa: The funny aspect of this is it requires... to make butter, it requires a lot of effort first, and then the enjoyment comes at the end.

Bābājī: Yes.

Uddhava dāsa: It's always the conclusion.

Bābājī: Right. Not only that, if you every churn butter, you mix it and mix it and mix it and mix it and mix it and mix it and all of a sudden, [snaps fingers] it happens in just a few seconds right at the end. But without doing all the mixing first, it won't make butter. It requires a certain concentrated effort. If you just like churn it very easy it won't become butter; you have to churn it really hard for five minutes and then all of a sudden, it becomes butter. It's very funny how the process works. It has such a nice analog to the process of *bhakti* itself. Because it's like I said, the final stages go very fast. In the first stages it seems like you're getting nowhere: "Oh, I'm working so hard, I'm doing so much and nothing's happening." But then, toward the end, it all starts moving very fast, and it all comes together.

Uddhava dāsa: We see all these same things with dancing, and because we're so used to other activities in devotional service, to take up the dancing was very easy. And the teacher usually asked, "Is this boring? Is this boring to you?" and like that. And we are like, "No, this is normal. We're used to this. It was very easy." But someone in the West, they would

start practice dancing they wouldn't get it, and it would be very hard. They wouldn't get any taste out of that.

Bābājī: To them it would just seem to be like useless fundamentals with no point, or...

Uddhava dāsa: Yes, you would become boring. Although you would get tired in the first ten minutes, it's still boring. That's one of the things that it took me, this, this today I understood the principle, when we say, "Kṛṣṇa is the most renounced of the whole existence, but at the same time He's the Supreme Enjoyer," and those two concepts seem very conflicting, at least in the beginning, but now I can understand.

Bābājī: Because His enjoyment..., Kṛṣṇa is willing to take a million years to set up just the right conditions...

Uddhava dāsa: To churn.

Bābājī: ...for His enjoyment. He's willing to churn and churn and churn until finally everything is just right and then choom! It comes together. Then ah, He enjoys.

Question from Draviḍa-rāja dāsa: "Hare Kṛṣṇa. Please accept my humble obeisances. Is singing *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma* mixed devotional service?"

Bābājī: It depends on why you're doing it. If you're chanting *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma* for relief of some material problems, then it's mixed devotional service. But certainly, it's better than going out and working for some evil corporation. If you have material issues chant *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, that is the cure. That's what it's for; it's a pious, transcendental way for addressing material problems. If you cannot simply surrender hundred-percent to Kṛṣṇa and engage in pure devotional service, fine; then at least engage in mixed devotional service. Don't go falling down completely into *karma*. But chant *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma* and let Kṛṣṇa fix everything, and then you'll be in a position to engage in pure

devotional service. We have this standard of pure devotional service, at least for the devotees who are living here. And maybe the devotees who are living outside can't meet that standard, but Kṛṣṇa has a famous explanation in the twelfth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* that:

"Just think of Me always, become My devotee, offer your love to Me and like that. And if you can't do that, follow the principles of *bhakti-yoga*, *vaidhī-bhakti*. And if you can't do that, just work for Me and offer the results to Me. And if you can't do that, then cultivate knowledge, because that will bring you to the stage of perfection." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.8-12]

And if you can't do that, He says, "Just try to be self-situated." Yeah, "Just be cool. Sit down and shut up."

So we're trying to encourage everyone to attain this stage of pure devotional service. But if you can't do that, that doesn't mean that you should just give up; no. You take the next level down and do that, and if you can't do that then take the next level down according to Kṛṣṇa's instructions, and according to whatever stage of spiritual life you can remain steady on. It's far better to be steady on a lower level of practice than to try to jump up to a higher level of practice and then fall down. Much better.

Question from Marino: "Hare Kṛṣṇa! Can you explain us how did you decided to jump into this ocean of *bhakti* for us who are still holding on fence?"

Bābājī: What can I say? Just do it; you just jump. It's like, we talk about when you eat a nice meal, nobody has to tell you that you're satisfied, nobody has to tell you how to eat either. "We'll you take the spoon and then you put it in the food, and then you..." That's nonsense. If you're not understanding these simple instructions, it's because you don't want to. Admit it. Sitting on the fence is another way of saying "No, I'm not going to do it." Like Yoda says, "There is no try: do or not do." Either you do it or don't do it. Make up your mind. Be honest about it, don't say "Well I'm

trying,” or “Oh, in the future.” No, no: either do it or don't do it. Take responsibility for it and take the consequences of your decision, whatever they are. That's honest. But don't try to say, “Well, I, you know, I'm working on it. I'm really, I'm trying. **I'm thinking about it.**” That's the word I hate. “**I'm thinking, let me think about it.**” Come on! **Either you want to do it or you don't.**

So we should become sincere, and we should try to eliminate this doubt from our system, and find a level of devotional service that we're comfortable with and we can remain steady on, and stick to that until you work your way up out of it. We're not asking people to artificially try to jump into a level of practice they can't sustain. That's very dangerous, actually. Because you will commit offenses then you will fall down. Then after that you'll be messed up, so we don't want people to get messed up, we want people to become cured of their material disease. So the best way is to take the slow, careful road, and steady. Just be steady. And **own** that; take responsibility for it. Say "This is where I'm at." We'll respect that. What we don't respect is people who are diplomatic and tricky. That doesn't help anybody; so just be straightforward and say, "OK this is where I'm at, this is what I can do, I can't do more than this right now, and I just want to stay on this platform until I've developed a little more." That's alright.

Question from Thiago: "Hare Kṛṣṇa! Please accept my humble obeisances. We see that many mixed *bhaktas* don't reach the pure state. Do we avoid getting stuck by always desiring pure *bhakti*? Do people get stuck because they don't work internally to change their consciousness to just love and please Kṛṣṇa."

Bābājī: Yes, that's exactly it. The only qualification for pure *bhakti* is **the greed to have it**. Greed means an unreasonable, strong desire: "I want this pure *bhakti*. I don't know what it is; I don't know how to do it, but **I know that I want it.**" That's the first stage. "I want to please Kṛṣṇa. I want pure *bhakti*. I don't know anything about it; I don't know how to get it, but

Kṛṣṇa, please somehow or other give it to me." And if you keep that up for long enough, Kṛṣṇa will give it to you. He wants to give it to you; He wants everyone to have it. That's the whole purpose of existence as far as He's concerned. So, this is a very wonderful thing from Kṛṣṇa's perspective, when a spirit soul who's been conditioned in the material world says "OK Kṛṣṇa, I want pure *bhakti*."

Now it may take some time to get from wherever you are to pure *bhakti*, but don't give up the desire. Keep that desire. That's why we're preaching like this: we're preaching so that everyone will think, "Oh man, this pure *bhakti*, this is the stuff, man, you know? I want that. That sounds good. Give me some of that." And even though we're using all these high-sounding words and complex technical Sanskrit explanations, and so on and so forth, if you just hang in there you'll get it eventually. That's the whole point. You'll get it, and by desiring it with pure intensity, Kṛṣṇa will give it. He's just waiting for the day when His devotees realize, "Oh, actually I'm wasting my time with this mixed devotional service, I should want pure devotional service alone." Ah, then Kṛṣṇa goes "Yes!" Because that is what satisfies Him, that's what pleases Him, so of course He's going to give it; but first He's going to make sure that you're sincere. That's the way Kṛṣṇa operates. He's going to test you. He's going to dangle all kinds of distractions in front of you, and see if you're really going to stay on the path. So be ready for that. But the way to attain pure *bhakti* is simply to desire it, and everything else will be revealed. Just hang in there, keep watching these *darshans*. We're going to explain everything.

Chapter 7: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11 continued

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, November 1, 2009

We're going to continue to study the purport of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, eleventh verse. Let's go over verse eleven again:

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttama*

“The highest *bhakti* is defined as continuous service or emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, His expansion forms or others related to Him, with a pleasing attitude toward Kṛṣṇa. It should be devoid of desires other than the desire to please the Lord, and unobstructed by impersonal *jñāna*, the materialistic rituals of *karma* or other unfavorable acts.” [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11]

So far in yesterday's *darshan* we have discussed in the purport for *anuśīlanam* and *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*. We talked about how *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* means service for Kṛṣṇa and persons related to Him, such as the devotees. And *anu* also means devotional, or uninterrupted. So *śīla* means service and *śīlanam* means to render service, *anuśīlanam* means to render service uninterruptedly. So real *bhakti*, pure *bhakti* means to render service uninterruptedly to Kṛṣṇa and/or His devotees. Anything related to Kṛṣṇa is also of the same quality as Kṛṣṇa, and so our service must be directed toward a transcendental object: either Kṛṣṇa or His devotees, Kṛṣṇa's qualities, Kṛṣṇa's abode, Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, His Names, His activities, His philosophy and so on.

The next term that we're going to discuss is *ānukūlyena*. This is the beginning of the second line of the verse:

ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā
[Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11]

The word *ānukūlyena*, meaning ‘with favorableness or friendliness’, is the descriptive element of *anuśīlanam*, or continuous service.

So we've already discussed *anuśīlanam*, now we're going to discuss the kind of service.

It is necessary in order to limit the definition of *bhakti*. The definition of *bhakti* cannot be established with a disagreeable attitude towards Kṛṣṇa. Disagreeable is *prati-kūlyena*, so the word *ānukūlyena*, in conjunction with *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, means behavior pleasing for Kṛṣṇa.

Not necessarily behavior that we consider pleasing, but that Kṛṣṇa considers pleasing.

Prati-kūlya means the opposite: behavior disagreeable for Kṛṣṇa.

There are many things that we may think are very nice, but Kṛṣṇa doesn't like. So we should be prepared to give those up and engage only in *ānukūlyena*, activities that are pleasurable to Kṛṣṇa.

Because this word is in the instrumental case, *ānukūlya*, the nominative case becomes *ānukūlyena*. It indicates that favorableness toward Kṛṣṇa is a necessary qualifier for defining *anuśīlanam*, not as a secondary element that can be assumed to exist in *anuśīlanam*, in which case need not be mentioned separately.

In other words, we don't assume that *anuśīlanam* is automatically favorable, we specify—make it very explicit—that this continuous service must be favorable. Why? Because there are instances of people who thought of Kṛṣṇa constantly—like Kāṁsa for example, thought of Kṛṣṇa constantly but unfavorably. And so, his thinking of Kṛṣṇa constantly is not accepted as devotional service, precisely because he was thinking unfavorably or in a hostile mood towards Kṛṣṇa.

An objection may be stated as follows: when someone says, “Prepare the weapon-bearers for battle”, he means as well that the warriors should also bring the weapons.

That's implied in the statement, “Prepare the weapon-bearers for battle.” Well, if the weapon-bearer shows up for battle without their weapons then what's the use of that?

Similarly, the word *anuśīlanam*, service to Kṛṣṇa, is sufficient to define *bhakti* since *ānukūlyā* is implied by the word *anuśīlanam*; it is not necessary to mention it separately. “*Bhakti* means actions directed to Kṛṣṇa” is a sufficient definition.

That's the argument. Someone is raising a doubt now, “Why do you need this word *ānukūlyena*?” The response is as follows:

When someone says, “Feed the weapon-bearers, he does not mean that the weapons should also be brought to the dinner table.”

In other words, the conception of appropriateness: just because a person is a weapon-bearer, a warrior, doesn't mean that he brings his weapons to dinner. Because even though he may be a professional soldier, dinner is a time when we're not thinking about fighting, we're thinking about nourishing the body.

Thus, the mention of weapon-bearers does not imply that they bring their weapons in all cases. Similarly, the word *anuśīlanam* if used alone, may not include favorableness in all cases. Actions directed to Kṛṣṇa with concentration are not always favorable.

And then he brings up in the commentary, the example of Kāṁsa:

Kāṁsa meditating constantly on Kṛṣṇa with the intention of killing Him, is thus rejected, although it is *anuśīlanam* of Kṛṣṇa. Thus the word *ānukūlyena* must accompany *anuśīlanam* in the definition of *bhakti* because it's necessary to add this particular limitation to the quality of service to Kṛṣṇa.

It has to be favorable, with a favorable attitude. *Ānukūlyena*. No, we don't accept *prati-kūlyena* as *anuśīlanam*, only *ānukūlyena anuśīlanam*.

There may be another objection: “We could just say, ‘perform *bhakti* favorably’ without *anuśīlanam*,” for the word *bhakti* alone implies

constant service. For instance, when we say, "the king goes out traveling," we also imply that he goes along with his retinue. Similarly, when we mention *bhakti* it includes service, and the idea of exclusiveness towards Kṛṣṇa and also the idea of continuous engagement and so on. That is true; however, by omitting the words *anuśīlanam*, there will be no clear indication of the different shades of meaning inherent in the root *śīl*.

Remember we discussed yesterday about the active and passive meanings of *śīl*? *Śīl*, the verbal root *śīl*, which is the root of the verb *anuśīlanam*, can mean either active service or it can mean contemplative service. It can mean doing things that are favorable to Kṛṣṇa, or it can mean simply contemplating Kṛṣṇa favorably.

And consequently, if we use the word in that way, there would be no indication of the different modes of *bhakti* (which we discussed yesterday), *ceṣṭā-rūpa* and *bhāva-rūpa*.

Because in the beginning of *bhakti*, everything is based on activities performed by the bodily senses according to the rules and regulations of the scripture. However, in the advanced stages of *bhakti*, the external activities become very much secondary to the internal mood: this favorable mood of contemplation towards Kṛṣṇa. And when we have this mood established, this is called *bhāva*. *Bhāva-bhakti* is a much higher level of practice of *bhakti* than *vaidhī-bhakti*. *Vaidhī-bhakti* is generally considered the introductory or neophyte stage of *bhakti*.

Therefore, in order to define *bhakti* completely, the prefix *anu* is added to *śīlanam*, to indicate that the service should be continuous, *anu*. *Ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*—continuous service or positive emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, expansion forms, or others related to Him, with a pleasing attitude towards Kṛṣṇa—is the essential characteristic, *svarūpa lakṣaṇa*, of *bhakti*.

See, everything has its essential characteristics. But within those essential characteristics, it has many variations, many different levels. So the definition of *bhakti* given here is both inclusive and exclusive: it's inclusive in the sense that it leaves room for different levels or stages of

practice of *bhakti*; but it's exclusive in the sense that it denies that thinking of Kṛṣṇa, for example, unfavorably could be accepted as *bhakti*. And it also denies that interrupted service toward Kṛṣṇa could be accepted as *bhakti*. So we see in many devotees, especially in the neophyte stage, that their service is interrupted. It's not continuous. They do serve Kṛṣṇa; they come to the temple and serve Kṛṣṇa for a little while, and then they go outside and go home and they do all their material activities. So what kind of service is that? Is that accepted as *bhakti*? Well, it's in the gray area.

Ānanda-vardhana dāsa: This is like a church. You go to the church every Sunday, and then you go home and then you do your nonsense.

Bābajī: It's putting God into a box: "OK, we're gonna have God-time now, for two hours on Sunday morning, and then the rest of the time we don't think about God, we do whatever we like." So God, and His service, and thoughts about Him and positive relations with Him are put in some kind of limitation. Time, space, or any limitation; whatever the limitation might be. Let's say we're unable to or unwilling to give up certain activities that are inimical towards *bhakti*, like sense gratification. That is another way of limiting *bhakti*: "Well, I'll perform *bhakti* but I'll also do these other activities that are actually against *bhakti*. And when I'm doing those activities I don't think of Kṛṣṇa, I want Kṛṣṇa to go away so I can do this nonsense." That's also covered by this definition as activity that is excluded from *bhakti*, because it's not done with a favorable attitude towards Kṛṣṇa, it's done with the attitude of "Kṛṣṇa, please go away for a while so I can do my nonsense." That's not pure *bhakti*. A person has to be engaged in *bhakti* activities, activities that are favorable to Kṛṣṇa, twenty-four hours a day, without deviation, to be accepted as a pure devotee.

Now, why is all this important? Because we want our association to be with pure devotees. We do not want to be associated with mixed devotees. This is one of the basic principles of *bhakti*, which will be discussed later on in this chapter on *sādhana-bhakti*. One of the principles of *sādhana-bhakti* is that we give up the association, especially of nondevotees, but we

also give up the association of mixed devotees if we want the highest pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service. How can we engage in pure devotional service if we're associated with people who have accepted a lower standard? It means that we will be influenced by them, and we will also accept a lower standard. Or another way to put it is that by accepting their association, we would accept the validity of that lower standard by implication.

This is why we don't associate with big, big organizations and religious groups. That's why we maintain a little distance from them. It's not that we hate them or anything like that, we don't have anything against them, we wish them well; but we don't want to associate with people who would influence us to reduce our standard, or to compromise Rūpa Gosvāmī's principles. This is very important, because it gives an insight into how we are structuring our activities, how we're structuring our *saṅga*. We want to encourage people to come to this platform of pure devotional service. So to do that there are two things necessary: education and encouragement, and also filtering. Because we don't want people to come into our *saṅga* and stay with us if they are not ready to make a total commitment to pure devotional service. That's very important; because like I said, we don't want to accept the association of persons who are not going to perform pure devotional service. If you want to do that, you can have your own separate place, that's alright. But actually we want to encourage people to completely surrender to Kṛṣṇa, because that's what Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja*

"Give up all other forms of *dharma* and just surrender unto Me."
[*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.66]

Now you might say or someone might say, "Well, the *Vedas* give all kinds of fruitive activities, *karma-yoga* and sacrifices with material benefits. In fact, you yourself teach chanting *Viṣṇusahasranāma* if there's any material

impediments in your life, so that's applying devotional principles in a materialistic way, isn't it?" Well, no. If we were saying that, we would say, "OK, if you're short of money then play the stock market, or go get a job with a big corporation or something like that. Go back to back to school, get an advanced degree or join the mafia or something, just to make money." But we know that these things are actually against the principles of devotional service, because they interrupt our devotional service and make us perform service to someone else. But chanting

Viṣṇusahasranāma is directly devotional service, and it's directly given by the Lord's representative Bhīṣmadeva, specifically for the needs of the common people who have material issues, who have material needs that need to be met, and they can be met by some arrangement of Kṛṣṇa.

That's the thing that everybody doesn't get. They think they have to meet their material needs by making their own arrangement. They think that they are the doer; they think that they are the controller, that they are responsible. But actually Kṛṣṇa is the doer. And by chanting

Viṣṇusahasranāma as a solution to material problems, we recognize that fact. So this can actually be part of *anuśīlanam*. That, in other words, "I don't have to interrupt my devotional service to take care of my material obligations." Now it takes some time for this result to manifest, so if you start chanting *Viṣṇusahasranāma* tonight, you may not get the result tomorrow or next week or next month; it may take a couple of years.

Why? Because you have to burn up the karmic reactions that are causing your material problems; and that may be very deeply embedded. So, it may take some time, it may take a lot of service. It may take a year or two. You have to be ready for that. You can't just change course overnight, turn on a dime, and expect to get instant results. Why? Because we've spent so long getting ourselves buried in this material energy that it's going to take some time to dig ourselves out. It's just a matter of practical necessity. Our minds are so full of so many material impressions; we're going to have to accumulate a lot of impressions of spiritual quality to counteract them. It's just common sense. But people expect spiritual methods to have instant

results. And that means they don't understand how this is all working; that it's all working according to consciousness.

So you should be ready— even if you can't accept it right away—at least approach this level of *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*: *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, meaning uninterrupted, undeviated favorable service towards Kṛṣṇa with a positive attitude towards Kṛṣṇa, *ānukūlyena*. And this is the actual standard of pure devotional service. And we see a lot of devotees who go to the temple in the morning, they do the whole morning program, and then they go out and they work a job or they collect money on the streets. Well this is fruitive activity. There's actually no need for it, and we're the proof of that. We're not collecting money; we don't even ask people for money, but somehow money comes. So money is necessary; yes, we agree. That's the world that we live in; but do you think that Kṛṣṇa is incapable of taking care of His devotees' need for money? No. If you are doing pure devotional service and you're preaching nicely, with enthusiasm and purity... “Purity,” Prabhupāda used to say, “is the force.” You know, you want to know what they're taking about “The force is with you?” That's purity: purity is the spiritual force. That's spiritual potency. So if your devotional service is pure, if you are on this platform of pure devotional service, Kṛṣṇa will maintain you, because you're totally surrendered to Him.

The next term is *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*, the first two words of the verse. *Anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*: to define the concept of *uttama*...

So far we've been talking about the concept of *bhakti*, what is *bhakti*? Now he's going to define *uttama*.

Two modifying phrases are added as secondary characteristics, *tatāṣṭha-lakṣana*. One phrase is: *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*: “it should be devoid of other desires.” And the other is *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*: “it should not be covered by *jñāna*, *karma* or other things.” The use of the word *anyā*, “other,” in the phrase *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*, indicates that *bhakti* should have only one desire: to serve the Lord. *Bhakti* is not devoid of desire, but that desire must be concentrated on serving Kṛṣṇa.

And no other desire. There are so many desires; the world is full of desires. The mind, especially, is full of desires: "I want this, I want that, I wanna go here, I wanna do this or that," constantly. But that's what the mind does. The mind scans the senses and picks up on whatever the senses are agitated about at the moment, and then it cooks up a desire. So our desires run the whole gamut of the mind's and senses' activities. From the most gross desires, sense gratification and sex life, all the way up to the most subtle desires for religious honor and spiritual recognition. Subtle controllers, subtle enjoyer. These are the most subtle desires, because they can easily masquerade as being spiritual. But they're not really spiritual at all, because they are for self-benefit. Any desire, that we can say is for self-benefit, is not accepted as *bhakti*. Now of course we have to eat, we have to sleep, we have to have clothing, we have to have a roof over our heads, these ordinary desires are not contrary to *bhakti*. Although in the highest stage of *bhakti*, even these desires go away. Still, during the course of our *sādhana*, we need some facility; and that's alright, we can desire that, that's not against *bhakti*. But to desire self-benefit, in the form of unnecessary facilities, "Let me have a beautiful marble temple, and let me be the king of this temple, and engage everyone in devotional service according to my direction!" You know, this kind of a desire is actually material. It's subtle because it seems to be linked with Kṛṣṇa, but actually it's separate from Kṛṣṇa because we don't want Kṛṣṇa to be the one everyone's coming to see, we want them all to come and see us. This is personal desire, this is selfish desire. And we see this kind of subtle desire in a lot of devotees. They want to attain some position, some recognition, some title, some designation, the chief Grand Poobah of such-and-such group or temple.

We don't care for these designations. We don't want any particular title. We don't want to be known as a famous preacher or a teacher or anything like that. We just want to do our service for Kṛṣṇa; and so we do desire from Kṛṣṇa the minimum, or necessary facilities for that. That's not against devotional service. There will be quite a discussion later on in this book about appropriate renunciation. One should practice renunciation of things

which are not useful or necessary in Kṛṣṇa's service. And the nature of the things that are necessary depends on our stage of advancement in *bhakti*. In the beginning of *bhakti* we may require quite a bit of facility, but as we advance more and more, the amount of external facility becomes less as our internal realization grows. Finally when we fully realize Kṛṣṇa, we don't need any external facility, because we have internalized the whole process. But that's a very, very high stage. In the beginning we need some kind of temple, some kind of association, some kind of books to study, some kind of a definite process, definite rules; otherwise we get lost. We need some kind of a map to follow, "This is the way you go to Kṛṣṇa." And it has to be comprehensible.

So this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* gives the map, the whole map. Other books beginning with *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*, especially *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and so forth, they also give maps; but the map is in pieces, like a puzzle, and we have to put it together ourselves. But here, Rūpa Gosvāmī has done all the work of putting the puzzle together, and what we wind up with is a nice neat outline, step-by-step-by-step. It's very, very well done. It's actually very impressive, what he has done. It's a combination of a dictionary, a rule book, and a technical manual, or something like that, like a software manual of how to go through this process step-by-step. And as you go through the process, there all the different indications are also given, how you know where you are in the process. What stage you're at, and then what you need to do, what kind of *sādhana*, what kind of devotional activities do you need to do to advance to the next stage; what qualities you need to develop, what qualities you need to renounce. Everything is there. It's the most wonderful book for the practice of devotional service, and that's why we're studying it. So now we'll look at the second line, *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*.

Jñāna, knowledge, in the second phrase, refers to the inquiry concerning the impersonal *Brahman*, with no qualities. This should be rejected. But inquiry concerning the worshipable form of the Lord should not be rejected, for that knowledge is necessary in *bhakti*.

So the question is, what is our aim? If our aim is impersonal liberation, or if we want to study knowledge that has that aim, that's rejected in *bhakti*. We specifically reject impersonal liberation because it means there's no chance for performing *bhakti*. That *bhakti* is offered to the personal form of the Lord is no accident. It's not just a random thing; it's because *bhakti*, as we discussed yesterday, comes from the same spiritual potency by which Kṛṣṇa manifests His form, the *svarūpa-śakti*. *Svarūpa-śakti*, *svarūpa* means the spiritual form, the original form of the Lord; and *svarūpa-śakti*, the same energy, also manifests *bhakti*. So *bhakti* and Kṛṣṇa's form are not two things, they're one thing. As soon as we engage in *bhakti*, especially pure *bhakti*, we actually have a direct connection with Kṛṣṇa's form. And since Kṛṣṇa's form is made of concentrated bliss, as soon as we have pure *bhakti*, then we have complete happiness as well. We're not telling you all this because we want to control you, or we want you to give money, or because we want you to come and join us. No. If you want to do those things that's fine, but we don't really care. We want you to be happy, like we are. So if you follow this advice and you engage in pure *bhakti*, you will also be engaged in pure bliss.

I was just thinking about it as we were doing *kīrtana* this evening: how these *mantras* have no negative connotation or meaning whatsoever. These *mantras* are nothing but pure bliss; there's no other meaning to them. And if you think there is some other meaning then you have some mistaken idea. The only meaning of these *mantras* of God's pure Holy Name is just pure ecstasy and bliss and happiness itself. Concentrated bliss. Not ordinary bliss, but *prema*. *Prema* means concentrated, two-hundred proof bliss. White lightning. So don't mistake this process for any other process. It's not a way of organizing people politically, it's not a plot for world domination. We're not trying to undo anybody else, or what they're trying to do. It's all irrelevant to what we're really doing; because what we're really doing is simply enjoying our relationship with Kṛṣṇa. That's all. But that's a really, really big thing. A really significant thing. Because when we come into relationship with Kṛṣṇa, we also realize **who we really are**. And that realization is so satisfying that we lose all desire for these

material things. So why should we engage in material activities and the concomitant suffering that's involved in them? We talked about that last night, too: how every time we perform material activities, it means we're signing up for another term of material existence. We're signing up for additional suffering. Why do we want to do that? Why would anybody that's in their right mind want to do that? No. What we want to do is get free from material suffering, and you can do that directly by engaging in pure devotional service.

The word *karma* in the verse refers to daily and periodic duties enjoined in the *smṛtis*, not the actions of serving the Lord. For serving the Lord is the very definition of *anuśīlanam*, or uninterrupted devotional service.

If you look in the Vedic scriptures you'll see there are so many directions for performing different rituals on a daily basis or on a periodic basis, based on the Vedic calendar and so many other things. But in the beginning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Nārada chastises Vyāsadeva for this. He says "You have actually promoted Vedic knowledge on the basis of offering material rewards for devotional service." He says "Verily this is unreasonable and condemned." Condemned, he actually uses the word. Why? Because it's *kaitava-dharma*, cheating religion. It's that "You do this ritual or you do this charity or you do this kind of auspicious work, and then you get some result, some material result that you can enjoy." We'll yes that's there; that's religion. *Karma-kāṇḍa*. *Karma-kāṇḍa* means the path of *karma*, where you make a deal with God, "OK God, I'll do this service and then I'll expect this result in return." But that's not love; that's business. The same thing happens when you go to some rich person, "I'll serve you in your company, and then I expect some salary or benefits in return." So it's a very easy concept for our materially conditioned consciousness to understand; but it's vastly inferior to the result given by pure *bhakti*. Because to accept that result you have to sign up for another term of material existence; and that involves birth, death, old age, disease, material suffering of different kinds, *karma*.

So this *karma-kāṇḍa* is only indirectly auspicious; *bhakti* is the only really auspicious thing that's given the scriptures. It's just very difficult for most people to understand it. Very difficult. Because they have some impurities in their hearts, they prefer this kind of business deal with God. They don't want to go into a relationship of pure love with God, because they don't trust God. They themselves are untrustworthy, and so they conceive of God as being the same way: having some selfish desire for Himself. But how can He have any selfish desire? He already has everything. And anything that He wants, should He want something, He simply has to desire it and then it manifests automatically by the action of His potencies. So God has no desire, He doesn't want anything from any of us. Nothing that we have would actually please Him—except love. So what does God from us? He wants our love. All these different offerings and rituals and different processes that are not devotional service, that give some material return, are not really satisfying to Kṛṣṇa; and they don't really engage Kṛṣṇa. But pure love of devotional service not only attracts Kṛṣṇa and engages Him, it actually controls Him; and we'll see as we get deeper into this discussion how that is so.

So *karma* in the verse does not refer to the activities that we do with a material body and senses to serve Kṛṣṇa. Those come under *vaidhī-bhakti*, and they're kind of in a gray area in between *karma*, *jñāna* and *bhakti*. But they're not against *bhakti* either, so we accept them provisionally in the beginning, just like we accept *jñāna*, a little bit of knowledge, and a little bit of *vairāgya*, renunciation, in the beginning of devotional service, as a good thing because it helps to prepare people for pure devotional service. First of all you have to give up your nonsense, then you can come and join the devotee *saṅga*, pure devotional service. So a little knowledge, a little renunciation is good in the beginning. But too much makes the heart hard. Too much knowledge, too much renunciation, makes someone very brittle and stiff; and to really appreciate this devotional service, one's heart must be soft. We have to have a kind disposition, merciful disposition, compassionate; and compassion means that you feel another person's suffering as your own. A hard-hearted person can't do that; they're only

thinking of themselves. So to really love Kṛṣṇa, then we have to allow Kṛṣṇa's beauty, Kṛṣṇa's good qualities, Kṛṣṇa's exalted character, Kṛṣṇa's loving affectionate nature to melt our hearts. And when we do that, then we can have a real relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Otherwise we're simply pretending on an external level. I want say three or four things at once because I have so much that I want to say about how wonderful this *bhakti* is. So if we become open-hearted, soft-hearted, giving, naturally merciful, these are the qualities that allow us to enter into the exalted platform of pure *bhakti*.

So the word *ādi* in *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*, in the verse:

The word *ādi* refers to practices such as *renunciation*, *yoga*, *sāṅhya* philosophy, these as well as impersonal *jñāna* and *smṛti*...

Just like we were talking about the different rituals of the scriptures, those are in the *smṛti*; these are all impediments to *bhakti*, they're obstacles to *bhakti*, and they have to be given up or let go before one can come to the actual platform of pure *bhakti*.

Someone may propose that since the definition mentions *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, *bhakti* should also be defined using the word *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. In response to this, it may be said that the definition uses the word *bhakti* rather than *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, because in the devotional scriptures, the word *bhakti* alone is commonly used, although it also may be used to refer to *bhakti* for Viṣṇu or other expansions of the Lord.

This is shown in the next part of the purport. So far we have *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*, which exclusive *bhakti* without any competing desires such as *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*, *jñāna-karma-ādi*, which means 'other things like that,' *anāvṛtam*, rejecting.

We define *bhakti* in this verse both positively and negatively. We define *bhakti* as *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam*, which means uninterrupted, undeviated, unmotivated service favorable to Kṛṣṇa; and then the means is *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*: the desire for Kṛṣṇa's welfare, for Kṛṣṇa's pleasure. And negatively we're defining it as *jñāna-karma-ādi*, all these things

rejected, *anāvṛtam*, including desires for *jñāna*, *karma*, and so on. And we can basically sum that up as any selfish desire. So we should desire to love Kṛṣṇa. This is actually the active principle in devotional service. When people ask me, "How do you advance in devotional service?" Well, you just have to desire to love Kṛṣṇa. And if you ask me how to do that, man, I can't tell you how to desire; you just do it. If your mind or your heart is not under control enough to desire to love Kṛṣṇa, then doing all this other stuff is not going to help you. And actually I've seen it many times in my Godbrothers. They'll be practicing all these external rules and regulations and rituals and activities, and going out and preaching and collecting and doing all this stuff and making devotees, and opening temples, traveling all over the world, working very hard and being very busy and industrious—but all of it is for themselves.

So they never get to the point where they actually can give up these things: *karma*, *jñāna*, and so on, because they still maintain some selfish desire. They still maintain some wants and needs for themselves. They want some honor, they want some respect, they want some position, they want some designation, some title. So they're working very, very hard. They have that same mood like you see in a middle manager at a corporation: wearing the suit, coming in to work early, and getting ready for the the big meeting. They have that same kind of industrious mood: busy, busy, busy. But do they love Kṛṣṇa? No, not really. Do they want to love, do they desire to love Kṛṣṇa? No, not really. Well, how can we say that? Because they don't! They don't love Kṛṣṇa. So if they don't love Kṛṣṇa, they can't be desiring to love Kṛṣṇa, that's the proof. Because if you desire to love Kṛṣṇa, of course Kṛṣṇa is going to give you love of Kṛṣṇa. He may not give it right away, it may take some time. But if you begin to cultivate this desire until it becomes the most important thing in your life, then how is Kṛṣṇa going to refuse it? Kṛṣṇa wants us to love Him. That's the whole purpose of Vedic knowledge, the whole purpose of the material creation: to simply give the conditioned souls a place to go where they can be trained up in devotional service. So this is the actual conclusion of the *Vedas*: one should love Kṛṣṇa and serve Kṛṣṇa without deviation in a

positive way, with love. So it's amazing, sometimes, how close some people can get to devotional service and still get it wrong. I'm constantly amazed by this. To me it's so obvious.

Uddhava dāsa: It's a covering.

Bābājī: Yes. [doing the Jedi mind trick] "This is not the *bhakti* you are looking for." They're under the whammy. Somebody's got them under the whammy of some kind of *māyā*, some kind of reality-distortion field that, "Oh yeah, I'm a devotee, see how I put my *tilaka* on, totally straight and neat. I use a little stamp, actually." [stamps forehead with right hand and makes stamping sound] I've seen people do this. They have a little rubber stamp in the shape of a *tilaka* mark, and then they mix up the *tilaka* in their hand and put the rubber stamp and [stamps forehead with right hand and makes stamping sound, laughs]. "So it's always perfect and neat." And then [makes stamping gesture with right hand on two places of left shoulder then left hand on two places of the right shoulder with a stamping sound effect]. Come on people; this is not a material corporation, you're not putting on your uniform to go to work. This is something transcendental; it's something a little mysterious. It's mystical. It's a mystery. What is a mystery? Can anybody define mystery in the sense of religious mystery or spiritual mystery? [to the devotees] Get the dictionary.

Kānāi dāsa: Mystery: it's something that we don't know. But it's known. So we don't know it yet. So we have to follow the clues, and follow down the path and the mystery will become solved.

Bābājī: Well you're mixing up mystery like a murder mystery, whodunit. No, look up the word mystery.

Uddhava dāsa: In terms of religion? It says, for example, "in Christian theology, a religious belief based on a divine revelation, especially one regarded as beyond human understanding."

Bābājī: Ah. [to Kānāi dāsa] You see how that's different?

Kānāi dāsa: Yes.

Bābājī: Yeah. So what is the divine revelation? The divine revelation is when Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself. Only Kṛṣṇa can do that, nobody else can do that; nobody else can do it. You can't make Him do it either. He does it in His own sweet time; and He will put you through all kinds of tests to purify you and make sure that you're sincere, before He'll actually reveal His transcendental form. But again, remember, going back to this point, which I think is a wonderful insight into the nature of *bhakti*: that Kṛṣṇa's form and *bhakti* are manifested by the same *śakti*, the same energy. **So if you get *bhakti* right, you automatically get Kṛṣṇa's form.** And the fact that my Godbrothers have not gotten revelation of Kṛṣṇa's form means they haven't got *bhakti* right. And I recall making this observation after I was in the temple for two weeks. Because I could see, just from reading one book, Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā As It Is*—just from reading that one book, I could see that the leaders were still maintaining some personal desire. The chapters that did it were chapters 15, 16, 17, and 18 on the three modes of material nature. A real spiritual leader has to be at least in the mode of goodness, and I could see that these guys still had some mode of passion. Read the definition of the mode of passion from *Bhagavad-gītā* chapter 18. It's something like, "The mode of passion is characterized by unlimited desires and longings, intense activity, which is basically motivated by self-benefit, and its final result is suffering." Because the mode of passion, in order to function in that way, requires that one maintain material desire. And whatever you get in response to your material desire is never going to be perfect, it's never going to be eternal; and it's gonna generate *karma* that creates suffering. So if you pursue passion—and we've seen this in our Godbrothers, they pursued these positions of big leadership and big responsibility—it has lead to nothing but suffering, both for them and for the people under their charge, under their care. I certainly suffered a great deal because of their mismanagement and personal ambition. And we read almost every day in

the devotee newsgroups how another one is falling down, and another one is having mental breakdown, and another one is a retired *sannyāsī*, another retired *guru*. Why are they getting worn down by their activities, if their activities are pure *bhakti*? They should become exalted by means of their activities; they should become purified, they should become happy. Not only happy, ecstatic; peaceful, joyful, kind. Instead we see they're playing a kind of hardball politics. Very, very intense politics with each other and with the people under their charge, because they're not actually qualified for the positions that they're in.

