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Śrī Jaiva-dharma

Chapter One
Jīver Nitya O Naimittik Dharma
The Soul's Eternal and Temporary Natures

Of all earthly realms, Jambūdvīpa is the best. Of all places in Jambūdvīpa, Bhārata-varṣa is the best. Of all places in Bhārata-varṣa, Gauḍa-deśa is the best. Of all places in Gauḍa-deśa, Śrī Navadvīpa-maṇḍala is the best. In one part of Śrī Navadvīpa-maṇḍala, on the Gaṅgā shore, the beautiful village of Śrī Godruma is splendidly manifested eternally. In ancient times many bhajānanandī devotees made their homes in the gardens of Śrī Godruma.

In that place, in a cottage of vines, a surabhi cow once worshiped Lord Gaurasundara, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Not far from that place was a bhajana-kuṭīra named Pradyumna-kuñja. In that bhajana-kuṭīra thick with vines, a paramahaṁsa bābājī, who was an initiated disciple of the Supreme Lord's personal associate Pradyumna Brahmacārī, always stayed, rapt in the bliss of worshiping the Lord (bhajānananda).

Aware that Śrī Godruma is not different from Śrī Nanda-grāma in Vṛndāvana, Śrī Prema-dāsa Bābājī, who was learned in all the scriptures, also took shelter in that holy place. Every day he chanted Lord Hari's holy names two hundred thousand times. Every day he offered hundreds and hundreds of daṇḍavat obeisances to all the Vaiṣṇavas. He maintained his life by madhukārī begging at the homes of the cowherd people there. He strictly followed the rules of a saintly life.

When he had finished all his spiritual duties, he would not waste his time with gossip. Rather, he would read, with tears in his eyes, the *Prema-vivarta* of Lord Gaurasundara's dear associate Jagadānanda Paṇḍita. At those times the devotees in that forest grove would listen with love and devotion. And why not? The book *Prema-vivarta* is full of the sweet mellows (rasas) of devotional service. Also, this bābājī read it so sweetly that hearing its words at once extinguished whatever remained of the poison fire of material desires in the hearts of the devotees.

One afternoon, when he had finished the chanting of all his rounds, the paramahaṁsa bābājī sat down in his mādhavī-vine-covered cottage and read from "Prema-vivarta", and as he read he became plunged in the ocean of devotional love. At that moment an austere sannyāsī approached him and again and again offered daṇḍavat obeisances at his feet.

Plunged in devotional bliss, the bābājī was for a moment unaware of external events. Finally seeing the sannyāsī prostrate before him, the bābājī, who was more humble than a blade of grass, at once bowed down to greet him. Saying, “O Lord Caitanya, O Lord Nityānanda, please be merciful upon me, a fallen soul," the bābājī began to weep.

Then the sannyāsī said to the saintly bābājī, “O master, I am very lowly and

fallen. Why, imitating my actions, do you mock me in this way?" Then, taking the dust of the bābājī's feet, the sannyāsī sat down before him.

Giving the sannyāsī a tree-bark sitting place, and then sitting beside him, the bābājī, his words choked with spiritual love, said, "O master, I am a fallen soul. How may I serve you?"

Setting down his kamaṇḍalu, the regal sannyāsī respectfully folded his hands and said, "O master, I am very unfortunate. I studied the sāṅkhya, pātañjala, nyāya, vaiśeṣika, pūrva-mīmāṁsā, and uttara-mīmāṁsā philosophies. I studied the Vedānta, Upaniṣads, and many other scriptures also. I traveled on pilgrimage to Vārāṇasī and many other holy places. I spent much time debating with others the meaning of the scriptures.

"It is twelve years now since I accepted a sannyāsī daṇḍa from Śrīla Saccidānanda Sarasvatīpāda. After I accepted the daṇḍa I spent my time always traveling to all the holy places. Wherever I went in Bhārata-varṣa I always associated with the sannyāsī followers of Śaṅkarācārya. Passing through the stages of of kūṭīcaka, bahūḍaka, and haṁsa, after a few days I attained the stage of paramahaṁsa. then I stayed always at Vārāṇasī.

"Observing a vow of silence, I took shelter of the sayings `ahaṁ brahmāsi' (I am Brahman), `prajñānaṁ brahma' (Brahman is consciousness), and `tat tvam asi' (You are that), which Śaṅkara declares are the mahā-vākyas (most important statements of the scriptures).

"Then one day a saintly Vaiṣṇava singing songs about Lord Hari's pastimes came before me. Opening my eyes wide, I gazed at him. he was bathed by the tears flowing from his eyes, and the hairs of his body stood erect in ecstasy. In a choked voice he chanted, `Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya! Prabhu Nityānanada!' Again and again he danced with faltering steps. Sometimes he fell to the ground.

"As I gazed at him and heard his song, my heart became filled with love, a love I have no power to describe. Even though I became filled with love, I followed the rules of paramahaṁsa life and I did not speak a word to him.

"I am pathetic, my rules of paramahaṁsa life are pathetic, and my so-called good fortune is also pathetic. Why did I not speak to him?

"Since that day my heart has been irresistibly drawn to to feet of Śrī Caitanya. I became very agitated. I spent many days searching for that Vaiṣṇava, but I did not see him anywhere.

"When I saw that Vaiṣṇava and heard the holy names from his mouth I became filled with a pure and sacred bliss. Before that time I did not know that such a bliss existed anywhere. I did not think it was possible for a human being to experience such bliss.

"After some days of thinking I decided that it would be best for me to take shelter of the feet of a Vaiṣṇava. Then I left Vārāṇasī and went to Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana.

"There I saw many Vaiṣṇavas. Every one of them was calling out the names `O Śrī Rūpa! O Śrī Sanātana! O Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī!' and lamenting. They were all meditating on Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and, in voices choked with love, calling out the name of Navadvīpa.

"From that moment I have yearned to see Navadvīpa. After a 168 mile journey from Śrī Vraja-dhāma, I arrived in Māyāpura a few days ago.

"In Māyāpura town I heard of your glories, so now I have come to take shelter

of your feet. Please be merciful to me, accept me as your servant, and give my story an ending that is good."

Weeping again and again, and humbly placing a blade of grass between his teeth, the saintly paramahaṁsa said, "O saintly sannyāsī, I am very unfortunate. I fill my belly, I sleep, I speak useless gossip. In this way I have wasted my life.

"Now I pass my days in the place where Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya enjoyed His pastimes. Still, I have no power to taste what is true love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

"You are fortunate. Gazing at a Vaiṣṇava, for a moment, you tasted that love. You have received the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. If, when you taste pure spiritual love, you once remember this fallen person, my life will be a great success."

Speaking again and again in this way, the saintly bābājī tightly embraced the saintly sannyāsī and bathed him with the tears flowing from his eyes. Touched by a Vaiṣṇava, the saintly sannyāsī felt an emotion he had never known before. He danced and wept. As he danced, he sang this verse:

jaya sri-kṛṣṇa caitanya śrī prabhu nityānanda
jaya sri-prema-dāsa guru jaya bhajana ānanda

Glory to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya! Glory to Lord Nityānanda! Glory to my spiritual master, Śrī Prema-dāsa! Glory to the bliss of devotional service!

After a long time of chanting and dancing, the two of them talked about many things. saintly Prema-dāsa Bābājī humbly said, "O great soul, please stay in this Pradyumna-kuñja for some days and purify me."

The saintly sannyāsī replied, "I place my body in the service of your feet. What to speak of a few days, I will serve you to the end of my life. That is my wish."

The saintly sannyāsī was learned in all the scriptures. He well knew the spiritual benefit to be attained by staying in the spiritual master's home and studying under his guidance. therefore he very happily stayed for some days in that forest grove.

After some days the paramahaṁsa bābājī said, "O great soul, Śrī Pradyumna Brahmacārī Ṭhākura kindly keeps me at his feet. Today he is rapt in the worship of Lord Nṛsiṁha in the village of Deva-pallī in the outskirts of Navadvīpa-maṇḍala. When we have finished our mādhukarī begging for alms, let us go and see him.

The saintly sannyāsī replied, "As you order, so I shall do."

Crossing the Alakānandā River, the two of them came to Deva-pallī at two in the afternoon. Then, crossing the Sūryaṭīlā River, they saw the Supreme Lord's personal associate Śrī Pradyumna Brahmacārī in the temple of Lord Nṛsiṁha.

From a distance the paramahaṁsa bābājī offered daṇḍavat obeisances to to his spiritual master. Melting with love for the Lord's devotees, the saintly brahmacārī at once left the temple, with both hands lifted up the paramahaṁsa bābājī, affectionately embraced him, and inquired about his welfare.

After a long talk about spiritual matters, the paramahaṁsa bābājī introduced the saintly sannyāsī. The saintly brahmacārī respectfully said, "You have attained a proper spiritual master. You should learn *Prema-vivarta* from Prema-dāsa. It is said

(Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 8.128):

"kibā vipra kibā nyāsī śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva vetta sei guru hay

" `Whether one is a brāhmaṇa, sannyāsī, or śūdra, regardless of what he is, he can become a spiritual master if he knows the science of Kṛṣṇa'."*

Then the saintly sannyāsī humbly offered daṇḍavat obeisances to his parama-guru (the spiritual master of his spiritual master) and said, "O master, You are a personal associate of Lord Caitanya. Your glance of mercy can purify hundreds of arrogant sannyāsīs like myself. Please be merciful to me."

The saintly sannyāsī was not experienced in the relationships among devotees. Still, he could see the relationship of the guru and parama-guru, and he did act in the way a sincere disciple should to his spiritual master. Then, after seeing the sandhyā-ārati, the two of them returned to Śrī Godruma.

After some days had passed in this way, the saintly sannyāsī desired to learn the spiritual truth from the paramahaṁsa bābājī. Except for his garments, the sannyāsī had become like the Vaiṣṇavas. Controlling his mind and senses, and filled with a host of virtues, he had full faith in the spiritual path. In addition to that, he was very humble, and he now had faith in the transcendental pastimes of the Supreme Lord.

One morning, at sunrise, the paramahaṁsa bābājī sat in his cottage of mādhavī vines and chanted his rounds on tulasī beads. As he remembered the Lord's pastimes of leaving Vṛndāvana, tears flowed again and again from his eyes. Now aware of his original spiritual form and forgetful of his external material body, he became engaged in a service appropriate for that time of morning. Approaching, the saintly sannyāsī could see that the bābājī was plunged in an ecstatic trance.

Staring at the sannyāsī, the paramahaṁsa bābājī said, “O gopī friend, please silence that monkey, so he will not break the happy sleeping of our Rādhā-Govinda. If They waken, then our friend Lalitā will be unhappy and she will rebuke me. Look! Anaṅga-mañjarī is signaling that it be done. You are Ramaṇa-mañjarī. This is the service given to you. Please be careful and attentive."

Speaking again and again in this way, the paramahaṁsa bābājī finally became unconscious. Now understanding his identity in the spiritual world, the saintly sannyāsī became engaged in those services.

Then the sun rose and the beauty of dawn became manifested. The birds sang. Gentle breezes blew. The morning sunlight made the cottage of madhavi vines very beautiful, beautiful beyond description.

The paramahaṁsa bābājī was sitting on a seat made from banana bark. Gradually he regained external consciousness. Then he continued to chant the holy names. At that time the saintly sannyāsī offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the feet of the bābājī, humbly sat down beside him, and said, "O master, this lowly person has a question. Please answer his question and make his burning life cool and happy again. Please sprinkle the nectar of Vraja on his heart, a heart burned by the fire of impersonalism."

The bābājī replied, "You are qualified to hear answers. Please ask your question, and I will reply as I am able."

The sannyāsī said, "O master, for many days I have heard about religion. I have asked many people about the truth of religion. Sad to say, their answers were not in harmony with each other. Therefore I ask: What is the true duty of the individual soul? Why do different teachers give different explanations of the truth of religion? If there is only one truth, why do the philosophers not agree in their opinions?"

Meditating on the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu, the saintly bābājī replied, "O fortunate one, As far as my understanding allows, I will tell you the truth of religion. Please listen.

"The eternal nature of a thing is its eternal religion. The religion of something comes from its original identity. When Lord Kṛṣṇa desires to create something, He creates its original nature. That original nature is its eternal religion. However, when as thing comes into contact with other things, its nature may become changed. After some days that changed state becomes firmly established and it seems to be the eternal nature of the thing. However this changed nature is not in truth the real nature of the thing. These changed natures are called *nisarga*. I will give you an example of such a changed nature. Water has an original nature. The original nature of water is that it is liquid. However, in contact with certain circumstance, that nature becomes changed and the formerly liquid water may become solid ice. That is the changed nature of water, which seems to be its original nature. However, this changed nature is not eternal. It is always temporary. It is manifested for some reason, it remains for some time, and eventually it disappears of its own accord. On the other hand, the original nature of a thing is eternal. Even when the changed nature is manifested, the original nature remains, although it is dormant. In the course of time, when circumstances are favorable, the original nature is again openly manifested.

"the original nature of a thing is eternal. Its changed nature is temporary. One who knows the truth knows the difference between the eternal and temporary nature. One who does not know the truth thinks the temporary nature is eternal."

Then the saintly sannyāsī asked, "You speak of a `thing' (vastu). What does this word mean?"

The paramahaṁsa replied, "The word `vastu' is derived from the verb `vas' (to exist) and the affix `tu'. Therefore that which exists is called `vastu'.

"There are two kinds of vastus: Things that exist in reality and things that do not exist in reality. What exists in reality are spiritual truths and the spiritual goal of life. What does not exist in reality are material objects, material qualities, and the like. What exists in reality exists in truth. What does not exist in reality exists only in someone's mistaken belief.

"When a person believes something it may be that what he believes is the truth, or it may be that it is an only an illusion. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2) it is said:

"vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadam

" `The highest truth is reality distinguished from illusion for the welfare of all.'*

In this way it is proved that the world of spirit is the true reality. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the only reality. From Him the many individual spirit souls, who are all his parts and parcels, are manifested, and from Him also the potency of illusion (māyā) is also manifested.

"Therefore the word `thing' (vastu) may be applied to three things: 1. the Supreme Personality of Godhead, 2. the individual spirit souls, and 3. the illusory potency (māyā). These three things exist in reality. Knowledge of the relationships that exist between these three things is said to be pure knowledge.

"There are many different conceptions of the true natures of these three things. These conceptions tend to be full of errors. The vaiśeṣika philosophers, in their categorization of things and qualities, believe to be true many things that are not true.

"Things that exist in true have specific attributes. These attributes determine their nature. The individual spirit souls exist in truth. The individual spirit souls have specific attributes that are eternal. These determine the natures of the individual souls.

Then the saintly sannyāsī said, "O master, I yearn to understand this properly."

Then the saintly bābājī said, "A devotee named Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, who has received the mercy of Lord Nityānanda, showed me a manuscript of a book he had written, a book named Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta. In that book (Madhya 20. 108 and 117) Śrī Mahāprabhu gives this instruction:

"jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya dāsa
kṛṣṇera taṭasthā śakti bhedābheda-prakāśa

"It is the living entity's constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa because he is the marginal energy of Kṛṣṇa and a manifestation simultaneously one and different from the Lord.*

"kṛṣṇa bhuli sei jīva anādi-bahirmukha
ataeva māyā tāre deya saṁsāra-duḥkha

"Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, the living entity has been attracted by the external feature from time immemorial. Therefore the illusory energy (māyā) gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence."*

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the totality of spiritual existence. He is like a sun from which many spiritual universes have come. The individual spirit souls are rays of light from that Kṛṣṇa-sun. There are many individual spirit souls.