[to Uddhava] Just check chapter 18 and the *Gītā* and then look up mode of passion in the translations.

Uddhava dāsa: Verse 24, chapter 18:

"But action performed with great effort by one seeking to gratify his desires, and enacted from a sense of false ego, is called action in the mode of passion." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.24]

Babaji: Great effort. In order to satisfy the desires and perform from a sense of false ego: "I'm the controller, I'm the enjoyer, I'm the temple president, I'm the whatever," you know? That's false ego. Real ego is "I'm simply the servant of my spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. And I'm doing this because it's my duty, and not because I'm getting anything out of it." But I can see that actually they were performing their activities because they were trying to get something out of it. They wanted to enjoy the results of their service, their *bhakti-yoga*. Well that's not *bhakti-yoga*, that's the mode of passion; that's *karma*. At best it's *karma-yoga*. Because you can say "Well, OK they have this tendency anyway, but somehow or other they're engaging it in Kṛṣṇa's service." But it's very, very indirect and unless they have an actual self-realized soul or at least someone in the mode of goodness guiding them, they will fall down.

[to Uddhava] Because, now find the result of action in the mode of passion. There's a verse, "The results of the mode of goodness."

Something like "The results of action in the mode of goodness is happiness, the results of action in the mode of passion is suffering"

Uddhava dāsa: Chapter 14 verse 16:

"The result of pious action is pure and is said to be in the mode of goodness. But action done in the mode of passion results in misery, and action performed in the mode of ignorance results in foolishness."
[*Bhagavad-gītā* 14.16]

Bābājī: Are you reading the original version or the new version?

Uddhava dāsa: I think I'm reading the new version.

Bābājī: I think so too. Anyway, the point is, action in the three modes of nature, especially in the mode of passion and ignorance, leads to suffering and ignorance, foolishness. Madness actually. A person becomes mad because they're striving for something for their own personal benefit, and whatever result they get from their activities is never satisfying. After a while, this is crazy-making. This is extremely frustrating, and people kind of go mad after a while; they get a little crazy. That they've worked so hard for so long and tried so many things, and nothing has worked. So they go a little crazy. They start going between anxiousness and despair. Oscillating, bipolar. Because everything they're doing is maybe even giving them the objects of their desires, but it's not really satisfying them deep inside. So they have to put on an act, "Oh, yes yes, I'm enjoying so much. Oh yes, this is great." But deep down inside, they're very unhappy. There's so many instances, especially of young girls, who as soon as they get out of high school they go into serious depression because the whole false world of school and friends, is built on this idea that "Oh yes, we're enjoying so much." And then as soon as school ends and all their friends go off to college, their whole world falls apart. The whole false ego that they've built up becomes useless. The whole identity that they've created for themselves in their high school context goes away. And so they discover "Oh, actually this was all false." And beneath the jovial exterior, there's this kind of emptiness, that nobody knows who they really are or what

they really want or what they care about. Well, it's their own fault because they were putting on this image of that “Yes, yes, I'm the great enjoyer, I'm the most popular kid in school,” or whatever. And then all of a sudden that, you know, they notice that “Oh, people aren't relating to me, they're relating to my role.” Well that's false ego: that you identify with the role that you play instead of who you really are, see?

Now we're very clear about that. My external role may be a spiritual teacher, *guru* or whatever. But who I really am is quite different: I'm just a little boy who lives in the jungle with my Lion. I mean, try to understand, that's who I really am. And I'm just playing this role to give service and pleasure to the devotees. That's all. It's just temporary; it'll be over soon, enjoy it while it lasts: “The Bābājī show.” So we're very clear on this, that this is just a temporary role, a temporary identity; it's just a play. It's just an act on a stage. “All the world's a stage, and all the people are actors thereupon,” as Shakespeare's Hamlet put it. So that's not a bad thing; that's just the way it is.

It's not even that we have to completely get rid of all false ego, but that even our false ego has to be in relation to Kṛṣṇa. Our false ego even has to be engaged positively in Kṛṣṇa's service, and the service to His devotees. Then we have no cause of suffering. Because even when things don't work out on the material level, “Hey it's not happening to me, it's just my false ego.” So there are no big problems, no big consequences in this material world. Most of our suffering is self-created, due to false expectations based on false ego, false identity, because we think we are “THE big mucka-muck of the Esoteric Teaching *saṅga*” or something like that. Then we have all these expectations of how people are supposed to treat us and how Kṛṣṇa is supposed to treat us and things that are supposed to happen and blah, blah, blah—and if they don't come out just the way we want, then “Oh it's a big problem!” But it's always going to be a big problem because it's all just false ego, it's just a role.

So try to understand, the conditions that we create in the esoteric school are such that help us to approach Kṛṣṇa so that He can reveal the mystery of actual existence, actual life. But all this that we see with our senses is unreal. It's phony; it's false. It's just the set. It's just the set and we play this role, we come out and dance and sing on the stage, and then we go off and we are who we really are. The thing is, most people have no knowledge of who they really are; no knowledge at all. So they're always caught by surprise when the lights go out and the play is over, "Huh? What? You mean I have to... what? But, but, but that's me!" No, it's not you. That's just a role that you play temporarily in the world. So you have to adjust your role to be in harmony with your real identity, your real self; and your real self is you're an eternal devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Your real activity is to offer continuous, unmotivated and positive service and love to Kṛṣṇa. And when you do that, then everything comes into line, everything comes into focus. It's all clear, there are no doubts anymore, no worries. And that's really the bulk of our problems, the bulk of our suffering, you know?

Unless we can come up with a solution to this problem of identity and desire, then there seems to be no end to suffering—and this is actually much more debilitating, much more depressing, than the suffering itself. There's always going to be pain in this world. Pain is required, but suffering is optional. You know, like if I bump up against something and cut my arm; it will hurt a little bit, but as long as I realize that "Oh, it will heal in a few days and everything will be all right," then I'm not suffering. But if I get all upset about it [makes a worried face] "Oh my arm! Ah!" And I go make a big drama over it, then I create more suffering and anxiety for myself and everyone around me. Most of our suffering is simply play-acting around the necessary pain of winter and summer seasons, of loss and gain, victory and defeat; all the things that happen because of the constant churning of the qualities of material nature: goodness, passion, and ignorance. These things are going to happen. Just like, now it's becoming winter here in India, it's getting cool. So in the morning sometimes the shower is a little bit brisk. That doesn't mean that we don't take shower. No we still take bath, like usual; we just tolerate it

because we realize "Oh, it's just temporary," and by February or March then it'll be steaming hot again, and the shower will seem like a relief—ahhhh!—like when we first got here. So knowing that the suffering is only temporary takes a huge load of anxiety off your mind. If you realize there's actually an end to this: "It won't be like this forever, there will be a time when I go back to Kṛṣṇa and everything is bliss." And that time, that consciousness can be within reach; all you have to do is to completely surrender and come to the platform of pure *bhakti*, *uttama-bhakti*; and that's the subject of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. That's why this verse defines *uttama-bhakti* so carefully: from every angle, from every direction. So I will read it one more time:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

"The highest *bhakti* is defined as continuous service or emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, His expansion forms or others related to Him, with a pleasing attitude towards Kṛṣṇa. It should be devoid of desires other than the desire to please the Lord, and unobstructed by impersonal *jñāna*, the materialistic rituals of *karma* or other unfavorable acts." [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11]

Now, is that a lot clearer? That's what we're talking about here. We're talking about *uttama-bhakti*. And if you can attain this platform of *uttama-bhakti*, then all suffering is finished. Pain may still be there, but there won't be any more suffering. Try to run that through your computer and get the conclusion. That's what this is about. And yes, it's a mystery; it's a mystery because it cannot be understood through material logic or ordinary religious activities, or philosophy, or anything material. You simply have to experience it. That's what a mystery school is; that's what an esoteric school is. To be accepted in the esoteric school you have to pass a certain test; and our test is four regulative principles and sixteen rounds.

And the fifth regulative principle: truthfulness. So if you're sincere and if you're willing to be a little austere, and have some interest in *bhakti* then

you can understand this. You can understand it; it's not beyond you at all because you're a spirit soul, and it's in our nature to be in a transcendental love relationship with Kṛṣṇa. That's who we really are. So how do you discover this; how do you understand this? You have to practice this method, this mystical method: chanting the Holy Name, and service and so on. And by this mystical method, somehow or other—of course we've explained the somehow-or-other part a million times—but somehow or other Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to you, and when that happens then that's it, all suffering is over. So you can do this; and if you do it, you will find everything we're saying is true. You have to perform the experiment to find out. There's no other way. Because I can talk very logically about it, and then somebody else can come along and talk very logically and disprove it all; so where's that at? It means that the only actual proof is in the personal experience of *bhakti* itself. Then you can know; otherwise you can never really know whether this is true or not. So come and experience and find out for yourself. Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Chapter 8: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11-12

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, November 3, 2009

This *kīrtana-rasa* is pure bliss. It's pure *bhakti*. It has nothing to do with the material world. It's totally on another level of reality; a transcendental reality that doesn't touch this material world at all. It's entirely separate from this material world; and when we engage in this *kīrtana-rasa*—and you shouldn't just hear it, you should actually engage in it, participate in it—then you find that you are actually taken out of material world, and you go into this parallel dimension where everything is just beauty and wonder and love; and there's nothing else. So Prabhupāda said "This *kīrtana-rasa* is the safest place to be in the world." Like in 2012, if the earth's rotation stops and the oceans come washing over continents or whatever, "Hey just get out the instruments, Haribol!" Or whatever happens—it doesn't matter what happens, that's the whole point. If we're in this nice *kīrtana* mood, then we'll be safe no matter what happens.

We're going to be doing a lot more of this style of *kīrtana*, very elevated and sweet. I've been waiting for this for so long, you can't imagine. Everything up to now has just been the preparation, and this is the real thing. So those of you who are joining us soon have a nice atmosphere to look forward to. And of course we're going to keep studying *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*; that's become our guidebook to the transcendental world. And last couple of days we were going through the eleventh verse:

*anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

“The highest *bhakti* is defined as continuous service or emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, His expansion forms or others related to Him, with a pleasing attitude towards Kṛṣṇa. It should be devoid of desires other than the desire to please the Lord, and unobstructed by impersonal *jñāna*, the materialistic rituals of *karma* or other unfavorable acts.” [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11]

Now there is an additional commentary on this verse by Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, but it's so technical and the points that he makes are so abstruse that I'm not sure what the value of them might be. I'll just read it, and then if there are any questions, if it's too far out, then we'll just go on to verse twelve; otherwise let's read what Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has to say about verse eleven because it's a **very** important verse in the Vaiṣṇava literature: the definition of pure *bhakti*. Our whole program, our whole aim is pure *bhakti*, so we should know what it is from the very beginning, so that we know what we're aiming for, what we're trying to reach. So:

The active sense of the root *śīl*. (Remember we were talking about *anuśīlanam*. *Anuśīlanam* means to serve without any interruption and with devotion.) So the active sense of the root *śīl* is active cultivation involving body, mind, and words. That's the *pravṛtṭy-ātmikā*. *Pravṛtṭy-ātmikā* means 'the external or active sense of the word.' But there's another sense of the word called *nivṛtṭy-ātmikā*. *Nivṛtṭy-ātmikā* means 'that which has no action,' or passive, or internal, or contemplative. The inactive sense of the root *śīl* takes the form of cultivation which uses emotions in the mind.

So *bhakti* is not just an external exercise of devotional service, but it's also internal, with the heart: emotions. In Western ontology there's very little information about emotions. But *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is like an encyclopedia of emotions; there are thousands of emotions described in this work, and it also gives a plan, or a root ontology of how emotions are formed—transcendental emotions of course. We don't want to talk about degenerate material emotions; we only want to talk about emotions in relation with Kṛṣṇa, that's *bhakti*. So:

This cultivation uses the emotions of joy and sorrow in the mind.

Not only joy, also sorrow. And we'll see, by the end of the Southern Ocean, how even emotions of sorrow can be used in service to the Lord; and in fact, the bliss connected to those emotions is more powerful and more tasty, and deeper and more satisfying than the emotions of so-called joy. Actually all *bhakti* emotions are transcendental. We shouldn't bring

our material prejudices into the realm of *bhakti*, because they don't apply. Just file that all away for now and try to understand this on a transcendental platform. So:

It uses emotions of joy and also sorrow, *prīti-viṣād-ātmikā*.

So we had *pravṛtty-ātmikā*, active service; *nivṛtty-ātmikā*, contemplative service; and now we have *prīti-viṣād-ātmikā*. *Prīti* means joy and *viṣāda* means sorrow. *Ātmikā* means cultivation. *Prīti-viṣād-ātmikā*.

It also takes the form of the *sthāyi-bhāva*.

Sthāyi-bhāva means the principal emotion, or the principal mood of the devotee in his relationship with Kṛṣṇa. The devotee's service relationship with Kṛṣṇa can be in one of five principal moods: neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parenthood and conjugal love. One of these five is the *sthāyi-bhāva* of each and every devotee. So this cultivation of *bhakti* takes the form of the *sthāyi-bhāva* on the levels of *bhāva* and *prema*. There's one verse towards the end of this Eastern Ocean. This famous verse that we quote over and over again:

*ādau śraddhā tataḥ sādhu-
saṅgo 'tha bhajana-kriyā
tato 'nārtha-nivṛttiḥ syāt
tato niṣṭhā rucis tataḥ*

*athāsaktis tato bhāvas
tataḥ premābhyudañcati
sādhakānām ayaṁ premṇaḥ
prādurbhāve bhavet kramāḥ*

"In the beginning one must have a preliminary desire for self-realization. This will bring one to the stage of trying to associate with persons who are spiritually elevated. In the next stage one becomes initiated by an elevated spiritual master, and under his instruction the neophyte devotee begins the process of devotional service. By execution of devotional service under the guidance of the spiritual master, one becomes free from all material attachment, attains steadiness in self-realization, and acquires a taste for hearing about the Absolute Personality of Godhead,

Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This taste leads one further forward to attachment for Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is matured in bhāva, or the preliminary stage of transcendental love of God. Real love for God is called prema, the highest perfectional stage of life." [Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā 23.14-15]

So after *anartha-nivṛtti*, after all the material conceptions are removed from the mind, then one can go forward into the higher stages of *bhāva* and *prema*. In those stages:

The cultivation of *bhakti* takes the form of the *sthāyi-bhāva* on the levels of *bhāva* and *prema*, which will be explained later. What is indicated by the words *seva-nāma-aparādham udbhavā karita* is a negative form of cultivation: *abhāva-rūpa*, avoidance to the offense to the Name and the Deity.

Everything that we've explained so far is a positive means of cultivation, but there's also a negative means of cultivation which involves avoiding the offenses. This language is very technical and very difficult, but it actually means something very simple: that we do these positive things with the mind, body, words, our emotions—spiritual emotions—and we also avoid certain things that are displeasing to Kṛṣṇa. The definition of *ānukūlya*, as pleasing for Kṛṣṇa, in this verse,

ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam bhaktir uttamā

[Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11]

Ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam: now he will talk about *ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* for a while. We already talked about *śīlanam*. *Śīlanam* means this service which is performed by both positive and negative means, by both active and passive means, by external and internal means, in fact, any means whatsoever. We offer these things to Kṛṣṇa and that's our devotional service. But now he's saying:

The definition of *ānukūlya* as pleasing for Kṛṣṇa...

In the translation:

"It should be devoid of desires other than the desire to please the Lord."
[Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11]

He's simply saying that specifying that the desires should be pleasing for Kṛṣṇa is too limiting; it's both too extensive and too limiting.

For example, the action, *anuśīlanam*, for a demon attacking Kṛṣṇa, is the *rasa* of fighting: *yuddha-vīrya-rasa*, derived from the *utsāha-rati* from Kṛṣṇa's perspective. *Utsāha* means fighting. It is pleasing for Him since He takes pleasure in fighting with them. *Yuddha-vīra-rasa* is expressed in the following verse:

*patim prayāntam subalasya putrī
pati-vratā cānuja-gāma sādhvī
himālayam nyasta-daṇḍa-prahaṣam
manasvinām iva sat-samprahāraḥ*

"The gentle and chaste Gāndhārī, who was the daughter of King Subala of Kandahar [or Gāndhāra], followed her husband, seeing that he was going to the Himālaya Mountains, which are the delight of those who have accepted the staff of the renounced order like fighters who have accepted a good lashing from the enemy." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.13.30]

Again, an illustration of the definition being too limited, if *ānukūlya*, means pleasing to Kṛṣṇa, is given. This verse is meant to illustrate *yuddha-vīra-rasa*. *Yuddha* means fighting, *vīra* means heroism, and of course *rasa* means emotional relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Dhṛtarāṣṭra was the father of Duryodhana, the enemy of Yudhiṣṭhira and Arjuna. And of course he was defeated in the battle of Kurukṣetra. So even though he was defeated, he kept his mood of heroism, *vīra*, and instead of accepting the hospitality of Yudhiṣṭhira and his brothers, who were actually his lifelong enemies, he took the renounced order and went to the Himālayas and there left his body under spiritual discipline and vows. So this indicates that he was still in the mood of *vīra-rasa*, *yudha-vīra*, fighting and heroism. What does a person do when they're defeated by the material energy? If they have any intelligence, they engage in

spiritual life. They surrender to Kṛṣṇa: "OK Kṛṣṇa, I can't master Your external material energy, so I'm gonna take the renounced order of life and enter the discipline of spiritual life." Another example is given:

When Yaśodā left Kṛṣṇa and went to take the milk off the fire, Kṛṣṇa was not pleased.

Thus, if we took this definition too strictly, Yaśodā's action would not be accepted as devotional service. The following example is given:

*sañjāta-kopaḥ sphuritāruṇādharam
sandaśya dadbhīr dadhi-mantha-bhājanam
bhittvā mṛṣāśrur dṛṣad-aśmanā raho
jaghāsa haiyaṅgavam antaram gataḥ*

"Being very angry and biting His reddish lips with His teeth, Kṛṣṇa, with false tears in His eyes, broke the container of yogurt with a piece of stone. Then He entered a room and began to eat the freshly churned butter in a solitary place." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.9.6]

So Kṛṣṇa was not pleased. In fact, He threw a temper tantrum. But was Yaśodā's action devotional service? Well, of course it was; because she performed the action with the intention to give pleasure to Kṛṣṇa.

So in order to prevent the definition from being too extensive—the first case, talking about Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Gāndhārī, would we accept that as devotional service, their activities?

Even though it's part of the fighting that Kṛṣṇa enjoyed so much, Kṛṣṇa has setup that whole situation so that He could fight and defeat the enemies of Yudhiṣṭhira? Or is the definition too limiting, as in the second case, where Yaśodā's devotional service would be excluded because Kṛṣṇa didn't like what she did?

The definition of *ānukūlyena* should be explained as devoid of hostility on the part of the performer. This would exclude the demons, since they have hostility in the form of hatred for Kṛṣṇa. But this definition will also not exclude Yaśodā because she does not have hostility towards Kṛṣṇa. Therefore, let *bhakti* be defined in terms of *ānukūlyā*, "a friendly

attitude directed to Kṛṣṇa." The word *anuśīlanam*, which is modified by *ānukūlya*, is thus unnecessary because *bhakti* can be defined merely as a favorable attitude to Kṛṣṇa.

Now this is considered an objection. See I told you this commentary was subtle:

This objection is rejected since even a pot is devoid of hostility to Kṛṣṇa and is therefore pleasing to Him. [to Devotees] What? But it cannot be described as having *bhakti*. [laughs] Therefore, the word *anuśīlanam* is also necessary.

In other words, *anuśīlanam*—meaning constant, devoted service to the Lord—is necessary, not just *ānukūlya*. *Ānukūlya* means without any hostility, without any bad attitude; but *anuśīlanam* means "and with constant devoted service."

In order to define the highest *bhakti*, *uttama-bhakti*, two further descriptive phrases are added. What type of *anuśīlanam* is this? It should be devoid of desires for obtaining results other than *bhakti*.

*smarantaḥ smārayantaś ca
mitho 'ghaughā-haram harim
bhaktyā sañjātayā bhaktyā
bibhraty utpulakām tanum*

"The devotee who remembers and induces other to remember the Lord, who takes away heaps of sin, develops symptoms like hairs standing on end by *bhakti* which has sprung from *bhakti*." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.3.31]

Very nice verse. It's spoken by the seven great sages who came to visit King Yudhiṣṭhira. In other words, *bhakti* has no other cause than *bhakti*. It's on the transcendental platform. Don't think that "Because I went to this website, because I read this book, because I did this, or I did that or gave money or something or other, therefore I got some *bhakti*, some taste for *bhakti*." No, no: if you have some taste for *bhakti*, it has come only from *bhakti* itself. The taste of pure *bhakti* is proper to pure *bhakti* alone. And these other attitudes, or other actions or other cultivations, they may

support and help the entrance into *bhakti*, but once you're on the actual platform of *bhakti*, *bhakti* alone is sufficient to support itself. So anyway:

Bhakti which aims at achieving *bhakti*, is proper. And *bhakti* which aims at achieving other goals is improper. In the verse, the phrase *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam* has been used. This means "devoid of other desires which are as deep-rooted as one's nature." In death-threatening situations, a devotee may say, "O Lord, please save me. Save me—your devotee—now from this danger." Because it is a sudden, temporary, desire, it is not harmful to his *bhakti*. That is because this desire arises beyond his control, opposite to his devotional nature.

The desire is not his nature, see? He's not purposely cultivating this desire: "O Kṛṣṇa, save me. O Kṛṣṇa, please give me something to eat. O Kṛṣṇa, please take care of my rent this month." He's not cultivating these kind of desires. In fact, the devotee should cultivate this mood of desirelessness where: "Kṛṣṇa, I'm just doing this devotional service to gain a deeper realization of *bhakti*. Now, You can take care of me, or not, as You wish." But trusting that Kṛṣṇa is going to take care. Trusting that Kṛṣṇa's unlimited resources and power can easily take care of His devotees. So we should trust Kṛṣṇa, and simply do our devotional service for the purpose of increasing our devotional service. The cause of *bhakti* is *bhakti*. The aim of *bhakti* is also *bhakti*. Both cause and result are nothing but *bhakti*. Don't try to get anything else out of *bhakti*. Don't try to improve your material situation through *bhakti*; it won't work. It will backfire, because you will wind up performing offenses when, at some point, you have to choose between *bhakti* and your material desires. I've seen this happen hundreds, if not thousands of times with my Godbrothers, that they were entering into *bhakti* with some material desire—let's say a desire for fame or power or wealth, or some kind of designation or position. And then in the heat of the moment, when it came right down to it, and they had to choose between their desire for themselves and the desire to please Kṛṣṇa, they chose themselves. And then they lost their taste for *bhakti* and gradually fell down. I've seen this happen so many times; don't make this mistake. That's why we're concentrating on this philosophy of pure *bhakti*, and we will make this our permanent platform; and if somebody can

appreciate it, if someone has a taste for it, they can come and join us on this pure *bhakti* platform. Otherwise we specifically reject mixed devotional service. If you want to practice mixed devotional service at home, that's alright; but not when you come in our association, because in our association we practice only pure devotional service. This is a very important point: don't try to mix material activities and *bhakti*. They don't mix. They don't mix, and sooner or later they will cause problems in your devotional service. So:

How is *anuśīlanam* further described? The verse states specifically that: "it is not covered by *jñāna* or *karma* or other items."

jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11]

Jñāna means inquiry about the undifferentiated Brahman, not inquiry about the worshipable Lord; but knowledge of the Lord is necessary for *bhakti*.

Does that mean that we don't study the scriptures? No, it means we study the scriptures with the aim of getting knowledge about the Lord. This refers to our intention, our aim. We should not study the scriptures just for the sake of learning, knowledge, or speculation, philosophical speculation, or to have a fresh supply of quotations we can use to beat somebody down in an argument. There are all kinds of reasons for studying the scriptures, but the only valid one in the course of *bhakti* is to learn more about Kṛṣṇa, the object of *bhakti*.

And *karma* refers to the daily and periodic duties enjoined by the *smṛti* scriptures—not to services, not to services, devotional services offered to the Lord, for devotional activities are *anuśīlanam*.

And *karma*, by definition, is not *anuśīlanam* because it's neither constant nor devoted. We discussed last time how people who are engaged in material activities of *karma* can do them for a while, then they have to leave them aside and go do something else. They can't perform continuous *karma* activities. And neither are they doing those activities out of devotion or pure love. No, they're doing it to benefit themselves. So in

both instances, these *karma* activities do not fit the definition of *anuśīlanam*. So:

But devotional activities are *anuśīlanam*. The word *ādi*, in *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*, which means *jñāna*, *karma*, and other things. The word *ādi* indicates engaging in sacrifices, renunciation, *yoga*, *sāṅkhya* philosophy, and other such items. These items should not cover *anuśīlanam*. (By cover, in this case, means obscure.) The word *śūnya*, devoid, is not used in the second descriptive phrase as it was in the first, namely *anyābhilāṣa-śūnyam*. The intention of using *anāvṛtam* instead of *śūnyam* is to forbid only those types of *jñāna* and *karma* which conceal *bhakti*...

So there is a type of *karma-yoga*, which is described in *Bhagavad-gītā*, third and especially the fifth chapter, where one offers the result of his work to the Lord, and that is not obscuring *bhakti*, that's a necessary preliminary for *bhakti*; in fact, it's one of the best ways to enter into *bhakti*, by being a congregational member of an assembly of pure devotees, and offering the results of one's work for the benefit of the pure devotees for their preaching and other activities. And this will actually remove **all** the karmic results of your past previous karmic activities, and purify you to the extent where you can also come to the platform of pure *bhakti*. And we also mentioned about studying the scriptures, *jñāna*. *Jñāna*, when used for learning about the Lord through the *bhakti* scriptures, is the proper use of *jñāna*. So:

The intention of using *anāvṛtam* is for forbidding the types of *karma* which conceal *bhakti*. Performing *nitya-karmas*, daily duties, with faith, out of fear of sin if one does not perform them, under the authority of Vedic rules, is a covering on *bhakti*.

Because instead of performing these pious activities out of love for Kṛṣṇa, one is doing it out of fear: "Oh if I mess up, if I don't do my duties, then I'll be punished." "If I don't follow all these rules and regulations and some, I'll go to hell." "And I won't get the reward of going to heavenly planets or whatever." So one is performing these material religious activities out of desire and fear. That's not love; but *bhakti* is simply love.

These kind of activities are a covering on *bhakti*. As well, performing them with faith that they will produce *bhakti* in the future is also a covering on *bhakti*.

In other words, "Now I'm doing this karmic ritual, inviting the Māyāvādī *brāhmaṇas* to my house and they're doing all these prayers, so in the future I may enter *bhakti*." No, no, no. Remember, the cause of *bhakti* is *bhakti*, the result of *bhakti* is *bhakti*. So if you want *bhakti*, do *bhakti*. Don't do these other rituals or other practices, or stand on your head, some TM or some other thing. No, no. I mean, if you absolutely must deal with some difficult material situation we already have a method for that: the *Viṣṇusahasranāma*. Please chant *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, and this will help your material situation and at the same time establish you in *bhakti*.

A great devotee is not excluded from pure *bhakti* by performing *śraddha* to the *pitās*, if it is done without faith in their absolute nature just to teach the common people.

In other words, there may be certain—in the West it's hardly there, but in India, for example—this business of offering *śraddha* to the soul of the departed relative is very common, very widespread. And one is considered to be very offensive and irreverent if you don't do it. And similarly there are many duties, for example, that must be performed by kings or priests or other members of Vedic society at certain times of the year and so on, otherwise they would be considered fallen. So a devotee—even though he doesn't really believe in those activities—should do them just to instruct the people in general to perform pious activities. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

"The wise do not unsettle the minds of the ignorant, even though their duties are inferior." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.29]

So, in other words, we shouldn't go walking down the street saying "Well, I'm a devotee, I can do anything I want," violating all the principles of society; no, that's not a very nice attitude. A devotee should always have a positive attitude towards other spiritual and religious practices. We don't

want to go around telling everybody that they're wrong, and they don't know what they're taking about and getting into useless arguments, because there's a reason why those people are stuck in those practices. The reason has to do with their previous activities and the *karma* resulting from them. So we have to accept the laws of the Lord that limit the activities of people with karmic reactions. It's just like the reason we don't get involved in politics. Yes, there's a lot of things we could say about the current political situation and the different leaders; but those leaders are put there by the Lord in response to the karmic situation of the people in general. And our experience is that, even though these things are going on, somehow or other they don't touch us. We're like exempt from that group *karma*, we've checked out. As Kṛṣṇa says:

"The devotee is not affected by the usual course of activities."
[*Bhagavad-gītā* 12.16]

And we've experienced that to be true. We are not following the normal course of activities and therefore we're not affected by those typical rules.

"Devotees are released from all kinds of sins because they eat food which is offered to Kṛṣṇa in sacrifice." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 3.13]

And their other activities also release them from so many restrictions and other things that souls who are not engaged in *bhakti* have to follow. But that doesn't mean that we should say to everybody, "Oh, you have to just drop everything and become a devotee." They can't do it. It's not going to happen. Because the Lord does not violate His own laws, His own principles. He won't take somebody out of their karmic situation **unless they desire it**. They themselves have to desire *bhakti*. We can give them nice impressions of *bhakti*, that's the best thing we can do for them. Because then in the future they'll be able to rise above their karmic situation by the results of *bhakti*, huh? The cause of *bhakti* is *bhakti*. The result of *bhakti* is *bhakti*. So by having a good feeling toward the devotees, people will gain more advancement than if we try to get down in the

trenches and argue our philosophy and all that. So the best presentation is simple and very positive.

*yathā śrī-nārada-pañcarātre
sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ tat-paratvena nirmalam
hṛṣīkeṇa hṛṣīkeśa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate*

"Thus, the *Nārada-pañcarātra* says: '*Bhakti* is defined as service to the Lord using the senses. It should be done with the intention of pleasing the Lord, free from other desires, and unobstructed by other processes.'" [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.12]

This verse is very frequently quoted by Śrīla Prabhupāda. Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

In this verse, *tat-paratvena*, meaning "with devotion to Him, taking Him as the highest object" is the equivalent of *ānukūlyena* in the previous verse.

Ānukūlyena means pleasing for Kṛṣṇa or with a positive attitude toward Kṛṣṇa.

Sarvopādhi-vinirmuktaṁ, "devoid of all conditions" is equivalent to *anyābhilāṣitā-sūnyam*, devoid of all other different processes. *Sevanam* is the equivalent of *anuśīlanam*. *Nirmalam*, without blemish, is the equivalent to *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*. So these two verses are exactly equivalent. The superior nature of this *bhakti*, *uttamatvam*, is understood by its very nature and thus, not stated in words.

Nārada, of course, is one of the great authorities, the *mahājanas*, the great *bhakti* authorities in the universe. There are twelve of them and Nārada, his engagement is traveling everywhere. He has this transcendental *vīṇā*, similar to our *tānpura*, and simply by playing this and chanting the name of the Lord, he can travel anywhere. He's like a transcendental spaceman, and he's a very far-out character: he's always ecstatic, he's always chanting, and he's always engaged and involved in the Lord's pastimes. He's sort of like Mercury, the messenger of the gods. He travels here and there and gives different messages to different people to facilitate the Lord's pastimes. He's very cool. So he is giving his definition of *bhakti* in

Nārada-pancaratra. *Pañcarātra* is a guide to spiritual activities. *Pañcārātika-vidhi*, means the knowledge by which one worships the Lord with the five senses, *pañca*. *Pañca-āratika*, like *ārati*. And we see in the *ārati* ceremony, also, that all the senses are there, all the objects of the senses, rather, are offered to the Lord. Nice scents, a lamp (a light), and water, a flower, fan, everything is there; and before the *ārati* ceremony, it's customary to offer food. So everything is there: earth, fire, water, air. And we offer the Lord's energies back to Him in the *ārati* ceremony, and then these five senses or sense objects are offered to the Lord in the process of *bhakti*, see? So he says here:

Bhakti is defined as service to the Lord using the senses.

So we offer the senses and the sense objects back to their source, which is Kṛṣṇa. Just like when you worship the Ganges river; you go in the river, and then you take the water from the river and offer it back into the river itself. So in the same way we take the different energies and elements coming from Kṛṣṇa and we offer them back to Kṛṣṇa, and we also offer our personal bodily senses back to Kṛṣṇa in the form of devotional activities: smelling the incense of the Lord, hearing the Lord's Name, chanting, thinking about Kṛṣṇa, and then doing all kind of active service around the temple. And we will get into detailed descriptions of all the different modes of devotional service to the Lord. That's one thing that this book, *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is all about. In the beginning it talks about all the practical arrangements that we need to serve the Lord very nicely, and then gradually it goes to higher and higher and higher levels, talking about the different emotional states and so on, which are actually the majority of the service. Like Jesus says,

"When you go to the temple to make an offering, first clear all of your accounts. Forgive everybody, like don't go to the temple with any anger towards anybody, with any outstanding debts in your heart, emotional debts. Resolve everything and go into the temple completely available to the Lord."

Don't be thinking about what happened yesterday or what you're planning to do tomorrow, but just **be here now!** Remember that book? Actually he has a point there; and the point is that most of the time, most of us go around desiring things for the future and lamenting about the past. And we swing back and forth, the mind goes back and forth between hope and desire, and despair and lamentation, and what kind of nonsense is this? You don't want to approach the Supreme Lord, who's the source of everything, and loves you unconditionally and can give you anything you want, while grumbling and muttering to yourself about all these things; this is really nonsense. Your heart should be clean, your mind should be pure. Your attention should be focused on the moment. You're approaching God, after all. And whenever you chant the Holy Name, the same thing: you should be very clean, very pure, focused, not rushed, not at all under stress, or angry or upset. In fact, there's a nice *śloka* that says:

"How can the Lord appear in a heart which is contaminated by lust, anger, greed, or lamentation?" [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.2.115]

How can He appear? The Lord doesn't go anyplace that's not pure. So how is the Lord going to appear in your heart if your heart is not pure? This is the first prerequisite for *bhakti*, the heart must be pure:

ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam

"Clean the mirror of the heart with the Holy Name." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya-līlā* 20.12]

So in one sense, the process for cleaning the heart is chanting; but in another sense, in order to chant without offenses, we have to clean the heart somewhat first. We should approach the Lord with a clean heart, a pure mind. This is very, very important. Otherwise our attention will be all over the universe, and we're certainly going to make an offense. And if we do that, then the result of our chanting is going to be delayed. Because remember, the result of *bhakti* is only *bhakti*. Don't chant to get out of some material situation or get into some material situation, or for any other reason other than you want to improve your *bhakti*, you want to

increase your devotion. Now it's an interesting fact that increasing devotion doesn't necessarily mean that we do **more** service. But what it means is that the service we **do** is of a higher quality; it's purer, it's without offense. We'll go over all the offenses that you can commit in devotional service and how to avoid them as part of this series. But the most important thing is that you are **present** and available for Kṛṣṇa. You want to engage with Kṛṣṇa, you want to meet Kṛṣṇa; so don't be distracted thinking of all these other things. Just be there with Kṛṣṇa, hang out with the Holy Name, and gradually Kṛṣṇa will reveal Himself through the transcendental sound vibration.

Uddhava dāsa: We have a question in regards to what we're doing right now, the technical part of studying scriptures. Technically speaking, would this be considered also *bhakti*, or is this like an overview of what *bhakti* is so that we can engage later on?

Babaji: Oh no, this study itself is *bhakti*. These scriptures don't have any application except in *bhakti*. They don't have any *karma-kāṇḍa* rituals, they don't have any *jñāna-kāṇḍa* philosophical speculation—they preach against that, in fact. There's going to be a whole long section with many, many, many, many quotations, for example, why the devotees aren't interested in liberation. So what to speak of ordinary fruitive activities; devotees don't even care about liberation! Studying this specifically, the *bhakti* scriptures—*Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, and even *Vedānta-Sūtra* and to certain extent *Mahābhārata*, *Rāmāyaṇa*, *Caitanya-bhāgavata* and anything written by the Six Gosvāmīs of Vrindavan—these are all considered *bhakti-śāstra* or *rasa-śāstra*, because they aim at reestablishing our original ecstatic transcendental relationship with the Lord. But in *Mahābhārata* there's a little bit of contamination of *karma-kāṇḍa*, a little bit of aiming for the heavenly planets and stuff like that. So it's mixed devotional service, but these other scriptures that I just named give pure devotional service; and if we study them, there's no other result other than engaging in devotional service. So that's the test. If by studying this book, is the result only

bhakti? Then, yes, it's a *bhakti* scripture. In *Viṣṇusahasranāma*, even though it gives some material benefits, the ultimate result is *bhakti*. And of course, *Viṣṇusahasranāma* is also a part of *Mahābhārata*, it comes from *Mahābhārata*, so one would expect that. But, for example, *Śrī Nṛsiṃhasahasranāma* has no material benefit; all its benefits are pure *bhakti*; it's not recommended for people who want anything from this world, but rather who want protection from the material energy so they can get on with their devotional service, see? So processes like the *Nārāyaṇa-kavaca*, the meditations before serving the Lord, where you do *ācamana* and *bhūtā-śuddhi* and all those things, those are considered *bhakti*, even though people who perform material *karma* rituals also use those practices; we're using them specifically to perform *bhakti* service, so therefore, they're transcendental.

Uddhava dāsa: I've seen another phenomenon that's kind of strange, that some authors of these books, these *bhakti* books, translators of the Six Gosvāmī, after all that work, they're still in this religion mood and power and all that stuff, so it's kind of difficult to understand why they fall into that; and do you see any reflection, for example, in this particular case of being too dry?

Bābajī: Yes, I do. As I was typing in the verses I noticed the influence of too much scholarship, too much *jñāna*, is that some of the verses came out very, very dry. And some of his translations differ significantly from Śrīla Prabhupāda's in spots, and so I tried to correct those, although I don't really have time to make detailed study of it, we'll try to correct those as we go through the book. I think it's because of his association. Uddhava is talking about the translator of this edition of *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, who's my Godbrother, Bhanu Svāmī. And he's the head of the temple up in Chennai. And just to give you an idea of his attitude, I wrote him saying that, "This is a very nice contribution to the *bhakti* literature, and that I have also done a commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, so I can really appreciate the amount of work that goes into it," like that. And so he wrote back with one word, "Haribol!" [scratches head with right hand] Well, it seems a bit

brusque, to put it nicely. **Rude**, actually. So this kind of attitude is very political attitude, "Oh, I'm president of a bigger temple than you are." We don't appreciate this very much. Certainly if I was contacted by someone who had attempted to write books about *bhakti*, even if they were imperfect or whatever, at least I would encourage them for trying. We want to see more people writing books on *bhakti*, but he was replying as if I was a competitor; as if I didn't deserve the time of day, and the implied judgment is not too palatable.

So what we want to see, of course, in people who write *bhakti* literature is that they also are in *bhakti* mood, that's the best thing. But, sometimes we have to accept translations from people who are in a more scholarly mood, more *jñāna* mood, and then we have to apply some corrective interpretation to bring them into the proper mood. And this mood is described here, that none of these other processes of *karma* or *jñāna* or *yoga*, or any of these things will cover the pure *bhakti*. And he has allowed his taste for *jñāna* to cover the meaning or the mood of pure *bhakti* in many cases. So we're going to have to correct for that as we go through the translations. But that's alright, we have plenty of time, we're only doing one or two or three a day, so it's not like we're trying to read this thing like a novel. We want to study it scrutinizingly, get back to the original Sanskrit and the original intention of Rūpa Gosvāmī. That way we'll be safe; we'll be in *bhakti* land, on the *bhakti* platform.

Uddhava dāsa: Another question that I have is, is there any limit to how scrutinizingly we can study? I was just reading in the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, where Lord Caitanya explained what you have said, that every verse is a whole ocean, and every word is like, is basically never-ending scrutinizingly.

Bābājī: There's no limit. You can go down to the meaning of every letter of every word.

Uddhava dāsa: That seems to me, like practically speaking, there must be a limit or something in terms of time and...

Bābājī: Well the human life is maximum one hundred years long, so we do want to get through the book to find out how it ends. I know how it ends, but I don't want to spoil it for you. So we want to take it at a pace that's not too fast and not too slow. When it's needed, we can go down to a very, very detailed level and look at all the word roots and stuff like that. There's certain very important verses—this eleventh verse in particular—the reason why they're scrutinizing it so deeply is because it's a very, very important verse, a pivotally important verse, because it's what distinguishes our particular lineage from all the other lineages that accept mixed devotional service. A lineage that claims to be descended from a certain teacher, but actually does not follow that teacher's philosophy is called an *apasampradāya*. Just like *sampradāya* is a lineage that's properly situated; a lineage that claims to follow Lord Caitanya, but actually doesn't follow His principles or His teaching is called an *apasampradāya*. And in one of the commentaries on *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Bhaktivinod Ṭhākura describes thirteen *apasampradāyas* of Lord Caitanya: Bāulas, Āulas, Kārta-bhājyas, Gaurāṅga-nāgarīs, and so many others. They all have a particular name and particular philosophy. So there are many groups of so-called devotees who don't actually follow the philosophy of Lord Caitanya. They get hung up on *vaidhī-bhakti*, or mixed devotional service, or *jñāna*, or *karma*, or something other than pure *bhakti*. There's even a group that claims to teach pure *bhakti*, they claim that they're teaching *rāgānuga-bhakti*, but what they do is **they make up all these rules about how you're supposed to feel!** "When you're offering the *prasādam*, when you take the spoon you're supposed to feel this way, and then when you take this other thing then you're supposed to feel that way, and when you take the plate and put it on the altar you're supposed to say this *mantra*, and that *mantra*, and this other *mantra*." There's more rules than even regular *vaidhī-bhakti*! So what's spontaneous about that?

Uddhava dāsa: Spontaneous *rasābhāsa* we call it.

Bābājī: Exactly. So, that's not a very good quality. These are called *apasampradāyas*. *Apasampradāyas* are very dangerous because it's like a

misabeled product. You go to the store and you buy a bottle that says “olive oil” but actually inside is motor oil. And if you try use it as olive oil it'll be a disaster. So there are so many groups that are saying "Oh, we teach *bhakti*, and we're following Lord Caitanya!" But they don't actually follow Lord Caitanya. They give some different conclusion or some different process. If you want to know what Lord Caitanya taught, look at His life. What did He do? Yes, He went through a period of intense Vedic study where he learned so many scriptures and defeated so many scholars, but then, as soon as He came to the *bhakti* platform, His practice was pure spontaneous *bhakti* based on this chanting of the Holy Name, *saṅkīrtana*. And He had all these wonderful artists who helped Him in his chanting pastimes. It's not at all like the typical temple where there are like people banging on the drums, “Haribol!” So we want to create a standard that's actually descended from the original mood of Lord Caitanya. This fine artistic sense of beauty and *rasa* which is coming from spontaneous love of Kṛṣṇa, spontaneous attraction based on Kṛṣṇa's exalted qualities; so we'll also spend quite a bit of time going over Kṛṣṇa's qualities. His sixty-four qualities are defined in so much detail in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, I mean, every one is given and then several examples from *śāstra*.

So we'll go into all these things, and study all of them at least to the level of the verse, and sometimes to the individual words in the verse. For certain verses it may be justifiable to go and like look up all the synonyms, we'll have the unabridged Sanskrit dictionary here very soon, so we'll be able to look up the word roots in the dictionary.

Uddhava dāsa: At least we're trying, you know? Trying to get to this level of artistic expression, even if we can't get there, but the intention.

Bābājī: Actually, to us our music, seems very nice, but to people who actually know Indian classical music, what we're doing is very, very, very simplistic; almost boring. But to us it's nice and sweet. And similarly the dancing. I don't know if you any of you have been watched the dancing videos we've been posting but, from the point of view of a professional

dancer, we're just hopeless. But if you see the way other devotees are approaching this, they're not trying to achieve any standard whatsoever. At least we're accepting the standards, whatever standards are there, and we've also ordered the *Bhārata Nāṭya-śāstra* so we can go back to the source of many of these Vedic principles of dance, music, drama and so forth.

So anyway, we're will do this research and try to understand the original principles of *rasa* that the devotional service is based on. And even if we fail, it's like Prabhupāda said, "Shooting the rhinoceros." If you attempt to go hunting the rhinoceros, the rhinoceros is the most difficult animal to hunt. You have to shoot exactly in the right place and it's very difficult, and if you miss; uh-oh, well, bye. But if someone tries to hunt the rhinoceros and they fail, then people will say "Well, at least they tried! It's the most difficult thing, so if they fail well it's understandable." But if we actually succeed, or even partially succeed, it'll be very wonderful. So far I like what's happening; I'm feeling very good tonight. Tonight's *kīrtana* was really up. It was floating, we got off, we got off the ground. It was very, very wonderful, and it's just the beginning. I've ordered three more flutes. So I hope that everybody continues to stay with us and go through this great *śāstra*, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Question from Chandramohan: "Please accept my humble *praṇams*."

The question is: "How an ordinary person can understand all these scriptures whether it has done by a devotee or if it's done from an *apasampradāya* person, and if he follows the wrong one, what happens to his *bhakti* if he follows the *apasampradāya*?"

Bābājī: Well, how can it be the wrong one? Any of Śrīla Prabhupāda's books or any of the books of the Six Gosvāmīs are authorized. Any of the *rasa-śāstras*, certainly, are authorized. And unless someone did really a terrible job of translation you would be able to get at least something. And we always have *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* to go back to, see?

If I'm going through a translation by a scholar and he's not very devotional, how do I know where he's off? Well, I go back to Śrīla Prabhupāda's original books. I use those as my standard. And if anything conflicts with Prabhupāda's original work, then it's wrong. And so what I do in that situation, now I know the original scripture isn't wrong; so I dig deeper, I get out the dictionary, I start looking up the words and I'll retranslate it, or rewrite it, so that it is harmonious with Prabhupāda's word. We can't be lazy. We can't expect someone to drop a prepackaged solution in our lap and say "OK, that's it." No. We have to take the responsibility for doing the research ourselves. We have to know the conclusion of our *sampradāya*. We have to see when somebody is off, and we have to know how to dig deep enough to find the actual truth; how to extract that truth from the original texts. That's why I tell everybody, "You have to learn Sanskrit." If you don't, you will get cheated sooner or later. Somebody with a big title after their name or a big position in some organization will give you a line of nonsense, and if you don't have the ability to go to the original source and see where they're off, then you may accept the wrong instruction. And I can't do anything to protect you from that, except to tell you, "You have to be able to think for yourself." You have to be able to go to the original authorities and extract the meaning by the same process of scholarship that any good devotee scholar uses to translate those scriptures. It's hard work, yes. It takes a lot of thought, and a lot of experience as well. And you will go up wrong alleys sometimes. But you can always tell because if you start to go up a wrong path, your *bhakti* will lose its taste.

If you start to lose your taste for *bhakti*, you know you have to take corrective action immediately. You have to find out what's wrong and fix it. It could be something as simple as not taking care of your health. Or it could be reading too many books, without having understood the terminology in the basic books, like *Bhagavad-gītā*, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Not that *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is basic; *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is very elevated. But in all cases there's usually some simple remedy, and it always goes back to careful study of the original sources. The knowledge

we have is perfect; it comes from the perfect person, Bhagavān. And if there has been some error in handing this knowledge down to us, then we should take the responsibility for correcting it. Nobody will help us with this; it's up to us. So we have to have the tools, we have to have the abilities and the intentions also, the willingness to do the work to get the correct teaching, then that will help us very much. That's why I encourage all my devotees, all my students to accept only books that contain the original text. Don't read books that don't have the original text, because there's no way you can verify whether the translation is accurate.

Chapter 9: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.13-16

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, November 5, 2009

This song, *Lālasāmayī Prārthanā*, is very nice. *Lālasāmayī* means longing. So he says:

'gaurāṅga' bolite habe pulaka -śarīra
'hari hari' bolite nayane ba' be nīra

"When will that opportune moment come, when there will be shivering of my body as soon as I chant Lord Gaurāṅga's Name?" [*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā* 1]

Actually *pulaka* doesn't mean shivering; *pulaka* means goosebumps.

And after the shivering, while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, when will there be tears pouring down from my eyes?" [*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā* 1]

Now, we know that he's not just talking about some devotee, sometime, somewhere, some unreachable unimaginable stage of devotional service; he's talking about every devotee, every time they chant Gourāṅga's Name or they chant Hari's Name. That every time we chant, we should be getting ecstatic symptoms, *sāttvika-bhāva*. *Sāttvika-bhāva* are one of the five ingredients of *rasa*; we know from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. If we're not getting ecstatic symptoms, or feeling bliss while chanting, it means we're not chanting with sufficient intensity, we're not chanting with total attention. We have our attention divided among different things. So:

"When will that moment come when there'll be shivering or goosebumps as soon as I chant Lord Gaurāṅga? And while chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, when there be tears pouring down from my eyes?" [*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā* 1]

āra kabe nitāi-cānder koruṇā hoibe
sāmsāra-bāsanā mora kabe tuccha ha'be

"When will that day come when Lord Nityānanda's causeless mercy is bestowed upon me, so that my desire for material enjoyment becomes very insignificant?" [*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā* 2]

Yes, we're waiting for that day.

*viṣaya chāriyā kabe śuddha ha'be mana
kabe hāma herabo śrī-brndābana*

"When my mind is completely purified, being freed from material anxieties and desires, then I shall be able to understand Vṛndāvan and the conjugal love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and then my spiritual life will be successful." [*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā* 3]

So actually while chanting, while in *kīrtana* and like that, we should be able to realize this state, where our mind is completely free from all material anxieties and thoughts, and we're just completely absorbed in the Holy Name. The Holy Name is so beautiful; it's so wonderful and ecstatic. It has no material energy attached to it whatsoever, so we shouldn't be thinking anything material while chanting.

*rūpa-raghunātha-pade hoibe ākuti
kabe hāma bujhabo se jugala-pīriti*

"When will I be very much eager to study the books left by the Six Gosvāmīs?" [*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā* 4]

Meaning Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa, Raghunātha Dāsa, Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī —the Six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvan.

kabe hāma bujhabo se jugala-pīriti

"One has to learn of the conjugal loving affairs of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa through the teachings of these Six Gosvāmīs." [*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā* 4]

Actually that's a fact; you can't learn the secrets of the conjugal love affairs of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in any other way. We can read about them in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, but it's stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* that:

"When Kṛṣṇa came, the storehouse of love of God, He brought the storehouse of love of God with Him, but it remained locked. And it wasn't until Lord Caitanya came that He opened this storehouse, and began to distribute its contents freely." [*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Ādi-līlā* 7.20-21]

But he's distributing through His disciples: the Six Gosvāmīs. So we should come to know these Six Gosvāmīs and their works. And that's why we're studying *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

*rūpa-raghunātha-pade rahu mora āśa
prārthanā koroye sadā narottama-dāsa*

"Narottama dāsa always wishes to understand this conjugal love under the direction of the Six Gosvāmīs." [*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā* 5]

So that's the meaning of this wonderful song. These songs don't describe some unattainable far-off state. They simply describe pure devotional service, the normal condition of the spirit soul. And if one is not in the normal condition, then he needs to take some medicine. And the medicine is described in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: the medicine is regulated devotional service. Regulated devotional service is the beginning, and then once one has recovered a little bit, then he can take the next stage of the medicine, which is spontaneous devotional service, and then *bhāva* and then *prema*. *Prema* is actually health; *bhāva* means almost healthy, almost done, gives you release from the hospital, you can recover at home the rest of the way. And then *Prema* means the healthy condition, normal condition.

śrī-bhāgavatasya tṛtīya-skandhe ca [3.29.12-14]
*ahaituky avyavahitā yā bhaktiḥ puruṣottame
sālokya-sārṣṭi-sāmīpya-sārūpyaikatvam apy uta
dīyamānaṁ na grhṇanti vinā mat-sevanaṁ janāḥ
sa eva bhakti-yogākhya ātyantika udāhṛtaḥ*

This is also stated in the Third Canto [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.12-14]:
“These are the characteristics of transcendental loving service to Puruṣottama, the Supreme Personality of Godhead: it is without other desires, and it is not contaminated by *karma* or *jñāna*. In this type of

bhakti, My devotees do not accept *sālokyā*, *sārṣṭi*, *sārūpya*, *sāmīpya* or oneness with Me—even if I offer these liberations—in preference to serving Me. This is called *bhakti-yoga*, and is declared as the highest object of human pursuit.” [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.13-15]

Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

In this verse, the word *ahaituky* (without cause) means *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*.

Remember *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam* from verse eleven? Let's read that again:

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu śīlanam bhaktir uttamā

“The highest *bhakti* is defined as continuous service or emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, His expansion forms or others related to Him, with a pleasing attitude towards Kṛṣṇa. It should be devoid of desires other than the desire to please the Lord, and unobstructed by impersonal *jñāna*, the materialistic rituals of *karma* or other unfavorable acts.” [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11]

So he's saying:

In this verse (that we just read), the word *ahaituky*, which means ‘without cause,’ means *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*. And the word *avyavahitā*, ‘not separated,’ means *jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam*: without any covering of *jñāna*, *karma*, or other different paths. The *bhakti* mentioned here is *bhāva-rūpa-bhakti*. This is because the previous lines of the *Bhāgavatam* just before this verse, describe that one's desires flow to the Lord like the Gaṅgā.

This describes the stage of *bhāva-rūpa*. *Bhāva-rūpa-bhakti* is all downhill. When you get to *bhāva-bhakti*, you don't have to make an effort. *Sādhana-bhakti* is all uphill: pushing, pushing, pushing. But when you get to the stage of *bhāva*, that's the peak and then from then, it's all downhill. Just like the Ganges flows into the ocean; the river automatically flows down into the ocean. Similarly, the devotee's heart flows naturally toward the Lord in that state. So:

Its nature is being free from other desires, *ahaituky*, is illustrated with the rejection of *sālokya*, and so on, in the verse. He says:

"My devotees do not accept *sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, *sārūpya*, *sāmīpya* or oneness with Me." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.12-14]

These are the five kinds of liberation. The devotees don't accept these kinds of liberation because they prefer service. They want service; they don't want these other things.

The word *yasyām*, 'in which type of *bhakti*,' should be understood to precede the statement of verse thirteen so that it's connected with the previous sentence. And the word *atyantika* means the highest object of human pursuit.

So this verse, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.11, is spoken by Lord Kapiladeva. The Lord appeared in His form of Kapila as the son Devahuti, and He gave the original theistic *sāṅkhya* philosophy. And in this *sāṅkhya* philosophy, the ultimate aim is devotional service. Because even in the course of discussing *sāṅkhya*, He's giving instructions on *bhakti*. And these instructions are substantially identical to the standard of *bhakti* given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. It has to be pure; without any mixture of *karma*, *jñāna*, or any other path.

Almost everyone who begins the process of devotional service is trying to use it to solve their problem; they're trying to use it to meet their own needs. But that's not the actual purpose of devotional service; the actual purpose of devotional service is simply to please Kṛṣṇa. And when we please Kṛṣṇa, all our own needs and problems are automatically solved. That's the magic of devotional service. You don't even have to think about it.

"The manifestation of unadulterated devotional service is exhibited when one's mind is at once attracted to hearing the transcendental Name and qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is residing in everyone's heart." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.29.11]

So this is the same thing as the song is saying:

‘gaurāṅga’ bolite habe pulaka-śarīra
‘hari hari’ bolite nayane ba’ be nīra

"As soon as I hear this chanting of the Lord's Name, I will become ecstatic. I'm attracted, like iron filings to a magnet. I cannot stop my mind from running towards this beautiful Personality of Godhead situated in the core of my own heart." Actually most people are going outside, through the senses, to the material world and they're trying to meet their various needs and desires. They don't realize that the actual aim, or the actual object, is inside, within their own heart: the Lord is there in the core of the soul, and if we find Him, then all our problems, all our issues, all our desires, everything is solved.

So our mind should be attracted, because He is the actual source of everything that we seek when we try to solve our problems or satisfy our desires. If you just think for a minute about any desire that you can have, it's actually for the Lord's energy. So the source of that thing, whatever you're looking for, is right there in your own heart. So why should you go outside? Ultimately, everybody wants love, everybody wants pleasure—transcendental pleasure, not material pleasure—because material pleasure is always flawed. There's always some error in it, always some mistake, always some cheating. Material pleasure never gives the real satisfaction that we're looking for, only transcendental pleasure. Because transcendental pleasure is based on unconditional love. The Lord has unconditional love for each and every one of us: eternal, beginningless, endless, perfect, unlimited, unconditional love. You're not going to get that quality of love from anybody else. And He has been with us since time immemorial. Without time, without beginning, and time without end.

But what are we doing? We're running away, trying to go out through the senses into this hostile world that is completely different from our natural quality as spirit souls. And so of course we're not feeling satisfaction. Of course we're feeling different kinds of pain and suffering. Of course we're not satisfied. So what do most people do? Well, usually they try harder:

"Oh, I must have done something wrong. I'll try again, and again, and again and again." They keep going out through the senses, out through the senses, all the different senses. And they keep experiencing the same thing over and over and over again. Well there's a saying, in America, that: "If all you do is what you did, what you'll get is what you got." In other words, if you keep doing the same thing, you're going to keep getting the same result. So why don't you try something different for a change? Instead of going outside to try to satisfy your desires, go inside. Go and try to search out the Lord within your own heart. And go looking with love and affection, because He says:

ye yathā mām prapadyante

"I respond to them in whatever way they approach Me." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.11]

So if we approach Him with love and affection, He will respond. Right now He's being cool; He's hiding. Why? Because we asked Him to: "O Lord, let me go to the material world where I don't have to see You, I don't have to serve You, um, I don't have to serve God, I don't have to think about love of God, I don't want to see God, I don't want to be reminded of God, let me just enjoy my senses and enjoy God's energy without God." That's most people's idea of heaven, isn't it? To have unrestricted material enjoyment; enjoying God's energy, but without the personal presence of God.

So actually that sounds more like hell to me. Because every time you enjoy God's energy without offering it to God, you're stealing. If you don't have the permission, if you come to our house and you try to enjoy it without our permission, you're a thief and we can punish you, call the police and have you hauled off. So, naturally this is called *karma*: Every time we try to do something nonsense, then we have some karmic reaction. So *karma* is there; why? Because every time we try to enjoy the Lord's energy without the Lord's permission **we're stealing!** It's so simple. God is real. God is not a fairy tale. You wonder why everything in this

world is so messed up? It's because everyone is a thief and a rascal, a rogue. So how can rogues and thieves and rascals be happy? How they be enjoying when every time they do anything they're stealing? They're stealing because they're not engaged in the service of the Lord. So all we have to do is use the Lord's energy in His service.

We have an obligation, actually, to use the Lord's energy for His service. That's what it's for. He emanated this creation, He made this world for His enjoyment, not for our enjoyment. It's for His purposes, not for our purposes. So when we use it properly, it doesn't matter whether we're in the material world or in the spiritual world, because we are using God's energy for God's service; and that's the real definition of happiness, that's the real meaning of heaven, that's the real meaning of enjoyment: when we use God's energy in God's service, to please God. Because we discover very quickly when we try to do this, that when God is pleased, we are pleased; when God is happy, we are happy. When we follow God's instructions, then the result is very, very nice. Why? Because we're not being thieves; we're using God's energy with His permission.

So everything that we do, everything that we make, everything that we offer and give away should be done as a sacrifice to Kṛṣṇa. That's what He says right in the third chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā* [3.9]. So if we follow this instruction, then everything goes very nicely. We're experiencing this ourselves. Everything is going very nicely, somehow or other, simply because we are spending our time and energy, spending our resources on trying to please Kṛṣṇa. Actually they're not our resources, they're Kṛṣṇa's resources; it's not our energy, it's Kṛṣṇa's energy. And when we engage Kṛṣṇa's energy in Kṛṣṇa's service, guess what happens? Everything goes very nicely. You think that maybe Kṛṣṇa is the Controller or something like that? Is it possible? No, it must be a coincidence. I mean even though the astrology is so terrible and the whole world financial situation and political situation is in a tailspin and it's all melting down and falling apart, we're doing fine.

So I wish people would see this, and say "Oh; well, I can do what they're doing." But somehow or other, they can't. Somehow or other it's like there's this mysterious force preventing them from offering things to the Lord or doing devotional service or understanding this philosophy properly. I've had many, many chances to see this, being engaged in preaching work, and it always amazes me. It always surprises me and blows my mind a little bit, when I see how otherwise intelligent people, who have a lot of knowledge about other things, can't seem to get it right. They can't seem to understand this philosophy properly, and they can't seem to implement it properly. They always wind up mixing some of their own personal desires in with their activities for devotional service.

Now, the soul naturally desires to be happy. So we're always going to have personal desires. But we have to find a way to engage our personal desires in the service of the Lord. I'll give you an example. I'm very fond of music, always have been. So there was never any doubt in my mind, from even a very young age, that I would grow up and be a musician. And sure enough, I did become a musician, but it wasn't very satisfying because the materialistic music business is so corrupt. If anyone has any experience in the music business—well I suppose every other business is like that too—it's just corrupt and nasty, and competitive and dishonest, and it's horrible. So I was very disappointed, because I saw in music something perfect, something beautiful, something beyond this ordinary mundane world. In other words, I saw some reflection of God in music. So I decided "I'm gonna use my musical skills and talents for pleasing Kṛṣṇa," and that has worked out very nicely.

When I was trying to make music on my own, or for my own enjoyment, then there was always some obstacle, there was always some problem. But now it's very easy and it's very nice. And there's no problem, everything is working very nicely; there's no suffering, no agents calling me in the middle of the night, you know, all this crazy stuff that happens in the music business. So in this way, a source of suffering has been turned into a source of happiness. How? By engaging it in devotional service. And I

could give lots more examples, but you should be able to figure out this principle. It's actually very simple. The problem is, and the reason why people can't implement this is—not that it's terribly complicated or difficult—but their hearts are not clean. They have some desire to cheat Kṛṣṇa. Some desire—there's, you know, you meet people like this, or at least I met various people like this in my various travels around the world. I call them rascals.

They're people who enjoy cheating others. Did you see that film? Paul McCartney and some other people did a film called “Time Bandits.” When you get a chance to see it, there's this one character who's the chief time bandit. Basically they're a bunch of dwarfs that have been working for God, helping Him create stuff, and they they discovered a map of time and they're using this map of time to go back in time and steal things. So they steal all this stuff, like Napoleon's hat, you know, all kinds of crazy stuff. So at one point they decide to go back in time to Sherwood Forest and meet Robin Hood, and steal Robin Hood's loot. So they go back, and they get caught in a trap. There's all these booby traps in the woods around Robin Hood's hideout. So they get caught in this net and the guy, the chief rascal time bandit is hanging upside down in this net; and then these other rascals, Robin Hood's men, they come out and meet them and they say: “Oh Robin Hood's men! You guys are thieves aren't you?” And Robin Hood's men go: “Yeah, yeah, we're thieves, ha, ha, ha, ha!” And so the guy is hanging upside down in the net—it's a very funny scene—he goes “Yeah, so are we! Ha, ha, ha!” And there's a certain kind of recognition that happens: “Oh you're a thief.” “Yeah, I'm a thief too.” “You're a rascal too! Ha, ha, ha! Isn't that great? Come on, let's party!”

And you see people like this all the time. I've met many people like this, because I hung out in the music scene and other weird scenes. And you meet a lot of people like this, people who put out this vibe of, “Ha, ha, ha, ha, I'm a rascal.” And if you match it, then oh, you're buddies: “Yeah, come on, let's go cheat somebody, ha ha ha.” But if you have a different vibe, if you have a vibe of ethics, there's a certain mood that's called

‘ethics presence.’ It means, in other words, that you have some principles; you have some integrity. You believe in following the rules. You don’t have this feeling of enjoying cheating; in fact, you’re against it. You believe in truthfulness; you believe in honoring your agreements. The first thing about a rascal is that they use all kinds of false promises to lull their victims into complacency and then rip them off.

So *māyā* actually means false promises; post-dated checks, that: "I promise you’re gonna get this tomorrow if you do this today," and it usually doesn’t turn out to be anything like that. So this *māyā*, or illusion, is the fundamental premise of this material world, this rascaldom: "Oh yes Kṛṣṇa, I’ll serve you later; right now I want this. Let me take this. I’ll serve you tomorrow, OK?" This is *māyā*. We are being a rascal; we are being a thief when we do like that; and because of that we have to suffer, when we put our own needs first. When we put Kṛṣṇa’s service first, in the course of that service we may use Kṛṣṇa’s resources to satisfy whatever little needs we have; and that’s OK, because basically we’re working for Kṛṣṇa. We all have to eat, we all have to sleep, we all need a roof over our heads, we all need clothes, so many little things that we need. But these are not very difficult desires to satisfy, because if we’re engaged in Kṛṣṇa’s service, we’re doing so much great welfare work for the benefit of the whole world, so what’s the problem with us having our little few personal things that we need? Because we need those things to continue that service, so Kṛṣṇa has no problem giving that.

So, in other words, whether we’re in the material world, or in the spiritual world, or we’re in the heavenly planets, or the earthly planets, or the lower planets, or wherever we find ourselves, everything around us, including our own body and everything, are Kṛṣṇa’s energy. If we simply engage Kṛṣṇa’s energy in Kṛṣṇa’s service, we’re going to be happy. **It doesn’t matter where we are.** It’s not like if we go somewhere else, or take a different name, or change our hairstyle, or our dress that that’s gonna make us happy, **NO!** What’s will make us happy is if Kṛṣṇa is happy. If Kṛṣṇa is pleased, we will automatically be pleased. So the devotee, especially the

pure devotee, one who is following this standard, his engagement is a hundred-percent in Kṛṣṇa's service, constantly.

ahaituky apratihātā

"The devotee's engagement in devotional service is causeless and uninterrupted." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.6]

So if we're serving Kṛṣṇa as our primary engagement in life, if our relationship with Kṛṣṇa is our primary relationship in life, and our whole purpose in living is to please Kṛṣṇa, it doesn't matter where we are. It doesn't matter what kind of body we have. It doesn't matter. Why? We'll be happy. And if we're happy, then we don't want to change. If you feel like: "Oh I have to go somewhere else, I have to do something else, I have to change this, I have to change that," then it means you're not happy. If you're restless, it means you're not satisfied. You have desires: "I want this, I want that, I wanna go here, I wanna do that, I wanna change this, change that," this is a sign of dissatisfaction. So you see this in material life—this week the certain kind of fashions will be in, and then next week or next month a different fashion will be in. They have to change that, throw out the old clothes, get all new clothes, you know? This year the Azores are the place to go for vacation, and then next year it'll be the Swiss Alps or something else.

So people are always trying to do something else. They're in *bhoga-tyāga*. They're working all week at some job, some business or whatever, and then on the weekend they have to go somewhere else and do something else. Maybe they go home and just rest, or maybe they take off and go to the mountains, or the beach, or the forest or the desert, or somewhere, anywhere, but where they normally stay. Why? It means they're not happy! They're not satisfied and they need this break, they need this vacation or holiday. This is called *bhoga-tyāga*. If our material activities were actually satisfying, we wouldn't want to change them. But material activities change all the time. The main thing about material activities is that they're always changing. This week's number one hit song will be off

the charts next week, and somebody else's hit song is going to be on top. Always changing, changing, changing, nothing stays the same for very long. Material relationships are the same way: "I love you, I hate you." Always changing. Just like some of our students, they come and then they go, we don't know where they go, why they leave, or what happens to them; just one day they're gone. It means what? They were unhappy, they were unsatisfied. Why? Well probably because they weren't following this practice properly. They weren't following the rules and regulations, or they missed some detail of the philosophy that led them to make offenses, or they didn't ever understand the philosophy in the first place, or they had misunderstood terms—somehow or other they weren't following the process. And because of that, they fell down.

So it takes a very rare type of person to actually go all the way through this process to the very highest stage. It doesn't have to be that way. Actually everybody has the ability to perform pure devotional service; it's just that very few people have the desire to. And the desire is the whole thing. In fact there's a very nice verse in *Śrī Padyāvalī* that I posted on the front page of our site and it says that:

"When one worships Kṛṣṇa without any desire for any other process or result, then Kṛṣṇa awakens beautiful transcendental bliss within his heart." [*Śrī Padyāvalī*, 13]

So why would you desire to go anywhere else or do anything else? If you're feeling transcendental bliss within your heart, why would you want to change anything? You would be content with simply staying and doing what you're doing. And if Kṛṣṇa wants you to do something else or go somewhere else, He'll let you know. So this process of devotional service has this quality, that one feels so satisfied, one feels so complete, so happy, that he doesn't even want liberation. Even if he has the chance, even if Kṛṣṇa personally comes to him and says, "Here, you can come to My spiritual world and be with Me." "Oh well that's OK, if You want me to, but I'm OK here too." We don't really even want it; we just want service.

We don't want liberation, we don't want mystic powers, we don't want any of these other things.

*sālokyetyādi-padyastha-bhaktotkarṣa-ñirūpaṇam
bhakter viśuddhatā-vyaktyā lakṣaṇe paryavasyati*

“The description of the excellence of the devotee in the above verse amounts to describing the characteristics of *bhakti* by revealing its purity.” [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.16]

The word *amounts* in that verse is a simple way of saying *equals*. It amounts to; it has the same meaning as; it's equivalent to. Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary:

How can a description of the excellence of devotees in the verse starting *sālokyā*, above, be used to indicate *bhakti*? That verse is placed in the middle of the two other verses, thirteen and fifteen, and cannot be removed from that context because it describes the glories of the devotees, it is not suitable for the topic.

This is the objection, that: “How can description of the excellence of the devotees be used to describe the qualities of *bhakti*?” So the verse that we just read, verse sixteen of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, answers this objection:

Because pure *bhakti*, without other desires, exists in that devotee, that devotee does not accept *sālokyā* and other goals.

Like what we were just talking about a minute ago: devotional service is so satisfying, it's so blissful, it's so happy, that we don't need any other process. It provides all our needs. We don't need to go on vacation; we don't need to take a break. We like doing this twenty-four hours a day.

Therefore, the description of the glories of the devotee in the verse amounts to describing *bhakti* because the devotee reveals the purity of that *bhakti*.

Let me read that verse again:

"These are the characteristics of transcendental loving service to Puruṣottama, the Supreme Personality of Godhead: it is without other desires, and it is not contaminated by *karma* or *jñāna*." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.29.12-14]

Now then here's the verse they're talking about:

"In this type of *bhakti*, My devotees do not accept *sālokya*, *sarṣṭi*, *sārūpa*, *saṁīpya* or oneness with Me, even if I offer these liberations, in preference to serving Me." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.29.12-14]

You understand? That describes the glories of pure *bhakti*. "In this type of *bhakti*," He says. What type of *bhakti* is that?

"Without other desires and not contaminated by *karma* or *jñāna*." [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.29.12-14]

He's not talking about mixed *bhakti* here, he's talking only about pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service. There is a tremendous qualitative difference in the effect of pure *bhakti* versus mixed *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is not a material thing. "If I have ten dollars, and then I get more money that's generally considered better. Now if I have a hundred dollars, and I get a thousand dollars, that's even better. And if I get a million dollars that's super, I can retire." That's how people think: "The more I get of it the better." But mixed devotional service and pure devotional service are not like that. It doesn't matter how much mixed devotional service you pile up. It doesn't matter how many hours or days or years of mixed devotional service you acquire or, log on your record; you're still on the level of mixed devotional service, and the results that you get will still be the same as the mixed devotional service provides.