"Someone may say, `You say that the individual spirit souls are parts of Lord Kṛṣṇa. This means that when He is broken up to become the individual spirit souls, Kṛṣṇa ceases to exist. This is like a mountain that is broken up into many parts. When it is broken in this way the mountain ceases to exist.'

"To this I reply: You cannot speak in that way. If my opponent then protests, `Why not?' then I reply: From Lord Kṛṣṇa limitless individual souls are manifested as His parts and parcels. Still Lord Kṛṣṇa is not diminished even slightly because of that.

"In all the Vedas it is said that the individual souls are like sparks emanating from the blazing fire of Lord Kṛṣṇa. However none of these comparisons gives a completely accurate picture of the real truth. The examples of the great fire and the spark, the sun and the ray of light, and the alchemists stone and gold do not describe the entire situation. Therefore, rejecting these material analogies, one should look inside his heart and there he will understand the truth of the soul's nature.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the great spiritual being and the individual soul is the infinitesimal spiritual being. Lord Kṛṣṇa and the individual soul are one in the sense that they are both spiritual. However, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the complete whole and the individual souls are only parts of the whole. That is the difference between them.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme master eternally, and the individual spirit soul is His servant eternally. In this way their natures are described.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme attractive, and the individual spirit soul is attracted to Him. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme controller, and the individual spirit soul is controlled by Him. Lord Kṛṣṇa sees all, and the individual spirit soul is observed by Him. Lord Kṛṣṇa is perfect, and the individual soul is poor and lowly. Lord Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful, and the individual soul is powerless. Therefore the eternal nature or religion of the individual soul is to be a faithful servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally.

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of limitless potencies. All these potencies are perfectly manifested in the spiritual world. For the manifestation of the individual souls one particular potency, the taṭasthā śakti, is employed.

"The imperfect material universes are also manifested by one of the Lord's potencies. That is the same potency, called the taṭasthā śakti.

"This potency creates a world where spiritual beings and inanimate matter stay together in the same realm. In this way it creates a kind of relationship between the spiritual world and the material world.

"Spirit, which is conscious and pure, and matter, which is inanimate, are opposites. Therefore it is not really possible for the conscious spirit soul to have a relationship with unconscious and inanimate matter.

"The individual soul is a small particle of spirit. Nevertheless, one of the Supreme Lord's potencies makes some individual souls somehow have a relationship with matter. The potency that does this is called taṭasthā śakti.

"The place that exists between a river's water and the dry land is called *taṭa* (shore). Such a place touches both land and water. In that place between land and water the attributes of both and land and water are manifested.

"The individual soul is spiritual. Nevertheless the spiritual soul may be placed under the control of inanimate matter.

"Thus the individual soul is not like the spiritual world, which never comes into contact with the material world. Nor is the individual soul like inanimate matter. In this sense the individual soul is neither spirit nor matter. That is why it is true that the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual spirit souls are

different beings eternally.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the master of the illusory potency māyā. Maya is under His control. On the other hand, the individual spirit soul may in some circumstances find himself under the control of māyā. Therefore the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the individual spirit souls, and the illusory potency māyā are three distinct entities eternally.

"That the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the eternal root of all existence is confirmed by the following words of the Vedas (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.13 and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.13):

nityo nityānām

The Supreme Lord is eternal and the living beings are eternal.*

Thus the individual spirit soul is a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally. The spirit soul is manifested from the Lord's taṭasthā śakti. From this it may be concluded that the individual spirit soul is simultaneously one and different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

"The individual soul may sometimes find himself under the control of the illusory potency māyā, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead is always the controller of māyā. In this way the individual spirit soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are different eternally.

"The individual soul is spiritual in nature and the Supreme Personality of Godhead is also spiritual in nature. Thus the individual soul is one of the potencies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

"On the other hand, because he is part and parcel of Him, the individual soul is also not different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead eternally.

"If the individual soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are simultaneously one and different eternally, then the eternal difference between them is most important.

"The eternal nature and duty of the individual soul is service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. If he forgets this duty, the individual soul comes under māyā's control. Then the soul stays away from Lord Kṛṣṇa. That staying away from Lord Kṛṣṇa means that the soul enters the material world.

"It is not possible to give an historical account describing when, in time, the soul first fell into the material world. That is why it is said `anādi-bahirmukha' (the living entity has been attracted by the external feature from time immemorial). This staying away from Kṛṣṇa and the time of entering māyā's world are both different from the soul's eternal nature. They are perversions of it.

"It is because he is in contact with māyā and under her control that the soul's temporary nature and temporary duties are manifested. The eternal nature of the soul is one, unchanged, and completely faultless. the temporary natures, created by contact with the material world, are of great variety."

After speaking these words, the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī stopped and began to chant the names of Lord Hari. After hearing this description of the truth, the saintly sannyāsī offered daṇḍavat obeisances and said, "O master, today I will

think over all that you have said. If I have any questions, tomorrow I will place them before your feet."

Chapter Two
Jīver Nitya-dharma Śuddha O Sanātana
The Soul's Eternal Nature Is Pure and Everlasting

The next morning saintly Premadāsa Bābājī was plunged in the ecstasies of Vraja. Although the saintly sannyāsī wished to place some questions before him, there was no opportunity. Then, in the afternoon , when they had finished their mādhukarī begging of alms, they both entered the cottage of mādhavī and mālatī vines. The saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī then kindly said, "O best of devotees, now that you have heard my explanation of the true nature of the soul, what is your conclusion?" Happy to hear these words, the saintly sannyāsī asked, "O master, if the individual spirit soul is by nature only atomic in size, how is it possible that his eternal nature is pure and perfect? If the soul is created at a certain point in time, then the soul's nature is also created at that time. If this is true, how can the soul's nature be eternally existing in past, present, and future?"

Hearing this question, the paramahaṁsa bābājī meditated on the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya, smiled, and then replied, “O noble-hearted one, even though he is atomic in size, the soul is nevertheless perfect, pure, and eternal. His being atomic is only in relation to his substance. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇacandra, is alone great in substance. The multitude of individual souls are His limitless atomic parts. Although the fire itself is not broken up into parts, many tiny sparks come from it. In the same way Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme conscious being, is not divided into parts, but still a great multitude of individual spirit souls are manifested from Him. As each spark has all the power of fire, so each individual soul has all the powers of consciousness. As each spark has all the burning powers of fire, and can, in the right circumstances, start a fire that will burn down the entire material universe, so each individual soul has the ability to fall in love with Lord Kṛṣṇacandra. He has the ability to be plunged in an ocean of love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. As long as he is not in touch with his original nature, the conscious and atomic soul cannot manifest its natural powers. In truth the nature of the soul is considered in terms of the soul's perception of others. Thinking, `What is the soul's eternal nature?', one should carefully search for the truth. The soul's eternal nature is love. Therefore the soul is not unconscious or inanimate. It is different from unconscious matter. The soul's nature is to be conscious. The soul's nature is to love. In its pure state, love is identical with devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore love, manifested as devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the original nature of the individual soul.

The individual soul may be situated in two states of existence: 1. the soul's pure state, and 2. the soul's state of material bondage. In the pure state the individual soul is manifested as pure spirit only, free of any contact with inanimate matter. In

his pure state the soul is still atomic, and for this reason it is possible that he may change his state of existence. Because Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme consciousness, He never changes His state of existence. In truth, Lord Kṛṣṇa is supreme, perfect, pure, and eternal. In the conditioned state the individual spirit soul is pathetic, broken, and impure. In his original state, the soul is great, unbroken, pure, and eternal. When the individual soul is in his pure state, his pure nature is manifested. But when the individual soul is in contact with the illusory potency māyā, the soul's pure state is not manifested. Then his original nature is perverted and he is impure. Then he does not take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Then he is tormented by happinesses and sufferings. When he forgets the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the soul finds himself situated in the material world of repeated birth and death.

As long as he remains pure, the individual soul retains his original nature. then he understands that he is a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, when he comes into contact with the illusory potency māyā, the soul becomes impure. In that condition the understanding of Lord Kṛṣṇa's service is diminished. Then the soul accepts many different material bodies, one after another. When he is in contact with the illusory potency māyā, the individual soul is covered by a body of gross and subtle material elements. First, the soul identifies himself with the subtle material body. Second, he identifies himself with the gross material body. Third, he identifies himself as the subtle and gross bodies mixed together. In this way the soul's conception of his identity becomes changed. In his pure state the individual soul is an unalloyed devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

When he identifies himself as the subtle material body, the soul thinks of himself as the enjoyer of the fruits of his work. In this way his conception of himself as a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes covered over by his misidentification of himself as the subtle material body.

When he identifies himself as the gross material body, the soul thinks, `I am a brāhmaṇa.' `I am a king.' `I am poor.' `I am unhappy.' `I am defeated by disease and grief.' `I am a wife.' `I am a husband.' Thus the soul's misidentification with the gross material body is manifested in a great variety of ways.

When the soul thus has a false conception of his identity, his original nature becomes perverted. The original nature of the pure soul is pure love. That pure love appears in the subtle material body in a perverted way as material pleasure, suffering, lust, and hatred. That pure love is seen in the gross material body in an even more perverted way as material eating, drinking, and a host of other so-called pleasures derived from contact with inanimate matter. In this way you can see that the soul's eternal nature is manifested only when the soul is in his pure state of existence. When he soul is situated in material bondage, only the soul's temporary nature is manifested. Thus the eternal nature of the soul is that the soul is perfect, pure, and eternal. The temporary nature of the soul I will describe in more detail on another day.

In the scripture Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam pure devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu is described. That devotional service is the eternal activity of the individual soul. Three different conceptions of the soul's nature are described in the material world. They are: 1. the eternal nature, 2. the temporary nature, and 3. the nature that contradicts the eternal nature.

The conception that rejects the existence of the Supreme Personality of

Godhead and the eternal soul is the third of these. The conception that accepts the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and declares that one should employ temporary, material means to win His mercy, is the second of these, the conception of the soul's temporary nature. The conception that declares that by employing the activities of spiritual love one should strive to attain direct service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the first of these, the conception of the soul's eternal nature.

The conception of the soul's eternal nature may be described differently in different countries, among different peoples, and in different languages, but these descriptions all refer to the same eternal nature of the soul. Still, the Vaiṣṇava religion followed in India is the original form, the prototype of all these conceptions of the soul's eternal nature. And the form of the Vaiṣṇava religion that Lord Caitanya, who is the son of Śacī and the Lord of our hearts, taught the world is the purest form of the Vaiṣṇava religion, the form that the great souls filled with the bliss of pure spiritual love accept and follow."

At this point the saintly sannyāsī folded his hands and said, "O master, at every moment I see that what was taught by Lord Caitanya, the son of Śacī, is the best form of the pure Vaiṣṇava religion. I also see that the theory of impersonal monism taught by Śaṅkarācārya is very wretched and horrible.

"Still, a thought has risen in my mind, a thought I will not accept it unless it is first placed before your feet. It is this: Is the state of deep ecstatic spiritual love revealed by Lord Caitanya really different from the state of merging into the impersonal Supreme?"

When he heard the name "Śaṅkarācārya", the paramahaṁsa bābājī at once offered daṇḍavat obeisances. Now he spoke the following words: "O noble-hearted friend, one should always think: `Śaṅkarācārya is Lord Śiva himself.' Śaṅkarācārya is actually the spiritual master of all the Vaiṣṇavas. That is why Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu honors him with the title *ācārya*. Śaṅkarācārya is a perfect Vaiṣṇava.

"When Śaṅkarācārya appeared in Bhārata-varṣa there was great need for a guṇa-avatāra of the Lord. The voidist philosophy of Buddha had already practically destroyed the teachings of the Vedas and the duties of varṇāśrama-dharma. Voidist Buddhism even denied the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Although it did hint at the existence of the individual soul, Buddhism denied the soul's true eternal nature. At that time the brāhmaṇas had practically become Buddhists and practically abandoned the religion of the Vedas.

"At that time extraordinarily powerful Lord Śiva descended as Śaṅkarācārya to this world, re-established the authority of the Vedas, and transformed voidist Buddhism into the philosophy of Vedic impersonalism. For succeeding in this extraordinary work, the world will be long indebted to Śaṅkarācārya.

"Every work in this world may be considered in two ways. Some work is useful in the context of a certain period of time, and other work is useful for all time. Śaṅkarācārya performed work that was very important for that particular period in history.

"From his efforts many good results came. Śrī Rāmānujācārya and Śrī Madhvācārya built the palace of pure Vaiṣṇava religion on the walls and foundation created by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. Therefore Śaṅkarācārya is a great friend of the Vaiṣṇava religion. He is one of its founding teachers. The benefit created by Śaṅkarācārya's teaching is now enjoyed, without any effort on their part, by the Vaiṣṇavas.

"Individual souls still in the grip of material bondage urgently need to understand their relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The individual soul is different from and superior to the gross and subtle material bodies in the material universes. The Vaiṣṇavas and Śaṅkarācārya agree on this point. They do not disagree on the spiritual nature of the individual soul.

"Liberation is defined as becoming free from the material world. Both agree on this also. Up to the stage of liberation Śaṅkarācārya and the Vaiṣṇavas agree on many points.

"By worshiping Lord Hari one purifies his heart and attains liberation. Śaṅkarācārya teaches this also.

"However, about the state of existence that is superior to impersonal liberation Śaṅkarācārya is silent. Śaṅkarācārya knew well that if the individual soul employed the worship of Lord Hari as the way to proceed on the path of liberation, the soul would begin to taste the pleasures of devotional service and would eventually become a pure devotee of Lord Hari. It is for this reason that Śaṅkarācārya, after showing the true path, did not reveal anything more about the secrets of Vaiṣṇava religion.

"They who carefully study all his commentaries can see that this was Śaṅkarācārya's hidden intention. It is only they who waste time merely circle the outskirts of Śaṅkarācārya's teachings who stay far away from the Vaiṣṇava religion.

"Being one with the Supreme Lord and attaining love for Him are, in one sense, the same thing. However, they who narrowly define oneness with the Lord claim that it is different from love for the Lord.

"Consider, for a moment, the meaning of the word `love'. The thing that attracts one spiritual entity to another spiritual entity is called `love'. If the two spiritual entities are not in truth different from each other, they cannot love each other.

"All spiritual entities are naturally attracted to the supreme spiritual entity, Lord Kṛṣṇacandra. That attraction is called *kṛṣṇa-prema*, or love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

"Lord Kṛṣṇacandra and the individual spirit souls are eternally distinct spiritual entities. Therefore the love they bear for each other is an eternal fact.

"Three things exist eternally: 1. the enjoyer, 2. the enjoyed, 3. the way enjoyment is obtained. If the person who enjoys by loving another is identical with the object of his enjoyment or love, then the love he feels can never be eternal.