You can never get the results of pure devotional service by performing **any amount** of mixed devotional service. That process will only yield that result and no other. But on the other hand, if you're engaged in pure devotional service, even a small amount of pure devotional service yields a far better result, a qualitatively different result than any amount of mixed devotional service. Progress in devotional service happens not by the

amount of devotional service we perform, but by the **quality** of the devotional service that we perform. That is because devotional service is not a material thing; devotional service is completely transcendental, just like Kṛṣṇa. So it's not about the **quantity**, but the **quality**. Otherwise, how could a tiny living entity like us satisfy Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the unlimited Creator, Controller, Maintainer, Destroyer of all the worlds? How is it possible that any one of us can satisfy Him? Any amount, no matter how much service we do, is infinitesimal compared to Him.

So it's not the **amount** of service that we do, it's the **quality** of service that we do. It's not the **amount** of consciousness. When people talk about 'consciousness expansion' this is actually a misnomer, because expansion implies that you get more consciousness, somehow or other. But actually the amount of consciousness that we have is fixed. But what would determine the difference in our experience is not the **amount** of consciousness, but the **quality** of consciousness that we have. This is what people don't understand. They don't understand because they try to treat consciousness with the same logic that they use for ordinary material objects. But it's not a material object; it can't be thought of as a material object, or we will come to wrong conclusions. I don't know how many times we've been over this point. It's just like there are certain people who style themselves as devotees, and because they've been thinking themselves to be a devotee for a long time, they think they know everything about it, and they've seen everything and they've done everything, been everywhere, know everybody, and so on like that. But what they don't seem to understand, is that *bhakti* is not a material thing. Otherwise why would they think, **how** could they think "Oh now I know everything about devotional service"?

Because devotional service is like Kṛṣṇa; it's unlimited and ever-expanding, so if the total compass or world of devotional service is understood one moment, in the next moment it expands. And so it can't ever be understood completely, even by Kṛṣṇa. Even Kṛṣṇa is always

surprised by the newer and newer arrangements His devotees make for His pleasure. And if you say something like, "Oh well, devotional service can't include X." Name any arbitrary thing: flying in a plane. "Devotional service cannot include flying in planes." Well, the next thing you know Śrīla Prabhupāda gets on a plane, and he travels all over the world preaching and spreads the Holy Name everywhere by flying in a plane. So flying in a plane all of a sudden becomes included in devotional service. How? By the arrangement of the devotees in their ever-expanding, ever-increasing efforts to please the Lord, you see? So devotional service can never be limited, it can never be static, it can never be stereotyped; it's always dynamic, it's always expanding, it's always growing, it's always increasing. Otherwise it wouldn't be relishable for Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇa is eternal. Kṛṣṇa Himself is ever-expanding and ever-fresh. What does ever-fresh mean? **Always something new!** Never the same old thing, over and over again. I've been to some temples where they're doing the evening *ārati* tune or something like that. And they've done it that way every day since the last thirty years, and now they're old men and they're like: "*kiba jaya, jaya gauracander*." And you just wonder, like "How they can keep doing it the same way?" I was in one temple where at the *maṅgalārati* ceremony in the morning, the same devotees who have been in this temple since it was opened, thirty or forty years ago, are standing on the same squares on the temple's marble floor. The same checkerboard tile square that they have standing on for thirty years, chanting the same hymn, with the same mispronunciations, and the same out-of-tune *kīrtana* that they did thirty years ago when they first joined the temple! How is this possible?! Kṛṣṇa must be bored to tears, He must be like, "If they sing that one more time, I'm out of here, man! I'm gonna go dance with Rādhārāṇī somewhere."

If Kṛṣṇa is always new and always fresh, and if His devotional service is ever-expanding and dynamic, then how can it remain always the same? How can it be reduced to some ritual that's always the same? Devotional service is not like classical music, where you have a score and you just

have to follow the same part over and over and over again. No. Devotional service is more like jazz. In jazz, maybe you start from the score, but then once you get it, it's never the same. It's always expanding, it's always new, it's always fresh. I remember one time we had this discussion group on *rāgānuga-bhakti*. At that time I was running the group, there were over like six-hundred devotees. It was bigger than our group today, and it was very popular and very controversial. But after running this group for 2-3 years I got really fed up with it, because the same devotees were asking the same questions, coming up with the same objections, and the same reasons why “nobody could attain *rāgānuga-bhakti*,” these same arguments that they had been engaging in since the group began, years before that. And I was getting so bored with it, so then I started talking about my relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

Freaked them out. Blew them away, freaked them out completely. Still, to this day—I mean, this was six or seven years ago—still to this day, these devotees will not speak to me. They know I'm here. They know where our site is, but they never come, they never visit, they never write, they never call. Why? They got freaked out so bad when they experienced an actual example of spontaneous devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. Because it's like: "You can't do that! You can't think that. You can't love Kṛṣṇa that way!" Well, too bad; I do, and somehow or other it's working so, what can you say? "Oh, it's not in Śrīla Prabhupāda's books." Are Śrīla Prabhupāda's books infinite and unlimited? Are any books infinite and unlimited? No. They can describe a limited number of classes of phenomena that we can use to understand a particular subject, but no book is going to be able to expand dynamically to cover every possible instance, or every possible variation or permutation on a particular subject, especially as dynamic a subject as devotional service to Kṛṣṇa. The scriptures are simply unable to describe all the possibilities. And even if they could, the next minute somebody would come up with a new possibility and the same condition would obtain.

So the argument that "Well you can't do that, because it's not in some book somewhere," does really not apply to devotional service. It applies to material processes maybe, but not to these spiritual processes. They have to be unlimited by definition, otherwise an eternal spirit soul would run out of new possibilities, and we'd find our selves doing the same old thing over and over and over again. That would be horrible. That would be like some kind of definition of hell: "You have to do the same thing over and over again for eternity." That's horrible: death by boredom. It would be horrible. So if we don't want to experience that ourselves, why would we subject Kṛṣṇa to that kind of experience?

But that's what people do when they get stuck in this 'rules and regulations' and 'by the book' and 'it's gotta be this way and it can't be any other way.' They lose their creativity, they lose their freshness, they lose their juice, because they don't have a real deep understanding of the subject; it's not coming from their heart. They're on the mental platform, and that is always going to limit them to the platform of *vaidhī-bhakti*, rules and regulations; because that's finite, that's understandable, it fits in a box; and it has to be that way for neophytes. But when we're talking about real devotional service, that means it has to be dynamic, it has to be flexible, it has to be ever-expanding, creative, exciting, interesting, far out, astonishing even to Kṛṣṇa. And actually if we look deep enough we find in the scriptures every kind of relationship or, just going through this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* like I have in the last few weeks, there's so much there; and as we get deeper into it you'll see the possibilities of devotional service from Kṛṣṇa are really unlimited. And whatever desire you may have to experience a certain kind of happiness, or certain kind of relationship, that's possible with Kṛṣṇa.

ye yathā mām prapadyante [Bhagavad-gītā 4.11]

He doesn't say "I will reciprocate however they approach me except for this, this, and that, because it's not mentioned in the scriptures." He doesn't say that. He says:

"Unconditionally, I reciprocate however they approach Me." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.11]

So He's not threatened by our approach to love Him. He's the Supreme Personality of Godhead, you know? We can't blow His mind. Although He likes it when we try.

Anyway, this is devotional service. Devotional service is really, really cool. And it's hard to get across to people how cool it is, because they don't have the conceptual background to understand what the heck we're talking about. It's a very technical subject, because it is on a transcendental platform and it deals with pure consciousness. And people generally don't understand consciousness, so it's very sad. But we do our best, and a few people are getting it, so I guess we must be doing something right.

Oh, the devotees were so shocked. I started talking a little bit about my relationship with Kṛṣṇa. And they were so shocked, a lot of them still haven't gotten over it. They probably never will either, at least in this lifetime. But you know, you have to go there sooner or later. You think Kṛṣṇa will be pleased if we offer Him the same old standard? I know I'm bored when I hear fifties jazz. It's the same old thing, the same old chords, the same old rhythms, the same old ideas just recycled again and again and again. And even when I hear more modern stuff it actually gets worse, because the players are bored now too. Not only the listeners, also the players. And then you hear Miles Davis and he's off in some weird space, thirteen dimensions out there. And his stuff sounds weird but, **it's not boring**. He's certainly into it. So the same thing can be said of devotional service. In the beginning, yes, you have to stick to the authorized path. But at some point when you get it, then you **have** to make up your own, you have to approach Kṛṣṇa freshly from your own realization in your heart, from your real desires, huh? Otherwise it's not sincere, it's not real. So that's the higher stage.

Uddhava dāsa: I have a question that in our practice of *vaidhī-bhakti*, my experience is that when I sing a nice song and music and play some instrument and like that, it's very easy for me to get into a more intense mood or more focused devotional experience than comparing it to chanting *japa*, for example, which usually takes more effort and the sitting position, and so much more, I find it more difficult. And so is this because I'm not focusing properly on *japa*? I should experience the same intensity in either?

Bābājī: Yes. Everything that is there in your devotional songs and music is also there in *japa*, you just haven't found the way to access it. The music is easy because you have to bring your creativity. You have to use your creativity, you have to use your expression, it has to come from your heart; or it's not gonna be good, musically speaking. Now if you can find a way to exercise those same qualities in chanting *japa* then you got it.

Uddhava dāsa: That's the thing I don't get, because I can sing in different intervals and it's the timing but pretty much...

Bābājī: No, you're missing the point. I've given you this hint several times. That the Gosvāmīs, when they would chant *japa*, would keep a pile of verses in front of them, and this is how *Padyāvalī* was written. That they had collections of verses that they found especially nectarean to relish during *japa*. And so they would keep this pile of verses in front of them when they were chanting, and they would take one at a time and relish it while chanting. What does relish mean?

Uddhava dāsa: To taste.

Bābājī: Yes, to taste, to enjoy. To enjoy the taste of that verse. They would pick verses, they would select verses that nourish their mood. *Saṅcārī-bhāva*. *Saṅcārī-bhāva* means 'that which nourishes the principal mood of the devotee.' So if a devotee's mood, let's say, is conjugal love, they would pick verses describing conjugal love that nourish that mood, and then they would relish these verses while chanting.

Uddhava dāsa: Isn't that more like remembering?

Bābājī: Yes, *smaraṇam*.

Uddhava dāsa: I have no experience.

Bābājī: So you have to try it.

Uddhava dāsa: Well, what can I remember if there's no experiences?

Bābājī: You remember somebody else's experiences.

Uddhava dāsa: Yeah, pastimes and like that.

Bābājī: That's right. Relish some verses. Let them guide you. Find the mood that appeals to you, pick out those verses, and then relish them while chanting. Develop a taste for those verses. What am I talking about? What does taste mean? Aesthetics. Like when you hear music that is really cool. Why do you think it's cool? Because you have a taste for it. It matches your taste; so in *japa* we are developing our relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the most intimate way, so what is that taste? What is that emotional taste that turns you on, that attracts you to Kṛṣṇa? So relish that while you're chanting.

Uddhava dāsa: I've tried that, and it usually leads to speculation. It's like licking the bottle and all that stuff, so it's like, esoteric.

Bābājī: I'm trying to explain it as simply as I can.

Uddhava dāsa: Yeah I know, I know.

Bābājī: Yeah. It's just like, what attracts you to Kṛṣṇa? What qualities of Kṛṣṇa do you enjoy?

Uddhava dāsa: Yeah. I think there's a sense of cheating by doing that.

Bābājī: What?

Uddhava dāsa: It's like then why shouldn't I just read? This idea...

Bābājī: No, no, no, no it's a different thing.

Uddhava dāsa: That's the thing I don't get.

Bābājī: It's not mental. It's in the heart.

Uddhava dāsa: That's the thing I don't get.

Bābājī: It's in the heart. There's something you've blocked in this emotional taste.

Uddhava dāsa: Yeah, well I get it with the songs. I mean it's not so...

Bābājī: You can do it through music, so why can't you do it in chanting also?

Uddhava dāsa: Yeah that's the thing I don't get.

Bābājī: Yeah.

Uddhava dāsa: I'll think about it.

Bābājī: It's like a joke; either you get it or you don't. If you get it through music, well then cultivate your taste through music. Prabhupāda does. Listen to Prabhupāda chant *japa*. It's so, it's very tuneful. He stays in one *rāga* through his whole *japa*. Sing the tune that's in your heart.

Uddhava dāsa: It's from Thiago: "Hare Kṛṣṇa! Please accept my humble obeisances. So as long as the intention is to please Kṛṣṇa we won't be causing any offense?"

Bābājī: The intention to please to Kṛṣṇa in what? Externally the devotee follows the principles and rules of *vaidhī-bhakti* but internally, in his *siddha* form, in his spiritual body, the devotee develops a personal relationship with the Lord. And then he gradually increases this mood, this

taste, this flavor of whatever attractive features he finds most relishable in the Lord's qualities. There are sixty-four qualities discussed in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*; we'll go into this in great detail. So whichever of these qualities the devotees finds most relishable, these are called the *vibhāva* or the attractive cause of devotional service. So he can relish those qualities by his service activities.

It seems to me like I'm speaking and the devotees are not getting it. I don't know how I can explain it any other way. It's like there's a blank spot or a blind spot in your consciousness itself, and it has to do with the heart and with things like taste. The question is, what kind of relationship do you want to have with Kṛṣṇa? Now don't ask me, 'How can I know what kind of relationship I want with Kṛṣṇa?'

That question is not a valid question, because it infers that there's some outside authority that can tell you what kind of taste you want. How do you know when you go in the ice cream store, what flavor you want to order? Maybe you have to try a few, but after a while you get a favorite, and then after you know your favorite, every time you go into the store you order that flavor. So it's simple: you read the *śāstra*, you read Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, and you see all these different relationships that devotees have with Kṛṣṇa, then the ones that appeal to you, you start to cultivate that taste in your own heart.

Uddhava dāsa: This is the state, the stage of *ruci*?

Bābājī: Yes, taste! At the same that you're externally following the normal principles and lifestyle of a devotee, internally you're thinking of Kṛṣṇa with a particular taste. Everybody does it anyway. It's just that in the beginning, they're unconscious of it. And I'm saying you should be conscious of it. That's all. And you're looking at me like, "Me? Taste? What taste, boss?" You're in denial about your own feeling towards Kṛṣṇa.

Uddhava dāsa: Yeah, of course, because I don't know. I have no knowledge of who I am, or what's my eternal service.

Bābājī: Well, at least that's honest. But for me it's inconceivable; from the minute I walked in the temple, I knew my taste for Kṛṣṇa was conjugal love. There was absolutely no doubt. No doubt in my mind whatsoever from the first day I walked in the temple. I put on *dhōti* and it was like "Yeah." Absolutely no doubt; so, it's very hard for me to understand how somebody could be engaged in devotional service for any length of time and **not know how they want to love Kṛṣṇa**. That's just like the people who—I don't want to mention any names—who can't hear *svaras*. I could hear *svaras* when I was three years old, so for me it's inconceivable not to be able to hear *svaras*. Inconceivable. I can't even imagine it; it's outside of my experience. So for me it's very hard to deal with this topic, because I can't remember not knowing my taste for relationship with Kṛṣṇa. From the moment that I realized that it was actually a possibility to have that flavor of love toward Kṛṣṇa, that was it: "Oh yeah!" Immediate recognition.

So for me it is very difficult to understand, having been exposed to the whole spectrum of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in devotional service, how one would not be able to understand how to recognize his own taste. It's like going in to Baskin Robbins and trying every single flavor, you know, they have the little spoon you take a little sample, "Well let me try this one, let me try this one, and that one." All fifty-seven flavors. And they go "Hm, lime-tangerine-praline-cream-whatever." So at least you should be able to identify which one is your favorite within the five *sthāyi-bhāvas*.

Uddhava dāsa: The problem is that each one of these are huge, enormous. They have...

Bābājī: No, no, no. Each one is a specific taste: servitorship, parenthood, friendship, neutrality, conjugal love. Those are very distinct tastes. They're as distinct as chocolate, vanilla, strawberry, lime and rocky road. They are very different tastes. So at least you can say this particular broad huge enormous unlimited infinite category is my favorite. Let's get real here.

Question from Chandra: "We have seen in our scriptures that we are not this body but the soul. My question is how, by giving trouble to the body, the soul is affected, and how he feels that pain?"

Bābājī: Well, the whole issue of how the soul perceives anything through the body is very deep: Ontologically speaking, the soul is completely different from the body. The body is material, it's temporary, it's made of matter; and the soul is spiritual and pure consciousness and personal, and so many opposite qualities. That the real question is, how can the soul perceive the body at all? And the answer is, through the special potency of Supersoul. Supersoul has a special potency, part of *yoga-māyā*. One of the aspects or potencies of *yoga-māyā* is that even the impossible becomes possible. So by *yoga-māyā* Kṛṣṇa sets up this link between the soul and a particular material body, in which the body appears to be the self. The word *ātmā* can mean body, it can mean mind, or it can mean soul. So this *ātmā* appears to be the self; the body and the mind. And for most people the body and the mind are actually their field of activities; but for most people the body and the mind appear to be the self—they don't make any distinction. So of course we know from the very beginning of studying this devotional service that this is incorrect. But how many people have actually realized it?

I question this, because I saw my Godbrothers, for example; many of whom even took *sannyāsa* at an early age and became big, big leaders of big, big projects and made big, big mistakes and had big, big falldowns. And took big, big money from ISKCON and went away. And strangely enough, none of them have been prosecuted for **embezzlement**. But that's getting off the topic. Apparently, they did not realize that they were not this body, because they were willing to perform actually criminal activities to support the body, even after having taken the so-called lifetime vows of celibacy and austerity, and accepting the title of *svāmī* and so on. So apparently they did not actually realize that they were not the body; they were simply thinking that they were not the body. There's a difference between thinking and realization. In thinking, that means you maintain a

copy of certain words within the mind. And you can bring this copy out, and you can even perform certain logical operations on it, and come up with different conclusions by philosophical speculation, and if your process of logic and your knowledge are accurate, you can actually reach correct conclusions by means of word jugglery. But this is very different from actual realization.

Realization means to perceive something directly with one's consciousness. But because people in general, and especially neophyte devotees, do not understand consciousness, cannot define consciousness, cannot explain consciousness; because they don't understand how consciousness works, or what consciousness is, they talk very glibly about 'Kṛṣṇa consciousness,' 'this consciousness' and 'that consciousness,' but when it comes right down to it they don't know what consciousness is—they simply throw the word consciousness around as in 'Kṛṣṇa consciousness' as a catch phrase: "Oh yeah, we're all about Kṛṣṇa consciousness." And they seem to be of the opinion that Kṛṣṇa consciousness means thinking about Kṛṣṇa. But that's not Kṛṣṇa consciousness; that's consciousness of symbols relating to Kṛṣṇa. Actual Kṛṣṇa consciousness means to be directly consciousness of Kṛṣṇa Himself. Not of a symbol, not of the word, not of a concept, or an idea—but directly conscious of Kṛṣṇa, the transcendental person. When one is actually Kṛṣṇa-conscious, then he can explain everything very clearly, and so in that state there's no question about falling down into material consciousness. Or actually, those devotees that I spoke of they never left material consciousness in the first place, they were simply in a more subtle layer of material consciousness, and this is proven by the fact that they fell down from *sannyāsa*.

So our orientation is that we don't care about taking *sannyāsa*, and we don't care about trying to demonstrate some artificial high standard of renunciation; because, as you notice, the definition of pure devotional service given by Rūpa Gosvāmī doesn't say anything about renunciation. It just says that you do not have any desires which are separate from *bhakti*.

Now, desire is something that is very deep within the heart. Desire is not something external; it's internal. It's something that only the person themselves can actually know. And it's like emotion; a lot of us have a block, an artificial block on seeing our actual desires. And so we deceive ourselves into thinking that "Oh yes, I have pure spiritual desires." When actually our actions and our words reveal that we have a lot of desires for power, position, prominence, recognition and different kinds of labels and designations. This is called *pratiṣṭha*. And this is a subtle form of sinful activity or *anartha*, that can prevent one from loving Kṛṣṇa. Because it means his devotional service is still motivated; and what was the definition given in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*? It has to be *ahaituki*, unmotivated. Unmotivated means the only desire in it is the desire for more *bhakti*. Desire to please Kṛṣṇa. No other desire for *karma*, *jñāna*, *yoga*, or anything else.

So the fact that these devotees fell down means they never did actually realize Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the first place, and the fact that they were giving guidance to often thousands of other devotees means that those other devotees' advancement was also limited by the lack of realization of those devotees, because they were the leaders. So you have a situation where, after Śrīla Prabhupāda left this world, certain devotees took over ISKCON; but these devotees were not actually self-realized. So none of the devotees who accepted their shelter could go beyond their realization. And for this reason the whole thing is now completely confused. If I have any good qualities, or any, you know, if there's anything special about me, it was that I never listened to those guys! I never listened to them. Even from the very beginning I didn't listen to them. I only read Prabhupāda's books. And by reading Prabhupāda's books very carefully, with the aid of a dictionary, which is a process that I personally was trained in, as an editor in the BBT, I could understand from Śrīla Prabhupāda's books that these guys were preaching something else. They weren't preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they were preaching 'follow-the-leader consciousness.' They were preaching political consciousness; they were preaching religious consciousness. They weren't preaching Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

They were preaching "Follow me in the name of Kṛṣṇa consciousness." And guess what, everybody bought it! And even today, I'll give you an example: there's a Kṛṣṇa consciousness, supposedly Kṛṣṇa conscious temple two blocks away from here. And everybody in that temple is less senior than I am. Everybody, from the temple president on down, is less senior; but do these people come to me for advice? No. If they were to come to me and I gave them advice, would they follow that advice? No. Do they consider me their authority in any way? No. Why? Because they have been trained not to accept any authority that is outside of their political structure. And because of that, they violate the *vaiṣṇava* etiquette, every single day. So this is the proof that the leaders who trained them were not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness; they were in politics consciousness, political consciousness, organization consciousness, religious consciousness—which is very nice, but it's not Kṛṣṇa consciousness. It's something material.

So if someone accepts instruction from a person on that platform, if someone hears from a person on that platform, their understanding is going to be limited by the level of realization of the person they are hearing from. *Śraddhā*, faith, is developed by hearing. So if one is not hearing from Śrīla Prabhupāda but is hearing from somebody else, or is interpreting Śrīla Prabhupāda according to the instructions of somebody else who is not in pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then they will not be able to understand what pure Kṛṣṇa consciousness is. That's why we're taking the trouble to explain all these things over and over and over, very, very clearly. So that people understand, or can understand, if they want to, what real Kṛṣṇa consciousness is. We spent the last three years preaching about 'what is consciousness.' You can go back to our earliest podcasts, you can go back to our early, early, books and different essays, and you'll see that every single one of them is about the *sāṅkhya-yoga* philosophy given in the Second Chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. There's even one series called *Science of the Soul*, where we go into every single one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's thirty-two classes on *Bhagavad-gītā* 2.13. And we take them apart, we analyze them in detail, because Prabhupāda preached on that

particular verse more than any other *śloka* in the *Vedas*. It's so important. And what does that *śloka* say?

"You're a spirit soul, you're eternal." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 2.13]

So we have been preaching on this platform for three full years. And only recently we started to move beyond that platform. And now we would like to preach on the platform of pure *bhakti*. Now that that term 'consciousness' has been adequately explained and cleared, now we can start to talk about 'Kṛṣṇa consciousness' and have it be meaningful, because now we have an adequate background to understand what is consciousness, now we can put it together with Kṛṣṇa and come up with something really interesting, which is pure *bhakti*.

Because as soon as we can understand what is Kṛṣṇa, our consciousness is going to be attracted like a magnet. But if there's something in between, just like you can have iron and you can have a magnet, but if you have a piece of wood in between, the attraction of the magnet is going to be very, very less. So in the same way, if you have Kṛṣṇa and you have the individual soul, and then you have someone else in between who is not Kṛṣṇa conscious, that's going to make the attraction to Kṛṣṇa very, very weak. And because of that, people are going to fall away; they're not going to be strongly attracted. And this is what's going on. We see this going on in all these different groups and organizations. People come out of curiosity, and it's our job to fire up their curiosity into something much stronger, into real attraction for Kṛṣṇa, real love for Kṛṣṇa. So this art is the art of preaching. But if we're actually not talking about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, if we're actually talking about organization consciousness or political consciousness or follow-me-and-give-me-money consciousness, that's going to come in between the attraction for Kṛṣṇa that is deep in the heart of every soul, and Kṛṣṇa Himself, and they're not going to be able to make advancement. As a result they're eventually going to fall down.

And this is happening. The average lifetime of a devotee in the organization of ISKCON is three-and-a-half years. The average lifetime of a devotee in ISKCON is three-and-a-half years. That comes from ISKCON themselves. ISKCON, especially ISKCON North America—I think it's even less now, two-and-a-half years. After that they can't stay in the organization. Why? Because after that much experience, they start to get a clue that "Oh wait a minute, something is wrong here." But because they've been hearing from people who don't understand real Kṛṣṇa consciousness, they can't quite put their finger on what the problem is, because it's a blind spot. That blind spot has been trained into them by people with an even bigger blind spot. Because they don't want to admit, even to themselves, that their real interest is in power, politics, and profit. So if we hear from people like that, they're not going to describe pure *bhakti*. They are going to describe in a very tricky way, something that appears to be like Kṛṣṇa consciousness to the uninformed, but is not actually Kṛṣṇa consciousness according to the definition of Rūpa Gosvāmī. And because these other people have not read Rūpa Gosvāmī, they have no standard to compare it to, and so they just accept whatever they hear, and then they're mislead. So this is going on, and this is a great trap.

So we're trying to advise people not to fall into that trap, but it's hard going because most people want to be cheated. They don't want the most powerful or highest or best process, because they themselves want to cheat. They want something less; they want something cheap. They want something fast. And yes, you can get that out of Kṛṣṇa consciousness; you can make it into a religion. You can even into some kind of self-help course. That's not really what it is, or what it should be, or what it could be. But you can do that, and some people have done that. But that's not what we're doing. So if you're really serious about Kṛṣṇa consciousness, if you really want the highest benefit, if you really want the full potential of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then you have to go deep into the original scriptures. You have to learn Sanskrit, you have to learn the philosophy, you have to think very deeply about it, and you have to look up all the words in the

dictionary and clear the definitions to get full comprehension. This is called ‘scrutinizing study,’ and Śrīla Prabhupāda recommends it again and again and again in his books. You have to study these books scrutinizingly to get the full benefit. If you do that, then you will not be cheated. Because you will know the difference between the real philosophy and the imitation. If you do not do that, if you are relying on somebody else to tell you what the actual standard is, then you will be cheated. And I say that, fully aware that people who listening are expecting me to tell them what the real standard is. But I'm saying “Don't rely on anybody, go to the original source literatures and understanding them directly yourself.” Otherwise you can't be sure; somebody may be trying to cheat you. It's very likely that somebody will cheat you, if you don't go back to the original and make up your mind from that. So that's my advice to you; that's my advice to everyone, that they should go back to the original, back to the Sanskrit. Don't be lazy, take the time and energy to analyze this information properly so that you really understand it, then whatever you do will be very, very effective.

Chapter 10: *Śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.17-20

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, November 6, 2009

Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī: We have to get our ears on straight. This is the biggest problem in learning spiritual life: we hear something imperfectly, but we think that we heard it properly; and then we go on and base so much other thinking and acting on our imperfect hearing. And it's true that sometimes the teachers will simplify things: Prabhupāda, when he first started teaching the *rāgas* of the *kīrtanas*, he simplified them somewhat for Western ears. But as soon as the devotees got a *tānpura*, Prabhupāda began to sing it in the original way; nevertheless, nobody except Prabhupāda sang it that way. Because the devotees learned it wrong, they kept doing it wrong out of habit, even down to the present day.

To hear an esoteric truth properly the first time is very difficult. Generally, people don't have the ontological structure embedded in their mind to be able to hear it correctly, so later on when they repeat it, it comes out all wrong. At least they're trying to glorify Kṛṣṇa somehow or other; but it's not actually the proper style; it loses something of the original mood every time it's changed even a little bit. So then one generation of disciples will change it a little bit, and then the next generation will change that a little bit, and then the following generation will change that a little bit, and by the time you get ten generations down the line, they're speaking and singing something completely different.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: Tying the cat to a tree.

Bābājī: [laughs] There was a Master in a temple where they had very nice cat. Every temple should have a cat, because in temples they store so much food for cooking for the Deities; and of course the mice will come, so every temple must have a cat. This particular cat was very affectionate, and every time the devotees sat down for class in the temple, the cat would

come and rub all over them and purr, and get in their laps and go "Pet me!" So of course this is very distracting when you're trying to study. So the Master said "OK look, I'm trying to get through to you guys about this philosophy. Please take the cat outside and leave him there." But of course then the cat would come back in again. "Oh, all those nice warm cozy laps. Mmmm." [laughs] So he would come in again, and if they closed the door he'd come in the window; you know how that goes. So after a while the Master said "Oh look, just tie the cat to the tree." So from that day on, every time they had class they would tie the cat to the tree, and then as soon as they were done they would let him go again. No problem, right? Except the next generation of disciples in that temple, before giving class or doing any kind of service, would tie the cat to the tree. Why? "Well, that's just the way we do it around here. You see? We tie the cat to the tree. It's an integral part of our process." Then, of course, a few years later that cat died, so they got a new cat, and they tied that cat to the tree too. And on and on it went, and after two or three generations the logo of the temple became a cat tied to a tree, and there were disciples writing learned discourses on the epistemological significance of cat-tree-tying, and you see how it goes.

So when students don't have an adequate background of definitions to duplicate what they hear, they will be firmly convinced that they heard something else. And then they will proceed to base their thinking and their attitudes and their actions and everything on what they **thought** they heard. You know, there's even a funny line about that: "I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant." And it's true. It happens so many times, that people will mis-duplicate our communication. And we see it in spiritual life, especially with the *kīrtanas*: we'll sing one thing, and then everybody will go of and sing exactly what they **thought** the tune was supposed to be, but actually it was something else. Maybe it was something close to that, but not exactly. But the devil is in the details, or actually Kṛṣṇa-*bhakti* is in the details. The difference between a very sort of plain-Jane tune and something that's really *rasika* will often be in just a

few notes, or in some subtle timing or the intonation, or any number of fine distinctions that one has to make to do really, really nice *kīrtana*.

And the same thing in the philosophy: there are a bunch of very fine distinctions that in the beginning don't seem to make any difference, but actually in the long run they make a great deal of difference. We're talking about *rasa*; this *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* is only about *rasa*. That's all it's about; this whole big thick book. Two volumes, how many pages? Nine hundred and sixty pages in Volume One, and Volume Two is just about as hefty. So sixteen, seventeen hundred pages of dense, highly technical information about *rasa*. But I remember in ISKCON hearing devotees talking very casually about *rasa* like, "Hey, what's your *rasa*, dude?" Having a very, very rough and inaccurate understanding of what *rasa* is. Here's my challenge to those of you who are in ISKCON, or know people in ISKCON, or hang out at ISKCON temples somewhere: go up to any of the authorities in the temple, the temple president or some big *sannyāsī* or some *guru* and ask him, "What are the five ingredients of *rasa*?" Ask him!

[to Nava-yauvana dāsa] What are the five ingredients of *rasa*?

Nava-yauvana dāsa: *Sthāyi-bhāva, vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika-bhāva* and *vyabhicārī-bhāva*.

Bābājī: See, everybody here knows what they are. But I bet you can go up to any big, big leader in any big, big ISKCON temple and ask him this simple question: "What are the five ingredients in *rasa*?" and they can't tell you. It's like "What are the five ingredients of sweet rice?" milk, sugar, ghee, rice, and a little pepper. You have to know what are the ingredients of something before you can make it. Otherwise, it's just words. I can say "Sweet rice, sweet rice, rice rice, sweet sweet," I can chant that all day, but I won't get a nice cup of sweet rice out of that. I have to know the ingredients, and go in the kitchen and make it. Then I can physically, tangibly have sweet rice to offer to the Deity. And the same with *rasa*. We can talk about *rasa* all day, but to actually make *rasa* we have to know the process.

In Los Angeles in the early days of ISKCON, there was a group of devotees who met together to discuss the *Nectar of Devotion*, and they met separately from the other devotees of the temple. And they called their little group the “Gopī-Bhāva Club.” And their idea was that “We’re advanced because we’re discussing *rasa*.” And the only thing they had to go on was Prabhupāda’s current edition, at that time I think it was the 1972 edition of *Nectar of Devotion*. And we’ve been through this issue in this series of classes, and we know how many editorial mistakes there are in that edition. So these devotees were meeting together, and they were trying to discuss the most exalted subject in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, which is the devotional service of the *gopīs*. And all they had to go on was this really rough edition of *Nectar of Devotion* that had so many errors in it.

And Prabhupāda knew this. He just hadn’t had time to go back and give a proper translation. But meanwhile these devotees are thinking like, winding each others’ spring, so to speak. They were arrogant: “We’re the Gopī-Bhāva Club! Hey, cool, wow Prabhu!” And Prabhupāda just stopped it. He just said: “No, this is nonsense, stop it. Don’t do this anymore. You haven’t even understood *Bhagavad-gītā*. How can you try to understand the *Nectar of Devotion*?” So now, fortunately, due to our Godbrother’s efforts in translating *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, we have an accurate edition, much more accurate. Maybe it’s not perfect, but it’s a lot better than what we had before. And we also had over thirty years of practical application of *bhakti-yoga* and our own *sādhana* and realization, so now we’re in an actual position to talk about these things, and to discuss *bhāva* and *rasa* and the ingredients of *rasa*, and how to approach all these things in the proper way. So, with that introduction, we’re going to look at verse seventeen.

*kleśa-ghnī śubhadā mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt sudurlabhā
sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā*

“The unique characteristics of *bhakti* are: its ability to destroy suffering; its bestowal of auspiciousness; its disregard for liberation; its rarity of

attainment; its manifestation of concentrated bliss; and its ability to attract Kṛṣṇa.” [Śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.17]

This verse is very important, because it's actually the subject matter for the entire First Wave. What we've been going through so far is basically the introduction. The introduction is not broken out into a separate section; it's part of the First Wave. But actually this is the beginning of the First Wave, because it gives the subject matter for the First Wave. The previous verses about the excellence of pure *bhakti* are giving the subject matter for the entire book. The previous three or four verses, especially talking about pure *bhakti*, give the overall subject of *Śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*; and now this verse gives the subject matter for the First Wave, which are the unique and astonishing characteristics of *bhakti*.

Of course, Rūpa Gosvāmī's talking about pure *bhakti*, *uttama-bhakti*. How do we know this? Because this was very, very carefully defined and elaborately commented upon in the previous verses. So if you have been following along with this series, you heard those explanations in great detail and extremely high language, very subtle points about the nature of pure *bhakti*. And pure *bhakti* is what it is because it has these special qualities, these six qualities:

- the ability to destroy suffering,
- it bestows auspiciousness,
- its disregard for liberation,
- rarity of attainment,
- manifestation of concentrated bliss, and
- its ability to attract even Kṛṣṇa.

These six qualities are going to be explained in great detail in the following verses. They are what make pure *bhakti* special. The subject matter of the First Wave, therefore, is a general overview of *bhakti*. And not just any kind of *bhakti*, but *uttama-bhakti*, the highest *bhakti*, pure *bhakti*, pure devotional service. This is the special characteristic of a pure

devotee: the pure devotee has pure *bhakti*, and offers this *bhakti* to the Lord continuously. And because of this offering, all these characteristics manifest in their experience, in their consciousness: that suffering is destroyed, it bestows auspiciousness, liberation is disregarded, it's rarely attained, it manifests concentrated bliss, and it attracts Kṛṣṇa.

So Jīva Gosvāmī comments:

In verse ten it was said that the qualities of *bhakti* will be discussed in this chapter. Why? To show *bhakti*'s supreme position. This verse mentions those unique characteristics of *bhakti* in brief.

In other words, we're not talking idly about these qualities of *bhakti*, we're not just making a laundry list; but there's a definite purpose behind it. The purpose is to show that *bhakti* is superior to every other spiritual method, every other spiritual path. And this will be proved elaborately from the *śāstra* itself. This is not just Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī's opinion. Although even if it were, I would be happy to accept it just because of who he is. But actually this is also Lord Caitanya Māhāprabhu's opinion and the opinion of the *Vedas* and Kṛṣṇa, and there are pages and pages below that describe these wonderful qualities of *bhakti*, and how they manifest in the life of the devotee.