"If oneness is defined as the spiritual living entity's pure state, where he is free from any contact with matter, then oneness and spiritual love are identical.

"However, the present-day *paṇḍita* followers of Śaṅkarācārya are not content to accept such a definition. Instead, they undertake a great struggle to prove that the Vedas teach the existence of ultimately only one spiritual entity, an entity who transforms Himself into everything that exists. Such a view kills the eternal existence of love. The Vaiṣṇavas have conclusively proved that this view contradicts the true teachings of the Vedas.

"Śaṅkarācārya affirmed that the pure spiritual state is one of perfect oneness. However, his present-day followers do not understand the hidden meaning of his words. Thus they gradually ascribed to him a position not truly his own. They declared the various stages of pure spiritual love to be products of the illusory potency māyā. It is for this reason that their theory is called *māyāvāda*. It is the lowest and most horrible of all theories in the world.

"The mayavada philosophers refuse to accept the existence of more than one spiritual entity. They refuse to accept the existence of spiritual love. They say that the supreme spirit (brahman) stays aloof from matter only as long as He remains one and undivided. They say that when He assumes any form of His own or the forms of the many individual souls He in the grip of illusion (māyā). Thus they think that the eternal, pure, and spiritual form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is a manifestation of the illusory potency, māyā. They think the separate existence of the individual spirit souls an illusion created by māyā.

"Thinking that spiritual love and its manifestations are all products of the illusory potency māyā, they affirm that meditation on the oneness of everything is the only thing beyond māyā's touch. Thus these bewildered fellows' idea of oneness is not at all the same as spiritual love.

"However, the spiritual love Lord Caitanya tasted in His pastimes and taught to the world is completely beyond the touch of the illusory potency māyā. That love is the highest fruit of pure spiritual oneness.

Mahābhāva is a specific transformation of that pure spiritual love. It is a very intense form of the bliss of pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. In it the confidential relationship between the lover and the beloved reaches an intensity never known before. On the other hand, the māyāvāda philosophy is shallow and unimportant. It can never understand that exalted love."

Then the saintly sannyāsī respectfully said, "O master, my heart is filled with conviction that the māyāvāda theory is shallow and unimportant. Any doubt I had about that is now thrown far away by your mercy. Still, I myself wear the garments of a māyāvādī sannyāsī. Now I yearn to rid myself of them."

The saintly bābājī replied, "O great soul, I do not teach that one should like or hate any particular kind of garments. When one's heart is purified, his garments will also become pure. When a person gives great respect to his outward garments, it shows that he does not give great attention to the condition of his heart.

"In my opinion one should first purify his heart. Then he may adopt the external activities and garments of a saintly person without committing an offense.

"In your heart become a sincere follower of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. Then you will naturally desire to accept the external things that are appropriate for that following. Let that be the way you act. Always remember these words of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya 16.238-239):

markaṭa-vairāgya nā kara loka dekhāñā
yathā-yogya viṣaya bhuñja anāsakta hañā

"You should not make yourself a showbottle devotee and become a false renunciant. For the time being enjoy the material world in a befitting way and do not become attached to it.*

antare niṣṭhā kara, bāhye loka-vyavahāra
acirāt kṛṣṇa tomāya karibe uddhāra

"Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued: Within your heart you should keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus Kṛṣṇa will soon be very pleased and deliver you from the clutches of māyā."*

Understanding, the saintly sannyāsī did not say anything more about changing his garments. Folding his hands, he said, "O master, I am your disciple and I have taken shelter of your feet. Whatever instruction you give, I will place on my head without argument. By hearing your words I have understood that pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only Vaiṣṇava religion. That love is the eternal religion of the soul. That religion is perfect, pure, and natural. How should I regard the other religions in the various countries of the world?"

The saintly bābājī replied, "O great soul, religion is one. It is not two, and it is not many. There is only one religion for the soul. That religion is called the Vaiṣṇava religion. There is no reason why religion should be different for different languages, countries, and peoples. The religion of the soul may be called by different names, but it is not possible that there can be different religions. The religion of the soul is the pure love the atomic spiritual entity bears for the supreme spiritual entity. Because of differing material conceptions, some spirit souls have distorted that original religion and given it a variety of different shapes. The pure and original form of the soul's religion is the Vaiṣṇava religion. Other so-called religions are merely distorted forms of the Vaiṣṇava religion. Other religions are pure to the degree that they are like the Vaiṣṇava religion.

"Some days ago, in Śrī Vraja-dhāma, I placed this same question before the feet of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, who is a personal associate of Lord Caitanya. "In the religion of the Yavanas there is a word `esk'. Does this word mean pure spiritual love, or does it not." That was my question. The saintly Gosvami is learned in all scriptures, and he is especially learned in the language of the Yavanas. In that language his learning has no limit. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, and many other learned scholars were also present in that assembly. Saintly Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī kindly replied in these words:

" `Yes, the word `esk' means love. When the Yavanas worship God they use the word `esk'. However, `esk' is often used to mean material love also. Examples of this may be seen in the history of Layalā Majanu and the writings of Hafiz. The Yavana ācāryas could not understand the true meaning of spiritual life. When they write of `esk' they mean love in terms of either the gross or subtle material bodies. However, they could not distinguish between material love and pure spiritual love, and thus they could not understand pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. I have not seen an accurate description of spiritual love in any of the books of the Yavana teachers. I have seen them only in the books describing the Vaiṣṇava religion. The Yavana teachers use the word `ru' to describe the pure individual soul. However, they could not understand the soul in truth. They used the word `ru' to describe the conditioned soul bound by māyā. That was all they could understand. I have not seen a description of pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa in any but the Vaiṣṇava religion. Generally speaking, pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa is described only in the books of Vaiṣṇava religion. Pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa is described in these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2):

dharma-projjhita-kaitavaḥ. . . .

"Completely rejecting all religious activities which are materially motivated, this Bhāgavata Purāṇa propounds the highest truth. . ."*

" `I am confident that before Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya came to this world, so one had given a complete description of pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. If you have faith in my words, then you may accept this conclusion.' "

"After hearing these instructions, again and again aI offered daṇḍavat obeisances to Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī." At that time the saintly sannyāsī offered daṇḍavat obeisances.

Then the paramahaṁsa bābājī said, "o great devotee, now I will answer your second question. Please listen with an attentive mind. The words `the creation of the individual soul' or `the fashioning of the individual soul' are all manifested by the illusory potency māyā. They are material words that describe inanimate material things. The three divisions of time are: 1. past, 2. present, and 3. future. These divisions refer to material time, time within the realm of the illusory potency māyā. In the spiritual world the present exists eternally. In the spiritual world the past and future do not exist. Lord Kṛṣṇa and the individual spirit soul exist in that eternal present. In this way the individual soul is eternal and his original nature, which is his pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa, is also eternal. Talk of the individual soul's being `created' or `fashioned' is a misconception, mistakenly imposing the time patterns of the inanimate material world on a spiritual entity. The atomic individual soul is spiritual and eternal. He existed before his entrance into the material world. Because in the spiritual world there is no past or future, whatever exists there exists in an eternal present. Therefore the soul and its nature are both eternal. They exist in that eternal present. I am only describing this in words. Your understanding will depend on your own ability to understand the pure spiritual world. I can only give a hint here. In spiritual trance you will be able to see all this directly. The logic and argument of this material world will not help you to understand it. Your ability to directly perceive the spiritual world beyond the realm of matter will depend on how much you can loosen the shackles of material bondage. In the beginning you will see your own pure spiritual form. By again and again chanting the spiritual and holy names of Lord Hari, you will come to understand the nature of the soul. By practicing aṣṭāṅga-yoga or following the path of the impersonalists you will not be able to see the pure spiritual nature. By directly serving Lord Kṛṣṇa you will be able to understand the eternal nature of the soul. Therefore you should chant the holy names of Lord Hari always and with enthusiasm. Only by chanting the names of Lord Hari will you make advancement in spiritual life. Again and again chanting the holy name of Lord Hari for some days, you will eventually attain love for the holy name, a kind of love you had never known before. Accompanying that love will be direct perception of the spiritual world. Of all the different activities of devotional service, chanting the holy names of Lord Hari is the most important and the most quickly effective. In Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's delightful book (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 4.70-71) Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu teaches:

bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti
`kṛṣṇa-prema' `kṛṣṇa' dite dhare mahā-śakti

"Among the ways of executing devotional service, the nine prescribed methods are the best, for these processes have great potency to deliver Kṛṣṇa and ecstatic love for Him.*

tāra madhye sarva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana
niraparādha nāma laile pāya prema-dhana

"Of the nine processes of devotional service, the most important is to always chant the holy name of the Lord. If one does so, avoiding the ten kinds of offenses, one very easily obtains the most valuable love of Godhead."*

"O great soul, if you now ask, `Who is a Vaiṣṇava?' I give this reply: A person who without offense chants the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa is a Vaiṣṇava. the Vaiṣṇavas are again divided into three groups: 1. kaniṣṭha (neophyte), 2. madhyama (intermediate), and 3. uttama (advanced). One who from time to time chants the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa is a neophyte devotee. One who always chants the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa is an intermediate devotee. A person the sight of whose face causes others to chant the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa is an advanced devotee. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has taught us that one should not use any other criterion to determine who is a Vaiṣṇava."

Diving into the nectar of these teachings, the saintly sannyāsī began to chant:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

Singing these holy names, he danced again and again. From that day forward he found great pleasure in chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. Offering daṇḍavat obeisances to his spiritual master's lotus feet, he said, "O master, please be merciful to this fallen person."

Chapter Three
Naimittik Dharma Asampūrṇa, Heya, Miśra O Acirasthāyī

The Soul's Temporary Duties Are Imperfect, Horrible, Contaminated, and Short-lived

Staying on a small hill in Godruma forest, and looking to the north, the saintly sannyāsī spent the whole day and three hours of the night in chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. Then the full moon rose and filled Navadvīpa-maṇḍala with a wonderful splendor and beauty. The sannyāsī placed his glance on Śrī Māyāpura, which was not very far away.

The saintly sannyāsī said, "Ah! Now I can see the wonderfully blissful spiritual abode. The Gaṅgā shore is splendid, garlanded with light from many great jewel palaces, temples, and archways. In many places tumultuous chanting of Lord Hari's holy names fills the sky. Hundreds of devotees playing vīṇās chant and dance like Nārada Muni.

"In one place Lord Śiva, the master of the demigods, manifests a white form. Playing a ḍambaru drum, he chants, `O Caitanya, O maintainer of the universes, please be merciful to me!' Wildly dancing again and again, he finally falls to the ground.

"In another place four-faced Brahmā lectures on the Vedas to an assembly of sages. He quotes and then purely explains these words (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.12):

mahān prabhur vai puruṣaḥ
sattvasyaiṣa pravartakaḥ
su-nirmlaām imāṁ prāptim
īsāno jyotir avyayaḥ

`The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Mahāprabhu, who disseminates transcendental enlightenment. Just to be in touch with Him is to be in contact with the indestructible brahmajyoti.'*

In another place Indra and the demigods jump and chant:

jaya prabhu gauracandra jaya nityānanda

`Glory to Lord Gauracandra! Glory to Lord Nityānanda!'

The birds on the branches chirp:

gaura nitāi

`Caitanya! Nityānanda!'

"Everyone is intoxicated by drinking the nectar of Lord Caitanya's holy names. From the gardens in the four directions come sweet humming sounds. Intoxicated by drinking the nectar of Lord Caitanya's holy names, Prakṛti-devī (the goddess of the material nature) fills every place with beauty and splendor. Ah! Now that I see The Śrī Māyāpura, what can I not see? What do I see now?"

Remembering his spiritual master, he said, "O master, now I understand. It is by your mercy that I am able to see the spiritual Māyāpura. From this day I will stay in the association of Lord Caitanya's devotees. Now that I have seen the spiritual Māyāpura, I will wear tulasī beads, tilaka, and the writing of the holy names. This I will do." Saying this again and again, the saintly sannyāsī fell unconscious for a moment.

After a moment he became conscious again. However, he could no longer see the wonderful spiritual vision he saw before. Weeping again and again, the saintly sannyāsī said, "I am very unfortunate. By my spiritual master's mercy I was able for a moment to see the holy abode of Śrī Navadvīpa."

The next day the saintly sannyāsī threw his ekadaṇḍa in the water, placed tulasī beads around his neck, wore Vaiṣṇava tilaka on his forehead, chanted "Hari! Hari!" and danced. Seeing his wonderful new garments and demeanor, and remarking how fortunate he had become, the residents of Godruma offered daṇḍavat obeisances to him. Embarrassed, the saintly sannyāsī said, "It is by the Vaiṣṇavas' mercy that I am now dressed like a Vaiṣṇava. However, there is still a danger for me. Again and again I heard from my spiritual master's mouth these words (Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka 3, Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya 20.21):

tṛṇād api su-nīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

`One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor but is always prepared to give all respects to others, can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord.'*"

Then he remembered his Vaiṣṇava spiritual master. he thought, "I should offer my obeisances to him." Again and again thinking in this way, he approached the paramahaṁsa bābājī and offered daṇḍavat obeisances to him.

Sitting in his cottage of mādhavī vines, the saintly bābājī was chanting the holy names of Lord Hari again and again. Seeing that the saintly sannyāsī had completely changed his garments and was chanting the holy names with spiritual love, the bābājī again and again bathed his disciple with the tears flowing from his eyes. Embracing him, the bābājī said, "O *Vaiṣṇava dāsa*, by today touching your perfectly auspicious body, my life is now a great success."

When he heard these words, the saintly sannyāsī at once threw far away his previous name. Now he accepted the name Vaiṣṇava dāsa. From that day on the saintly sannyāsī began a new life. He threw far away his māyāvādi-sannyāsī garments and arrogant sannyāsī name. In the afternoon many residents of Śrī

Pradyumna-kuñja, Śrī Godruma, and Śrī Madhyadvīpa came to see the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī. They all sat in a circle around the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī. They all chanted the holy names of Lord Hari on tulasī beads. Some chanted "O Gaurāṅga-Nityānanda!", others chanted "O Advaita, husband of Sītā!", and others chanted "Glory to the son of Śacī!" Chanting again and again, their eyes became filled with tears. All the Vaiṣṇavas conversed about spiritual matters. All the assembled Vaiṣṇavas circumambulated the tulasi plant and offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the assembled Vaiṣṇavas. Then Vaiṣṇava dāsa circumambulated the tulasī planet, and then he rolled about in the dust that had touched the Vaiṣṇavas' feet. The saintly Vaiṣṇavas said, "This is not the same sannyāsī. Now his form is wonderful."