So we should be very anxious to hear this, because this is what we're doing here: we are cultivating pure *bhakti*. That is our reason for being devotees. There's no other reason. We don't accept any other motivation or any other desire as being a part of *bhakti*. That's part of the definition of *bhakti* that was given in the previous verses. So here we go back to the original topic that we started with tonight: that some people hear about *bhakti*, and think: "OK, so I'm a devotee, but I can still continue to work at my job and hang out with my girlfriend and smoke a little dope on the side, and I have my hobbies like my car and my dog, and every once in a while I go out and have a burger, but you know, and it's no big deal because I chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and I'm a devotee." Well, sort of. Somehow or other, in the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, this wonderful definition of

pure *bhakti* given in the scriptures, and confirmed again and again by so many quotes in the upcoming section that ratify and confirm and support these points, has gotten turned into something very different than the original.

I remember a few years back I heard an interview with rock singer Boy George; and some reporter was asking him: "I hear you're into this Kṛṣṇa movement." Boy George replied, "Oh yeah! I'm really into this Hare Kṛṣṇa thing, it's great, fantastic!" The reporter said, "But you're gay!" And Boy George goes: "Oh, it's cool to be gay and be a Hare Kṛṣṇa! Hare Kṛṣṇa is the gay religion. It's like, totally cool to be gay and into Hare Kṛṣṇa." What? I wondered, what nonsense rascal so-called devotee is preaching to him? He's got it completely wrong. Sinful activities are sinful activities. Illicit sex is illicit sex, whether it's gay, straight, with animals or whatever your perverted mind can think of; it's still illicit sex. Illicit sex is breaking the principles. That's an offense. That means you're ineligible for pure *bhakti*.

So if you're not engaging in devotional service to get pure *bhakti*, why are you here? What is this all about? If it's not to get pure *bhakti*—if it's to become a big, big religious leader and make millions of dollars and rack up lots of frequent flyer miles, that's not pure *bhakti*. It's not pure *bhakti* if you want to make a big splash with the ladies and have a lot of girlfriends, be popular—that's not pure *bhakti*. It's not pure *bhakti* if you want to become a big, big scholar and be able to defeat anybody by quoting so many *śāstras* and *ślokas*; that's not pure *bhakti*. That is covering *bhakti* with *jñāna* and *karma*. It's not *bhakti* either if you want some mystic powers to be able to see into the future, or understand what's inside somebody's mind or control them by mystic power. That's not *bhakti*, that's *yoga*; that's mystical stuff. We're not into any of that. What we're here for is to please Kṛṣṇa; and when we please Kṛṣṇa then these six wonderful qualities manifest. When we try to use *bhakti* to please ourselves—with *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna*, or any other way—then these special qualities do not manifest, because they are proper to pure *bhakti* alone.

Bhakti, if it's not pure then it's not, in a sense, really *bhakti* at all. It's just like, here I have a glass of pure water. Because it's pure, it satisfies my thirst. This pure taste is very nice. In fact, it's so nice that Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā*:

"I am the taste of water." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 7.8]

Kṛṣṇa identifies Himself with the taste of water because water is pure. But if somebody puts a little turpentine in the water, then it will not accomplish its specified purpose of satisfying thirst. Or if somebody puts alcohol, or blood or any one of a million contaminants in the water, then it won't do what it's supposed to do. The satisfying properties of water are predicated on its purity. Similarly, *uttama-bhakti* is very pure like water, and when you take it, it satisfies the soul. Just like the body has a natural thirst for pure water, the soul also has a thirst for pure *bhakti*; and if we don't get it, then we run here and there trying all kinds of other things, but they don't work very well. But if our *bhakti* is contaminated, if our *bhakti* is not pure, it does not have the same quality of satisfying the soul, just like the water that's contaminated with some pollutants does not have the quality of being satisfying. Did you ever go someplace where they have a lot of chlorine and fluoride and all kinds of nonsense in the water? If you go to New York, and you taste the water it's like: "Whoa! What kind of chemistry set did **this** come from?" It's not drinkable; it's not something you want to put in your body.

So similarly, impure *bhakti* is liable to cause you more problems than it solves. We can't recommend it; we can't tolerate it either, in the people who are close to us. And our requirement is that when you join our community, your aim is to develop pure *bhakti*; and especially if you come here to live in our *āśrama* or be closely associated with us, you **must** be following pure *bhakti* or we won't accept your association. That's because we want to cultivate pure *bhakti*, and to do that we have to restrict our association to those who are practicing *kevala-bhakti* alone. That's our principle. That's our platform. That's our value proposition. That's what makes us special. That's what makes us different. That's why we can hang

out our brand and say: "We are the Esoteric Teaching of the *Vedas*," not the religion of the *Vedas*, not the philosophy of the *Vedas*, not the armchair Monday morning quarterbacks of the *Vedas*; not the political committee of the *Vedas*; but we are the Esoteric Teaching of the *Vedas*, and we give Esoteric Teaching seminars. Welcome to our Esoteric Teaching seminar for today. This defines who we are and what we're doing: that we're talking about pure *bhakti*, and pure *bhakti* has all these wonderful qualities that we will discuss in detail in this series.

Uddhava dāsa: Why is pure *bhakti* so rarely attained? But it gives so much benefit, you know? And then, still it's rarely attained.

Bābajī: Precisely because of this issue that people do not take care to make sure their *bhakti* is pure. And even just a little bit of contamination renders *bhakti* almost impotent to confer its special benefits. There's a quote in the *Vedas* that:

"Even just a little bit of sand in a bowl of sweet rice, and the whole thing is ruined."

Sweet rice is so nice. It's very, very satisfying; but only when it's pure. If anything contaminates it, the whole thing is ruined; it's rejected. We have the same attitude towards *bhakti*. *Bhakti*, when it's very, very pure, oh, there's nothing like it. Really it's just wonderful! But if it's contaminated—if it's covered over by any of these things, *karma*, *yoga*, *jñāna*, speculation—then we don't like it. Why? Because it does not give the wonderful, astonishing results of pure *bhakti*, which are given in this verse.

So let's jump into this and look at this first wonderful quality, which is that pure *bhakti* destroys all suffering.

*tatrāsyāḥ kleśaghnatvam
kleśās tu pāpaṁ tad-bījam
avidyā ceti te tridhā*

"The first topic, its ability to destroy all suffering, will be discussed. Suffering is threefold: sinful reaction, the seed of sin and ignorance."
[Śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.18]

Here we enter into a discussion of how *bhakti* relieves all suffering. When people hear this they tend to be skeptical: "You mean just by chanting this *mantra* I can eliminate all suffering? It doesn't sound at all plausible. Just by this little song I can get rid of all my suffering? How is it possible?" So now we're going to explain how it's possible; and it begins from an analysis of the anatomy of suffering.

Suffering has three main parts.

And actually he states them backwards in time, or in terms of cause and effect.

Ignorance is the first thing, then the seed of sin, which is material desire, and finally sinful reaction.

How it works is that first one will be or become ignorant, either by circumstance or even by desire; ignorant of the real truth about what is sin and what are the results of sinful activities. Then because of that, they will begin to cultivate a desire for sinful activity. And then, because of cultivating this desire, eventually they will act upon it. Actually, it will happen by the laws of material nature. And then there's the reaction: suffering. Suffering is the reaction; and actually, all three of these things are suffering: ignorance is suffering, cultivating sinful desires is suffering, and sinful reactions are suffering. They're all suffering, but from subtle to gross. Ignorance is subtle suffering. Cultivating sinful reactions is in between; and actually performing sinful reactions and getting the results, is gross suffering.

We see people going through this cycle all the time. Out of ignorance, they don't know that a particular activity is sinful. Let's take for example eating meat: because of ignorance, which has been deliberately cultivated in our society, people don't know that eating meat is wrong. They don't know that

the cruelty that they treat the animals with is going to come back to them in the form of karmic reaction. Some of these people even believe in *karma*, but they have the wrong definition of *karma*. They think that, as put it, “What goes around comes around,”

They think, “So if I'm nice to people, then people will be nice to me.”

“OK, but what about the animals? How are you treating the animals?”

“Well, it just says in the Bible, 'do not murder'.” That's what Christians say.

If you say, “But Jesus says, 'Thou shalt not kill;' Why are you killing?”

“Oh, it's OK to kill animals, they're meant for us to eat.” they say.

Uddhava dāsa: Material taste.

Bābājī: Yes, they are driven by the taste to enjoy, instead of the taste of serving and helping others. Here they are, somehow or other convinced that animals don't have consciousness. But anybody who's had a pet knows that animals have feelings. How could they have feelings if they didn't have consciousness? How could they have desire? How could they have intelligence? It's well-proven scientifically that animals have intelligence; they can learn, they can communicate, so many things. How can they do that without consciousness? It's not possible. You know from your own experience that everything you do—learning, action, desire, communication—involves consciousness. So do you think the animals are any different? This is ignorance. There's so much data, so many proofs, so many ways that they could come to the right conclusion, but somehow they come to the wrong conclusion. Why? Because they have sinful desire, a taste for selfish enjoyment. They want to enjoy the material world, and so somehow or other, they rationalize it. What this means is they accept ignorance as truth.

This is very unfortunate. Because then, the next thing they know, they're down at McDonald's; and if that doesn't kill them, then the sinful reaction of all of that junk food will. So now there's record numbers of people getting heart attacks and different terminal diseases, cancer and such things, as a sinful reaction for their meat-eating. That's the way it goes. The violence which is performed on the animal, reacts upon the eater. You can't say: "Well, I'm not killing the animal! I'm just going down to the store and buying a burger." That doesn't cut it, because you're paying someone to kill the animal for you, and dress it and pack it and ship it and sell it and so many things. You're paying all those peoples' salaries by paying for the meat at the store. So all those sinful activities will come back on you, as well as on them.

So, people are so ignorant; they don't realize that the whole material world is intelligent, and everything we do is recorded. Everything that we do is known. People are so up in arms now about the regulation of the Internet: "Oh, now they're gonna know everything I do. Oh, they're spying on us! Every site we visit, they're gonna know; they're gonna record it." Well, so what? Everything you even think is recorded; it's recorded and it's played back at the time of death. And this playback is analyzed to determine what proportion of sinful activities and pious activities you have performed, and then you get the next body according to the result of that analysis. So what to speak of your web-surfing, everything you even think is recorded. Everything you feel, everything you want, your desires, your dreams, everything; and that all goes towards creating a sinful reactions or pious reactions. So first, let's discuss sinful reactions.

*tatra pāpam —
aprārabdham bhavet pāpam prārabdham ceti tad dvidhā*

“First we will discuss sinful reactions. There are two types of sinful reactions (effects of sinful acts): effects that are experienced in this lifetime (*prārabdham*) and effects that will be experienced in future lives (*aprārabdham*).”

There are two types of sinful reactions. Sinful reactions are the effects of sinful acts. They may not be connected in time, and this is one thing that makes it very difficult for ordinary people to understand the law of *karma*: that the cause and the effect may be widely separated in time. The effect may come even in the next lifetime. Therefore, there are two kinds of sinful reaction: *prārabdha*, which means it comes in this lifetime, and *aprārabdha*, which means it comes in a future lifetime.

*tatra aprārabdha-haratvam, yathā ekaḍaśe (11.14.19)
yathāgniḥ susamiddhārciḥ karoty edhāmsi bhasmasāt
tathā mad-viṣayā-bhaktir uddhavaināmsi kṛtsnaśaḥ*

Here is an example of destroying all *aprārabdha* reactions from the 11th Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [11.14.19]:

“My dear Uddhava, devotional service in relationship with Me is like a blazing fire that can burn to ashes all the fuel of sinful activities supplied to it.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.20]

What a wonderful verse spoken by Kṛṣṇa! Jīva Gosvāmī’s commentary says:

Just as a blazing fire used for cooking and other purposes turns wood sticks to ashes, so *bhakti* directed to Kṛṣṇa in the form of actions such as hearing about Him, somehow or other burns up all sins which will be committed.

The hint in this verse is that, although devotional service destroys all sinful reactions both in this life and in a future life, that's not its real purpose. The real purpose of *bhakti* is only to satisfy Kṛṣṇa; but as a byproduct of satisfying Kṛṣṇa, it burns to ashes as much sinful reaction as you can throw at it. Take a fire, for example: the more fuel you put on the fire, the bigger it blazes and the more it burns. And you can just keep adding fuel to a fire unlimitedly; it will burn whatever you give it. That's the nature of fire. So the nature of *bhakti*, no matter how many how many sinful reactions you have coming, you can throw them at the *bhakti* and *bhakti* will burn them up; it will annihilate them.

The power of *bhakti* is so strong because the Supreme Personality of Godhead is directly involved. He has the power, of course, to nullify all sinful reactions. He can purify anything; His influence is so strong. So we shouldn't worry about sinful reactions when we're engaged in pure *bhakti*. Now if we're not engaged in pure *bhakti*, well, we don't know exactly what will be the result.

Uddhava dāsa: I have one question about this verse. I don't know if it's just the translation or the Sanskrit that it mentions "When this *bhakti* is rendered unto Me," or Kṛṣṇa is saying, "unto Me." Is there any other *bhakti* that's not for Kṛṣṇa?

Bābājī: Well, go back to the definition of *bhakti* given in the eleventh verse. What does it say?

"The highest *bhakti* is defined as continuous service or emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, His expansion forms **or others related to Him.**"
[*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.11]

Bābājī: So *bhakti* can be towards Nṛsiṃha or Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu, or Vāmana or any other expansions or *avatāras*, or His devotees or His temples or His qualities or His scriptures or anything related to Him.

Uddhava dāsa: In this verse He's saying, "*bhakti* directed towards Me." So He's being more specific?

Bābājī: Yes. He says "Devotional service in relationship with Me." He's specifically talking about the platform of *rasa*. He's talking about *rasika* devotional service. The exact word is "*mad-viṣaya bhaktir*." Look up *viṣayā*.

viṣaya chāḍiyā kabe śuddha ha'be mana
[*Lālasāmayī Prārthanā*, from *Prārthanā* by Narottama dās Ṭhākura, verse 3]

We sang that last night.

Uddhava dāsa: *Mat-viṣayā* – with Me as the object.

Bābājī: Ah! Yes. So Kṛṣṇa is especially indicating devotional service directed toward Him as the object. But that object could also be any of His expansion forms, because They are all equally potent. He's not limiting the object of *bhakti* to His form as Kṛṣṇa. He's saying, in other words, “Any devotion directed towards the Supreme Personality of Godhead...

“...can burn to ashes all the fuel of sinful activities supplied to it.”
[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.19]

So it doesn't matter how much sinful reactions we have stocked up in *aprārabdha* form; these are all destroyed by pure *bhakti*.

prārabdha-haratvam, yathā tṛtīye (3.33.6)
yan-nāma-dheya-śravaṇānukīrtanād
yat-prahvaṇad yat-smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt

Here is proof of destroying *prārabdha* reactions from the Third Canto of *Bhāgavatam* [3.33.6]:

“To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face-to-face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the Holy Name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him.” [*Śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.21]

The previous verse talked about *aprārabdha* reactions that are going to manifest in a subsequent lifetime; but this verse talks about *prārabdha* reactions that will manifest in this lifetime. Because we not only have to worry about what will happen in the future, we have to be concerned about what will happen in this life too; and if we have so many sinful reactions coming from our previous activities, then how can we make any advancement in life, or accomplish anything worthwhile? But here it's stated that:

"...even a person born in a family of dog-eaters..." [*Śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.21]

We can understand that dog-eaters are very sinful people, because dogs are very impure, and it's very nasty to eat them. So if a person is born in such a degraded position in life, we can understand that they must have a lot of sinful activities which are manifesting in this lifetime, *prārabdha*.

Prārabdha, that's what it means: sinful reactions manifesting in this lifetime. *Aprārabdha* means in next lifetime; but *prārabdha* means now. So the evidence of past sinful activities is that they're born in a family of dog-eaters. Now, even if such a person performs any kind of devotional service, even once chanting the Holy Name of the Lord, they immediately become **eligible** for performing Vedic sacrifice. Now, performing Vedic sacrifice requires a lot of knowledge, a lot of purity, a lot of pious activities, so many qualifications. It's not easy to do; you have to be qualified. Now, how is it that some rascal dog-eater can immediately become qualified to perform Vedic sacrifice? Well, it doesn't say that he immediately becomes qualified; it says that he immediately become **eligible**. **Eligible**. What does eligible mean? "Chosen for that purpose." He's a candidate for performing Vedic sacrifices. Not that he immediately goes from being a dog-eater to being a qualified *brāhmaṇa* performing all kinds of sacrifices; that's not possible. But the possibility opens up; whereas before, there was no question about it. But if he's just walking down the street and he sees some devotees chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, immediately he has the possibility of walking over to them and taking a book, and going back to the temple with them and staying there the rest of his life and getting trained up in devotional service **not saying he's gonna do it, but he has the possibility. He becomes eligible** because any contact with devotional service, especially for a person like that means, in practical terms, it means contact with devotees. So either through a book or some other medium or personally, somehow or other, this person is coming in contact with devotees, and that gives him the opportunity to become trained up in devotional service **if he so desires**. Kṛṣṇa never forces us to do anything, especially in terms of desiring. But if we want,

the possibility is open. So anyone who is listening to this webcast, or watching the YouTube recording later on, or reading this as a book, is in this same position. And actually this applies to all of us, because all of us were born in sinful Western families, or became entangled in the sinful Western lifestyle. Somehow or other we got rescued from that. How did that work? This *śloka* describes it. Somehow or other we came in contact with devotees; we came in contact with the power of devotional service, and because we had some small desire that: “Oh, I want a better life,” or “I want to know what this is all about” or “I want to find God” or something like that, we approached the devotees, we got involved, we started performing devotional service, one step led to another, and here we are, actually performing Vedic sacrifice. **This verse is about us. It's about you and me. This verse explains how we became devotees.** Because of this extraordinary quality of devotional service, pure *bhakti*, to destroy sinful activities, thanks to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa's so wonderful.

Śvadaḥ refers to a particular class of persons who eat dogs. That is because the derivation of the the word is the noun *śva*, dog, combined with the verb *adam*, eating in the present tense. This refers to a person who possesses the nature of eating low food like a carnivorous animal. If the verse were to refer to remembrance of the Lord's name as the atonement for accidental eating of dog flesh, the past tense should be used: "The person who ate the dog."

But in this case the present tense is being used. So that means he's still doing it.

In any case, there is the rule of *rudher yogam apahity*, conventional usage overrides etymology. The conventional meaning of *śvadaḥ* is "a low-born person" and this contradicts a contrived liberal meaning such as "a person who ate a dog only once."

All these commentaries are to defeat specific speculative arguments against the actual purport of the verse. So somebody might say: "Well, it's impossible for a dog-eater, somebody who eats dog all the time, to perform Vedic sacrifices; so this must refer to a situation where someone was actually born in a *brāhmaṇa* family and, somehow or other by

mistake, they ate a little dog meat one time." So now Jīva is dismantling this argument, piece-by-piece.

Thus, the proposition of having the word *śvadaḥ* refer to an accidental sin of eating dog flesh is rejected. Therefore, Śrīdhara Svāmī says the word is the equivalent of *śva-pacaḥ*—dog cooker. A person of very low caste.

I guess people like that existed even back in those days.

By hearing or chanting the name of the Lord, or by bowing down to the Lord or by remembering the Lord, the dog-eater quickly destroys his *prārabdha-karma* of this life which have produced his low birth and which prevent him from performing sacrifices. At the same time, by devotional acts, he also attains the *punya*—which means good *karma*—which creates qualities suitable for performing sacrifices. However, a person, even if born as a *brāhmaṇa*, without bad birth, has the need of Vedic initiation with the *Gāyatrī mantra*.

This is required. Before a person can perform Vedic sacrifices, they have to be properly initiated with *Gāyatrī mantra*. *Gāyatrī* initiation is the actual initiation, because it makes you a priest: you can perform weddings, sacrifices, any of the eight sacrifices of family life. The wearing the *brāhmaṇa*-thread is very significant: it means you can open temples, you can perform all of the duties of a priest. Actually it's a very, very high qualification to have that thread. So a person who is born, even in a family of *brāhmaṇas*, doesn't get to wear that thread automatically by birth; but because they're born in that environment, they have an ideal opportunity to acquire those qualifications. The chanting of the Holy Name, or other devotional service, is so potent that even a dog-eater who performs these things very quickly becomes qualified to receive that kind of initiation.

This produces in him the special birth necessary for performing sacrifices.

Because the *brāhmaṇa* initiation is called the "second birth." Somebody may say, "Well, if you're not born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, you can't perform Vedic sacrifices." That's incorrect, because even a person who is born in a

brāhmaṇa family has to have a second birth before they're qualified. That means the actual principle is: one must become qualified for the second birth and accept that initiation, and then he can perform sacrifices. Physical birth is irrelevant. So even a person born in a family of dog-eaters, if they acquire the necessary *punya*, the necessary karmic qualifications, can accept the second birth, and then the past is wiped out and they have the opportunity to perform Vedic sacrifices just like any *brāhmaṇa*.

Therefore, what has been stated in the verse is that the process of hearing, chanting, or remembering has the power to elevate even the dog-eater by eradicating his *prārabdha-karmas*. What then must be the power of seeing the Lord directly?

What then must be the elevation of other persons not born so low? The verse's purpose is not to advocate his immediate performance of Vedic sacrifices. Similar statements are found elsewhere.

*bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā
śva-pākān api sambhavāt*

"Devotional service fixed on Me purifies even the dog-eaters from the contamination of their low birth." [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21]

That's another verse from the *Uddhava-gītā*, spoken by Kṛṣṇa to Uddhava. So we'll continue discussing this point of this section tomorrow, because there's a rather long purport coming up. Are there any questions on tonight's topics?

Uddhava dāsa: You just read that the "*prārabdha-karma* is destroyed." And then we talked about, some time ago in the *Vedānta-sūtra* that the *aprārabdha* is destroyed for the devotee and the only thing left is the *prārabdha*.

Bābājī: Yes, but not all of the *prārabdha-karma*; just a portion, whatever is needed to maintain the body. Let's take the example of people like us, who were born in Western families which are addicted to meat eating and

illicit sex and all that nonsense. If we had stayed in that situation, like most of our peers, then we would have continued those activities even in this life, due to *prārabdha-karma*; but now our activities are completely different: we're not doing those things anymore. We're engaged in pure devotional service; so it must be that the *prārabdha-karma* that caused that low birth, and would continue to cause these same sinful activities, has been removed. But other *prārabdha-karma* that simply causes the existence of the body, has not been removed. It's just that the body is now purified of the sinful *prārabdha-karmas*. But the ordinary or normal *prārabdha-karmas* remain. And the reason for this is so that the enlightened people can stick around and teach others. Otherwise who is going to represent Kṛṣṇa? Who is going to instruct people in this art of devotional service? If everyone who becomes self-realized just immediately leaves the body and goes back to the spiritual world, who is going to tell people about this thing? As soon as someone became self-realized, they would disappear. The whole system of disciplic succession would fail, because nobody who was left would be self-realized. So then we would be stuck. We would have only theoretical knowledge of *bhakti* and as we have experienced, that is not sufficient. We have to have access to one with realized knowledge; we have to have practical knowledge, practical realization, to keep going with the process; otherwise, the process very quickly becomes corrupted and fails.

Uddhava dāsa: So this *prārabdha-karma* can be understood something like: "A person is kind of cursed or sentenced to be in the mode of passion or in the mode of ignorance in which all their actions are controlled by nature," basically. Like a dog. You put food and he will always go for the food. He can't choose.

Bābājī: Yes. If you look at a person's birth chart, that gives an astrological picture of their *prārabdha-karma*. That's what we're seeing in the birth chart: "He's got this sun in this particular sign in this house, and this rising sign and this moon and all these things going together. And this gives a picture of a certain type of individual." But if that person becomes

engaged in devotional service, that can change many, many things in the chart. It probably won't change their overall lifespan and things like that. But it will certainly remove all the sinful *prārabdha-karmas*, for sure. And it may also release other forces in the chart that are holding them back from, let's say, becoming an artist or whatever it is they want to do for Kṛṣṇa. Just like Jadurani is a good example. When she first came to Śrīla Prabhupāda she wasn't an artist. What was she doing? She was working as a clerk or something like that. And Prabhupāda was working on his books, and he was saying: "You know, we really need an artist to do the book covers." And she said: "You know, I've always wanted to be an artist. Can I try?" And Prabhupāda said, "OK I'll instruct you." And so she started working and she worked very hard, and she developed the ability to paint very nicely to for Kṛṣṇa in just a few months. So of course, under the inspiration of Prabhupāda, he had this tremendous force driving him to bring devotional service to the West, so we can understand his presence was very inspiring and very elevating. All those devotees made tremendous advancement in a very short time.

So the *prārabdha-karmas* that are holding a person back from reaching their full potential, can also be destroyed without substantially changing maybe the span of the life or other things. Well, the health improves. So many things improve when one becomes a devotee, because you're not performing sinful activities anymore. The sinful activities are the things that are so hard on the health and the nerves and the psyche and all that. They're going to discuss, a little bit later on in this topic, how the *aprārabdha-karmas* manifest in the form of premonitions. Thinking that, "Oh, something bad is gonna happen in the future." Because you have the impressions stored in the mind in subtle form that: "Oh, I did this and I did that, and now I'm gonna have to suffer for that." You don't know exactly what will happen or when it will happen, but you have this feeling of, "Oh boy, something bad is gonna happen." Because the impressions are there; they're just sitting there, waiting for the right time, the right situation. So even the *aprārabdha-karma* causes mental anxieties even before it actually manifests.

Question from Thiago: "Hare Kṛṣṇa! Please accept my humble obeisances. Is there such a thing as *karma* to learn and spread Absolute Truth? Or it only happens by free will?"

Bābājī: It's not *karma*, because *karma* is material. *Karma* could make you a bank president, but it won't make you a *guru*. Devotional service is done by the pure free will of the soul wanting to love Kṛṣṇa, and to spread this wonderful science to as many other people as possible.

Question from Don: "So if people think they can't change the aspects of their chart, they are basically not going to change anything unless they bring in *bhakti* to their life?"

Bābājī: Yes. How can you change your birth? It already happened. It's done; the die is cast. Unless you have something higher, more powerful than *karma*, how can you change *karma*? Just like when we talk about changing consciousness; you cannot change consciousness from the mental platform. Because the mental platform is below consciousness; it's less powerful, it's one of the effects of consciousness. You can't change the cause by working on the effect. So similarly, you cannot change *karma* by, for example, attending a course on "how to win friends and influence people." You can change *karma* by *bhakti*, because *bhakti* is more powerful: *bhakti* is on the spiritual platform, and the spiritual platform is of course higher than mind, intelligence or false ego. So by engaging in *bhakti* we purify the *prārabdha-karmas*, and then whatever is left of the *prārabdha-karma* becomes our *karma* for the rest of that lifetime. It feels almost like you're losing something. People are so attached; they're even attached to their suffering. And when they become engaged in devotional service their suffering begins to melt away, and sometimes they'll become upset: "Wait a minute? I'm gonna have to give this up? I'm gonna have to give that up? I'm gonna have to give up my smoking and my drinking and my illicit sex and my... all my other nonsense?" But wait a minute, all that is suffering. Because the verse that we just read says that:

"Suffering is of three parts: sinful reaction, the seed of sin, and ignorance." [*Śrī bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.18]

That's called the threefold suffering of material existence. So all these things connected with *karma* are suffering: suffering from beginning to end. From the beginning of the concept of material existence, all the way through the actual experience of the reaction of sinful activities: it's all suffering. There's no enjoyment in it. People think: "Oh, I have to give up my enjoyment, my intoxication or whatever my nonsense is." But that's not enjoyment really, it's suffering because it creates *karma*, and in the future you're going to have to take another material body and suffer all that—the traumas of birth and so on—just to get the result of those *karmas*. It's not a very good deal. Engagement in *bhakti* doesn't destroy all of our *karma*, but does clean up the sinful reaction part.

Nava-yauvana dāsa: In many of these verses, we find Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary elaborately using Sanskrit grammar to prove exactly what Rūpa Gosvāmī meant in that verse. Why doesn't he just say that: "Look, Rūpa Gosvāmī is my uncle, and I studied with him for thirty years. If anyone knows what he meant, it's gonna be me." Otherwise, there's always a thought that there might be some other grammarian who could use a better argument and prove something else that he meant.

Bābajī: Well, that's understood by any astute reader of the book: "This is not just anybody writing a commentary. This is a very close disciple, a very closely-related person." But he also has to follow the Vedic form. For example, Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra* uses a five-fold structure. Where Vyāsadeva will make an assertion (*viśaya*) in the form of a *sūtra*; and then there will be a counter-assertion (*pūrvapakṣa*): thesis and antithesis. And then the synthesis, the resolution of the objection, has three parts: the first part is the statement of why this idea is wrong, the second part is presentation of Vedic evidence to prove that it's wrong, and the third part (*siddhānta*) is a statement in ordinary language of the logic of why it's wrong. So actually, Jīva Gosvāmī is simply following this formula. Maybe not always in the complete form

like it is so formally done in *Vedānta-sūtra*, especially Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa's wonderful *Govinda-bhāṣya* commentary strictly follows this form throughout the whole thing. It's this amazing tour-de-force; and you learn the art of Vedic argument and debate just from reading this. It's so wonderful because it covers every possible point, every possible objection, every possible nonsense philosophy. So this is what he's doing in his commentary: he's taking apart the typical arguments that crop up. In this example that we just read, it would be from the caste *brāhmaṇas*. They're saying: "Well, certainly you can't be talking about a real dog-eater! It must be someone who is actually a *brāhmaṇa* like us and born in a *brāhmaṇa* family, and then he just happens to have a dog-burger at the beach, or something." The caste *brāhmaṇas* are trying to rationalize the real meaning of the verse away, and take some other meaning because they can't imagine that anyone not born in *brāhmaṇa* family could ever become qualified to perform sacrifice. But, if that's true, then that means Kṛṣṇa is wrong in *Bhagavad-gītā* for saying that:

"I created these four *varṇas* by quality and work." [*Bhagavad-gītā* 4.13]

So what Jīva Gosvāmī is really affirming here is that anyone can change the quality of their work by *bhakti*. And that is the key to *bhakti* eradicating suffering, because *bhakti* can even destroy the *prārabdha-karma* of the present life. It not only destroys the *aprārabdha-karmas* of the following life, but it even destroys the sinful karmic reactions of this life. And he'll go on to show how it also counteracts the other things: the seed of sin and ignorance. This section goes on for another twenty or thirty verses, so it's a very elaborate argument; a very, very cogent argument that proves the fourteenth verse. The first of the six amazing qualities that *bhakti* has is that it destroys all suffering. And the point that they're trying to make here is **how** it destroys suffering, and as a sub-point in this particular topic: "By the way, anybody can do this. You don't have to be born in a particular family, you don't have to have a particular kind of

background. Even a dog-eater can do it. Anybody can do it. All you have to do is perform pure *bhakti* as it's given in the scriptures.”

Nava-yauvana dāsa: And the aim of this section is to convince the reader to take up this path of *bhakti*, right?

Bābājī: Well, of course. It's more or less assumed, though, that the reader is actively engaged in *bhakti*, or why else would they be reading this? So the point in this stage of the discussion is to educate the reader actually how wonderful *bhakti* is, and also to convince him that: "If you're not getting all these benefits, you need to amend your practice of *bhakti* so that your practice is pure." And then he gives all the methods in a very detailed way. The next Wave is on *sādhana-bhakti*, and will be a very intricate discussion of all the methods of *sādhana*. So if you're not already on the stage of *bhāva-bhakti* where all these things manifest, he's telling you how to get there.

Uddhava dāsa: It's for devotees.

Bābājī: Yes, it's for devotees; it's not for the general public. That's incidentally why we don't have general public programs. We're not interested in preaching to the general public; we're interested in teaching those devotees who want to perfect their practice of *bhakti*, how to do it. This knowledge is coming from the preeminent authority, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, who was directly empowered by Lord Caitanya to give this teaching. That's why we're studying this particular book. There are so many temples and teachers and *svāmīs* and places you can go and hear *Bhagavad-gītā*. There are fewer, but still quite a few places where you can hear *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But how many places can you go to hear *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*? Especially in the original Sanskrit, with the original verses, the original commentary? It's very, very rare; we're probably the only people in the world that are studying this? Why? Because nobody else cares! They're into something else, other than pure *bhakti*. They're into having a big temple, a big community, a big false ego or whatever their desire is.

So they don't want to know about this Esoteric Teaching, because this is going to tell them: "No. No. No. Turn it down; tune it down; make it small; make it intimate; make it very, very pure; only accept the people who are very serious; don't worry about the big temple and the big, big this and that. Just like have your little scene, and keep everything very personal, very pure, very ecstatic, and continue like that." That's the only way that a teaching like this can be propagated. If you create a big group, then you have to lower the standard so that everybody can be included. That is the nature of a big group. It goes along with the territory. You can't artificially change it, otherwise everybody will leave. If we had a big group, like the ISKCON temple down the street, and we start talking about pure *bhakti*, everyone would run away. I went there one Sunday and they asked me to give class. I started talking about *Bhagavad-gītā* 10.8, and talking about the Kṛṣṇa and His energies, energies of creation. So of course I started talking about *Vedānta-sūtra*, and:

athāto brahma jijñāsā [*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.1]

Is the first *sūtra*. That is the question: "What is Brahman?" And the answer is:

janmādy asya yataḥ

"From whom all of this creation has come." [*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.2]

That is the Vaiṣṇava philosophy in a nutshell: that God has energies, and He is in control of those energies. He is the Owner, the Origin, the Controller, the Enjoyer, and the Doer through His energies. And that this is precisely the point on which the argument of Māyāvādī philosophy turns. And they say: "Actually God doesn't have any energies; everything is simply God. There's no difference between God and His energies." So I was talking like this; and we've talked over these points many times. This is just basic Vaiṣṇava philosophy. And later on the temple president came up to me and I asked him, "How was the lecture?" And he said: "Oh, it was too high. Nobody knew what you were talking about." There was

maybe a hundred and fifty to two hundred people in the temple room. "Oh, Prabhu, it was too high." And that night we were leaving after the feast and one very intelligent man came up and he said, with his hands together praying, "Oh thank you, thank you, I've been waiting to hear this for years!" One, out of two hundred people! So if we started giving class there all the time, eventually they would be down to like two or three people. Those two or three would be really into it; but everybody else would go away.

Prabhupāda used to say: "We're selling diamonds. When you sell diamonds, you can't expect to have too many customers because diamonds are very, very expensive. They're also very, very high quality gemstones. Among gemstones, diamonds are the top." So Kṛṣṇa is like that in every department; He is the top. And in devotional service, the top means pure devotional service. Among all the different processes of religion and different forms of worship, different types of philosophies, this pure *bhakti* is the top. But it's a diamond; it's very expensive. You have to dedicate everything. So not too many people will buy it. Just like that quote that I put on the front page of the site. I recently rewrote the introductory essay on the front page and it ends with this quote that:

“When there is hunger and thirst, tasting varieties of food and drink make one feel satisfied. Similarly, worshiping the Lord with pure devotion awakens powerful, astonishing and ever-increasing transcendental bliss within the heart. Pure devotional service in transcendental consciousness is very rare: it cannot be procured by ordinary religious or pious activity, even for hundreds of thousands of lives. It can be obtained only by paying one price: intense desire to attain it. If it is available somewhere, surely one must acquire it without delay.” [*Śrī Padyāvalī*, 13-14]

And to get these amazing benefits, there's no need for any other process. In fact, trying to do any other process along with *bhakti* diminishes its results. But the point is that this process is very, very rare, because only a very intelligent person, a very pious and a very fortunate person, is going

to be able to let go of all these other things that contaminate *bhakti*, and come to the pure *bhakti*. This is why pure *bhakti* is very, very rare.

There aren't many people who have the discrimination to recognize why pure *bhakti* is superior. Those devotees who were puttering along in mixed *bhakti* and who have been puttering along ever since I was in ISKCON twenty or thirty years ago, are probably puttering along in the same rut their whole lives, they can't tell the difference! They honestly, sincerely cannot tell the difference between what they're doing and what we're doing. They think we're doing the same thing as they are, only on a smaller scale. They really think that! They really think that we're just a bunch of small-time country boys, and they're downtown. They really think that. They don't have the discrimination; they don't have the intelligence to see that we are doing something qualitatively different. It is said: "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." So we're giving all these wonderful, high philosophical arguments based on principles of pure *bhakti*, which originate with Lord Caitanya; and those who can appreciate them are welcome to them. Enjoy them! Perform the process, get the result and experience the benefits of pure *bhakti*. And if you can't appreciate this pure *bhakti*, well just change the channel. We'll get by; we'll be OK. We're being taken care of directly by Kṛṣṇa. That's the value of what we're doing.