Rolling on the ground before the Vaiṣṇavas, Vaiṣṇava dāsa said, "Today I have attained the dust of the Vaiṣṇavas' feet. Now my life is a success. By my spiritual master's mercy I have learned the truth. Without the dust of the Vaiṣṇavas' feet, my future is not good. The dust of the Vaiṣṇavas' feet, the nectar water that has washed the Vaiṣṇavas' feet, and the nectar food touched by the Vaiṣṇavas' lips are three medicines to cure the disease of repeated birth and death. They cure the disease of repeated birth and death. When he is cured of the disease of repeated birth and death, a person enjoys great pleasure. O Vaiṣṇavas, Formerly I was very proud of my great learning, but today there is no pride in my heart. I was born in a brāhmaṇa family, I studied all the scriptures, and I entered the sannyāsa-āśrama. In this way my pride reached its highest point. When I was first attracted to the Vaiṣṇava religion the seed of humbleness was planted in my heart. Gradually, by your mercy, I have thrown far away the pride I felt for my birth, learning, and sannyāsa. Now in my heart I know that I am only a small soul, a soul without any shelter. Without taking shelter of the Vaiṣṇavas' feet, for me there is no hope. My status as a brāhmaṇa, my learning, and my sannyāsa were actually making me degraded: leading me lower and lower. Therefore I truly make this request at your feet: "Please accept me as your servant."

Hearing Vaiṣṇava dāsa's humble words, the Vaiṣṇavas said, "O best of the devotees, we are very eager to attain the dust from the feet of Vaiṣṇavas like Vaiṣṇava dāsa. Please be merciful and make our lives successful by giving us the dust of your feet. You have attained the mercy of a saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī. Please give us your association and purify us. Devotional service is attained by one who associates with devotees like yourself. This is confirmed by the following words of Bṛhan-Nāradīya Purāṇa:

bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-
saṅgena parijāyate
sat-saṅgaḥ prāpyate pumbhiḥ
sukṛtaiḥ pūrva-sañcitaiḥ

"Devotional service is attained by associating with devotees. The association of devotees is attained by past pious deeds."

"Therefore it is because in the past we performed many devotional pious deeds

that we have obtained your association. Because we have attained your association we may now hope to attain true devotional service."

Saintly Vaiṣṇava dāsa thus stayed among the devotees as they humbly offered obeisances to each other and conversed about devotional service. He looked splendid and glorious as in his hands he held new beads for chanting the holy names of Lord Hari.

That day a fortunate person came to that group of Vaiṣṇavas. Since childhood he was able to read and write the language of the Yavanas. He imitated the activities of the Mohammeden kings and in their country he counted himself one amongst them. His home was in Śāntipura. He was born in a brāhmaṇa family. he associated with many wealthy men. For many days he enjoyed all worldly pleasures, but they did not make him happy. At the end he turned to religion and began chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. When he was a child he had studied *rāgas* and *rāgiṇīs* from a Delhi classical music teacher. He would employ this knowledge in melodiously singing the holy names of Lord Hari. Gradually he became famous as a singer and musician in Vaiṣṇava circles, and his sweet singing was in great demand. After some days he began to understand the pleasures that reside in the Lord's holy names. Eventually he came to Navadvīpa to sing the holy names with the Vaiṣṇavas there. He stayed at a Vaiṣṇava's āśrama. Accompanied by this Vaiṣṇava, he came to the cottage of mālatī and mādhavī vines in Pradyumna-kuñja. Hearing from Vaiṣṇava dāsa of the Vaiṣṇavas' saintliness and humbleness, some doubts still remained in his mind. With boldness and eloquence he placed a question before the assembled Vaiṣṇavas.

He asked, "In Manu-saṁhitā and the other dharma-śāstras it is said that the brāhmaṇas are the best caste. In those scriptures are described the brāhmaṇa's regular duties, which begin with chanting the Gāyatrī mantra. If these are the regular duties of the best caste, then why are the duties of the Vaiṣṇavas different?"

The Vaiṣṇavas did not reply. Afraid to dispute with this brāhmaṇa logician, they gave no answer. After the asker of the question had sung the holy names of Lord Hari, the Vaiṣṇavas finally said, "The saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī will answer your question. His reply will make us happy."

Hearing the order of the assembled Vaiṣṇavas, the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī offered daṇḍavat obeisances and said, “O saintly devotees, if you wish, then Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa, the best of devotees, will give the proper answer." Everyone was happy with this proposal.

Hearing his spiritual master's words, and reflecting on his own good fortune, Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa said, "I am very fallen, and I do not possess anything of any value. Therefore it is not right that I speak very much in the assembly of the saintly and wise. However, the spiritual master's order should always be respectfully carried on one's head. I have drunk the nectar of the truth, nectar words that flowed from my spiritual master's mouth. Therefore I will repeat what I can remember of his words. That I will do." After speaking these words, Vaiṣṇava dāsa placed on all his limbs the dust from the feet of the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī. Then, offering daṇḍavat obeisances, Vaiṣṇava dāsa spoke the following words:

"the original form of the Supreme is the supremely blissful Supreme person (bhagavān). the impersonal Brahman is the effulgence of His transcendental body,

and the all-pervading Supersoul is His expansion. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is the abode of all glory and all t pastimes, taught this to us. The Manu-saṁhitā and other dharma-śāstras, which are supplements to the original Vedas and which explain what should and should not be done, should be followed by the entire world. The religious activities of human beings are of two kinds: 1. vaidhī (spiritual rules and regulations to be followed), and 2. rāgānuga (spiritual activities to which one is naturally attracted and which one one performs even without being impelled to do so by the rules of the scriptures). When he is under the control of the illusory potency māyā, the human being must perform vaidhī spiritual activities. When he is freed from māyā's grip, the human being need not perform vaidhī spiritual activities. Then his spiritual activities are rāgānuga. Engagement in rāgānuga spiritual activities is the pure state of the individual spirit soul, a state that is naturally pure, spiritual, and free from matter. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's wish the pure spirit soul may become free from the grip of matter. However, that is not Lord Kṛṣṇa's wish. However, from the day Lord Kṛṣṇa does not wish that the individual soul be liberated, from that day the soul is thrust into the calamity that is life in the material world. When he is thrust into the calamity of material life, the soul cannot truthfully be liberated from the grip of matter. When he is truthfully liberated from the grip of matter, the pure soul naturally engages in rāgātmikā spiritual activities. The spiritual activities of the people of Vraja are rāgātmikā. When the soul still resides in the calamity that is the material world, these activities are rāgānuga. As long as he engages in rāgānuga spiritual activities, the soul in the material world is happy. As long as he does not engage in rāgānuga spiritual activities, the soul in the material world is attracted to the illusions of māyā. Attracted to māyā, the soul becomes bewildered. Then he is not attracted to pure spirit. `It is I' and `It is mine' are the two conceptions māyā thrusts upon the soul. Then the soul thinks, `This material body is mine' and `I am this material body'. In this condition the soul loves persons who bring pleasure to his material body and hates persons who thwart the bringing of pleasure to his material body. Thus the bewildered soul becomes a slave of love and hatred. The bewildered soul thinks others are either his friends or his enemies in three ways: 1. śārīrika (in relation to material bodies), 2. sāmājika (in relation to society and social groups), and 3. naitika (in the context of ideas). One who unlawfully desires gold and women will find himself a slave to pleasures and pains. That condition of life is called “*.fn 2}saṁsāra* (the world of repeated birth and death). One who is attached to the world of saṁsāra is subjected to birth, death, karmic reactions, and a variety of living conditions, some high and some low. Thus the souls bound by material illusion wander here and there in the material worlds. However, the souls attracted to spirit do not experience these troubles. They do not experience these troubles. They who are attracted to spirit attain their eternal spiritual nature. They who forget they they are by nature small particles of spirit fall down into the experience of material life. Staying in the material world, they suffer many misfortunes, although they think they do not suffer misfortunes at all.

For the souls bound by māyā, the activities of rāgātmikā are far away and the activities of rāgānuga are not accepted. It is only by the mercy of a devotee of the Lord that the activities of rāgānuga may rise within a conditioned soul's heart. The activities of rāgānuga are rare and difficult to attain. The residents of the material world have been cheated of them.

However, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is all-knowing and full of mercy. He sees that the souls imprisoned by māyā have been cheated of their spiritual activities. How will these souls attain auspiciousness? By what means will the souls bewildered by māyā remember Lord Kṛṣṇa? The answer is that by associating with saintly devotees the soul is able to understand that he is in reality a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The rules of ordinary piety do not enjoin that one associate with saintly devotees. How, then, does one associate with devotees, or what makes one desire to associate with devotees? the association of devotees does not generally happen when one follows the path of rules and regulations (vidhi-mārga). That is not the way one comes to associate with devotees. It is from the merciful glance of the Supreme Personality of Godhead that the scriptures are created. Born from the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the sun of the scriptures rises in the sky of the devotee's heart. In this way the rules of piety are manifested.

In the beginning is the Veda. One part of the Veda teaches fruitive work, another part transcendental knowledge, and another part loving devotional service. The individual souls bewildered by māyā are situated in different states of existence. Some are very bewildered, some are a little enlightened, and some are very enlightened. In this way the conditioned souls have different kinds of intelligence. The Veda teaches all these classes of souls. Although one may consider that the souls have an infinite variety of natures, still they are grouped into three broad categories: 1. those qualified to perform fruitive work (karma), 2. those eligible for transcendental knowledge (j{.sy 241}āna), and 3. those eligible to engage in loving devotional service (prema) to the Supreme Lord. The Veda thus describes these three categories of eligibility. The Veda's description of what should and should not be done by these three classes of living entities constitute *vaidha-dharma* (the rules of religion). When one actively performs pious deeds that is called *vaidhī pravṛtti*. They who do not follow the rules of *vaidha* commit sinful acts. Therefore living entities should always avoid actions that violate these rules and regulations. They who are outside the jurisdiction of the Vedas are called by the name *mleccha* and by other names also. The conclusion, then, is that three classes of living entities are qualified to follow the Veda. For their benefit the great sages have written many books to supplement the hymns of the Veda. Manu and twenty other sages thus wrote the dharma-śāstras to benefit the persons eligible to perform pious fruitive work (karma). Different philosophers wrote books of logic and philosophy to benefit the persons eligible for philosophical speculation (jñāna). The great devotees wrote the Purāṇas and pure Tantras to teach the persons eligible to engage in devotional service (bhakti) and to guide their actions. This is the nature of all the Vedic literatures. The philosophy of the *mīmāṁsakas* is not seen anywhere in the original scriptures. Every point the mīmāṁsakas claim shows the superiority of their idea is easily thrown into a dark hole of counter-arguments and doubts. In all the scriptures the *uttara-mīmāṁsā* (Vedānta) philosophy is most clearly shown in *Bhagavad-gītā*. The teaching of karma that ignores jñāna is an atheistic kind of karma and that teaching should be rejected. In the same way the teaching of karma and jnana that ignores bhakti is atheistic karma and jñāna. There are only three kinds of yoga: karma-yoga, jñāna-yoga, and bhakti-yoga. That is the Vaiṣṇava description of the Veda's teachings.

The individual soul bewildered by māyā first takes shelter of fruitive work (karma). Then he takes shelter of karma-yoga. At the end, when he come to the

conclusion of karma-yoga and jñāna-yoga, he takes shelter of bhakti-yoga. The soul bewildered by māyā does not ascend only one step in the staircase. Ascending only one step of the staircase, he cannot enter the temple of devotional service.

What is taking shelter of fruitive work (karma)? Fruitive work is the activity performed by the body and mind while one is alive in the body. Fruitive work is of two kinds: 1. auspicious, and 2. inauspicious. By performing auspicious work one attains an auspicious result. By performing inauspicious work one attains an inauspicious result. Inauspicious work is called either “pāpa" (sin) or "vikarma" (evil work). When one does not perform auspicious work that is called "akarma". Both of these are bad. Auspicious work is good. Work is of three kinds: 1 nitya (regular), 2. naimittika (occasional), and 3. kāmya (desired). Kāmya work, where the desire for personal benefit is very prominent, should be avoided. Nitya and namittika work, on the other hand, is work prescribed by scripture. Considering what should and should not be done, the scriptures explain what is nitya, naimittika, and kāmya work. Akarma (failure to do auspicious work) and vikarma (inauspicious work) are not the same as karma (auspicious work). When one avoids kāmya work, then his work is nitya or naimittika. Work that brings auspiciousness to the body, the mind, other people, or humanity at large, is called nitya work. Everyone should perform nitya work. When work prompted by a temporary circumstance is like nitya work in this way, it is called naimittika work. Chanting Gāyatrī, offering obeisances, and cleanliness are activities that maintain one's own body and the welfare of society at large. So also do honest dealings and protection of they who should be protected. All these are nitya work. Duties to one's deceased parents, other like duties, and atonement of sins are all naimittika work.

Nitya and naimittika work bring good to the world. Therefore the great sages order that such auspicious work be performed. Considering the different natures of the human beings, they thus describe what is called the varṇāśrama system. According to their natural tendency for work, human beings are thus divided into four classes: 1. brāhmaṇa, 2. kṣatriya, 3. vaiśya, and 4. śūdra. In this material world there are also four other divisions, called āśramas. The four āśramas are: 1. gṛhastha, 2. brahmacārī, 3. vānaprastha, and 4. sannyāsī. They who are fond of performing akarma and vikarma work are called antyaja (the lowest) and nirāśrama (outside the āśrama system). the different varṇas (classes) are determined according to 1. birth, 2. nature, 3. work, and 4. qualities. Whenever the varṇas are determined by birth, the meaning of the varṇāśrama system is lost. the different āśramas are determined according these states: 1. being married, 2. not being married, and 3. the renunciation of association with women. They who are married are in the gṛhastha āśrama. They who are not married are in the brahmacārī āśrama. They who have renounced association with women are in the vānaprastha and sannyāsa āśramas. Of all the āśramas, the sannyāsa āśrama is the best. Of all the varṇas, the brāhmaṇa varṇa is the best. This is all described in the crest jewel of all scriptures, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.17.15-21), in the following words:

varṇānām āśramānāṁ ca
janma-bhūmy-anusāriṇaḥ

āsan prakṛtayo nṛṇāṁ
nīcair nīcottamottamaiḥ

"The various occupational and social divisions of human society appeared according to inferior and superior natures manifest in the situation of the individual's birth.***

śamo damas tapaḥ śaucaṁ
santoṣaḥ kṣantir ārjavam
mad-bhaktiś ca dayā satyaṁ
brahma-prakṛtayas tv imāḥ

"Peacefulness, self-control, austerity, cleanliness, satisfaction, tolerance, simple straightforwardness, devotion to Me, mercy, and truthfulness are the natural qualities of the brāhmaṇas.***

tejo balaṁ dhṛtih śauryaṁ
titikṣaudāryam udyamaḥ
sthairyaṁ brahmaṇyam aiśvaryaṁ
kṣatra-prakṛtayas tv imāḥ

"Dynamic power, bodily strength, determination, heroism, tolerance, generosity, great endeavor, steadiness, devotion to the brāhmaṇas, and leadership are the natural qualities of the kṣatriyas.***

āstikyaṁ dāna-niṣṭhā ca
adambha-brahma-sevanam
atuṣṭir arthopacayair
vaiśya-prakṛtayas tv imāḥ

"Faith in Vedic civilization, dedication to charity, freedom from hypocrisy, service to the brāhmaṇas, and perpetually desiring to accumulate more money are the natural qualities of the vaiśyas.***

śuśrūṣūṇāṁ dvija-gavāṁ
devānāṁ cāpy amāyayā
tatra labdhena santoṣaḥ
śūdra-prakṛtayas tv imāḥ

"Service without duplicity to the brāhmaṇas, cows, demigods, and other worshipable personalities, and complete satisfaction with whatever income is obtained by such service, are the natural qualities of śūdras.***

aśaucam anṛtaṁ steyaṁ
nāstikyaṁ śuṣka-vigrahaḥ
kāmah krodhaś ca tarṣaś ca
sa bhāvo 'ntyavasāyinām

"Dirtiness, dishonesty, thievery, faithlessness, useless quarrel, lust, anger, and hankering constitute the nature of those in the lowest position outside the varṇāśrama system.***

ahiṁsā satyam asteyam
akāma-krodha-lobhatā
bhūta-priya-hitehā ca
dharmo 'yaṁ sarva-varṇikaḥ

"Nonviolence, truthfulness, honesty, desire for the happiness and welfare of all others and freedom from lust, anger, and greed constitute duties for all members of society."***

"In the assembly of the wise, everyone can understand the meaning of the scriptures. Therefore I shall not give any comment on these words. I will only say this: The duties of varṇa and āśrama are the root of following the scriptures rules and regulations (vaidha). A country is impious to the degree it does not follow varṇāśrama.