Chapter 11: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

1.1.21-23

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, November 11, 2009

Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī: We will continue our discussion from the previous lecture [Chapter 10: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.17-20] about the poor dog-eater [laughter]. He's down at McFido's having lunch and he hears the *kīrtana* party go by. The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says about him that:

"To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face to face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters immediately becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices if he once utters the holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or chants about Him, hears about His pastimes, offers Him obeisances or even remembers Him."

[[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.33.6](#)]

That's very easy to do here in India. From "Veṅkateśvara Hardware Store" to "Śrī Rāma Cloth Merchants," all these Holy Names are everywhere. You can't avoid the Lord's Holy Name. The Lord confirms in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Eleventh Canto that:

"Devotional service fixed on me purifies even the dog-eaters from the contamination of their low birth." [[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 11.14.21](#)]

This discussion is in the context of a discussion about suffering and how *bhakti*, specifically pure *bhakti*, eradicates suffering. How does it do that? It destroys two kinds of *karma*: *prārabdha* and *aprārabdha*. *Prārabdha-karma* is the *karma* that's due to manifest in this life, and *aprārabdha* means the *karma* will manifest in the next life. There is a controversy about this verse. How is it possible that a person born in a very low family

suddenly becomes eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices? The next verse reads:

*durjātir eva savanāyogyatve kāraṇam matam
durjāty-ārambhakaṁ pāpaṁ yat syāt prārabdham eva tat*

"It was understood that the low birth of the dog-eater is the cause of his disqualification for performing sacrifice. The sinful reaction by which he attains such low birth in this life is called the *prārabdha* sin." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.22]

Here is Jiva Gosvami's commentary:

This verse, starting with *durjātir eva*, explains how the previous verse illustrates removals of *prārabdha karma*. The cause of being disqualified for sacrifice (*savanāyogyatve 'pi kāraṇam*) is a low birth (*durjātiḥ*) only in the sense that it produced the sinful nature which is not favorable for being qualified for sacrifices.

Jātīḥ means birth and *dur* means difficult, bad or troublesome. In other words, anyone can theoretically become qualified for doing sacrifices by taking the proper training. But, most people don't do that; and the reason they don't do that is because they have a sinful nature. *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.18 discussed how suffering is of three kinds:

- The *karma* itself, the karmic reaction from the sinful activities.
- The seed of sin which is desire.
- Ignorance.

"Suffering is threefold: sinful reaction, the seed of sin and ignorance."
[*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.18]

The sinful reaction here is the low birth. The seed of sin is the sinful nature; it causes a person to desire sinful or material activities. Ignorance is the lack of information that this is not the natural or normal healthy spiritual condition; this is something you have to take care of. But, most people are completely ignorant of this; they think that everything is OK

and they're just normal. They don't realize that they have a serious disease.

Low birth or *durjāti* is not the sole cause of his disqualification for sacrifice, for even those born in *brāhmaṇa* families without bad qualities are not qualified. Even those of high birth must attain additional qualification. They must undergo the second birth which gives them a special purity which makes them qualified for performing sacrifice. Even if you're born in a family of *brāhmaṇas*, you can't just start performing Vedic sacrifices; you have to be initiated first. To be initiated means that you have to acquire certain qualifications; you have to meet specific criteria.

Now, it is a fact that the sinful person dissolves the *prārabdha-karmas* producing bad birth and qualities which are unfavorable for conducting sacrifice. How does he dissolve it? By chanting, hearing or remembering the Holy Name, or some contact with devotional service or devotees. Association of devotees is the key to making any kind of real spiritual advancement.

But since he does not have the second birth, because of previous lack of virtuous behavior, if he actually wants to perform sacrifices he must take another birth in the future and then undergo the second birth rites which will bestow the particular purity which will destroy the lack of qualification inherent even in the sons of *brāhmaṇas*. In that sense, commenting on the words, *savanāya kalpate* in verse 1.1.21, Śrīdhara Svāmī says "being immediately qualified for sacrifice means that he has given the respect due to a qualified person."

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it says:

"To say nothing of the spiritual advancement of persons who see the Supreme Person face-to-face, even a person born in a family of dog-eaters becomes immediately eligible to perform Vedic sacrifices." [[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 3.33.6](#)]

It doesn't say that he can immediately perform sacrifices. It's not like a person is walking down the street who hears somebody chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and then they immediately go and start performing the Vedic sacrifice; that's not going to happen. It means that now they become **eligible** to perform sacrifice; they gain the possibility. How? By approaching that devotee who is chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa and inquiring: "What are you doing? Tell me about this. How can I do this?"

What should be understood from the words "immediate destruction of sinful reactions in this life which have caused bad birth" is that there is destruction of the sufferings to be experienced in this life (caused by bad birth) through the action of *bhakti*. In other words, he got the bad birth because of sinful reactions. And those sinful reactions would be operative throughout the whole life. A person, especially here in India, who is born in a very low family is basically marked for life. Everybody is born in a low family in the West [laughter]. But even in the West, a person who is born in a very, very poor family will be marked.

For example, a person born in a very poor rural family in a Southern state in the US: [In a funny Southern accent] "That person's always gonna talk a little funny." [laughter] And people are going to know: "Oh you're a poor yokel from some backwoods village." No matter how hard he tries, he can't erase that mark. But, if somehow or other he goes to Harvard, the first thing that's going to happen is that all of his frat brothers are going to be on his case until he learns how to talk normal. [laughter] By that education, he will overcome the influence of his very low birth, from a material standpoint.

From a spiritual standpoint, the reason why he got that low birth is because he has sinful reactions from the previous life. Normally, those sinful reactions would operate through his whole life, and he would have to experience all kinds of unhappiness because of that. For example, people would encounter him and their reaction would be: [in a disgusted voice] "Oh, you're a dog-eater. Ew, get out of here." What happens if he

becomes a devotee is that now he no longer identifies with that birth, and because he no longer identifies with that birth, with that identity, the sinful reactions no longer affect him. They may even happen to him; he may even get problems. People may say:

[In a materialistic person's voice]: "Oh, you're Charlie, the dog-eater. I remember you."

[In a devotee's voice]: "No, no, no, I'm Kṛṣṇa dāsa now. Hare Kṛṣṇa! Please chant this Holy Name."

[In a materialistic person's voice]: "**Get out of here, you dog-eater!**"

[In a devotee's voice]: "Ah. Haribol! Haribol!."

He is now no longer identified with that material designation. I keep telling people about changing your consciousness. Well, this is what it means: if you want to be free from suffering, you have to change your consciousness **so that you're no longer identified with the designation that is the recipient of your bad *karma***. But, because we don't have time to explain all of this every time we want to help somebody, we have to say: "Well, just chant Hare Kṛṣṇa. [laughs] And all these things will happen." One of the things that should happen when you chant is that you stop identifying with this material body. Because this identity of "I am the son of so-and-so, I was born in this family, in this country, in this socioeconomic group" and so on and so on, all these material designations, they attract *karma* like flies. Whatever *karma* is affecting you, that caused you to take that birth, is always going to be invoked by identifying with that body. As soon as you don't identify with that body anymore, even if the *karma* continues to affect that body, it won't affect **you**. Why? Because you know that you're different from that body.

What should be understood from the words "immediate destruction of the sinful reactions in this life which have caused bad birth" is that there is

destruction of the sufferings to be experienced in this life (caused by the bad birth) through the action of *bhakti*.

The sinful reactions from the previous birth are nullified through the action of *bhakti* because we don't identify ourselves with the body anymore. If you still think you're Joe Blogs, then you will react to any *karma* coming to you. But, if you change your consciousness, direct it to the spiritual platform, then you don't see yourself as Joe Blogs anymore. You see yourself as a spirit soul who is not identified with this body. So the sinful reactions might affect your body, but you don't suffer because you know: "I'm not the body." Those who are engaged in this process of *bhakti* don't **suffer** from the bad *karma* of their previous life. That's what destruction of *prārabdha-karma* means.

Thus, this is a suitable example to illustrate the topic "destruction of all *prārabdha-karmas*." In a similar way, it is said:

*ma vāsudeva-bhaktānām aśubham vidyate kvacit
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhir bhayaṁ vāpy uajāyate*

"There is no sin at all in the devotees of Vāsudeva. Birth, death, old age, and disease do not give fear to them." [*Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma-stotra*]

There is a similar verse in the *Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma, phala-śruti* :

*na vāsudeva-bhaktānām aśubham vidyate kvacit
janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhir bhayaṁ naivopajāyate*

"No actually inauspicious condition is ever imposed on the devotees of Lord Vāsudeva, and therefore they do not fear having to take birth in this world again to suffer the miserable conditions of old age, disease and death." [*Śrī Viṣṇusahasranāma, phala-śruti*]

This is very, very important; this is a **big deal**. It's a very big deal because people understand that: [in a materialistic person's voice] "Oh, I'm suffering because of what **he did**. I'm suffering because of what **they said**. I'm suffering because **the weather is bad**. I'm suffering because I have

bad luck." They come up with all these excuses that all mean the same thing: "I'm suffering because of something outside of me." But this is not correct. If you're suffering, you're suffering because of **your karma**. If you want to get released from your suffering, you have to destroy that *prārabdha-karma*. That's the only way. Otherwise, even if you stop this guy from saying whatever he is saying about you that's disturbing you, then somebody else will start saying it. Or, even if you move to get away from the bad weather, then the weather in the new place will get bad. You cannot get away from your *prārabdha-karma*; you have to destroy it. The only way to destroy it is with *bhakti*. Here is Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

Yogyatvā or qualification means the essential nature which qualifies a person for performing sacrifice. One should not say, "If that lowborn person really has qualification for sacrifices why does he not then perform sacrifices?" (This implies actually that he is not qualified.) He does not do sacrifices, not because he is not qualified, but because he does not have faith in such actions, since he is not endowed with pure *bhakti*.

The same *prārabdha-karma* that results in a low birth also results in mental qualities like lack of intelligence, lack of faith, sinful desires and so on. If someone has desire for sinful activities, they're not going to perform sacrifice. To become qualified to perform sacrifice means that you have to give up sinful activities for long enough to get trained and initiated to perform them. That's just not an option for most people because they have this disqualification. They're not endowed with pure *bhakti*.

And other householder devotees born in high families perform these actions only to teach the common people in general not to abandon duties, although they too have no faith that these actions have any value. They're talking about religious sacrifices like rituals.

Thus, the *Gītā* says:

*karmaṇaiva hi saṁsiddhim
āsthītā janakādayaḥ
loka-saṅgraham evāpi
sampaśyan kartum arhasi*

"By prescribed actions as well as hearing, Janaka and others attained realization of *ātmā*. Thus, just with the consideration of setting examples for others, you should perform work. "

[*\[Bhagavad-gītā 3.20\]*](#)

In other words, we actually aren't following the path of Vedic sacrifices. We are following the transcendental path; the Esoteric Teaching of the *Vedas*. Sacrifices are the exoteric teaching of the *Vedas*, the public teaching. When people think of Vedic knowledge or Vedic civilization, they think of going to the temple and performing sacrifices: having the fire altar, all the paraphernalia, chanting so many *mantras*, big, big prayers, and big offerings. It's a spectacle. It's like entertainment; it's like holy entertainment. This may have been the *dharma* for a previous age. In the Dvāpara- and Tretā-yugas, temple worship and the performance of great sacrifice were the *yuga-dharmas*. But, in Kali-yuga, that doesn't work anymore. The main reason is that there is a lack of qualified *brāhmaṇas* to perform such sacrifices. We don't actually believe in this path of sacrifice, although sometimes we perform them. It's basically just to provide a good example for the people in general, that they should perform religious duties according to scripture.

It should be understood that their reason for performance of sacrifice is only because of fear of rumors created by people ignorant of the devotional scriptures. Explaining that having qualification means being respected, just like a person who performs sacrifice, arises from a wrong interpretation of the text. It is incongruous with the actual text. The text says that the destruction of *prārabdha-karma* makes one qualified for sacrifice, not for being respected. That interpretation would be applicable in the case of a *jñānī* who had some *prārabdha-karmas* which instigated such bad qualities [like eating a dog once in this life] and then regained

respect by performance of *bhakti* which extinguished those temporary bad effects.

We went over this argument in the last lecture. The *jñānīs*, or the rule-based religionists, especially here in India, have very, very strict rules. If you break them then you have to perform *prāyaścitta*; you have to perform penance to be reinstated in your previous position. But that is an indication that they are engaged in a material process, not a spiritual process.

Vaiṣṇavas do not accept penance. The process of penance is for people who are on the material platform of religion. Why? Because, in spiritual life, everything is based on consciousness. If a devotee has a minor accidental falldown, all they have to do is pick themselves up and renew performing their normal duties. They don't have to go through any special process of purification, penance, austerity, or some extra thing. They just go back to their regular performance of devotional service because devotional service itself is the purifying activity. If something interferes with your devotional service and you have to stop for a while, instead of doing penance, just keep on doing your devotional service. Instead of going to the woods and sitting under the sun with fires blazing around you, or sitting up to your neck in ice water in the middle of winter (these are actual Vedic penances) just keep on doing your devotional service. None of this other stuff is necessary. Your regular devotional service is the path that leads to the highest purification.

However, happiness and distress are also seen in the devotee, even with the destruction of *prārabdha-karmas*. Happiness is one of the incidental results of practicing *bhakti*. It is said:

*hari-bhakti-mahā-devyāḥ sarvā mukty-ādi-siddhayaḥ
bhuktayaś cādbhutās tasyāś ceṭikāvad anudrutāḥ*

"All the perfections such as liberation and wondrous enjoyments pursue the great goddess of devotion to the Lord like maidservants." [*Nārada-pañcarātra*]

The distress experienced by the devotee is sometimes given by the Lord (not by *karma*).

*asyāham anugrhhāmi hariṣye tad-dhanam śanaiḥ
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam*

"If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another." [[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.88.8](#)]

This verse is spoken by Kṛṣṇa. The verse after this explains that finally, when the person has no other alternative, he makes friends with the devotees and then Kṛṣṇa gives him His special mercy.

So in other cases, the suffering of the devotee is a result of offenses to the Vaiṣṇavas. In other words, if you become a Vaiṣṇava, if you're engaged in pure *bhakti*, then the *prārabdha-karma* is destroyed, except for those *prārabdha-karmas* necessary to maintain life and the body. Yet, still it's seen that the devotee experiences happiness and distress. However, the devotee's happiness and distress is different from the happiness of the materialist. Why? Because the devotee's happiness comes from his association with the Lord. His is transcendental happiness. Similarly, the devotee's suffering comes from separation from the Lord, or the Lord disciplining him to get rid of his bad habits, as described in the verse that we just read. Also, sometimes we see a devotee suffering because they committed some offense. In that case, they're quickly restored to devotional service as soon as they realize their mistake. Here is the next verse:

*padma-purāṇe ca—
aprārabdha-phalam pāpaṁ kūṭaṁ bījaṁ phalonmukham
krameṇaiva pralīyeta viṣṇu-bhakti-ratātmanām*

Also, in the *Padma Purāṇa* it is said:

For those engaged in *bhakti* to Viṣṇu, step-by-step the *aprārabdha*, *kūṭa*, *bīja* and *prārabdha-karmas* are destroyed. [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.23]

Aprārabdha means in the future life. *Bīja* means seed *karmas*. *Prārabdha-karma* means the *karma* of this life. *Kūṭa* isn't clearly defined here but we can use Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary to figure it out from the context. This is Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

This additional quotation from the *Padma Purāṇa* makes clear the fact that *bhakti* destroys *prārabdha-karma*. The word *pāpam* is the substantive which is modified by the words *aprārabdha-phalam*, *kūṭam*, *bījam* and *phalonmukham*. This verse particularizes sinful reaction. *Phalonmukhuam* (approaching fruition) means *prārabdha-karma* (literally "commenced *karma*"), that *karma* which has already begun to fructify, and sinful reaction presently being experienced in this life as happiness and suffering. *Bīja* means that reaction which is about to produce or become *prārabdha*, about to be experienced, and is in the form of impressions. *Kūṭa* refers to sinful reactions which are about to become *bīja*.

It doesn't really explain it very clearly but that's good enough for our purposes here. *Aprārabdha-phalam* means those reactions which are not *prārabdha*: they are not to be experienced in this life at all, but which cause effects in the form of *kuta*, *bīja* and *prārabdha*. These *aprārabdha-karma* have been acquired without beginning (*anādi-siddha*) and are infinite in number (*ananta*). In this work, *aprārabdha-phala* has been called simply *aprārabdha* (illustrated back in verse 20) when talking about the dog-eater.

Bīja and *prārabdha* were reckoned together previously in verse 21. The remaining type not yet discussed, *kūṭa* reactions, may be included with the *aprārabdha* reactions. So *kūṭa* is a little bit closer to manifestation than *aprārabdha*, but it's still in such subtle form that it doesn't even matter for this particular life. It's pretty much outside the discussion that we're talking about right now.

Kramena means that the reactions are destroyed gradually from recent to previous: from *prārabdha*, to *bīja*, to *kūṭa*, and finally to *aprārabdha*. However, verse 21 mentioned that immediately the *prārabdha-karmas* of the dog-eater were destroyed rather than gradually. Therefore one should understand that the *prārabdha-karma* will be destroyed in the manner of a needle piercing a hundred lotus leaves. [The needle appears to piece the whole pile of leaves in one stroke but actually it pierces one leaf at a time]. Similarly, the *karmas* will be destroyed gradually, though from the perspective of the unlimited duration of the *jīva*'s existence in the world, they are destroyed all at once. These contradictions between the two statements in verse 21 and the present verse are resolved.

He's giving all these arguments because he's anticipating how the materialistic religionists are going to react to this: [in a materialistic religionist's voice] "What? Just by chanting this little *mantra* and doing a little service in the temple, all the sinful reactions are dissolved? It takes thousands of births to attain liberation. Are you kidding? You can't destroy all this *karma* just by a little devotional service." They're going to argue that. Then they're going to quote so many *ślokas* from the *Vedas* saying that it takes hundreds and thousands of births to attain liberation.

But the question is inappropriate because our aim is not to attain liberation at all. Our aim is to attain pure love of Godhead, and liberation is automatically included in that. The devotee is in a liberated condition of life even while existing within the material world. We don't feel the normal aches and pains, ups and down, and gains and losses of life the way the ordinary material person does. They still happen to us sometimes, but they don't really bother us. It's not the end of the world. The difference between our having a good day and having a bad day is: were we able to stay in spiritual consciousness? Were we able to stay in Kṛṣṇa consciousness? Are we able to stay in our personal ecstatic loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa? If we can do that, then no matter what happens, it's a good day. Even if we get run over by a truck. [laughs] It's a good day

if we don't forget Kṛṣṇa. Consequently, it can be a bad day even if something good happens but it results in our forgetting Kṛṣṇa.

Devotional service puts us in a different state of consciousness, and because of that, the *prārabdha-karma* is destroyed. It is not destroyed in the sense of being annihilated completely, but in that we transcend its influence, its range. It's just like if you know there's going to be an explosion. You get a call: [in a ruffian's voice] "The house is bombed. You've got five minutes?" What do you do? Stay in the house and look for the bomb? No, that would be stupid. What you do is you run out in the street and you get as far away as possible. If you know that *prārabdha-karma* is coming, you know it's going to cause us suffering. The proof that you have *prārabdha-karma* is the fact that you have a material body. So we know that *prārabdha-karma* is coming and it's going to cause us suffering.

The cure then is to **get out of range**. How do we do that? We stop identifying with the object of *karma*: the body. And we stop performing sinful material activities which are the cause of *karma*. These two things together basically mean that we're not subject to the law of *karma* anymore. Does that mean that we're not going to suffer at all anymore? No, because sometimes, just by the force of circumstances or by the nature of the body that we have, there's going to be some suffering. But we don't have to identify with that. There's a saying that I like: "Pain is required, suffering is optional." This body is going to experience pain because it's a material body. There's going to be so many pains: hunger and thirst, sleeplessness, the body getting old and your joints start to hurt, so many things. But, if we're not identified with the body, we don't think that the pain is happening to **me**; we don't suffer. Try to understand the distinction between pain and suffering. I may be very, very angry because it's raining: [quietly yells in a grumpy voice] "I wanted to go out and get a tan. Now it's raining. My whole day is shot. Bah!" This is only because I had some expectation that I was going to do something that required sunshine. If I had read the weather report last night, I would know that it's supposed to

rain all day today, and I would just make other plans. Similarly, if you read the weather report in the scriptures, you know that this body is going to experience pain, because it's a material body; it comes along with it. You can look up your astrology: if you have a Saturn square then there's going to be some pain, some annoyance, or something. But, you don't have to suffer.

For example, last week I was sick. Most of the day I had to rest, take it easy, or just stay in my room. What I did was spend hours and hours transcribing *Bhakti-rasāmrta-sindhu*, which doesn't take much energy; it doesn't take a whole lot of anything except time, attention to detail and stuff like that. I had plenty of time, nothing to do, and had to rest anyway as my body felt like crap, so I just sat at my desk and did a little transcription work. If I got tired, then I would rest for a while and then I would come back to do some more. And because of that, even though my body was sick, I wasn't suffering. I was in an ocean of nectar, paddling around very happily, experiencing so many wonderful things. Similarly, even if there's suffering in the body, the devotee doesn't have to suffer. Even if there's pain in the body, the devotee doesn't have to suffer because the devotee knows: "I'm not this body. I'm the spirit soul. I'm the consciousness within." Even if something goes wrong, I don't have to get all wound up about it. **I don't have to think that it's happening to me.**

If you say: "Where's your hand?"

Somebody will say: "OK, this is my hand."

"Where's your arm?"

"OK, this is my arm."

"Where's your shoulder?"

"This is my shoulder."

"Where's your head?"

"This is my head."

"Where's your consciousness?"

"Uh, um." [laughs] Usually they'll point to their head. If you ask them why:

"Why do you say your consciousness is in your head?"

"Well, my eyes are there; my ears are there."

No, those are your senses. **Those are the things that you're conscious of**, or you're conscious of the world through those senses. That doesn't mean your consciousness is there. Where's your consciousness? Can you show me your consciousness? No. Why? **It's not part of the body.** You can say "my body, my head, my arm, my senses, my mind," even "my ego," but you can't say where the **I** is located. All you can say is: "I'm here," wherever 'here' is. [laughs]

The spirit soul can go from the material world to the highest spiritual planet in a second, just like Kṛṣṇa. Why don't we? Because we're identified with this piece of meat. We're identified. Identification means you think that you are something that actually you're not. We are suffering from this disease of identification, and this is the cause of all our suffering. If we could just cure this one suffering, this one disease of identification with the body, then so many other things would automatically be cured. How do we do that? It's much more than just accepting a theory: [in a common person's voice] "Oh, OK, I'm a spirit soul, I'm consciousness, I'm not the body." Right, but then the next thing that happens is you stub your toe and you go "Ow!" [laughs] That's not a very powerful way of curing this disease.

To perform devotional service to Kṛṣṇa is very powerful because suddenly you have a relationship. You have communication going back and forth between you, the spirit soul (not the body), and someone who is never located in a material body, who is never on the material platform, who is always on the transcendental platform, and whose form is always spiritual. Suddenly you're operating and experiencing on the spiritual platform, someplace where this body doesn't exist at all. When we're off in *kīrtana*-land, and we're feeling high and ecstatic from the Holy Name, you don't even think of your body; there is no attention on the body at all. This is the actual proof of suffering being eradicated by devotional service. Anybody

can experience this, but it's especially profound in the states of *rasa*, when we are feeling a strong mood of emotion towards the Lord.

There are six wonderful qualities of *bhakti* that we're going to discuss in this chapter: it destroys suffering, it gives auspiciousness, it disregards liberation, it is rare to attain, it gives concentrated bliss, and it attracts Kṛṣṇa. Destroying suffering is not the same as giving concentrated bliss. In fact, the destruction of suffering, and the disidentification with the material body that is required for it, has to take place before we can experience this bliss.

We can't experience it on the physical body platform; it would be too much. The energy would be just too much; it would burn us out. Sometimes we hear about people who take a bunch of acid or something, and they have some kind of enlightenment experience that leaves them unable to function. They're saying: "Oh yeah, it's beautiful man, it's great," but they can't even take care of themselves; they're totally out of it. What this means is that they did not destroy their *prārabdha-karmas*, they did not destroy the causes of suffering or debility in the material body, and they pushed too far into the spiritual realm by some kind of speculative process. They encountered energies that were way beyond the ability of their body to deal with and so they become basically disabled. The path of *bhakti* automatically prevents this by insisting on complete sobriety; no intoxication is permitted on the path of *bhakti*. That way we don't ever get too deeply into the spiritual energy; no more than our body or our mind can handle. We let Kṛṣṇa guide us. We completely surrender to Kṛṣṇa and he makes sure that we don't get into something that we can't deal with.

Question from Thiago: "If we can stop suffering just by changing our consciousness and not identifying with the pain, is this characteristic of destroying the *karma* exclusive of *bhakti*? Won't someone who may not know about *bhakti* have the same benefit if he changes the consciousness and stops identifying with the source of the problem."

Bābājī: First of all, there's some incorrect assumptions here. We can't destroy *karma*. We can't destroy suffering. We can't change consciousness. But, we can perform the process that convinces Kṛṣṇa to change our consciousness. How? By desiring. We can desire to change our consciousness and then Kṛṣṇa actually changes it. We can't change it because we're not our own creator. Kṛṣṇa is our creator and we're Kṛṣṇa's energy. When I say we should change our consciousness, I'm using a shortcut way of expressing the process. But actually, we don't change our consciousness because we don't have the power to do that. However, we **can** perform a process that convinces Kṛṣṇa we're serious about wanting to have our consciousness changed, and then He changes it. Why are we in this material world? Because we convinced Kṛṣṇa that we really wanted to be here. He's like: "**Are you sure you want to go there?** [laughs] **You really want to go there?**" [in an excited conditioned soul's voice] "Oh yeah, yeah!" [in Kṛṣṇa's voice] "**OK!**" And so here we are. Some time ago we convinced Kṛṣṇa to put us here; now we have to convince Kṛṣṇa to take us out. [laughs] How are we going to do that? The whole *bhakti* path is there just to do that. That's how we do what we're trying to do.

How then is the suffering destroyed? Again, it's not by us, but by Kṛṣṇa. The *karma* is Kṛṣṇa's energy and He can do with it whatever He likes. We don't have control over *karma*. We have control indirectly; we have control over our activities. If we like to fully engage in devotional service, then we can stop creating more *karma*. But, we still have the *karma* that we already made coming to us: *prārabdha-karma* and the *aprārabdha-karma*. If that's going to be destroyed, it's going to be destroyed by Kṛṣṇa, not by us, because we're not even in charge of it. Yamarāja is in charge of *karma* in this universe and even he doesn't try to change anybody's *karma*; he just delivers the results according to what they deserve. Only Kṛṣṇa can change your *karma*.

Now to answer the second part of your question: "Won't someone who may not know about *bhakti* have the same benefit if he changes the consciousness and stops identifying with the source of the problem?" Now

the answer should be obvious that without knowledge of the process of *bhakti*, he can't change his consciousness. ***Bhakti is how you change your consciousness.*** Or, actually, you convince Kṛṣṇa that you would like to change your consciousness and so He does it for you. A person without knowledge of *bhakti* is helpless to change consciousness. They can't do it; they don't have the tools. If I'm trying to work on my car and all I have is my bare hands, I'm not going to get very far. I need strong metal tools that are of the same nature as the car engine. I can't work on a strong metal engine with just my soft bare hands. I need the proper tools to work with that kind of material.

Similarly, *karma* is on the same level as consciousness and stuff like that; it's ultimately spiritual. I can't work on *karma*, I can't affect *karma* or change *karma* with ordinary tools such as mind, intelligence and false ego. Those are improper substances; they're of a different nature than *karma*. *Karma* is spiritual. If I try to work on *karma* with my mind, it's not going to work. It's like trying to work on a car engine with my bare hands. It's the wrong substance; the wrong type of energy. I need tools which are much, much more subtle. Tools which are much more spiritual to even approach the level of *karma*. It has to be beyond false ego. False ego means that I identify with this body, with this mind, with these senses. I have to get beyond that before I can even think about doing something to my *karma*. And if you look at every other process of so-called spiritual life: *karma-yoga*, *jñāna-yoga*, mystical *yoga* like *sāṅkhya*, and so on, they all stay on the level of mind, intelligence and false ego. They never go beyond that. Our process of *bhakti-yoga* begins from the result of these other kinds of *yoga* which is to realize that I'm a spirit soul. Our process begins from the highest level that other forms of *yoga* can reach. How can any of those other processes affect *karma*? *Karma-yoga* is even in the third and fifth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. But the fact that we're a spirit soul is in the second chapter; that's prerequisite to these other processes that act upon *karma*.

Chapter 12: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

1.1.24-25

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, November 8, 2009

Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī: We are going to continue with *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.24:

bīja-haratvam, yathā śaṣṭhe (6.2.17) —

*tais tāny aghāni pūyante tapo-dāna-vratādibhiḥ
nādharmajaṁ tad-hṛdayaṁ tad apīśāṅghri-sevayā*

An illumination of *bhakti* destroying the seed of sin, namely material desires, is found in the Sixth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [6.2.17]:

“Although one may neutralize the reactions of sinful life through austerity, charity, vows and other such methods, these pious activities cannot uproot the material desires in one's heart. However, if one serves the lotus feet of the Personality of Godhead, he is immediately freed from all such contaminations.”
[*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.24]

That's *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 6.2.17. The context is the discussion of the six wonderful qualities of *bhakti*, and in particular, the first one: that it destroys all suffering. Suffering is due to sinful reactions. Therefore, by destroying sinful reactions we can at least stop the cause of suffering. We haven't got to real happiness yet, but at least we'll stop the suffering.

How does *bhakti* destroy the sinful reactions? First of all it destroys the seed of sin. It destroys the desire to commit sinful activities. Other methods of penance, austerity, yogic meditation and stuff like that may destroy the results of the sinful activities, but they don't touch the seed of desire in one's heart to perform sinful activities. The origin of suffering is separation from the Personality of Godhead. Everyone is suffering because

they're separated from Kṛṣṇa, and they're trying to find the same joy that one would get from serving Kṛṣṇa in this material world. This is the origin of all these desires for sinful activities: “Let me be the doer, let me be the owner, the creator, the knower, the enjoyer and all these other things.” But actually, Kṛṣṇa is all these things. By imitating Kṛṣṇa, we create so many desires which lead to sinful activities, and then we have to suffer the reactions. Everyone is suffering on account of these reactions. Then what do they do? They go out and try to commit **more** sinful activities: “I'm suffering, so let me enjoy even more. Let me take more intoxication, more meat-eating, more illicit sex.”

It's a vicious circle leading downwards. An intelligent person – or even a little bit intelligent person – they will take up some kind of process of atonement: saying prayers, giving charity, performing sacrifices, maybe some kind of yogic austerity, renunciation, vows, and those kind of things. Those can help you overcome the reactions to the sinful activity but they don't remove the cause of the sinful activity, which is the sinful desire within the heart. But, pure *bhakti* – *bhakti* in general and pure *bhakti* in particular – brings us directly in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and thus the joy that we get from *bhakti* completely satisfies our desires for love and happiness and all these other things. *Bhakti* uproots the seed of the desire to go out and commit sinful activities in an attempt to compensate for the loss of the association of Kṛṣṇa.

If you can serve the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, this immediately removes all these sinful desires because it removes the underlying cause of separation from Kṛṣṇa. Here is Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

“This verse is quoted to show particularly the destruction of the seed (desires which cause sinful acts which cause *karma*, which cause suffering).”

It's a chain of cause and effect; like I said, a downward spiral. “I don't have Kṛṣṇa; I have separated myself from Kṛṣṇa due to ignorance. Now where am I going to get my happiness? Oh, I'll try to engage my material

senses in enjoying objects in the material world.” That's a great idea, except for one thing: those things belong to Kṛṣṇa. When **we** try to enjoy them, it creates karmic reaction because we're stealing. We're enjoying Kṛṣṇa's property without His permission. Where does Kṛṣṇa say in the scriptures: “Oh, go out and enjoy anything you like in the material word.” No, He doesn't say that. The scriptures of any religion – not just the Vedic religion – always try to restrict material enjoyment: “No, you can only eat this kind of food on this particular day of the week.” Or: “You can only have sex on this particular day of the month.” Something like that. They always restrict. In fact, the very word 'religion' comes from Latin *re + legere*, which means 'to bind back the senses; to restrict the senses'. That is the original etymological derivation of the word ‘religion’ itself. Religion means sense control.

However, even the most strict sense control is not going to uproot the desire for sinful activities and, sooner or later, we're going to break down and do it anyway. It is better to just stop the whole process at its root: the process that causes suffering. It's better to cut it at the root by getting rid of the original problem, which is that we're separated from Kṛṣṇa. If we serve Kṛṣṇa nicely in *bhakti-yoga* then we come in contact with Kṛṣṇa. Our consciousness contacts Kṛṣṇa directly and then, after that, we feel great happiness. There's no need to go out and try to enjoy through the senses. Here is Viśvanātha Cakravarti Ṭhākura's commentary:

“This verse shows how the seed acts as a cause of sin. *Pūyante* comes from the root *pūn*, which means 'to destroy'. Sins, heavy or light, (referred to in the previous *Bhāgavatam* verse) are destroyed by austerity, charity and vows. The root – the subtle form of the sins (*tad-hṛdayam*) arising from evil nature – is not destroyed by pious acts. The root, however, is destroyed by *bhakti* to the Lord's lotus feet because *bhakti* destroys even the desires for sin.”

The three causes of suffering are:

- sinful reactions (*pāpam*),

- the seed desire for sin (*bījam*),
- ignorance (*avidyā*).

So far we have covered the first two. Previously we discussed how *bhakti* destroys the sinful reactions even to the degree that a very low-born person can become a performer of Vedic sacrifice and actually approach the Lord directly. Here we discuss how the seed of sin, or material desires, is destroyed by *bhakti*. And finally, we're going to discuss *bhakti*'s ability to destroy ignorance.

avidyā-haratvam, yathā caturthe (4.22.39) —

*yat-pāda-paṅkaja-palāśa-vilāsa-bhaktyā
karmāśayaṁ grathitam udgrathayanti santaḥ |
tadvan na rikta-matayo yatayo 'pi ruddha-
sroto-gaṇās tam araṇaṁ bhaja vāsudevam ||1.1.25||*

Next, *bhakti*'s ability to destroy *avidyā* (ignorance) is illustrated [in [Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.22.39](#)]:

“The devotees, who are always engaged in the service of the toes of the lotus feet of the Lord, can very easily overcome hard-knotted desires for fruitive activities. Because this is very difficult, the nondevotees – the *jñānīs* and *yogīs* – although trying to stop the waves of sense gratification, cannot do so. Therefore you are advised to engage in the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa, the son of Vasudeva.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.25]

What a nice verse. It's a beautiful verse. Here is Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

“Taking up the topic of *naiṣṭhikī bhakti*'s ability to destroy *avidyā*, the author illustrates this with two verses.”

Naiṣṭhikī means 'without any impurity'; without any falldown, without any contamination. Remember the subject of this whole *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: it's not ordinary *bhakti*, it's pure *bhakti*. All of the wonderful

qualities and properties and activities of *bhakti* described in this book apply to **pure** devotional service, not mixed devotional service. Mixed devotional service is rejected immediately in the first few verses of this book by the definitions given of *bhakti*, which require that *bhakti* should be uninterrupted, unmotivated and pure. It should not be mixed with any other desire or any other process. That means the devotee's life has to be centered completely on serving Kṛṣṇa. No other activity, no other desire, no other thoughts. That's the standard. **Then** all these wonderful things happen. But unless you reach that standard, then to that degree the actions or results of *bhakti* are going to be diminished.

“*Rkta-matayaḥ*, persons with empty minds, means those persons whose minds are empty of meditation on the Lord. *Araṇam* means shelter. Using the process of hearing to represent all the devotional processes, Sūta Gosvāmī gives the progression in destroying *avidyā* or the knot in the heart in the following verses:”

This is [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.2.17-21](#):

“Śrī Kṛṣṇa the Personality of Godhead, who is the Paramātmā [Supersoul] in everyone's heart and the benefactor of the truthful devotee, cleanses desire for material enjoyment from the heart of the devotee who has developed the urge to hear His messages, which are in themselves virtuous when properly heard and chanted.”

These are very famous verses.