"Now let us consider: How are the words `nitya' (eternal) and `naimittika' (temporary) used here with the word `karma'? If we consider the deep meaning of the scriptures, we will see that these two words do not refer to the supreme spiritual goal of life. The terms are used with ordinary, or material meaning.

"Words like `nitya-karma', `nitya-tattva', and `nitya-sattva' may be applied only to the soul's pure spiritual position. They cannot be used to refer to anything else. Therefore when the word `nitya' is used to modify the word `karma' that `nitya-karma', seemingly of the material world, indirectly refers to the eternal spiritual reality. The karma of the material world is never eternal. When karma is employed in karma-yoga, karma-yoga leads to the search for jñāna (knowledge), and that search leads to bhakti (devotional service), then that karma and jñāna may be called `nitya' because they lead to something that actually is nitya.

"Therefore a brāhmaṇa's chanting of the Gāyatrī mantra is called a `nitya-karma' because, even though it is an activity in relation to the material body, it does have an oblique reference to the path of devotional service. Therefore these things may be called `nitya', even though in themselves they are not really `nitya'. Such a usage is called `upacāra' (a figure of speech).

"The word `nitya-karma' can be applied truthfully only to kṛṣṇa-prema (pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa). The word `nitya-karma' can be applied truthfully only to the realm of the spirit. When the activities of this material world are used for advancement in spiritual life, those activities may be called `nitya-karma'. There is nothing wrong with that usage. However, one who sees the truth does not call these activities `nitya' (eternal). He prefers to call them `naimittika' (temporary). It is not really true that the words `nitya-karma' and `naimittika-karma' may refer to materialistic activities.

"In truth, the eternal nature of the soul is purely spiritual. The religion that describes the pure soul is the real eternal religion. All other religions are temporary. Varṇāśrama-dharma, aṣṭāṅga-yoga, saṅkhya, and austerities are all temporary. If an individual spirit soul is not bound by māyā, there is no need for him to follow any of these paths. These temporary religions are meant only for souls bewildered by māyā. All these religions are intended for certain specific circumstances. Therefore the truth is that they are all temporary.

"The brāhmaṇas are the best best of the social classes, the brāhmaṇas' duty is to chant the Gāyatrī mantra, and the sannyāsī's duty is to renounce other duties. However, all these duties are temporary. All these duties are praised by the dharma-śāstras, and they are good for some spiritual aspirants. Still, they are not in any way equal to the eternal duties of the soul. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.9.10) explains:

viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-
pādāravinda-vimukhāt śvapacaṁ variṣṭham
manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārha-
prāṇaṁ punāti sa kulaṁ na tu bhūrimānaḥ

"If a brāhmaṇa has all twelve of the brahminical qualifications (as they are stated in the book called Sanat-sujāta) but is not a devotee and is averse to the lotus feet of the Lord, he is certainly lower than a devotee who is a dogeater but who has dedicated everythingmind, words, activities, wealth, and life to the Supreme Lord. Such a devotee is better than such a brāhmaṇa because the devotee can purify his whole family, whereas the so-called brāhmaṇa in a position of false prestige cannot purify even himself.*

"The twelve brahminical qualifications here are: 1. truthfulness, 2. self-control, 3. austerity, 4. freedom from envy, 5. modesty, 6. tolerance, 7. freedom from malice, 8. sacrifice, 9. charity, 10. steadiness, 11. hearing the Vedas, and 12. observing vows. A brāhmaṇa who possesses these twelve qualities should be honored by everyone in the world. However, if a brāhmaṇa has all these qualities, but has no devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa, then that brāhmaṇa is degraded. Even a devotee who is a dogeater is better than such a brāhmaṇa. The meaning here is that the dogeater referred to is a person who has taken birth in a dogeater family, but by association with saintly persons becomes purified (saṁskāra), and because of that purification engages in the eternal spiritual activities of the soul. The brāhmaṇa referred to here is a person who has taken birth in a brāhmaṇa family,

but is averse to the eternal activities of the soul, and prefers to perform temporary, material activities in their stead. Than such a brāhmaṇa, such a dogeater is better.

"Human beings in the material world are of two kinds: 1. The intelligent, and 2. the unintelligent. The material world is filled with unintelligent human beings. Intelligent human beings are rare. Among such unintelligent persons, the brāhmaṇas are the best, and thus the duties of the brāhmaṇas, such as their chanting of the Gāyatrī mantra, are the best of these kinds of duties. `Intelligent person' is a synonym for the word `Vaiṣṇava'. The activities of the Vaiṣṇavas and the activities of unintelligent persons are inevitably very different. However the the teachings of the Vaiṣṇavas and the teachings of the unintelligent followers of the smṛti-śāstras (the so-called smārtas) are not really opposed to each other. The teachings of the scriptures are always in harmony with each other. Intelligent persons accept the scriptures as their friends. They do not think that the different duties described in the scriptures have different purposes in the end. The duties prescribed in the scriptures for unqualified persons are indeed different from the duties prescribed for the intelligent. Still, these different activities have the same purpose at their root. For the unintelligent the scriptures prescribe temporary duties as most appropriate. However, temporary duties are all imperfect, horrible, contaminated, and short-lived.

"These temporary duties are not the same as directly spiritual duties. Temporary duties may be accepted when they follow the spiritual path. Then they help one to attain the spiritual nature. When the means does not lead to the goal, the means should be rejected. Therefore the means is not complete in itself. It is merely a part, a separated fragment of what will be the final goal. Therefore temporary duties are not complete. For example, a brāhmaṇa's chanting Gāyatrī, like his other duties as well, is subjected to various rules and meant to be performed only at certain specified times. All these duties are not manifested from the soul's natural spiritual activities. However, after many days of following such rules a person may become purified by associating with saintly Vaiṣṇavas. Then he develops a liking for the spiritual holy name of Lord Hari. At that time he does not continue other activities, such as the chanting of Gāyatrī. Chanting the holy name of Lord Hari is the perfect spiritual activity. The chanting of Gāyatrī and other like activities are only various means to attain the goal, which is the chanting of Lord Hari's holy name. Therefore these activities are not the final perfection. Saintly persons teach that these temporary duties, while honorable in themselves, are still imperfect, horrible, contaminated, and short-lived. The spiritual truth is the final goal. Because they bring one into contact with matter and materialists, temporary duties are horrible for the individual souls. Temporary duties are very material. Temporary duties bring with them many irrelevant results. The individual soul naturally attains these results. Even though he does not wish these petty results, he cannot escape them.

"For example, that a brāhmaṇa worships the Supreme Personality of Godhead is good. However, a brāhmaṇa tends to think, `I am a brāhmaṇa. Other souls are inferior to me.' Such a falsely proud brāhmaṇa finds that his worship of the Lord brings a horrible result. Mystic powers obtained by practicing aṣṭāṅga-yoga also bring horrible results. They are very inauspicious for the individual souls. Material sense gratification and impersonal liberation are the two unavoidable friends of temporary duties. Only if he can cheat these two will the individual soul attain his

root spiritual nature. Therefore temporary duties are very horrible for the individual soul.

Temporary duties are short-lived. The soul's temporary duties are not performed in all situations and all times. For example: a brāhmaṇa's brāhmaṇa nature, a kṣatriya's kṣatriya nature, and other like natures also, are manifested because of a particular cause. When the cause ceases to be, these natures vanish. A person may in one birth be a brāhmaṇa and in the next birth an outcaste. Therefore the duties of the brāhmaṇa caste are temporary. They are not the original duties of the soul. Therefore in reference to temporary duties the phrase `own duty' is only a figure of speech. That is why in every birth a soul's `own duty' changes. However, in none of these births does the soul's eternal duty ever change. This eternal duty is the soul's true `own duty'. Temporary duties are all short-lived.

"If one asks, `What are the duties of the Vaiṣṇavas?' then I answer: The Vaiṣṇavas' duties are the eternal duties of the soul. When he is liberated from the world of matter, the Vaiṣṇava soul attains his pure spiritual body, and with that body he engages in devotional activities that express his spiritual love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. When he resides in the material world, a person who is intelligent respectfully accepts all that advances his spiritual life and rejects all that hinders it. He does not blindly follow the orders and prohibitions of the scriptures. When the scriptures encourage devotion to Lord Hari, then such a person happily accepts those teachings. When the scriptures' teachings do not encourage devotion, he does not honor those teachings. In the same way a Vaiṣṇava also honors or rejects the prohibitions taught in the scriptures. A Vaiṣṇava is the best person in the world. A Vaiṣṇava is the friend of everyone in the world. A Vaiṣṇava is the auspiciousness of the world. In this way I have humbly said all I wish to say to this assembly of Vaiṣṇavas. May the Vaiṣṇavas wash away all my faults and mistakes."

After speaking these words, Vaiṣṇava dāsa offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the Vaiṣṇava assembly, and then sat down to one side. The Vaiṣṇavas' eyes were filled with tears. With one voice the Vaiṣṇavas called out, "Well done! Well done!" The four directions of Godruma forest echoed with "Well done! Well done!"

The brāhmaṇa singer who had first asked the question could see deep truth in many of the speaker's arguments. Although he still had some doubts, the seed of faith in the Vaiṣṇava religion had been very firmly planted in his mind. With folded hands he said, "O great souls, I was not a Vaiṣṇava. Again and again hearing Lord Hari's holy names, I have now become a Vaiṣṇava. If you are merciful and teach me a little more, all my doubts will go far away."

Then Śrī Prema dāsa, the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī, mercifully said, "Stay with Śrīmān Vaiṣṇava dāsa. He is learned in all the scriptures. At Vārāṇasī he deeply studied Vedānta-sūtra and accepted sannyāsa. By the limitless mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is the Lord of our lives, he was attracted to Śrī Navadvīpa. He knows all the truths of the Vaiṣṇava religion. Deep love for Lord Hari's holy names has taken its birth within him.

The questioner was a pious man named Śrī Kālīdāsa Lāhirī. Hearing the saintly bābājī's words, in his heart he accepted Vaiṣṇava dāsa as his spiritual master. In his mind he thought, "This person was born in a brāhmaṇa family and he accepted sannyāsa. Therefore he is fit to teach a br\ahmaṇa. Also, I see that he has deeply entered the truths of Vaiṣṇava religion. From him I will learn much about the Vaiṣṇava religion. Thinking in this way, L\ahirī Mah\aśaya offered daṇḍavat

obeisances at Śrī Vaiṣṇava d\asa's feet and said, "O great soul, please be merciful to me." Offering daṇḍavat obeisances to him, Vaiṣṇava d\asa replied, "If you are merciful to me, then I have attained my wish."

With sunset approaching, everyone returned to their own places.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya's home was in a secluded part of the village. It was in a grove. In the middle was a cottage of mādhavī vines and a platform for tulasī-devī. There were two rooms, one on each side. The yard was hedged with cita bushes. With a bela tree, nim tree, and some other trees bearing fruits and flowers, the place was charming. The proprietor of that grove was named Mādhava dāsa Bābājī. At first the babaji had been a good soul, but by bad association he had had fallen away from the Vaiṣṇava religion. Because of improper association with a woman, his devotional practices were now dwarfed. Pushed by poverty, he could not live happily. He begged in many places and rented out one of his rooms. Lāhirī Mahāśaya was now staying in that room.

In the middle of the night Lāhirī Mahāśaya's sleep was broken. Again and again he thought of what Vaiṣṇava dāsa Babaji had said. Then he heard a sound in the courtyard. Coming outside, in the courtyard he saw Mādhava dāsa talking with the woman. Seeing him, the woman disappeared. Embarrassed before Lāhirī Mahāśaya, Mādhava dāsa stood motionless.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "Bābājī, what's wrong?"

Tears in his eyes, Mādhava dāsa replied, "O my misfortune! What more can I say? What was I in the past? What am I now? How much faith the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī had in me! Now I am ashamed even to come near him."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "If you tell me clearly, I can understand."

Mādhava dāsa said, "The woman you saw was my married wife in my former āśrama. A few days after I accepted a life of renunciation, she came to Śrī Śāntipura and lived in a cottage she built by the Gaṅgā's shore. many days passed in that way. Walking by the Gaṅgā's shore at Śrī Śāntipura, I saw her and said, `Why did you leave your home?' She told me, `Material life is not good. Now that I am robbed of your feet, I will stay at a holy place and beg alms.' Not saying anything more, I slowly returned to Śrī Godruma. At Śrī Godruma I eventually stayed at a Sad-gopa's house. Every day, at some place or other, I would see her. The more I tried to avoid her, the more she tried to come near me. Now she stays at an āśrama. She comes late at night and tries to ruin me. Now I am infamous everywhere. Because I now associate with her, my devotional service has become dwarfed. I am a cinder that blackens the family of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya's servants. Since the time of Choṭa Haridāsa's punishment, I am the most deserving of punishment. Being merciful, the bābājīs of Śrī Godruma have not yet punished me, but they do not trust me.

Hearing these words, Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "Take care, O Mādhava dāsa Bābājī." After speaking these words, he entered the house. The bābājī sat on his own seat.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya could not sleep. Again and again he thought, "Mādhava dāsa Bābājī has fallen down. He is like one who eats his own vomit. I should not stay in this house. Why not? Even if I do not fall down by associating with him, I will be criticized by others. Not trusting me, the pure Vaiṣṇavas will not teach me.

At sunrise he went to Pradyumna-kuñja, properly greeted Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa, and asked for a place to stay. When Vaiṣṇava dāsa informed the saintly

paramahaṁsa bābājī of this request, the bābājī said he could stay in a cottage on one side of the forest. Lāhirī Mahāśaya stayed in that cottage and arranged to get prasādam at the home of a nearby brāhmaṇa.

Chapter Four
Nitya-dharmer Nāmāntara Vaiṣṇava-dharma
Another Name For the Eternal Religion Is the Vaiṣṇava Religion

The cottage of Lāhirī Mahāśaya and the cottage of Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa stood side by side. Nearby were some mango and kāṇthāla trees. Small betel plants gracefully enclosed the place on four sides. In the courtyard was a large circular terrace. The terrace had been there since the days when Pradyumna Brahmacari lived there. Many days since then the Vaiṣṇavas came to call that place "Surabhi's Terrace" and became accustomed to circumambulate it and offer daṇḍavat obeisances.