“By regular attendance in classes on the *Bhāgavatam* and by rendering of service to the pure devotee, all that is troublesome to the heart is almost completely destroyed, and loving service unto the Personality of Godhead, who is praised with transcendental songs, is established as an irrevocable fact.”

Naiṣṭhikī bhakti:

“As soon as *naiṣṭhikī bhakti* is established in the heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire

and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy. Thus established in the mode of unalloyed goodness, the man whose mind has been enlivened by contact with devotional service to the Lord gains positive scientific knowledge of the Personality of Godhead in the stage of liberation from all material association. Thus the knot in the heart – *avidyā* – is pierced, and all misgivings are cut to pieces. The chain of fruitive actions is terminated when one sees the Lord, who is the *ātmā*.”

This is a very famous passage from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. *Naiṣṭhikī-bhakti* means immovable, fixed, pure. We should become *naiṣṭhikī-bhaktas* and perform pure devotional service. **Then** all these wonderful things will happen.

The image is given several times here of a knot in the heart. When you take a rope, you tie a knot in it, and then you pull it very tight, the tighter you pull it then the harder it is to loosen the knot. The more load you put on the rope, the tighter the knot is going to get. Similarly, these desires for material enjoyment in the heart are like a tight knot binding us to material existence. The more sinful reactions that we accrue by these lustful activities is like increasing the load on the rope, and the knot becomes tighter and tighter, and more and more difficult to disentangle. Sometimes the knot will become so hard when you tie a rope that the only way to undo the knot is to cut the rope. *Bhakti* – pure *bhakti*, especially – cuts this knot. Instead of trying to untangle a complicated knot, the easiest thing is to just cut it. Instead of trying to disentangle ourselves from material activities and their reactions, which is very complicated and difficult, we should just cut the root of the problem. Cut the knot by developing love for Kṛṣṇa. It's much easier; it's less complicated.

I get these letters sometimes that contain a long, elaborate description of what's going in a devotee's life and then: “How can I solve this problem?” I suspect that some of them are disappointed with me when I reply: “Well just engage in *bhakti*. Just engage in devotional service and automatically

all these problems will be solved.” But actually it's true, and the support for this idea is there in the scripture, in the verses that we just read:

“As soon as *naiṣṭhikī bhakti* is established in the heart, the effects of nature's modes of passion and ignorance, such as lust, desire and hankering, disappear from the heart. Then the devotee is established in goodness, and he becomes completely happy.”

[\[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.2.19\]](#)

If you read in *Bhagavad-gītā* the description of the three modes of nature:

- the result of the mode of goodness is happiness,
- the result of passion is suffering,
- and the result of ignorance is madness.

Because of madness, because of ignorance, people do so many nonsense passionate things and then they suffer. All the influence of the mode of passion and ignorance has to be removed from the heart and the devotee has to become established in pure goodness. When that happens then **automatically** we become happy; **automatically** we become satisfied. We don't have to **do** anything in particular to enjoy that happiness. Happiness is the natural, healthy condition of the spirit soul.

It's not that we have to engage our senses in some kind of sense enjoyment to be happy. That's not true. That's the perverted, diseased condition of material consciousness. That is the cause of suffering, actually. It's so ironic. The very thing that people are doing to try to stop their suffering is actually the cause of suffering. It's like sometimes you find out there'll be a consumer report on some kind of medicine, usually a patent medicine. Not a prescription medicine but something available over the counter. And they'll find that it contains some ingredient that actually makes the condition worse. For example, I remember one that's dandruff shampoo. Seriously. They did tests and found that the dandruff shampoo actually makes your dandruff worse. Well, duh! [Laughter] Why? Because they

want to sell more dandruff shampoo. “Oh this dandruff is getting worse. I'd better use more.” [Laughter] Really, that's the way these rascals work.

Coca-cola is another very good example. Coca-cola makes you thirstier. It contains all kinds of garbage. Because these rascal cheaters are trying to exploit people, they say: “Oh, this will cure your thirst! Here you go, have a Coke!” And you drink it and you get twice as thirsty. This is going on. That's the action of the mode of passion. Yes, drinking a Coke will increase your mode of passion, definitely. It contains so much caffeine you'll be like, “*aaaahhh!*”, ready to run around and do all kinds of stuff.

But is that going to make you happy? No, it's going to make you suffer because that's the result of the mode of passion. It doesn't matter what kind of passionate activity; the result is suffering. Because passion, in general, involves the exploitation of material energy, and – here we go back again to the same old thing – this is not your energy to exploit! It's Kṛṣṇa's and it has to be used according to His direction. And when we use Kṛṣṇa's energy according to His direction, that is the mode of goodness. And because we're engaged in the mode of goodness, utilizing Kṛṣṇa's energy properly, we're happy.

But this information about how to act in the mode of goodness has been very carefully and deliberately suppressed in the Western culture. Now this Western culture has become dominant all over the world, and gradually people are being misled away from the mode of goodness and into the modes of passion and ignorance. We're saying the cure for this is to break this cycle of cause and effect, of passionate activity and suffering, and simply serve the Lord in goodness and then you'll be happy. It's so simple. It's so simple that actually an unintelligent person cannot accept it. A person who is addicted to the material logic or the material conception of cause and effect cannot understand this. They will insist that they have to **do** something to be happy, and what they usually propose on doing is some kind of activity in the mode of passion. But this is going to make you suffer.

You have to stop that and do devotional activities. Devotional activities are in the mode of pure goodness – goodness with no contamination of ignorance or passion. Even ordinary religious activities still have some contamination of passion and ignorance. For example, the Vedic sacrifices that give material results, *karma-kāṇḍa*, are done not for the pleasure of the Lord but for the pleasure of the person performing the sacrifice. Even though you're acting according to Vedic direction, there's some contamination of passion: the desire to enjoy. There's also an influence of ignorance because one does not know that Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and that serving Him is the actual purpose of human life. Instead, they think: “Oh, I'll do these rituals and then I'll enjoy.” But that's not perfect knowledge. Perfect knowledge is: “If I surrender completely to Kṛṣṇa then He'll take care of me. I don't have to worry about anything.” That's perfect knowledge.

This is describing how the practice of *bhakti* yoga destroys ignorance. Here is Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on this verse, *Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.25:

“With two verses, the ability of *naiṣṭhikī bhakti* to destroy *avidyā* or ignorance is illustrated. *Palāśa*, petal, refers to the Lord's toes in this verse. *Vilāsa* means 'distinctive sport' or 'movement with distinction' (*viśeṣeṇa lāsa*) – in other words, beauty increasing at every moment. *Bhakti* has two forms: *sādhana* (practice) and *sādhya* (perfection). *Karmāśayam* means *ahaṅkāra* filled with impressions of *karma*.”

Ahaṅkāra means false ego. *Ahaṅkāra*: “I think I am this body.”

“... filled with impressions of *karma*. And this is tightly knotted (*grathitam*). This is equated with *avidyā*.”

This is the image given of the knot in the heart.

“The *hṛdaya-granthi* (the knot in the heart) refers to this condition. Please worship Vāsudeva, the shelter. The Vaiṣṇavas (*santaḥ*) untie the knot of *ahaṅkāra* filled with impressions of *karma*, tied

tightly by the *jīva*'s previous actions, by now performing actions to the Lord which have the opposite effect – by the process of *bhakti*, progressing from *sādhana* to *sādhya*, which is offered to His lotus petal toes whose beauty increases at every moment. Renunciates (*yatayaḥ*) cannot do the same. Why? Their minds are without objects of thought (*rikta-matayaḥ*).”

He calls them 'empty-minded'. This means they don't have a final goal in their mind. We meet many *yogīs* like this. They want to call themselves *yogīs*, wear far-out clothes, a cool hairstyle, and usually they wear the three-line *tilaka* and like that. And we also see them smoking *chillum*, smoking tobacco, taking intoxicants, having sex-life and all this. They think they're very cool, but if you ask them “Well what is your final goal?” then maybe they'll say 'liberation', if they're very intelligent. But most of them just want to gain some mystic powers and enjoy this material world in a better way, not realizing that the very activities that they're performing to gain these mystic powers are actually going to cause them suffering in the future. Maybe they do a little yogic exercise or chant a few little *mantras*, and then they're off being engaged in sense-enjoyment just like an ordinary rascal. What is the point? What is the use of their yogic activities? It's again like the elephant that goes and takes a bath and then rolls in the mud. What's the use of it?

“On the other hand *santas* [commendable persons or saints], have their minds concentrated on the Lord. They have good intelligence. The renunciates have attempted to stop the group of senses which flow like rivers into the sea of material life or existence. But just as it is impossible to stop the flow of a river, this attempt to stop the sense is a sign of their foolishness. On the other hand, the *santas* engage their eyes and other senses in the sweetness of the Lord's beauty and other qualities. They are very intelligent and happy. *Araṇam* means shelter.”

These people who are following this impersonal path have no final object of devotion in their mind. How are they different from the ordinary person who is trying to enjoy their senses? Actually they're not different. They're

actually following the same process, just at a little bit higher scale of intelligence. It's actually very little difference between them and a regular sense-enjoyer. The only thing is they try to regulate the senses a little bit. Ultimately they try to stop the senses. They have some idea of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* or something like that. They give it various different names but it all means the same thing, which is that the senses do not engage with their objects. But, factually this is impossible because they don't have any other object for the mind. What else are they going to think about except the senses? They may talk; they may give some bluffing talk about nothingness, emptiness and all this nonsense. Or oneness: “Oh, it's all one.”

They may bluff about that, but then as soon as they get down off the podium, we see them engaging in ordinary activities just the same as any other rascal [laughs]. Even the best of them, the highly-trained Śāṅkarite *brāhmaṇas*, and people like *sannyāsīs*. What are their activities? Opening hospitals, building temples, and things like that. We don't see any of them engaged in pure *bhakti*. They don't think they need it. They think that ultimately they are God, which is such a nonsense idea that I'm not even going to bother trying to defeat it. We've been over this ground many, many, many times on the way to this topic.

What we're talking about now is how to destroy all suffering. The only way to destroy all suffering is by cutting this knot in the heart that attaches one to material activity; that actually binds one to material activity. As long as we're engaged in material activity, we're going to suffer. It can't be stopped; it can't be avoided. The senses are like rivers. In India here, there are many rivers, and especially this time of the year in the rainy season they're full of strong currents of water. Trying to stop these rivers would be foolishness. It would be madness. Similarly, the senses are like rivers that flow toward their objects. The eyes are drawn to beautiful sights, the ears are drawn to beautiful sounds, the tongue is drawn to tasty food and so on. You can't stop these senses. They're like snakes. Ever try to catch a snake? It's very hard to catch a snake. You usually get bitten [laughs].

The best thing is not to try to stop the senses but to simply engage them in objects that are related to Kṛṣṇa. This is the actual sense control. Control doesn't mean stopping someone. That's a really low, crude level of control. You see this a lot in policemen and people like this, whose job is to stop certain things from happening. For example, somebody is going in their car and they do something wrong. The patrol car has to chase after them and stop them. This is very dangerous for everybody. It's dangerous for the motorist, for the policeman, for the bystanders, for everyone. A high-speed chase on the highway and then finally they make a blockade and stop the rascal. Maybe then there's a fight or something. Why not just teach people how to drive properly? But they don't do that. This is the strangest thing. I've always wondered about this. Actually I took driving class when I was in high-school and I learned how to drive properly. And because I was a young rascal sometimes I would speed and stuff like that. But the point is, I knew how to drive properly. A lot of people never bothered to learn driving, as if driving was something that anybody could do automatically. What is the qualification to be a good driver? There's a lot of things you have to know. But these people don't bother to look into it at all.

Here's another example that is always inconceivable to me: some people think they can become a musician without any training whatsoever. “Let me just pick up a guitar and start to sing,” and, of course, you know the result is Bob Dylan or something like that. He's a musician but he can't sing; he's a guitarist but he can't play. He knows like three or four chords which he repeats over and over and over again. Meanwhile we're all going [makes yawning motion] “Isn't there a Brahms recital? Some real music we can listen to?” Music is such a deep thing. Music is such a complicated thing; it has high, high standards. For somebody to think: “Oh I can just become a musician without any training,” is actually ridiculous. It's ludicrous; it's nuts. All you're going to do is degrade the whole art down to your level of unintelligence.

So the same is true of life in general. Life is a very complicated thing. It's a very risky thing. You can really mess yourself up if you don't know what

you're doing. But do people take any education in how to live? No, they automatically think that they know. I mean, this is the nuttiest thing. This has always been very puzzling to me, how people could think that there doesn't need to be any manual, there doesn't need to be any instructions, there isn't a course you could take that teaches you how to be a human being or how to live. Isn't it strange when you think about it?

This is the *Vedas* or the teachings of devotional service especially. They're giving us a manual for human life; they're giving us instructions on how to live so that you don't have to suffer. All the suffering that people are going through in this world is **completely unnecessary**. It's only due to the reactions of their previous sinful activities – and they could even stop that. They could even destroy that simply by engaging in pure devotional service. Why don't they do it? Instead, they fight against the devotees, they try to suppress the Vedic philosophy, or reinterpret it so that it becomes the same materialistic nonsense that they're already engaging in.

Why don't they take up this process? We can only guess that they must be cursed. They must be cursed by the Lord that they lose all their good intelligence, and all their intelligence simply becomes directed at material sense-gratification, because they seem to be very good at that. They're expert at that. They're expert at causing themselves more suffering in the future, but they're not very good at figuring out how to **release** themselves from suffering. The suffering goes on and on and on. This is the material world.

We would like to help these people, but without their cooperation we can't do anything. We can't force anybody to love Kṛṣṇa, just like you can't force anyone to eat or drink. You would think that as soon as we would say things like: “This is the cure for all suffering,” or: “This is the way to destroy all ignorance,” that they would be very attracted. But no. Because it's 'religion', they're very skeptical. Of course, they have been cheated in the name of religion before and so have we, but that doesn't mean we stopped looking. Because when you're cheated by something false, it

means that there is a **real** thing. That's **why** there are so many cheaters; that's why there are so many knock-offs. You can go to any store and get Gucci bags that are made in China somewhere. Or Rolex watches. They look perfectly just like the original, but they're just cheap knock-offs. They won't last as long or be as accurate, but they look great. The same is there in religion. A lot of religious teachers, spiritual teachers who **look** the part – they're real Hollywood: they have the looks, the delivery, and the whole thing – but if you follow their teachings, their teachings have no real substance. They don't lead anywhere.

This is the cheating process in the name of religion. Many, many people have been cheated because they were young, foolish, and they didn't know any better; they got involved in some cult or something like that. And then a few years later they're like: “Yeah, religion. Yeah, I tried that; it didn't work.” But just because there is a false religion doesn't mean there is no real religion. The fact that there is a false religion almost certainly guarantees there **is** a real religion somewhere that the false religion is copying, that the false religion is trying to make a buck off of. For example, if anybody comes up with a hot website these days, immediately there are a hundred copies of it all over. How many knock-offs of Twitter are there? We even have one on our website. [laughs] Anything that's famous, anything that's successful, anything that works is going to have imitators. It's natural that devotional service, the process of actual spiritual success, is going to have imitations. Cheaters are going to come along and copy it, change it and present it in their own way. In the process, they're going to take all the potency out of it. We have to be intelligent enough to know this and to correct for the inevitable cheaters; to keep looking until we find the real thing.

The real thing is here; the real thing is in the Esoteric Teaching, and especially in the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. These are the top. It doesn't get any better than this: pure *bhakti*. We've been working toward this level for years now, trying to build up enough knowledge, enough experience and a good situation where we could just get our attention off of all these other

things and simply focus on pure *bhakti*. That's what we're doing now, and it's working out very well. I'm spending my days immersed in this ocean of *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, and it's a very happy situation for me. This is the way I like to live. It's very simple. We're even taking very simple *prasādam*, nothing elaborate, and worshipping the Lord in His most merciful form, Lord Caitanya, Nityānanda, and just chanting the holy name and staying engaged in service 24 hours a day. This is the ideal life. In the near future I expect this will become a lot more popular. Right now it's kind of... esoteric [laughs]. But that's the way it's got to be because the world is full of cheaters. Only a few people are going to find their way to the real thing. If the forest is filled with a thousand false wells that don't have any water, how are you going to find the one that really has the water in it? You're going to have to look here and there, high and low, everywhere, until you finally find one that actually has some substance, some meaning.

Don't give up. Read these books. Study them very deeply – scrutinizingly, as we say – by looking up the words. Keep a good dictionary around. Yes, they're technical. Did you expect the process for solving all problems to be so easy anybody could do it? Well actually anybody **can** do it, but it requires very expert guidance. You have to know what you're doing otherwise you'll simply repeat the same mistake that got you in this mess in the first place. You have to take the association of a pure devotee, and you have to join a community of pure devotees who are practicing pure devotional service – not mixed devotional service. This scripture does not say that these same astonishing qualities, such as destroying all suffering, exist for mixed devotional service. It doesn't say that at all. In fact, it rejects mixed devotional service right in the beginning. It says devotional service cannot have any mixture of any other desire. In pure *bhakti* the only desire accepted is to serve the Lord with love. All other desires are rejected. That includes mixed *bhakti* because that's what mixed *bhakti* is: when you have *bhakti* along with some other desires. These astonishing, amazing, exalted, powerful qualities definitely exist in pure *bhakti*, and as far as mixed *bhakti* is concerned, well, nobody can really say. We don't

want to say anything against mixed *bhakti* because we don't want to discourage the people who are on that platform. But at the same time we have to be honest and say: “You can't expect to get the **full** results. You can't expect, for example, the **complete** cessation of suffering or the **complete** cessation of ignorance.” Why? Because there's some contamination of passion and ignorance. It's very clear. One has to be situated at least in the mode of goodness, if not in the transcendental mode of *śuddha-sattva*, pure goodness. Then all these amazing qualities will come.

Question from Don: “Is it true to say that because we have senses, it is sinful to try to nullify them, since the real purpose of the senses is to use them to worship Kṛṣṇa?”

Bābājī: Well you **can't** nullify them. The senses are stronger than we are. If it wasn't so, then the *yogīs* would be successful in controlling or stopping the senses. But as we all know, they're not. Even great *yogīs* like Viśvāmitra fell down because they couldn't control the senses.

Rūpa Gosvāmī uses the image of a great river. You can't stop a great river; water is going to flow down. Even if you put some obstacle in the way, it will go around the obstacle. It's going to flow down to the sea. That's what water does. Similarly, the senses are also very strong. They're like a great river, full of all kinds of impressions and desires. We can't stop them; we can't nullify them. To do that would be like suicide. Maybe that's what people do when they try to drink themselves into insensibility or something like that. They're trying to stop the senses somehow or other; they're trying to stop the mind. But you can't do it that way. You can only do it by changing their objects. You can't stop the general operation of the senses, but you can aim them at devotional service to the Lord. When you do that and you fill the senses with impressions of spiritual quality, then the suffering of material life begins to dissipate very, very quickly. That is the process of devotional service, of *sādhana-bhakti*. The farther we get in that process, the more of the suffering is destroyed. Remember the sinful

reactions are only part of the suffering. It's also the desire seed and ignorance. All these three things have to be destroyed before get complete relief from suffering. Otherwise, for example, if ignorance is not destroyed completely, we may make some mistake that will get us right back in hot water again. All these things have to be done:

- you need the transcendental education,
- you need the actual pure lifestyle,
- and you need to perform devotional service to cleanse the mind.

All those things are needed. You have to stop sinful activities, cleanse the mind, and educate yourself on the real philosophy of life – the real reason why all these things are happening. **Then** you can conquer the suffering. You can't do it by stopping the senses.

Question from Don: “Thus it is sinful because it is a waste of time?”

Bābājī: It's impossible. It's not even sinful; it's just not possible. Why bother trying to do something that's out of the question, that can't happen? Why try to stop the wind? You're not going to do it. It's just going to go around you. It's bigger than you are. Similarly, the senses are very powerful. *Māyā* is very, very strong. The only thing we can do is engage them in the service of Kṛṣṇa. **Then** we can control them.

Chapter 13: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

1.1.26-29

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, November 10, 2009

Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī: We are going to continue with *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.26:

*pādme ca —
kṛtānuyātrā-vidyābhir hari-bhaktir anuttamā
avidyām nirdahaty āśu dāva-jvāleva pannagīm*

Padma Purāṇa says the following:

“As the forest fire burns up the female snake demon, supreme devotion to the Lord quickly burns up *avidyā* completely by the knowledge (*vidyā*) which accompanies it.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.26]

This is a nice verse from *Padma Purāṇa*. Remember there were three causes of suffering:

- sinful reactions (*pāpam*),
- the seed desire for sin (*bījam*),
- ignorance (*avidyā*).

The sinful activities happen automatically if the desire is there. As soon as the opportunity arises, then **boom** – the senses will act. Viśvanātha Cakravarti Ṭhākura comments on this verse:

“*kṛtānuyātrā-vidyābhir* means 'by knowledge which follows after'. Such knowledge appears by itself along with the practice of *bhakti* even though there is no desire for it. *Anuttamā* means 'most attractive'.”

Hari-bhaktir anuttamā means the most attractive devotional service for the Supreme. And:

“*Pannagīm* means 'a female snake'.”

The female snake is the most vicious snake. The male snakes aren't so vicious, but the females, because they have to protect their eggs, are very, very vicious. We have experience of that. In this material world, the female mentality is very dangerous. Especially for one who wants to engage in devotional service, the association of female mentality is very dangerous. Female mentality means more or less like a child. A person who has this mentality considers themselves the center of the universe and their own desires are the supreme object of worship for them. They tend to engage everyone around them in that same worship. The female mentality is very, very dangerous; it's very much attached to the material body and the senses.

We aren't against women or anything like that, but if someone in a female body wants to become spiritually advanced, they must give up this mentality. That's the first thing they have to do. And they have to adopt the mentality that: “I am a spirit soul different from this body, different from these senses. These desires of the senses are not my real desires. They're only coming from the body and I have to bring them under control.” Someone who takes that attitude is no longer considered to have the female mentality. Now they have the devotee mentality. This devotee mentality is very auspicious because it automatically brings knowledge. Knowledge, *vidyā*, is what gives us the perspective to conquer over the senses and the activities of the mind and body. *Avidyā* means the lack of this knowledge. When we're talking about knowledge, we mean the standard background philosophy of the *Vedas* which is given in *Bhagavad-gītā*, the *Purāṇas*, and so many other scriptures. This is beginning with the idea that: “I am not this body. I am the soul within the body. The desires and needs of the body are not as important as the desires

and needs of the soul.” What does the soul desire? What does the soul need? Kṛṣṇa. And we attract Kṛṣṇa through the process of pure *bhakti*.

What is this knowledge, *vidyā*? *Vidyā* is especially the knowledge of the spirit soul and the spirit soul's relationship with God, Kṛṣṇa. This *vidyā* is absolutely necessary for self-realization. If you don't have this knowledge, or if you have incomplete knowledge, then you will not be able to attain self-realization. Nor will you be able to get the wonderful benefits that are discussed in the *Vedas* and especially the six wonderful benefits of *bhakti-yoga* given in this book. These benefits are not given by any old *bhakti-yoga* but only by pure *bhakti-yoga*. Pure *bhakti-yoga* is described in the 11th verse:

*anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*

“The highest *bhakti* is defined as continuous service or emotions directed towards Kṛṣṇa, His expansion forms or others related to Him, with a pleasing attitude towards Kṛṣṇa. It should be devoid of desires other than the desire to please the Lord, and unobstructed by impersonal *jñāna*, the materialistic rituals of *karma* or other unfavorable acts.” [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11]

If one can cultivate this kind of uninterrupted service, which has very, very positive affinity toward the Lord, then this is pure *bhakti*. This platform of pure *bhakti* is not obstructed by any other activity or desire, and it has as its object only the pleasure of the Supreme Lord or others associated with Him, in any of His forms or expansions, but principally the form of Kṛṣṇa, the original form of the Lord. If one practices this pure *bhakti* then there are six wonderful qualities that manifest:

“The unique characteristics of *bhakti* are: its ability to destroy suffering; its bestowal of auspiciousness; its disregard for liberation; its rarity of attainment; its manifestation of

concentrated bliss; and its ability to attract Kṛṣṇa.” [Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.17]

So far, we have discussed the ability of *bhakti* to destroy suffering. There are three causes of suffering:

- sinful reactions (*pāpam*),
- the seed desire for sin (*bījam*),
- ignorance (*avidyā*).

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.26 describes how *bhakti* destroys ignorance, and this is the experience of everyone who practices *bhakti*. Simply the practice of *bhakti* itself automatically destroys ignorance. The association of devotees also destroys ignorance because devotees are always speaking about the Lord, they're always sharing their experiences in spiritual life, and they're always referring back to the Vedic scriptures, which are the source of all this knowledge. We have a tremendous store of knowledge that comes along with the whole package of *bhakti*, and association with devotees especially.

One should practice *bhakti* – not just any kind of *bhakti*, but pure *bhakti* – and then automatically the three causes of suffering are destroyed. When you destroy the causes of suffering, the suffering automatically dissipates. Maybe it doesn't happen overnight; maybe it takes some time. Maybe it takes a few years actually. But one gets into a position where the suffering of material existence is certainly minimized. And that's only the beginning. That's only number one of the six wonderful qualities.

Now we will discuss the next wonderful quality: the bestowal of auspiciousness. This is described in verse 27:

*śubhadatvam —
śubhāni prīṇanaṁ sarva-jagatām anuraktatā
sadguṇāḥ sukham ity-ādīny ākhyātāni manīṣibhiḥ*

“Next, the second unique characteristic of *uttama-bhakti*, namely its bestowal of auspiciousness, is discussed. The wise explain that there are four kinds of *śubha* (auspiciousness): affection for all living entities, being attractive to all living entities, possession of good qualities, and happiness, as well as other items.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.27]

What does auspiciousness mean? It means that whatever happens is good and favorable. When we say that something is auspicious, it indicates something good is going to happen in the near future. This quality of auspiciousness is broken down into four specifics in verse 27:

- affection for all living entities,
- being attractive to all living entities,
- possession of good qualities,
- and happiness, as well as other items.

Jīva Gosvāmī comments:

“*Prīṇana* or affection for the world means that he works for the world's benefit.”

What does a person with a sufficient amount of money do? He becomes a benefactor, he becomes a philanthropist, and he begins to benefit people with this money by different philanthropic gifts. Similarly, all the *bhakta's* problems are solved; he has no difficulties or problems in life. Therefore, he begins to work for other people's benefit. For example our broadcasts, podcasts and webcasts are all for other people's benefit. We would be studying these books, chanting these *mantras* and doing this worship of the Lord anyway; but by sharing it with others, we benefit and help them. The devotee is always engaged in some kind of activity for the benefit of all human beings or all living entities, and this is auspicious.

The whole world is also attached to the person who works for the benefit of all beings. Everyone likes someone who does good. In fact, a great personality is known by the fact that they are very charitably disposed.

They work for the benefit of others. A great personality – not a phony great personality created simply by media, but an actual great personality – is someone whose life is dedicated to the welfare of other people. That's the definition of a great personality. If you see someone who is very, very selfish, very venal and low-class, you don't think of them as a great personality. But if you hear of a great philanthropist or a great leader who benefits the people in his country, this is a great personality. There's all too few great personalities these days.

“Though these two items are actually included within ‘possession of good qualities,’ the third type of *śubha*, they are listed separately to show their superiority above all other qualities. Or, though these two qualities may be included in the attainment of good qualities, they should not be relegated to the status of mere constituents. Rather, they are the very *svarūpa*, the very essence of all good qualities. Therefore they should be listed separately. This quality of being honored by all others is also noted in the story of Dhruva:

*yasya prasanno bhagavān
guṇair maitry-ādibhīr hariḥ
tasmai namanti bhūtāni
nimnam āpa iva svayam*

“Unto one who has transcendental qualities due to friendly behavior with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, all living entities offer honor, just as water automatically flows down by nature.” [[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*4.9.47](#)]

In other words, people automatically tend to honor a person who has good qualities. The [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta*](#) gives a list of twenty-six qualities of a devotee. The devotee automatically attains good qualities, whereas a person engaged only in material life actually doesn't have any good qualities. Even their so-called good qualities are actually bad qualities because they lead only to further entanglement in material existence, whereas the devotee, because of having friendship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, automatically becomes decorated with all good

qualities: knowledge, detachment, gentleness, sense of beauty, the ability to sing and dance very nicely, etc.

Devotees have all good qualities: transcendental knowledge, humility, honor, respect, the love of the common people. Everyone among the common people loves a great religious person. It's found that if a spiritual personality has enemies, they are usually among the so-called upper classes who feel that this natural attraction is a threat to their power. But the common people generally always love a spiritually advanced person. This is natural, just as natural as water flows downhill. It's natural for people to honor a saintly person.

These auspicious qualities all become the property of the devotees because the devotees are in touch with the Supreme Personality, who is the ocean of all auspicious qualities. Another thing that we'll go into in great detail in the study of this book is the 64 qualities of the Lord. These qualities are so wonderful and amazing that we'll be in bliss just by studying them.

Here's another quote from *Padma Purāṇa* in verse 1.1.28:

*tatra jagat-prīṇanādidvaya-pradatvam, yathā pādme —
yenārcito haris tena tarpitāni jaganty api
rajyanti jantavas tatra jangamāḥ sthāvarā api*

The first two types of auspiciousness are illustrated in the *Padma Purāṇa*:

“He who worships the Lord is pleasing to all living entities; and all the inhabitants of the world, both moving and non-moving, are pleasing to him.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.28]

How does that work? Because the devotee is in touch with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he automatically inherits the good qualities of the Lord – as far as his ability to assimilate them. A pure devotee possesses up to 71% of the Supreme Person's qualities – 50 qualities out of 64 – although in small amount. Kṛṣṇa possesses these same qualities, but in an

unlimited amount. The other qualities, of course, belong to the Supreme Person alone.

Because the devotee sees all living entities as emanations from the Lord, as the Lord's energy, they're dear to him because they are created by the Lord – they're the sons and daughters of the Lord. All living entities become dear to the devotee and he tries to benefit them by giving them spiritual knowledge. That's how this works. The devotee acquires auspiciousness by being dear to all living entities because of his beneficial activities for all living entities. And all living entities are dear to him because he sees them in relationship with the Lord; he doesn't see them in relation to his own desires. The unenlightened person sees everything in relationship to what he wants, and if he sees someone that he thinks can help him get what he wants, then he flatters them, serves them, and does all kinds of things just to attract their good wishes. But, if the unenlightened person sees someone who has no value to his desires, he simply ignores them, mistreats them, or just rejects them.

A devotee of the Lord considers every living entity equally important. He doesn't consider anyone to be better than anybody else. He sees them all as *jīva* souls. And so they all have – or should have – the benefit of the Lord's mercy. For example, that's why we make all the scriptures, the original texts, the videos, and the audios of all of our teachings available on our site for free. We want everybody to have access to them. Not that only people who can pay deserve to access this teaching; everybody should have access. Everybody is related to the Lord and so everyone should have this wisdom; everyone should have this knowledge; everyone should have the opportunity to serve Kṛṣṇa. Everyone should have the opportunity to engage in pure devotional service because that is our heritage; that's our inheritance from our Supreme Father. We all have the ability to use the Father's energy up to our quota:

*īśāvāsyam idam sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyām jagat*

*tena tyaktena bhuñjīthā
mā grdhaḥ kasya svid dhanam*

“Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one should not accept other things, knowing well to whom they belong.” [[Śrī Īsopanisad, Mantra 1](#)]

Everybody in this world is entitled to their particular share of the Lord's energy, but that energy has to be engaged according to the Lord's instructions, otherwise it creates sinful reactions. The scriptures are giving the teachings of how to engage this energy properly. If we follow them, or if we induce others to follow them, then this is very auspicious for everyone. In this way the devotee becomes dear to everyone and everyone is dear to him. These are two qualities of auspiciousness.

Here is verse 29:

*sad-guṇādi-pradatvam, yathā pañcame (5.18.12) —
yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā
sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ
harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā
manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*

That *bhakti* bestows good qualities and other things is discussed in the Fifth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* [[5.18.12](#)]:

“One who has unflinching devotion for the Personality of Godhead has all the good qualities of the demigods. But one who is not a devotee of the Lord has only material qualifications, that are of little value. This is because he is hovering on the mental plane and is certain to be attracted by the glaring material energy.” [[Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.29](#)]

This is a wonderful verse because it brings out the difference between the devotee and the non-devotee. The devotee has all good qualities, just like the demigods, and for the same reason: he's engaged in unflinching service

to the Lord. *Bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā*: in fact, he has nothing else – *akiñcanā* means one who owns nothing. He has nothing else except service to the Lord. His whole life is nothing but service to the Lord. He has given up his life, surrendered his life at the lotus feet of the Lord, and therefore he becomes decorated with all good qualities. This is the same thing that makes the demigods so powerful. Kṛṣṇa gives them His own power. He shares with them some of His own qualities so that they can serve Him nicely as administrators of the material world, of the universe. Similarly, the devotee is given certain powers and certain qualities to be able to serve the Lord nicely. The devotee becomes linked with the spiritual energy, and the spiritual energy is wonderful; it has all kinds of very attractive qualities.

Here is Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

“In the phrase *sad-guṇādi-pradatvam*, the word *adi* (other things) has been added to indicate the devotees’ ability to control the *suras*, and by extension, all other beings (since that is what is stated in the *Bhāgavatam* verse).”

In other words, the devotee can actually control the demigods. How? By the power of devotional service. In the ancient times the devotees would perform great sacrifices. These sacrifices were so wonderful and so attractive that the demigods would actually appear; they would actually show up. Now in Kali-yuga, this doesn't happen any more. But the demigods, or their blessings, are certainly felt whenever we engage in pure devotional service to the Lord. Kṛṣṇa says in *Bhagavad-gītā* that when we take the material elements and offer them back to the Lord, the demigods are automatically pleased and they begin to shower all kinds of blessings on us. The actual cause of prosperity, success and all these wonderful things is not our own endeavors at all; it's because we get blessings from higher powers.

The devotees' view of the world is completely different from the humanistic view of the world. In the humanistic view of the world,

humans are regarded as the cause of everything that happens to them; but actually that's not the case. These different material resources are under the control of the servants of the Lord – the demigods – and they are giving or taking the material resources that we enjoy in this world according to our qualifications, according to our *karma*. The law of *karma* is all-powerful within the material world.

However, the devotee is actually situated in a liberated condition. The devotee is not situated in the material world; he's actually situated in the spiritual world. He sort of visits the material world just to take care of whatever service that he has to do here. The devotee doesn't even consider himself a resident of the material world; he's sort of just visiting. But, because of this, he gets all kinds of facilities from the demigods. We all have stories we can tell about the wonderful things that happen when we engage in Kṛṣṇa's service. Every devotee has some wonderful stories they can tell, and this is the evidence that this is true.

“*Sad-guṇādi-pradatvam* (the power of bestowing good qualities, etc.) means that *bhakti* puts at the command of the devotee all good qualities, the Lord, and others as well.”

Pure devotional service can attract even Kṛṣṇa. That's one of the astounding qualities of pure devotional service; the devotees can even control the Lord. Not that they want to control the Lord for their own benefit, but they want to control the Lord so that He can come and enjoy their service. In this way they can attract the Lord; they can control Him.

“*Surāḥ* refers to the Supreme Lord and others – that is, first the Lord and then His attendants, the *devatās* and *ṛṣis*. *Samsāsate* they remain under control.”

And there's a footnote here:

“If *bhakti* gave only the qualities of the *devatās* (the demigods), that would not be remarkable.”

Why? Because:

“Even *devatā* worshippers can obtain those qualities, which will be predominantly material.”

If the qualities of *bhakti* are extraordinary then the meaning of *surāḥ* has to include the Lord Himself. Generally *surāḥ* means 'saintly persons'. And of course, the Lord is the chief of all saintly persons, so He is included in that. The Lord, the demigods, His eternal companions, the great devotees, the sages and all saintly persons are controlled by the devotee. What does that mean? It means that they give him blessings. So the devotee is never without blessings; he's never without auspiciousness. This is where the auspiciousness comes from: the fact that by pure devotional service the devotees influence all the saintly persons up to and including the Lord Himself.

Here is Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary:

“The devotee brings under his control the *suras* along with excellent qualities of the senses (*guṇaiḥ*), and not with any faults in the senses.”

In other words, not material qualities but spiritual qualities, which are faultless.

“Thus the meaning is “the *devatās* in charge of the senses (*surā*) remain under the control of the devotee (*tatra*), along with the excellent qualities of the senses (under the *devatās* control). The non-devotee who pursues material objects (*asatī*) because of desire (*manorathena*) has no faultless qualities in his senses.”