It was shortly after dusk. Sitting on a leaf-seat in his cottage, Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa chanted the holy names of Lord Hari. It was the dark fortnight. The night was gradually becoming dark. A flickering lamp burned in Lāhirī Mahāśaya's cottage. Seeing a snake at his doorway, Lāhirī Mahāśaya quickly trimmed the lamp and took up a stick to kill the snake, but when he came outside with his lamp, he did not see the snake. The Lāhirī Mahāśaya said to Vaiṣṇava dāsa, "Take care. A snake has entered your cottage." Vaiṣṇava dāsa replied, "Why do you worry about a snake? Come. Enter my cottage without fear." Lāhirī Mahāśaya entered the cottage and sat on the leaf-seat. Still, his mind was agitated about the snake. He said, "O noble-hearted one, Śāntipura is very good in this way. It is a city and there is no fear of snakes or other dangers. In Nadiya there is always fear of snakes. Especially Godruma and the other forest places. It is hard for a gentleman to live in those places.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī replied, "O Lāhirī Mahāśaya, It is foolish to let the mind be agitated over these things. You must have heard the story of Mahārāja Parīkṣit in the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Giving up all fear of snakes, with an unagitated mind he heard nectar descriptions of Lord Hari from the mouth of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī. In this way he attained transcendental bliss. No snake can kill a man's spiritual body. The spiritual body is bitten only by the snake of separation from hearing the nectar topics of the Supreme Lord. The material body is not eternal. Some day you must give it up. One may do everything to maintain his material body. Still, whenever Lord Kṛṣṇa wills, that material body will certainly collapse, and one will not be able to protect it. If the time of one's death has not yet come, one may even sleep beside a snake, but the snake will not harm him. Therefore one who gives up fear of snakes or other dangers may be called a true Vaiṣṇava. If it is afraid of every danger, the mind will always be restless. How can a restless mind always think of Lord Hari's lotus feet? Therefore one should abandon all fear of snakes and all attempts, born from that fear, to kill snakes.

Becoming a little faithful, Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "O saintly one, your good words have made my heart fearless. I know that only a person with a noble heart is qualified to attain the final goal of life. The great souls who stay in mountain caves

and worship the Lord there are never afraid of wild animals. On the contrary, it is because they fear the association of materialistic persons that they voluntarily live in the forest surrounded by wild animals."

The saintly bābājī then said, "When Bhakti-devī (the goddess of devotional service) appears in someone's heart, that heart naturally becomes exalted. The whole world loves such a person. Saints and ruffians alike, everyone loves a devotee of the Lord. Therefore every human being should become a Vaiṣṇava."

Hearing this, Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "You have given me great faith in the eternal religion. The Vaiṣṇava religion is very close to the eternal religion. That is my belief. I am not convinced that the Vaiṣṇava religion is completely identical with the eternal religion. Therefore I ask you to tell me what you think of all this. Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī then said:

"In this material world two different religions are called by the name the Vaiṣṇava religion. One is the pure Vaiṣṇava religion and the other is the contaminated Vaiṣṇava religion. The pure Vaiṣṇava religion is one, although it is divided into four according to the different *rasas*. Thus there is the Vaiṣṇava religion in servitorship (dāsya), a Vaiṣṇava religion in friendship (sakhya), a Vaiṣṇava religion is parental love (vātsalya), and a Vaiṣṇava religion in conjugal love (mādhurya). Still, the pure Vaiṣṇava religion is one. It is not many. `The eternal religion' and `the transcendental religion' are merely other names for the Vaiṣṇava religion. The Śruti-śāstra declares:

yaj jñātaṁ sarvaṁ vijñātaṁ bhavati

"By understanding the Supreme, one comes to understand everything."

"These words refer to the Vaiṣṇava religion. This truth will gradually be revealed to you.

"The contaminated Vaiṣṇava religion is of two kinds: 1. Vaiṣṇava religion contaminated by fruitive work (karma), and 2. Vaiṣṇava religion contaminated by the impersonalist fallacy (jñāna). The activities of the Vaiṣṇava religion as conceived by the *smārta* paṇḍitas are the Vaiṣṇava religion contaminated by fruitive work. Although it includes initiation in chanting a Viṣṇu-mantra, this conception of the Vaiṣṇava religion belittles the all-pervading Supreme Personality of Godhead and makes Him subordinate to fruitive work. According to these people, even though He is the master of all the demigods, Lord Viṣṇu is merely a part of the process of karma and is Himself subject to the laws of karma. Thus karma is not subordinate to the will of Viṣṇu, but Viṣṇu is subordinate to the will of karma. According to them all worship and spiritual practices are merely various aspects of fruitive work, and therefore nothing is higher than fruitive work. This form of Vaiṣṇava religion according to the conception of the mīmāṁsaka philosophers has existed for many days. In India many follow this idea, and they claim to be Vaiṣṇavas. They do not accept the pure Vaiṣṇavas to be Vaiṣṇavas at all. Such is the misfortune of the mīmāṁsakas.

Vaiṣṇava religion contaminated by impersonal philosophy is also prevalent in India. According to the impersonalists, in order to attain the qualityless

impersonal Brahman one should worship Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Śakti, Śiva, or Viṣṇu. Then, when one attains perfect knowledge, he can discard the form that he had worshiped. Then, at the end, he attains the qualityless impersonal Brahman. Accepting these ideas, many persons dishonor the pure Vaiṣṇava religion. The worship of Lord Viṣṇu is included in the impersonalists worship of five Deities (Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, Śakti, Śiva, or Viṣṇu, as described above), and that worship includes initiation, Deity worship, and the other aspects of devotion to Lord Viṣṇu. Sometimes it may even include the worship of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. Still, this is not the pure Vaiṣṇava religion.

The pure Vaiṣṇava religion is different from these kinds of contaminated Vaiṣṇava religion. It is the true Vaiṣṇava religion. Because of the defects of Kali-yuga, many people do not understand what is the pure Vaiṣṇava religion. They think these varieties of contaminated Vaiṣṇava religion are the true Vaiṣṇava religion.

The worshipers of the Paramātmā (Supersoul) wish to meet the Supersoul. Desiring to enter a mystic trance and there meet the Supersoul, they engage in kriyā-yoga, karma-yoga, or aṣṭāṅga-yoga. According to these people, initiation into chanting Viṣṇu-mantras, worship of Lord Viṣṇu, meditating on Lord Viṣṇu, and other kinds of devotional service, are all various aspects of karma-yoga. Among these people Vaiṣṇava religion contaminated by fruitive work is manifested.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam explains that the most fortunate persons are attracted to pure devotional service, service to the pure form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Such persons engage in Deity worship and the other activities of devotional service. These activities of devotional service are not subordinate aspects of kriyā-yoga, karma-yoga, or the speculations of the impersonalists. Rather, they are aspects of pure devotional service. These activities are the pure Vaiṣṇava religion. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.11) explains:

vadanti tat-tattva-vidas
tattvaṁ yaj-jñānam advayam
brahmeti paramātmeti
bhagavān iti śabdyate

"Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this non-dual substance Brahman, Paramaṭmā, or Bhagavān."*

One should see in this way. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is not different from either the Paramātmā or the impersonal Brahman, is the highest, the final manifestation of the Supreme. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is Lord Viṣṇu, who is supremely pure. Individual spirit souls that become His followers are also pure. The activity of such pure souls is called `bhakti' (devotional service). Hari-bhakti (devotional service to Lord Hari) is also called by the names śuddha-vaiṣṇava-dharma (pure Vaiṣṇava religion), nitya-dharma (eternal religion), jaiva-dharma (duty of individual souls), bhāgavata-dharma (religion of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead), paramārtha-dharma (way to attain the final goal of life), and para-dharma (highest religion). Religions that strive to attain the

Paramātmā and the impersonal Brahman are all temporary religions. A material motive pushes one to seek the impersonal Brahman. Therefore the religion of the impersonal Brahman is materially motivated and temporary. It is not eternal. The individual soul trapped in the material world is eager to escape his material bondage. To escape this material bondage the soul searches for the impersonal Brahman. In this way he takes shelter of a religion that is both temporary and materially motivated. Therefore the religion of seeking the impersonal Brahman is not eternal. Seeking the happiness of rapt meditation (samādhi), a soul may take shelter of the religion of seeking the Paramātmā. Thus, seeking a more subtle kind of material pleasure, he follows a temporary religion based on a material motive. Therefore the religion of seeking the Paramātmā is not eternal. The religion of serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead is alone eternal."

Hearing these words, Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "Please describe to me the pure Vaiṣṇava religion. I am advanced in years. I take shelter of your feet. Please be merciful and accept me. I have heard it said that a person previously initiated and instructed by an unworthy person should find a worthy teacher and accept initiation and instruction from him. For some days I have heard your good instructions and now I have faith in the Vaiṣṇava religion. Please be merciful. Teach me the Vaiṣṇava religion and, when your teaching is concluded, initiate me and purify me.

A little embarrassed, the saintly bābājī said, “Saintly brother, I will teach you as far as I am able, but I am not qualified to be an initiating spiritual master. However that may be, you should now learn about the pure Vaiṣṇava religion.

"Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the original spiritual master of the entire world, teaches that there are three basic truths in the Vaiṣṇava religion. They are: 1. sambandha (the relationship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual spirit soul), 2. abhidheya (the activities in that relationship), and 3. prayojana (the final goal, which is pure love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead). One who understands these three truths can act properly. He is a pure Vaiṣṇava, or a pure devotee of the Lord.

"Within sambandha are three distinct truths: 1. the material world, or the illusory potency māyā, 2. the individual soul, or the subordinate living entity, and 3. the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is one and unrivaled, the master of all powers, all attractive, the abode of all opulence and sweetness, and the only shelter of both the individual spirit souls and the illusory potency māyā. Although He is the only shelter of both the individual spirit souls and the illusory potency māyā, He is always supremely independent, and His transcendental form is both sublimely handsome and eternal. The impersonal Brahman effulgence is merely a distant reflection of of the splendor of His limbs. With His potency of transcendental power (aiśī śakti) He manifests the material universes and places the individual souls within them. Then He expands to become the Supersoul. As the Supersoul He enters the material universes. In this way He is the Supreme Controller. When He manifests His feature of supreme opulence, He is Lord Nārāyaṇa in the spiritual sky. When He manifests His feature of supreme sweetness, He is Lord Kṛṣṇacandra, the gopīs' beloved in Goloka Vṛndāvana. His different forms and pastimes are all limitless and eternal. No person or thing is His equal. Nothing is superior to Him. All His forms and pastimes are manifested by his parā śakti (transcendental potency). Of His many different transcendental

potencies, three are especially known to the individual souls. One of these potencies is called the cit potency. Employing this potency, the Supreme Personality of Godhead enjoys all His transcendental pastimes. Another of these potencies is called the jīva potency or the marginal potency. By this potency limitless individual souls are manifested and maintained. The third potency is called the māyā potency. By this potency all material things, material time, and material activities are manifested. The Supreme Personality of Godhead has a relationship with the individual spirit souls. The material energy and the individual spirit souls both have relationships with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual souls both have relationships with the material energy. These different relationships are called sambandha. Sambandha is understood when one understands these different relationships. Without first understanding these relationships it is not possible for anyone to become a pure Vaiṣṇava."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "From the Vaiṣṇavas themselves I have heard that Vaiṣṇavas surrender to their emotions and therefore they have no need for knowledge. What kind of statement is that? I myself, up to this time, have chanted the holy names of Lord Hari only to attain a certain feeling. I did not strive to understand any relationships."

The bābājī said, "A Vaiṣṇava's feelings of ecstatic love are the final result of his devotional service. However, such love must be pure. They who think that this ecstatic emotion culminates in oneness with the impersonal Brahman cannot have actions and ecstatic emotions that are pure. Their pure ecstatic emotions are all an empty show. A single drop of pure ecstatic love fulfills all the desires of the spirit soul. However, when that emotion is contaminated by impersonalism, the only result is trouble and calamity for the spirit soul. The devotional emotional displays of one who in his heart thinks he is not different from the impersonal Brahman are merely a trick to cheat the innocent people. Therefore pure Vaiṣṇavas must thoroughly understand these relationships.

Faithful Lāhirī Mahāśaya then said, "Is there something higher than the impersonal Brahman? If the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the origin of the impersonal Brahman, then why do the philosophers not leave the impersonal Brahman and worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead instead?"

The saintly bābājī laughed and said, "Brahmā, the four Kumāras, Śukadeva Gosvāmī, Nārada, Śiva, and all other truly great philosophers took shelter of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's feet."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "If the Supreme Personality of Godhead has a form situated within space, then then that form must also be limited in spatial terms. How, then, can the spatially limited form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead be the resting-place of the all-pervading, spatially limitless impersonal Brahman?"

The bābājī replied, "Even in the material world the element ether is also all-pervading and spatially limitless. Why, then, should the impersonal Brahman be considered so glorious merely because it is all-pervading and spatially limitless? From the splendor of His transcendental limbs the Supreme Personality of Godhead manifests the all-pervading, spatially limitless impersonal Brahman, and at the same time His transcendental form is spatially limited, situated in a specific place. Who has seen anyone like Him? Because no one is like Him, and because He has no rival, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is superior to the impersonal

Brahman. His form is wonderfully attractive. In His transcendental form all-pervasiveness, omniscience, omnipotence, the greatest mercy, and the greatest bliss are gloriously manifest in their completeness. Is this form good? What virtue does it not have? What power does it not have? Is an amorphous, all-pervading, unknowable something good? The truth is that the impersonal Brahman is the qualityless aspect of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Personality and impersonality exist side by side in the handsome form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The impersonal Brahman is merely one aspect of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This formless, changeless, qualityless, unknowable, and immeasurable feature of the Lord is liked by short-sighted persons. However, they who see everything do not like any feature but the original and complete form of the Lord. The Vaiṣṇavas cannot place their faith in the formless impersonal Brahman, for to do so would block their eternal nature and also block their pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Kṛṣṇa, is the resting-place of both features: the qualityless Brahman and the quality-filled Supreme Person. He is an ocean of transcendental bliss, and therefore He is attractive to all pure spirit souls.

Lāhirī: Kṛṣṇa was born, performed activities, and then left His body at death. How is it possible that His form is eternal?

Bābājī: Śrī Kṛṣṇa's form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss. His birth, activities, and so-called death are not material.

Lāhirī: Why do the Mahābhārata and other scriptures describe Him in that way?

Bābājī: The eternal Absolute Truth is beyond description. Pure souls see Lord Kṛṣṇa's form and pastimes. These persons then describe these both with words. Those words are like ordinary historical accounts of material persons. They who know the true meaning of the Mahābhārata and the other scriptures understand Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and other features in one way, and the unintelligent materialists understand Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes and other features in a very different way.

Lāhirī: When one meditates on Lord Kṛṣṇa's form, in one's heart naturally arises the idea of a form limited by both time and space. What other way is there to think of Lord Kṛṣṇa's form?