Why does the non-devotee have no faultless qualities in his senses? Because all the objects of his senses and all the objects of his desires are for his own benefit alone; his own personal or extended benefit. Sometimes people say: “Well I'm not selfish. I'm trying to get money, enjoyment and other things not just for myself but for my family, maybe for my country, maybe for my religion, my political group or some other

group. So I'm not selfish.” But wait a minute. If these different entities benefit then you will also benefit, isn't that true? “Well, yes.” So it's actually selfishness. It's simply extended selfishness. Extended selfishness means that we seek the benefit of those entities or groups that we identify with. There is no difference between enjoying or desiring these things for ourselves and enjoying them for groups that are part of our extended bodily conception of life. It's just a difference in degree or quality.

But we're talking about changing our consciousness so that we have a different **quality** of existence and a different **quality** of desire; so that our desire is not focused on our own benefit. In fact, it's not focused on the benefit of any living entities in this material world, but it's focused on the pleasure of the Lord. And because of this, we're automatically able to benefit all kinds of living entities – without even trying. That's the amazing thing.

Śrīla Prabhupāda would often make the example of watering the root of the tree. If you water the root of the tree then all the branches and leaves are automatically taken care of. We don't have to water each one separately. Similarly, when we worship the Supreme Lord – Who is the root of all existence – then we please Him. When we please Him, we automatically please all living entities; we automatically benefit them. By our service the world becomes a better place – truly a better place.

For example, think of the benefit given by the author of this wonderful book that we're studying: *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. It's because of his work that so many thousands and millions of people in the future will be able to understand all these secrets about *bhakti*. This is really, really wonderful work; it is really beneficial for the whole world. All living entities will benefit from this. The world will be changed; the world will be a better place. This knowledge would be lost if it had not been written down by Rūpa Gosvāmī. Even then, there is a tendency for it to be lost because it's so high, it's so advanced, it's so pure, and it's so transcendental that very, very few people can appreciate it. If you're able to hear this knowledge, if

you're able to appreciate it, and best of all, if you're able to apply it in your life then you will get such wonderful benefits.

Kānāi dāsa: When I started this process – maybe I was just two months into following the regulative principles and also always paying attention to what you were saying – I was walking through town and someone who I'd known for years saw me. He hadn't seen me for a long time and said: “Oh my God! Look at you! You look great! Are you back from a holiday or something?” I replied “No.” He continued: “You look wonderful.”

I had bleached all my clothes; they were all orange, whitish and kind of shiny. Everyone else in the place was wearing real dark clothes – grayish – and I was shining, had a change of clothes, and I looked healthier. He asked: “Well how are you looking so good?”

I replied: “Well, I changed my whole approach to life. I'm chanting now and eating *prasādam*.” It opened so many doors for him to ask: “What is *prasādam*? What is this process?” This led to 12 hours of me explaining the philosophy. I was going to go and do my thing, and he was going to go and do his thing, but he just couldn't let go of me. He was inquiring: “And what about this? And what about that?”

I asked: “Don't you have to go to the post office?” And he was saying: “No, no no! Don't worry about the post office. Tell me more about this.”

There was a big improvement in how I looked. Prior to devotional service, my eyes were sunken in and looked jaded, but now I just beam. All the devotees shine.

Bābājī: Yes, when someone is engaged in devotional service they automatically become happy. Śrīla Prabhupāda used to joke; he said: “Formerly you were Hippies; now you are Happies.” [Laughs] Prabhupāda had that way – he could turn a phrase just perfectly. 'Happies', because devotional service invokes the Lord, and the Lord is always happy. He's

never subject to illusion, negativity, ignorance, suffering, any of the things that bother us. He's beyond all that.

Uddhava dāsa: The other example that's very good is when demons approach devotees for advice. Like when Kāṁsa was trying to find Kṛṣṇa, or the person who would kill him. Nārada came and Kāṁsa said: “Oh Nārada, please come. You're my friend because you always tell the truth.” Even the demons appreciate and value the devotees very much because of their qualities.

Bābājī: It is said that the demons used to live with their doors unlocked because they knew that unless they attacked Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa wouldn't attack them. Of course, Jarāsandha didn't listen to that, but most of the demons were just like: “OK: He killed Kāṁsa, He killed Jarāsandha. We'd better leave Him alone.” They stopped messing with Kṛṣṇa after that. The demons didn't bother to guard against Kṛṣṇa attacking them because they knew that unless they bothered Him, He wouldn't bother them. That's the good quality of a devotee: even the demons count on his good qualities.

Question from Kānāi dāsa: Are demons ordinary *jīva* souls who are really fallen and became very nasty and corrupt?

Bābājī: A demon is someone who is against the supremacy of the Lord. That's the definition of a demon.

Kānāi dāsa: Their original starting point is eternal. They were created by Kṛṣṇa like we were created by Kṛṣṇa, and so originally they had some of the good qualities of Kṛṣṇa.

Bābājī: The soul is never created nor destroyed. The soul is eternal. But, because we have free will, we can desire all kinds of weird, perverted, strange, negative things and get ourselves really tangled up in material nature. This is what the demons have done. They've inverted values so that what's good is bad and what's bad is good; what's up is down and what's

down is up. Their idea of progress is completely wrong; it's backwards. They think that they alone are the cause of everything that happens.

So don't be a demon [laughs]. When Prabhupāda first came to the US, he was preaching again and again and again against the Māyāvādis, against the impersonalists, against the demons. The devotees were wondering: “Why is Prabhupāda always preaching against the impersonalists and the demons?” And then it finally hit them one day: “He's talking about us.” [Laughter]

That's exactly who they had been before they became devotees: demons. But this process cleanses the heart even of a demon. Prabhupāda knew this. In fact, when he first came on the boat and they were at Boston harbor, he was looking at the people and he was thinking: “How am I ever going to make these people devotees? They're so demoniac; they're so fallen. They're so covered over with heavy, heavy *karma*. How am I **ever** going to break through this?” Then, of course, Prabhupāda found his audience in the Hippies. The Hippies were ready to try anything. That was the mood. [Laughter] That was their good quality. So they would also try devotional service. Most of them didn't stick with it because then they went on to try the next thing and the next thing. But a few did, and slowly Prabhupāda was able to build up his movement like that.

Uddhava: There's several times where Prabhupāda is giving a lecture, and he would say: “Oh, it looks like an assembly of the demigods.” The hippies had become very pure and nice.

Bābājī: Yes, he had seen them when they were still all dirty and furry, wearing weird clothes. When I first joined the temple, we actually would have to announce to the guests at the Sunday feast that they have to cover their breasts and genital areas. We had to actually announce that this is a requirement of attending the Sunday feast. [Laughter] It was the 1960's and 1970's. Somehow we survived it. We're so fortunate to have these good qualities. Life is so much more enjoyable when you're not a demon. [Laughs] Hare Kṛṣṇa!

Chapter 14: Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu

1.1.30-32

Kumbakonam, Tamil Nadu, November 11, 2009

Gaurahari Dāsānudās Bābājī: We will start with *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.30:

*sukhapradatvam —
sukhaṁ vaiṣayikaṁ brāhman aiśvaram ceti tat tridhā*

Bhakti bestows happiness: There are three types of happiness: from material things, from realization of *brahman* and from the Lord. [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.30]

This verse is describing the quality of all auspiciousness. As we have discussed, there are six extraordinary qualities of pure *bhakti*:

“The unique characteristics of *bhakti* are: its ability to destroy suffering; its bestowal of auspiciousness; its disregard for liberation; its rarity of attainment; its manifestation of concentrated bliss; and its ability to attract Kṛṣṇa.” [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.17]

We covered the ability to destroy suffering in the last few verses. Now we're covering the quality of granting auspiciousness and there are four types of auspiciousness. These were covered in verse 27:

“...affection for all living entities, being attractive to all living entities, possession of good qualities, and happiness, as well as other items.” [Śrī *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.27]

These four are the most important. If someone wants happiness, the most common thing that they do is they try to get happiness from material things, and this always fails. [laughs] It fails because material things are not constituted in such a way as to give happiness to the soul. The soul cannot get happiness from the material items because they're imperfect, they're temporary, they're always covered by some fault or some cheating,

and there's always some mistake. These are also the four disqualifications of the conditioned souls: they have imperfect senses, they have a cheating propensity, they are in illusion, and they make mistakes.

These four qualities of the conditioned soul are also true of material happiness. You try to get something to please your senses, but right away that's a mistake because what it does is it gives the senses power over the soul. The soul is begging the senses: "My dear senses, please give me some happiness." The senses say: "Oh OK, and you're a sucker; come on. We've got some happiness for you, a special today only." [laughs] It's a cheating business. The senses cheat the soul because the senses are inferior to the soul by nature. Just like the cheating rascal at the used car place; I guess in India it would be the used bicycle place. They're always cheating; they can't help themselves. This is part of the relationship between the soul and the senses. The soul is higher than the senses. If the soul goes to the senses begging some favor, this is immediately a setup to be cheated. For example, if some very, very high class person goes to some low rascal on the street begging: "Please do me some favor," what's going to happen? He's going to get cheated. [in a rascal's voice] "Oh yeah, just come into this alley here." [laughs] "Show me the money." The next thing you know, he's cheated. Similarly, when we go to the senses, the material senses, and the mind, for happiness, we always get cheated.

Another point in this regard is the happiness from *Brahman*. This is basically a mental happiness because we cannot really merge with the *Brahman*. People think: "Yes, I can merge with *Brahman*, I can realize *Brahman*." But, you can't realize *Brahman*. *Brahman* is infinite and the soul is infinitesimal, atomic. How can we realize the great *Brahman*? It's not possible. The most that can happen is that we can get some mental idea of merging into the *Brahman*, and we get pleasure from considering this mental idea: "Oh yes, I am so advanced, I'm merging into the *Brahman*." [laughs] This is another form of cheating because it's not actually *Brahman* realization. Actual *Brahman* realization means to understand that I'm a spirit soul. I'm a spiritual living entity. I'm not this

body. I'm not this mind either. If we try to take pleasure from the mind, from some mental conception of ourselves, from any material designation, thinking: "I am a man, I am a woman, I am this, I am a member of this family, I belong to this country, I belong to this religion, I belong to this business," then this is foolishness. And the highest ones are the illusions of ego connected with religion: "Oh, I am very advanced in religion; I am very advanced in spiritual life." Actually, we're all fools if we think this. Then the highest one is: "Oh, I am one with God." This is the highest form of illusion, the highest form of ignorance. This is the greatest ignorance. A person is Fool numero uno, fool number one, to think: "I am one with the *Brahman*." This is nonsense. If you were one with *Brahman*, then how did you get this individual consciousness, individual existence, individual body, mind, everything. You are a unique individual and you cannot give it up. Even if you try, you cannot become one with any other individual. In *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa asserts that everyone is individual. In the second chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa says:

"Never was there a time when I did not exist, nor you, nor all these kings; nor in the future shall any of us cease to be." [[Bhagavad-gītā 2.12](#)]

The soul is eternal and individual. Even if you try, you cannot change it. Individuality is a quality of consciousness, and consciousness is the principle symptom of the soul. You cannot separate consciousness and individuality. Just like you cannot separate consciousness from the soul. We are eternally existing and we are eternally conscious. Depending on how we direct our consciousness, to which objects, that determines the quality of our existence. I have been saying this for years now and a few people have actually got it. But, most people who hear this don't really understand what we're talking about. The point is, you can focus your consciousness on anything, so what are you going to focus it on? Are you going to focus it on the objects of the senses? The objects of the mind? Or, are you going to focus it on a spiritual object? We humbly suggest that you focus it on Kṛṣṇa. If you do this, you will get unlimited happiness. The happiness of *bhakti* is not anything like these other kinds of happiness. It's

not simply a mental construct, like a happiness of *Brahman*. And it's not simply the objects of senses; a false promise of happiness like sense pleasure. This happiness of being in love with Kṛṣṇa, or being connected with Kṛṣṇa, is real happiness. This is real *yoga*, real self-realization and real spiritual life. All others are simply imitations.

The proof that other paths are imitations is that the people who follow these paths cannot give up their sense enjoyment. They cannot renounce the material world. If they do, they renounce by force because they have to, because they're getting old, or something like that, and they can't enjoy anymore. Then they say: "OK, now I'll pretend to be a *sannyāsi* and I'll pretend to be some big, big *brāhmaṇa* scholar. I'll quote all these *śloka*s and try to prove with word jugglery that I am one with Brahman." No, they're simply cheating.

We don't accept this. Because we don't accept it, people in general don't know how to understand the devotees. In general, people think that if you cannot achieve happiness in this material world, then the only other alternative is to try for liberation. And their idea of liberation is something impersonal: you cease to exist; you merge back into the Brahman. But actually, you can't do that; you can only **think** that you're doing it. Any pleasure or happiness that comes from this Brahman realization is actually just mental happiness. It's not really different in quality from thinking that "I am an American, I am an Indian, I am man, I am a woman, I am this body. I am a member of this family or this country, of this business, of this political party," or whatever. People think like that and they extract a little temporary happiness from these material designations.

But actually, there is no happiness there. The proof is that all of these designations have a beginning and an end, and they all have an opposite. If you think that "I am a man," somebody else is thinking "I am a woman." If you think "I am rich," somebody's thinking "I am poor." If you're thinking: "I'm beautiful," then somebody else is thinking "I am ugly." And you can also think those things at different times and different places. Some days

you think you're beautiful, and some days you think you're ugly. Some days you think you're very intelligent, other days it's shown how dumb you actually are. [laughs]

But spiritual happiness is not like that. There's no opposite to spiritual happiness. If we come in contact with Kṛṣṇa through His Holy Name, some spiritual service that we do, through meditating on His form or pastimes, or through hearing about His wonderful qualities, then there's no opposite to that. There's no negative side to that. You cannot conceive of anything that negates the happiness that comes from being in touch with Kṛṣṇa. [laughs] That's because this happiness is absolute, just like Kṛṣṇa. There's no opposite to Kṛṣṇa. The Christians have invented the devil, but the devil doesn't really exist. That's just their own invention. Actually, there is no opposite to God. Anyone who is against God is automatically disempowered; he has no place to stand. He becomes a demon and then he's kept forever in this hellish material world.

When we approach Kṛṣṇa, this is real happiness. This happiness never ends. It has no opposite, it has no imperfection, and it has no material source either. The next verse is:

*yathā tanre —
siddhayaḥ paramāścaryā bhuktir muktiś ca śāśvatī
nityaṁ ca paramānando bhaved govinda-bhaktiḥ*

Thus it is said in the *Tantras*:

“Astounding mystic powers, material enjoyment, eternal happiness in the realization of *brahman*, and eternal bliss from service to the Lord all appear from *bhakti* to Govinda.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.31]

These are all the desirable things that people pursue in life and they're all available from a single source: Govinda-*bhakti*. The scriptures don't lie; at least the Vedic scriptures don't lie. There's further confirmation in the next *śloka*:

*yathā hari-bhakti-sudhodaye ca —
bhūyo 'pi yāce deveśa tvayi bhaktir dṛḍhāstu me
yā mokṣānta-caturvarga phaladā sukhadā latā*

It also says in the *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*:

"O Lord of the *devas*! I again pray to You that I may have firm devotion to You. That *bhakti* is a creeper that bestows *artha*, *dharma*, *kāma*, *mokṣa* and also the happiness of realization of the Lord." [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.32]

These are all the things that everyone finds desirable. *Artha* means economic development; *dharma* means religiosity and pious activities; *kāma* means sense enjoyment; *mokṣa* means liberation. And beyond all of these things, because these are all very easily available here in the material world, there is eternal service to the Lord, or *bhakti-rasa*. That's the actual subject of this book, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. That's the name of the book. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* means "the eternal ocean of *bhakti-rasa*, which is eternal, ecstatic loving service to the Supreme Lord, or *Rasa*."

Rasa means nectar, and it also means taste. One should have this exalted taste for pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If he develops this taste then his happiness, and his material and spiritual well being are guaranteed; everything is guaranteed. You have to have this faith. If you don't have it, then you have to develop it because this is the actual Absolute Truth. There are many different processes as a means to attain happiness, and all of them are flawed for reasons that we've already discussed. Most of them are either on the material platform of the senses, or they're on the mental platform of the mind. Also, the happiness derived from *Brahman* is considered nothing next to the ocean of happiness derived from *bhakti-rasa*.

There's even a *śloka* saying that the happiness derived from *Brahman* realization is like the water in the footprint of a calf. [[*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 3.197*](#)] A calf has a very small foot; it's just a little baby cow. When they stick their foot in the mud, it creates a little puddle. But, the happiness of *Brahman* is likened to the water in that puddle, compared

to the ocean of happiness of *bhakti-rasa*. If anyone has intelligence, they will approach Kṛṣṇa in devotional service and not waste time with these other processes. Here is Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on this verse:

Siddhayaḥ means mystic powers such as becoming very small. *Bhukti* means material happiness. *Mukti* means happiness derived from realizing impersonal *brahman*. *Paramānanda* means the bliss derived from the Lord since it comes at the end of the statement.

nityaṁ ca paramānando bhaved govinda-bhaktitaḥ
[Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.31]

There's some happiness in these other things but that happiness is limited. The bliss derived from devotional service is *paramānanda*: the greatest bliss. Anyone can taste this just by doing a little chanting. He also comments on the verse from *Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya*:

I pray that I may have *bhakti*, the creeper which gives the four fruits of endeavor culminating in liberation, and which also gives the bliss of realization of the Lord (*sukhadā*), which consequently makes liberation insignificant.

There's a footnote:

The happiness that *bhakti* gives will manifest in all three stages—*sādhana*, *bhāva* and *prema*—but with increasing intensity, with increased realization of the Lord.

This *bhakti* process is so nice because from the very beginning, even in the stage of *sādhana*, it gives spiritual happiness. Everybody wants happiness. Why are we doing everything that we're doing? Simply to get happiness. This the greatest motivation in our life is to obtain happiness. The problem is that most of us are seeking our happiness from the wrong source; we're seeking happiness from the material world. The material happiness is not only limited, but it's not even really satisfying. In order to gain material happiness you have to become a slave of the senses, and the senses are going to cheat you because they're material. They're material and you're

spiritual. You are a spirit soul; the senses are just organs of the body. Someday, all these senses are going to die. This body is going to be finished and you're going to have to get another one. What kind of happiness can you get in that situation, knowing that everything you do is only temporary? No matter how much material wealth, material beauty, fame, knowledge, or whatever material quality that you aspire for, no matter how much of it you collect, you cannot extend the length of your life even by one second. It's already programmed. From the moment of birth, the whole life is already programmed.

I see this time and time again when I do astrology charts. Yesterday I did an astrology chart for a gentleman, someone that I don't know. He simply emailed me on the website and sent in a donation, asking: "Would you do my chart?" I did his chart, and I was two-thirds of the way through when the power went off. I didn't even get to finish the reading, but I uploaded it anyway just to see if he had any questions. He wrote me back this morning and said: "I can't believe how you know everything about me." [laughs] "Well, you told me your time and place of birth." [laughs]

That's what astrology is for. Astrology shows you the persons *karma* that they bring into this life at the time of birth. From this very, very small amount of information—the person's name, the date, the time and the place of birth—then you can tell so much about their whole life: what happened in the past, what's happening now, what's gonna happen in the future. It's all very, very simple and clear. This should not be astonishing, because the material energy is not supreme; the material energy is dependent on the spiritual energy. The spiritual energy is the cause and the material world is its effect.

The type of consciousness you have will determine the type of body, the type of circumstances, the type of happenings and everything that you experience. It's very simple. We've made the point again and again that two people with different consciousness will experience the very same thing in very different ways. The example I like to use, because it's so

relevant to our work, comes from when I was acting as a priest in a temple. A young married couple came to visit, and at that particular temple, the Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa Deities are very beautiful. I opened the curtains so they could have *darshan*, and the young lady was just immediately struck by Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's beauty. She was just like: "Oh, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa." The guy standing next to her was checking his watch: "Oh let's see, how long before we can leave?" The same place, same time, same Deities, same everything. But one person, who had a little credit of devotional service, was in ecstasy, and the other one was impatient and ready to leave. This shows that the difference in consciousness determines what kind of experience you're going to have. All you have to do is change your consciousness a little bit, and the whole experience of your life will change. Maybe the circumstances won't change, but your attitude will change; your consciousness will change and you'll experience it very differently.

How do you change your consciousness? By changing the impressions in your mind. Our consciousness is the sum total of impressions that we have absorbed in our experience. If someone has very unfortunate circumstances, let's say they experience so much suffering in their early life, we know this predisposes the person to have certain attitudes toward the world: a defeatist attitude, a depressed attitude, or an expectation of more suffering. We also see that when a person is born in a good situation, and they have early impressions of pleasure, security and safety, their attitude is completely different. They have a much more positive, much more confident, and much more pleasure oriented attitude toward the world, and this changes their experience. It changes their possibilities; it changes everything. If you fill your mind with material impressions, then you're going to see the world as a very inhospitable place, a very unfriendly place, a very nasty place full of all kinds of suffering. That's going to be your experience because that's the material energy. The material energy is there to cheat you. The material senses are going to cheat you because they are not spiritual. You cannot get the quality of enjoyment that you seek as a spiritual living entity from the material

senses. You cannot get the quality of experience that you seek from the material senses. You can only get it from spiritual senses. How do you spiritualize the senses? By engaging them in the service of the Lord in devotional service. There's that famous verse:

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
[arcanaṁ] vandanaṁ dāsyam
sakhyam ātma-nivedanam*

Prahlāda Mahārāja said: Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, remembering them, serving the lotus feet of the Lord, offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, offering prayers to the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (in other words, serving Him with the body, mind and words). [[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.23](#)]

Ātma-nivedanam means surrendering everything. It begins with hearing and chanting. Hearing with these same ears and chanting with this same mouth, but instead of some material nonsense, instead of the latest pop song, we're chanting the name of the Lord and we're hearing the Lord's Holy Name. We recommend to people who have material issues, who are suffering, that they should chant *Viṣṇusahasranāma*: the thousand names of Viṣṇu. Why? Because that *mantra* specifically says that the results of chanting is that it takes away all material miseries. How does simply chanting and hearing some *mantra* take away material miseries? How is that possible? The way it works is that by hearing all those Holy Names of Kṛṣṇa over and over again, we absorb spiritual impressions in the mind. In other words, we direct our consciousness towards spiritual qualities by chanting over and over again: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa. We accumulate so many impressions of spiritual quality, and because we direct our consciousness towards the spiritual energy, we begin see things from a whole different viewpoint. We begin to see from the spiritual viewpoint instead of the material viewpoint. In the spiritual viewpoint there is no suffering, there is no death, and there is no

hardship. There is not a problem of any kind because we are under the protection of Kṛṣṇa. This process of *bhakti-yoga* means to shift our consciousness from the material platform to the spiritual platform, and the way we do that is by creating many, many impressions of spiritual quality. Kṛṣṇa is known as *sac-cid-ānanda*:

*īśvaraḥ paramaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-vigrahaḥ
anādir ādir govindaḥ
sarva-kāraṇa-kāraṇam*

Kṛṣṇa who is known as Govinda is the Supreme Godhead. He has an eternal blissful spiritual body. He is the origin of all. He has no other origin and He is the prime cause of all causes. [[*Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā* 5.1](#)]

This is the opening verse of the fifth chapter of *Brahma-saṁhitā*. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, *svayam bhagavān* [[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.3.28](#)], and He has a body of *sac-cid-ānanda*. *Sat* means eternal existence, *cit* means eternal consciousness or knowledge, and *ānanda* means spiritual bliss. His body is directly composed of spiritual bliss which means that, if we're touch with Kṛṣṇa, we're automatically in touch with spiritual bliss.

If you're chanting and you're not feeling bliss, there's some problem or offense that you have to clear up. If you are chanting and it seems like a drag, it's just routine, it's dry and boring, and you're not getting any bliss, **it means you're doing something wrong**. Usually it's some misconception of what is Kṛṣṇa, what is devotional service, what is *guru*, what is the proper relationship, or what is the proper way of performing devotional service. If you're not getting bliss, you have to look into this. Which of the ten offenses are you committing? We've spent a lot of time discussing these offenses in the past. You can look up those podcasts, Darshans, or articles where we talk about them, on our site. We also have a whole course discussing the Holy Name, how to chant, the ten offenses, and all that, as part of the Bhakta degree. The point I want to make is that by approaching Kṛṣṇa in devotional service, you will get all the happiness

that you can handle. If you're not getting happiness from your devotional service, that means you should check into it and correct your mistakes.

If you're performing your devotional service nicely, you will have all the happiness you can deal with. It's described in many places in *śāstra*. For example, Subala was fanning Kṛṣṇa with a big peacock fan. Subala's bliss was increasing so much that his body was becoming paralyzed. He couldn't even fan Kṛṣṇa because there was so much bliss, and he was thinking: "Darn it! I wish I could get rid of this bliss, it's too much. It's getting in the way of my fanning Kṛṣṇa." This is the pure devotee. The devotee doesn't think about his own happiness at all. He doesn't crave his own happiness. He even rejects the happiness when it gets to become too much, and starts to interfere with his service, because the main thing is Kṛṣṇa's happiness. If we think of Kṛṣṇa's happiness, if we act for Kṛṣṇa's happiness, **if we try to ensure that Kṛṣṇa is happy, then automatically we become happy.**

Try to understand Kṛṣṇa's character and his attitude. Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. He has all potencies. He has unlimited potencies. His body is composed of concentrated transcendental bliss. Kṛṣṇa is not lacking for happiness, enjoyment, or anything. He is full of enjoyment eternally. Kṛṣṇa is *paramānanda*, the highest bliss. If we serve Kṛṣṇa, and come into touch with Him through our service, we automatically taste this bliss. We don't have to endeavor separately for our happiness. We especially should not approach Kṛṣṇa or devotional service with thoughts or desires for our own happiness. That will get in the way of our own devotional service; that will interfere with our devotional service. That selfish attitude will get in the way of our pure loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa.

This is not like ordinary love; this is not like mundane love. In mundane love you have to make a deal: "OK, I'll give you this and you give me that. I'll do this for you and then you're going to do that for me." We negotiate a deal. That's mundane so-called love. It's not really love at all; it's a

business deal. Real love means that we give service to Kṛṣṇa without any thought of return. But, just the fact that we're in touch with Kṛṣṇa automatically guarantees that we're going to be happy.

We don't have to think separately about our own happiness. We don't even have to worry about it because one of Kṛṣṇa's qualities is that He's grateful and that He considers a little bit a service a great deal. If we approach Kṛṣṇa, or any of the expansions or forms of Kṛṣṇa, and we render devotional service, then He will automatically take the initiative to respond or reciprocate with the devotee for that service. He's not a cheater. He's not like the people in this material world. Kṛṣṇa is so completely generous, so loving, so unselfish, and so pure that He will automatically reciprocate our service. We don't have to worry about Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa will take care of us. We don't have to worry about ourselves either. Kṛṣṇa will take responsibility for those who surrender unto Him. There are so many *ślokas* confirming this in the scriptures. Kṛṣṇa says that as soon as someone surrenders to Him, He takes responsibility for that devotee and maintains him:

"But those who worship Me with devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack and preserve what they have." [[*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.22](#)]

He may not maintain you in the way or with the standard of material enjoyment that you have been conditioned to expect, especially if you're a Westerner. You may wind up living in a big dormitory in India with a bunch of devotees. [laughs] But, you will be happy, and you won't really know how you're happy or why you're happy. You won't really have to know; it doesn't matter. When a person is born into a very, very rich family, they don't think about money. Money is just there. A person who is born in a poor family is always struggling for money or is anxious about money. They're always in anxiety: "How am I going to get money?" But, the person who is born in a rich family never thinks about money. Similarly, a devotee who is in touch with Kṛṣṇa is in an ocean of happiness. He's not anxious about happiness and he doesn't think about

happiness. He just assumes that he's going to be happy because he's always happy. It's not something you have to go out and get, it's just a natural part of life: "Oh happiness? Oh yeah." He's so secure and so confident of being happy, that he doesn't even strive or try for happiness. He doesn't even think about or make plans for happiness. He doesn't even hesitate to give up his own happiness for Kṛṣṇa because he has the confidence that Kṛṣṇa, somehow or other, will make everything come out alright and he will be happy in the end, even if he has to do something that he might not like to do.

I don't like taking care of business. Since we got to India, it seems like every other move is some kind of business or about money: taking care of the house, getting this or getting that, trying to incorporate a trust, and so many other things. It seems like every other thing we do is about some kind of business. I don't like business at all even though I had my own business for twenty-five years. I was a professional writer and my whole business was my checkbook. [laughs] Later on it was my debit card. [laughs] I would say: "Oh, you want to give me some work? Just go to my PayPal account and pay me some money, and it'll show up on my debit card. That's great." At the end of the year I would just do a printout and that was my financial report. [laughs] I supported myself quite well by that business for twenty-five years. I guess you can figure out that I'm not really into business.

But it seems now that I'm so much involved in business. This is not really what I would like to do. I'd really like to just play music and read scriptures all day, but I have to be responsible for my students. They took the risk of following this madman halfway across the world to some obscure place, in the middle of nowhere, in the middle of India. [laughs] Now here we are and somehow or other I've got to take care of them, but I don't mind. Even though I have to do so many things that I don't like to do, I'm so happy by my devotional service that I don't worry about it. It's not a big deal: "Oh yeah, I gotta do this, OK." I'm not going to be grumpy because of it.

When a devotee is engaged properly in devotional service, he's automatically happy. He doesn't think about getting happiness for himself because he trusts Kṛṣṇa, and that Kṛṣṇa's going to take care of him. This works really, really well; it's very, very reliable. There are millions of people here in India who have no job, no home, and practically no possessions. All they do is wander around as *sādhus*, chanting *mantras*, and going to different places of pilgrimage. Somehow or other, Kṛṣṇa takes care of all of them. I've seen it. If you go to Kumbha Mela, or a similar place of pilgrimage, you will see millions of people like that. **Where do they all come from?** Who takes care of them? They don't have anything; they just wander around. They sometimes even walk around barefoot. How do they eat? How do they live? Somehow or other, by Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

We've also seen it ourselves in our own experience. We thought we were going to have to do some kind of business to maintain our *āśrama* in all these different places around the world. We tried this, that and the other thing, and then finally we just said: "Ah, the heck with it. Let's just preach." As soon as we took that attitude, we made more money. [laughs] We have money and it's still coming. I don't know where it comes from. Kṛṣṇa, somehow or other, just arranges that money comes to us; more money than we can spend. The cure for all these material problems is simply do *bhakti-yoga* and preach. Kṛṣṇa loves it when we preach. Kṛṣṇa says in the eighteenth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*:

"For one who explains the supreme secret to the devotees, devotional service is guaranteed, and at the end he will come back to Me. There is no servant in this world more dear to Me than he, nor will there ever be one more dear." [[*Bhagavad-gītā* 18.68-69](#)]

If you want happiness, and if you want a secure position in this life, or in this world, learn the Esoteric Teaching and then preach it to others. Believe me, Kṛṣṇa will take of you. Kṛṣṇa will give you so much, you won't know what to do with it. Your reaction will be: "What are we going

to do with all this money?" Maybe He won't give you money. Maybe He will give you lots of friends, or a nice piece of property somewhere, or an old temple. Who knows? Kṛṣṇa has all kinds of ways of taking care of His devotees. Your situation might not look exactly like ours, but somehow or other, Kṛṣṇa will take care of you. That's His promise, and Kṛṣṇa is good to His word.

If you want happiness, and I know you do because everybody does, then take up this performance of devotional service as your full-time engagement. There is a way to do it. Read the third and the fifth chapter of *Bhagavad-gītā*. Kṛṣṇa describes how to turn your ordinary working activities into devotional service. The devotees here all did this, that's why they are here. They turned their ordinary work into devotional service, and the next thing they knew they were on the plane going to meet Bābājī. [laughs] This is how Kṛṣṇa works. Kṛṣṇa is extraordinarily powerful and He can do anything just by desiring it. He doesn't personally create the material world. He just desires that the material world should be created, and then automatically all these things happen by His internal potency. Try to understand Kṛṣṇa. If you love Kṛṣṇa, He will respond to you:

*ye yathā mām prapadyante
tāms tathaiva bhajāmy aham*

"All of them—as they surrender unto Me—I reward accordingly. "
[*\[Bhagavad-gītā 4.11\]*](#)

Kṛṣṇa doesn't make any conditions on how you should approach Him. You can approach Him in neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parenthood, or conjugal love. You can approach Him by hearing, by chanting, by remembering, by doing worship, and so many different processes. All these ways are valid; they are all acceptable to Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa will respond. Take up this path and experience it for yourself. I can talk about it; I can rave on it for weeks or years. But, you won't have the actual experience until you try it, and then you'll see everything I'm talking about is true.

Question from Uddhava dāsa: I have a question on verse 1.1.31:

Thus it is said in the *Tantras*:

“Astounding mystic powers, material enjoyment, eternal happiness in the realization of *brahman*, and eternal bliss from service to the Lord all appear from *bhakti* to Govinda.” [*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* 1.1.31]

We sometimes see mystic powers present in demons, like Hiranyaśipu. How is this explained in terms of *bhakti*?

Bābājī: Hiranyaśipu's mystic powers were obtained by a blessing from Lord Brahmā after severe austerities. But, why should you have to go through severe austerities, and why should you have to worship anyone other than Kṛṣṇa when, if you perform *bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa, you'll get all these things? The verse mentions mystic powers, material enjoyment, eternal happiness, and eternal bliss. Eternal happiness from *Brahman* realization and from *bhakti*. Hiranyaśipu's practice only gave him one thing: mystic powers. Then he had to go forth and conquer the demigods to get the material happiness that he was craving. His one process didn't give everything. But, when you perform *bhakti*, **one process is giving everything**. It's giving mystic powers, material happiness, spiritual happiness, realization, knowledge, bliss, and more. Everything you could ever want, just from one practice. Not that you have to do this for a while and then you do something else. When Hiranyaśipu attained his mystic powers, he stopped his practice. But, *bhakti* never stops; *bhakti* never ends. The process of *bhakti* that we're doing now is the same thing that we're going to be doing in the spiritual world eternally: hearing, chanting, serving and so on. *Bhakti* is eternal from the very beginning. The processes or practices of *bhakti* are not some kind of stepping stone to the higher practice. The same practice that we begin *bhakti-yoga* with is the same practice that we continue in the higher stages, and it's the same practice that we perform even after realization in the spiritual world. It's just that here in the material world we're in separation from Kṛṣṇa, and then after we go to the spiritual world we're in meeting with Kṛṣṇa all the

time; we're in association with Kṛṣṇa all the time. This is the proof of the absolute nature of the practice of *bhakti*:

- It gives all the benefits of one practice.
- The practice is eternal and it stays the same throughout all the different stages.

Question from Don: You were discussing women's mentality in the previous class. Is it not that most men are of such mentality since they are basically female in relation to Kṛṣṇa?

Bābājī: Most men have a female mentality these days, and this is because of too much association with females. 'The powers that be' do this by arranging the school system so that the male and female children are educated in the same classroom. From a very early age, males get a lot of association with females, especially immature females of their own age. Naturally they pick up many qualities from the female mentality by association. In the old days, you never had male and female students in the same classroom. The boys had a male teacher and the girls had a female teacher. This increased the qualities of the men and women separately so that the men developed more masculine qualities, and the women developed more feminine qualities.

Nowadays it's all merged together. The women are manifesting a lot of male qualities and the men are manifesting a lot of female qualities. And of course, this is very, very bad. This is very dangerous for the society. It leads to all kinds of nonsense like homosexuality, divorce, and so many things. This nonsense 'Women's Liberation' is actually just a technique to get more women in the workplace so that there will be more competition to drive down wages. That's the only reason for it. All this talk about how women are equal, and all this stuff, is propaganda. Women aren't equal. They even look different. [laughs] If men and women were raised separately, the way they should be, they would also think very differently; even more differently than they already do. That would be a good thing.

That would help the stability of the whole society. It would greatly drive down the divorce rate. Men and women would appreciate one another more for their unique qualities, and not have this artificial idea that everyone's the same. Everyone isn't the same.

That's the whole point of Vedic society. That's why Vedic society is structured in the way it is with four social classes and four spiritual classes. Everyone is different and those unique qualities should be enhanced, so the society is divided and the association is regulated to help that process. Nowadays men have become so female that sometimes they're more female than the females. It's a shame because that means in their next life they become women. I guess the women in their next life become men. This is a big problem.