Bābājī: Thinking is an activity of the mind. As long as the mind is not purified and spiritualized, the mind's activity of thinking and meditating cannot be spiritual in its nature. When it develops a devotional attitude, the mind gradually becomes spiritualized. Then the mind's activity of thinking and meditating is inevitably spiritual in nature. When the Vaiṣṇava devotees, who delight in devotional service, chant the holy names of Lord Hari, the material world has no power to touch them. They are spiritualized. Residing in the spiritual world, they meditate on Lord Kṛṣṇa's daily activities. In this way they attain the bliss of confidential service to the Lord.

Lāhirī: Please be merciful and give that spiritual understanding to me.

Bābājī: When you give up all material arguments and doubts, and when you chant the holy names day after day, then after a few days genuine spiritual understanding will rise in your heart. As long as those material arguments remain, your mind will stay in the shackles of material understanding. When you taste the nectar of the holy name, the material shackles will become loosened. Then the spiritual world will be gloriously manifested in your heart.

Lāhirī: Please be merciful and tell me about that. That I desire.

Bābājī: The mind and words cannot understand it. Only when one attains the bliss of spiritual life can one understand it. Give up all your arguments and for a few days chant the holy names of Lord Hari. Then all your doubts will go far away. Then you will no longer ask any question of anyone.

Lāhirī: I know that a person who has faith in Lord Kṛṣṇa and tastes the nectar of His holy names attains the highest of all goals. I have well understood the relationship of the Lord and the individual soul. I will take shelter of the Lord's holy names.

Bābājī: That is the best of all. Understand well your relationship with the Lord and you will directly see the spiritual truth.

Lāhirī: I understand the truth of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate form of the Supreme. The impersonal Brahman and the Supersoul are subordinate to Him. He is all-pervading. In the spiritual world He manifests His wonderful form. He is a person, He is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, and He is the master of all potencies. Even though He is the master of all potencies, He is always overcome with bliss in the company of His hlādinī śakti (pleasure potency). Now please tell me about the individual spirit souls.

Bābājī: Among the limitless potencies of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one is called taṭasthā śakti. Positioned between the spiritual and material worlds, this potency can reside in either of them. This potency is also called jīva-tattva (the individual spirit souls). The individual souls are tiny particles of spirit. Because they are tiny particles, they may attain bondage in the material world. However, because they are pure spirit, they may also reside eternally in the supremely blissful spiritual world. the individual spirit souls are of two kinds: 1. souls who reside in the spiritual world, and 2. souls in bondage who reside in the material world. Souls in bondage in the material world are of two kinds: 1. intelligent, and 2. unintelligent. Birds, beasts, and human beings who do not strive to attain the supreme spiritual goal are the unintelligent materially bound souls. Human beings who follow the path of the Vaiṣṇava religion are intelligent. They who are not Vaiṣṇavas so not actively strive for the real goal of life. Therefore the scriptures declare the service to Vaiṣṇavas and association with Vaiṣṇavas are the best of all activities. Intelligent human beings who have faith in the scriptures and chant the holy names of Lord Hari naturally associate with Vaiṣṇavas. They who are not intelligent do not have faith in the scriptures and do not chant the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Even though they may serve the Deity form of Lord Kṛṣṇa according to the rules passed down through the disciplic succession, in their hearts such unintelligent persons do not properly honor Vaiṣṇavas.

Lāhirī: Now I understand the truth about Lord Kṛṣṇa and the truth about the individual spirit souls. Now please tell me the truth about the illusory potency māyā.

Bābājī: Māyā is matter. Māyā is one of the potencies of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Māyā is also called aparā śakti (material potency) and bahiraṅgā śakti (external potency). As a shadow stays far away from light, so māyā stays far away from Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. Māyā manifested the fourteen material worlds, earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false ego, which makes one think `I am this material body'. The gross and subtle material bodies of the bound souls are manifested by

māyā. When a soul attains liberation, his spiritual body is cleansed of māyā's influence. To the extent he is tightly bound by māyā, to that extent the soul is far away from Lord Kṛṣṇa. To the extent the soul is free of maya's influence, to that extent the soul is able to see Lord Kṛṣṇa face-to-face. The material universe, which is a place of sense-pleasures for the bound souls, has sprouted from Lord Kṛṣṇa's will. The spirit souls do not stay forever in the material world. The material world is only a prison for the spirit souls.

Lāhirī: O master, now please tell me of the eternal relationship that exists between māyā, the individual soul, and Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Bābājī: The tiny spirit soul is an eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The world of māyā is the soul's prison. By associating with devotees and chanting the holy names, the soul attains Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Then, restored to his original spiritual form, the soul tastes the nectar of direct service to Lord Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual world. These are the confidential relationships between these three. Without understanding this, how can anyone engage in devotional service?

Lāhirī: If one should carefully attain this knowledge, must one become a great scholar before becoming a Vaiṣṇava?

Bābājī: A Vaiṣṇava need not study different languages and become a great scholar. To throw far away the bewilderments presented by māyā, what the soul must do is take shelter of the feet of a bona-fide Vaiṣṇava spiritual master. By the spiritual master's words of instruction and by the disciple's own spiritual activities, the disciple comes to understand truth of these relationships. This is called dīkṣā (initiation) and śikṣā (instruction).

Lāhirī: What does one do after initiation and instruction?

Bābājī: Living a moral life, one should serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is called abhidheya. Because it is clearly described in the Vedas and all other scriptures, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu called this activity abhidheya.

Lāhirī (with tears in his eyes): O spiritual master, I take shelter of your feet. By hearing the honey of your words, I now understand my relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. By your mercy all my pervious ideas of caste, knowledge, and spiritual instruction are thrown far away. Now please mercifully instruct me about abhidheya.

Bābājī: There need be no more worry. Now that you are humble, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya will certainly be merciful to you. Association with devotees is the only cure for souls bound in the material world. The bona-fide spiritual master mercifully teaches one how to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. By engaging in devotional service one gradually attains the goal of life. Thus devotional service is called abhidheya.

Lāhirī: Please tell me: How does one serve Lord Hari?

Bābājī: Devotional service to Lord Hari is called bhakti. Bhakti has three stages: 1. sādhana (devotional service in practice), 2. bhāva (ecstasy), and 3. prema (pure love). The beginning stage is sādhana. By again and again performing sādhana, bhāva is manifested. When bhāva becomes perfect it is called prema.

Lāhirī: What are the different kinds of sādhana, and how are they performed? Please teach me that.

Bābājī: In his book Śrī Hari-bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has elaborately described all this. I will give a brief summary. There are nine kinds of sādhana. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.23) it is said:

śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
śravaṇaṁ pāda-sevanam
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyaṁ
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."*

Thus in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam it is written that the nine kinds of sādhana-bhakti are: 1. Hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name, form, qualities, paraphernalia, and pastimes of Lord Viṣṇu, 2. remembering them, 3. serving the lotus feet of the Lord, 4. offering the Lord respectful worship with sixteen types of paraphernalia, 5. offering prayers to the Lord, 6. becoming His servant, 7. considering the Lord one's best friend, and 8. surrendering everything unto Him. Describing the different limbs and sub-limbs that are parts of these, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī describes 64 different kinds of sādhana-bhakti. While considering these points, another topic needs to be explained. Sādhana-bhakti is of two kinds: 1. vaidhī (according to rules and regulations), and 2. rāgānuga (spontaneous). In vaidhī bhakti one engages in the nine kinds of activities previously described. In rāgānuga-bhakti one engages in the activities of sādhana-bhakti, but one becomes a follower of the people of Vraja, and in one's mind one serves Lord Kṛṣṇa as they do. One should engage in the kind of sādhana-bhakti for which he is qualified.

Lāhirī: How does one know he is qualified for one or the other of these kinds of sādhana-bhakti?

Bābājī: A faithful person who follows the rules and regulations is qualified. In the beginning his spiritual master teaches him vaidhī sādhana-bhakti. Then, when the disciple becomes qualified, the spiritual master teaches him how to worship the Lord by following the path of rāgānuga-bhakti.

Lāhirī: How does a person know he has become qualified for this?

Bābājī: One who has not yet experienced in his heart the love that characterizes rāgānuga-bhakti, and who instead wishes to serve the Lord according to the rules and regulations described in the scriptures is qualified to engage in vaidhī bhakti. One who does not wish to be ruled by the scriptures' rules and regulations in his devotional service to Lord Hari, and in whose heart a spontaneous love for Lord Hari's devotional service has become manifested, is qualified to engage in raganuga-bhakti.

Lāhirī: O master, please tell me for which one I am qualified. I cannot understand these explanations of who is qualified for what. I do not know whether I should engage in vaidhī or rāgānuga bhakti.

Bābājī: If you examine your heart you will understand where you are qualified. In your heart do you see the idea that it is not possible to engage in devotional

service to Lord Hari without following the scriptures' teachings?

Lāhirī: In my mind is the idea that sādhana-bhakti following the scriptures teachings brings the best result. But now in my mind I also think that devotional service to Lord Hari is a great ocean of nectar, and by engaging in devotional service I will gradually be able to taste that nectar.

Bābājī: You can now see that the scriptures' rules and regulations are the ruler of your mind. Therefore you should engage in vaidhī bhakti. Gradually the spiritual love that is raganuga-bhakti will manifest in your heart.

Hearing these words, Lāhirī Mahāśaya, his eyes now filled with tears, touched the bābājī's feet and said, "Please be merciful and engage me as I am qualified. I am not able to understand my own qualifications." The saintly bābājī then embraced him and made him sit down again.

Lāhirī: Please clearly order me, and I will thus engage in devotional service.

Bābājī: You should chant the holy names of Lord Hari. Taking shelter of the holy names is the most powerful of all kinds of devotional service. The name of the Lord and the Lord Himself are not different. By offenselessly chanting the holy names one quickly attains all spiritual perfections. Therefore with great faith you should chant the holy names. By again and again chanting the holy names, one engages in all nine kinds of devotional service. By chanting the holy names aloud one engages in śravaṇam (hearing) and kīrtanam (chanting). As one chants the holy names one will naturally remember (smaraṇam) the pastimes of Lord Hari, and in one's mind one will serve His feet (pāda-sevanam), worship Him (arcanam), offer obeisances to Him (vandanam), serve Him (dāsyam), think of Him as a friend (sakhyam), and surrender everything to Him (ātma-nivedanam). In this way one engages in all nine activities of devotional service.

Lāhirī: My heart is very eager to receive the holy names. O master, please be merciful. Please don't delay any further.

Bābājī: O great soul, without committing offenses, you should always chant this mantra:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

As he chanted these words again and again, the saintly bābājī placed in Lāhirī Mahāśaya's hands a string of tulasī beads. Weeping, Lāhirī Mahāśaya again and again chanted the holy names on these beads. He said, "O master, I cannot express the happiness I feel today." Overcome with happiness, Lāhirī fell unconscious at the bābājī's feet. The saintly bābājī carefully picked him up. After a long time Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "Today I am fortunate. Never before have I been so happy."

Bābājī: O great soul, you are fortunate, for you have faithfully accepted the holy names. Thus you have made me fortunate also.

From that day Lāhirī Mahāśaya chanted the holy names on those beads.

Without fear he stayed in his cottage and chanted the holy names. Some days passed in this way. Lāhirī Mahāśaya wore the twelve tilaka marks. He did not eat anything but kṛṣṇa-prasādam. Every day he chanted two lakṣas of the holy names of Lord Hari. Whenever he saw a pure Vaiṣṇava, he would always offer daṇḍavat obeisances. Every day he would offer daṇḍavat obeisances to the paramahaṁsa bābājī before attending to other duties. He always served his spiritual master. He was not attracted to useless gossip or non-devotional music. He was not the same Lāhirī Mahāśaya. Now he was a Vaiṣṇava.

One day he offered daṇḍavat obeisances to saintly Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī and asked, "O master, what is the final spiritual goal (prayojana)?"

Bābājī: Pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa-prema) is the final spiritual goal for the individual soul. Again and again performing the duties of sādhana-bhakti, one attains the state of bhāva (ecstasy). When bhāva becomes complete and reaches its perfection, it is called prema (pure spiritual love). That is the individual soul's eternal nature, his eternal wealth, his highest goal. The absence of this love is the greatest calamity. It means bondage in the material world. It means the attempt to enjoy with the material senses. Nothing is higher or better than this spiritual love (prema). Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself is controlled by this love alone. This love is purely spiritual. It is filled with the most intense spiritual bliss.

Lāhirī (weeping again and again): Will I ever be qualified to attain this spiritual love?

Bābājī (embracing him): Look, and in a few days your sadhana-bhakti will become bhāva-bhakti. A few days after that Lord Kṛṣṇa will certainly be merciful to you.

Overcome with joy to hear this, Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, “Ah, aside from the spiritual master, nothing is important. My spiritual master has mercifully rescued me from the blind well of material sense gratification."

Chapter Five
Vaidhī-bhakti, Nitya-dharma, Naimittik Naya
Vaidhī-bhakti, The Eternal Religion. It Is Not Temporary

Lāhirī Mahāśaya had a large family in his home in Śāntipura. His two sons were famous scholars. One was named Candranātha, who was 35 years old. He was a landowner (zamindar) and he looked after all the household affairs. He was learned in the medical texts. He did trouble himself much with religion. Still, he was honored in brāhmaṇa society. He took care of the servants, maids, doorkeepers, and others, and he looked after the household affairs. The second son was named Devīdāsa. From childhood he eagerly studied the Nyāya-śāstra and Smṛti-śāstra. He had his own school with ten or fifteen students. He bore the title Vidyāratna (the jewel of knowledge).

One day in Śāntipura there was a rumor that Kālīdāsa Lāhirī had become a Vaiṣṇava ascetic. The rumor was everywhere: at the bathing ghāṭas, in the marketplace, and on the streets. Some said that he was now a senile old man.

Indeed, on that day the general opinion was that he had become senile. Some said, "Perhaps he was struck with some disease. He is a brāhmaṇa by birth. His sons and wife and family obey him. What suffering led him to renounce the world?" Some said, “Such is the sad end of they who run here and there advertising their love for religion." Some educated persons said, "Kalidāsa Lāhirī is a very pious man. Although everything this world has to offer is in his possession, in his old age he has become attracted to the holy names of Lord Hari." In these ways they talked. Hearing all these rumors, someone repeated them to Devīdāsa Vidyāratna Mahāśaya.

Rapt in thought, Vidyāratna approached his elder brother and said, "Brother, I think our father is in great trouble. His body is in good health. He is staying at Godruma in Nadīyā. But he has fallen into bad association. We cannot be blind to the rumors in the village."

Candranātha replied, "O brother, I have also heard some of these rumors. The fame of our house in very great. Still, when I hear these rumors about father, I can no longer hold my head high. We have always held the family of Advaita Prabhu in low esteem. But what has now happened in our own house? Let us go home, consult with our saintly mother, and do what we can."

Devīdāsa and Candranātha sat on the veranda of their home. A brāhmaṇa widow served them their meal. Their mother sat with them, arranging for the meal. Candranātha said, "Mother, have you heard any news about father?"

The saintly mother replied, "Why? Is his health good? He is in Navadvīpa now. He is mad after the holy names of Lord Hari. Why don't you bring him back here?"

Devīdāsa said, "Mother, his health is good. But I have heard that other things are not good. If we bring him home our reputation will be ruined."

Then the saintly mother asked, "How can it be? The other day at the Gangā's shore I talked about many things with the daughter-in-law of one of the big Gosvāmī's. She said to me, `Your husband is very fortunate. The Vaiṣṇavas honor him'."

Devīdāsa said, "He is not honored in our social circles. Now that he is old in years will he stay at home and allow us to serve him? No. He eats the remnants left by men who wear loincloths. He has defiled our exalted family. O wicked age of Kali! Our father has seen and heard so much! What has happened to his intelligence now?"

The saintly mother said, "Bring him here and keep him hidden until you can bring him to his senses."

Candranātha said, "What else can we do? Accompanied by two or three men, Devī should go to Godruma and secretly bring father back."

Devī said, "You know very well that father, thinking me an atheist, does not have a very good opinion of me. If I cannot even talk with him there should be something else I can do."

Devīdāsa's maternal cousin Śambhunātha is liked by father. Śambhunātha stayed with him and served him for many days. So it was settled that the two of them, Devīdāsa and Śambhunātha were to go to Godruma. A servant was sent in advance to arrange their stay in some brāhmaṇa's home.

The next day Śambhunātha and Devīdāsa finished their meal and set out for Godruma. Arriving, they descended from their palanquins and gave the bearers permission to depart. At their new place they would have one brāhmaṇa cook and

two servants.

At sunset Devīdāsa and Śambhunātha peacefully walked about Pradyumna-kuñja. They saw Lāhirī Mahāśaya sitting on a leaf-seat in Śrī Surabhi's courtyard. His eyes closed, he was chanting the holy names of Lord Hari on his beads. His limbs were glorious with the twelve tilaka marks. Quietly entering the courtyard, Śambhunātha and Devīdāsa offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the feet of Lāhirī Mahāśaya. Startled, Lāhirī Mahāśaya opened his eyes and said, "Ś_ambhu, why have you come? What is in your mind, that you have come here? Devī, is all well with you?"

The two of them humbly said, "Because you have blessed us, all is well."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya asked, "Will you take your meal here?" The two answered, "We are already guests at someone's house. You need not worry for us."

At that moment the sound of Lord Hari's holy names came from Śrī Prema dāsa's cottage of madhavi and malati vines. Then Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa came from his cottage and asked Lāhirī Mahāśaya, "Why does the sound of Lord Hari's holy names come from the paramahaṁsa bābājī's cottage?" lahiri Mahāśaya and Vaiṣṇava dāsa went there. There they saw many Vaiṣṇavas chanting the holy names of Lord Hari and circumambulating the saintly bābājī. The two of them joined in these activities. Then everyone offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī. Then everyone sat down. Devīdāsa and Śambhunātha also sat down to one side. They were like two ducks surrounded by a flock of swans.

One of the Vaiṣṇavas said, "We come from the town of Kattwa. Our primary reason to come here is to see Śrī Navadvīpa and Śrī Māyāpura and to attain the dust of the paramahaṁsa bābājī's feet. Embarrassed, the paramahaṁsa bābājī said, “I am a fallen sinner. You have come here to purify me. After a short time it becomes obvious that these Vaiṣṇavas are very expert in singing the glories of Lard Hari. In a moment mṛdaṅga and karatālas are brought. Reading from a paper, an elderly Vaiṣṇava sang these words:

śrī kṛṣṇa caitanyacandra prabhu nityānanda
gadāi advaitacandra gaura-bhakta-vṛnda

"O Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanyacandra! O Prabhu Nityānanda! O Gadādhara! O Advaitacandra! O devotees of Lord Gaura!

apāra karuṇā-sindhu vaiṣṇava ṭhākur
mo hena pāmare dayā karaha pracur

"O Vaiṣṇava Ṭhākura, O shoreless ocean of mercy, please be merciful to me, a fallen sinner.

jāti bidyā dhana jana made matta jane
uddhāra kara he nātha kṛpā-vitaraṇe

"Master, please be merciful and deliver me, a person mad with pride in my birth, learning, and wealth.

kanaka kāminī lobha pratiṣṭhā vāsanā
chāḍāiyā śodha more, e mora prārthanā

"Please purify me of the desire for gold, women, and fame. That is my prayer.

nāme ruci, jīve dayā, vaiṣṇave ullās
dayā kari' deha more ohe kṛṣṇadāsa

"O servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa, please be merciful and give me attraction for the holy name, mercy to the living entities, and happy association with the Vaiṣṇavas.

tomāra caraṇa-chāyā eka-mātra āśā
jīvane maraṇe mātra āmāra bharasā

"The shade of your feet is my only hope. Whether I live or die, you are my only shelter."

When these verse came to an end, Lāhirī Mahāśaya sang a prayer he had himself composed:

miche māyā-vaśe, saṁsāra-sāgare, paḍiyāchilāma āmi
karuṇā kariyā, diyā pada-chāyā, āmāre tārile tumi

"I was in the grip of illusion. I had fallen into the ocean of birth and death. You were merciful to me. You gave me the shade of your feet. You rescued me.

śuna śuna vaiṣṇava ṭhākur
tomāra caraṇe, sampayāchi māthā, mora duḥkha kara dūr

"Please hear me! O saintly Vaiṣṇava, please hear me! Now I surrender to your feet. Please throw my sufferings far away.

jātir gaurer, kebala gauraba, bidyā se abidyā-kalā
śodhiyā āmāya, nitāi-caraṇe, sampahe,{fn 2}jauka jvālā

"Pride of caste is hell. Material learning is ignorance. Please purify me and place me before Lord Nityānanda's feet. Please extinguish the fire that burns within me.

tomāra kṛpāya, āmāra jihvāya, sphuraka jugala-nām
kahe kālīdāsa, āmāra hṛdaye, jaguka śrī-rādhā-śyām

"Please be merciful and place on my tongue the holy names of the Divine Couple. Kālīdāsa prays: Please place Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma in my heart.

Hearing this song, everyone became wild with happiness. Together they stood up. Again and again they sang. Again and again singing the words "Please place Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Śyāma in my heart", they danced wildly. Again and again dancing, some Vaiṣṇava become overwhelmed with spiritual love and fell unconscious. Then something unprecedented happened, something that when he saw it made Devīdāsa think, “Father is now plunged in meditation on the Absolute. It will be difficult to take him home again. The meeting broke up in the middle of the night. After saying their farewells, everyone returned to their own places. After bidding farewell to Lāhirī Mahāśaya, Devīdāsa and Ś_ambhunātha returned to their host's home.

The next day, after they had finished their meal, Devi and Śambhu entered Lāhirī Mahāśaya's cottage. After offering daṇḍavat obeisances, Devīdāsa Vidyāratna placed the following request before Lāhirī Mahāśaya: "This is my request: Please reside in Śāntipura. In this place there are many troubles and inconveniences. All of us will happily serve you at home. If you order, we will arrange a solitary room for you to stay there."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya replied, "It is not a bad idea. Still, in Śāntipura I will not be able to associate with devotees as I do here. Devī, you know that the people of Śāntipura are atheists and delight in criticizing others. It is not a happy place for anyone to live. True, there are many brāhmaṇas there, but their intelligence is warped by association with weavers. The three characteristics of Śāntipura's people are fine garments, pompous words, and blasphemy of Vaiṣṇavas. That is why the descendants of Advaita Prabhu suffer there. By bad association even many of them have also turned against Lord Mahāprabhu. Therefore please arrange that I may stay here in Godruma. That is my desire."

Devīdāsa said, "Father, what you say is true. Still, why need you have any contact with Śāntipura's people? In your own private room you can chant Gāyatrī and perform your other religious duties. In this way you may pass your days. A brāhmaṇa has eternal duties and eternal religious rituals. Great souls like yourself should always be absorbed in these duties."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "Son, those days are no more. Now that I have stayed for some moths with the devotees and heard the teachings of my spiritual master, my view of life is completely changed. What you call eternal duties I call temporary

duties. Devotional service to Lord Hari is the soul's only eternal duty. Chanting Gāyatrī and other like duties are all temporary.

Devīdāsa replied, "Father, I do not see that duty in any scripture. Is chanting Gāyatrī not the worship of Lord Hari? If chanting Gāyatrī is the worship of Lord Hari, then it is an eternal religious duty. How is chanting Gāyatrī different from hearing and chanting about Lord Hari and the other activities of vadhī-bhakti?"

Lāhirī Mahāśaya said, "Child, Chanting Gāyatrī and other karma-kāṇḍa activities are very different from vadhī-bhakti. Chanting Gāyatrī and other karma-kāṇḍa activities are performed with a desire to attain impersonal liberation. However hearing and chanting about Lord Hari and the other activities of vadhī-bhakti are not performed with any material motive. When in the scriptures such results are seen to come from the devotional activities that begin with hearing and chanting the glories of Lord Hari, that is so only for the purpose of attracting the materialists. Devotional service to Lord Hari brings only one result: devotional service to Lord Hari. It brings no other result. The primary result attained by vaidhī-bhakti is that one becomes attracted to serve Lord Hari."

Devīdāsa said, "Father, then it is true that some secondary results also come from devotional service to Lord Hari."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: For different kinds of neophyte devotees there are secondary results. Still a true Vaiṣṇava engages in sādhana-bhakti so that he may some day attain the perfection of devotional service. They who are not true devotees perform sādhana-bhakti to attain two goals: 1. material sense gratification, and 2. impersonal liberation. Externally one cannot see a difference in the activities of true Vaiṣṇavas and pretenders, but internally, at the root, there is a difference of faith. The worship of Lord Hari performed by a person who thinks that worship a material fruitive activity may bring purity of mind, impersonal liberation, cure of diseases, or other material results. Still, the worship of Lord Hari performed by a person who thinks that worship is spiritual devotional service brings attraction to Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy names as its only result. For the materialists, observance of the ekādaśī vow destroys sins. For the devotees, observance of the ekādaśī vow increases devotion to Lord Hari. You can see the difference here. The subtle difference of sādhana-bhakti performed by they who think it a material activity and they who think it spiritual devotional service can be understood only by the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The materialists are caught up in the secondary results. The devotees attain the primary result. All secondary results may be grouped into two categories: 1. material sense gratification, and 2. impersonal liberation.

Devīdāsa: Then why do the scriptures praise these secondary results? Lāhirī Mahāśaya: Two kinds of human beings inhabit the material world: 1. the intelligent, and 2. the unintelligent. The unintelligent will not perform any spiritual activity unless they see an immediate material benefit comes from it. For such persons the scriptures praise the secondary results of devotional service. However, it is not the purpose of the scriptures that such persons shall remain always content with these secondary results. The idea is that, after a short time and by the mercy of the Lord's devotees, such persons will become attracted to the primary result.

Devīdāsa: Are Raghunandana and the other authors of smṛti-śāstras then unintelligent?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: No. They themselves seek the primary result. Still, the code of actions they prescribe is meant for the unintelligent.

Devīdāsa: In some scriptures we see only the secondary results are described and there is no mention of this primary result. What is the reason for that?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: The scriptures are of three kinds according to the three classes of human beings eligible to receive them. For human beings in the mode of goodness there are scriptures in the mode of goodness. For human beings in the mode of passion there are scriptures in the mode of passion. For human beings in the mode of ignorance there are scriptures in the mode of ignorance.

Devīdāsa: In which of these scriptures should one place his faith? How can a person in the lower stages become elevated?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: Persons with different kinds of qualifications have different kinds of faith. They who are in the mode of ignorance have faith in the scriptures of the mode of ignorance. They who are in the mode of passion have faith in the scriptures of the mode of passion. They who are in the mode of goodness have faith in the scriptures of the mode of goodness. Thus a person believes the conclusions of the scripture in which, according to the modes, he naturally has faith. By faithfully performing the duties for which he is qualified, and by associating with saintly devotees, one becomes elevated in this birth. Thus elevated, a person attains faith in the scriptures meant for elevated persons. The authors of the scriptures are perfectly learned and not at all bewildered. They composed the scriptures in such a way that by faithfully performing his own duties a person may be gradually elevated. That is why the different scriptures describe many different kinds of duties. Faith in the scriptures is the source of all auspiciousness. Śrīmad-Bhagavad-gītā describes all the different conclusions of the different scriptures and at the end it clearly describes the final conclusion of all scriptures.

Devīdāsa: Since boyhood I have studied many scriptures, but today, by your mercy, I can understand the wonderful purpose of them all.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.8.10) it is written:

aṇubhyaś ca mahadbhyaś ca
śāstrebhyo kuśalo naraḥ
sarvataḥ sāram ādadyāt
puṣpebhya iva ṣaṭpadaḥ

"Just as a honeybee takes nectar from all flowers, big and small, an intelligent human being should take the essence from all religious scriptures."***

Son, I used to call you an atheist. Now I do not speak ill of anyone. Anyone who faithfully performs the prescribed duties that suit his nature should not be criticized. In fact everyone acts according to their nature and all will be gradually elevated at the proper time. You are learned in books of logic and fruitive action. Therefore you are not to blame if your words follow those ideas.

Devīdāsa: I know some things, but I am not learned in the Vaiṣṇava religion. I used to think that the Vaiṣṇavas are fanatics who insisted on interpreting the

scriptures in their own way. But now that I have heard your explanation, I know that among the Vaiṣṇavas are learned persons who know the true meaning of the scriptures. From what great soul have you learned all this about the scriptures?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: Son, recently I have been instructed by a staunch Vaiṣṇava. In the next cottage my spiritual master worships the Lord. He has taught me the meanings of all the scriptures. He is the person I have described to you. If you approach his feet you may ask him about devotional service. Come, you and I will visit him.

After speaking these words, Lāhirī Mahāśaya took Devīdāsa Vidyāratna to the cottage of Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa. Leaving him there, Lāhirī went to his own cottage, sat down, and chanted the holy names.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Child, have you studied the scriptures?

Devīdāsa: I studied the nyāā-śāstras from Muktipāda to Siddhānta-kusumāñjalī, and I also studied all the smṛti-śāstras.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Did you study many scriptures diligently? What was your conclusion after diligently studying them?

Devīdāsa: The conclusion is given in the words, “With great trouble one should renounce everything and attain impersonal liberation." Therefore the conclusion of the scriptures is that one should struggle by every available means to attain impersonal liberation. Therefore, while faithfully executing my prescribed duties, I have sought impersonal liberation.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: At one time I also studied all books, and, like you, I also yearned to attain impersonal liberation.

Devīdāsa: Why did you abandon the desire for impersonal liberation?

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Child, tell me: What is the nature of impersonal liberation?

Devīdāsa: In the opinion of the nyāya-śāstras, Brahman and the individual soul are eternally distinct. How, then, is it possible to renounce everything and attain impersonal liberation. According to this system, it is clearly not possible. According to the Vedānta philosophy, however, liberation is defined as understanding that the individual soul and the Supreme are not really different from each other. According to this system, then, impersonal liberation is clearly possible.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Child, for fifteen years I studied Śaṅkara's interpretation of Vedānta, and after that I accepted sannyāsa. In many ways I struggled to attain impersonal liberation. For many days I meditated on what Śaṅkara considered the four most important statements of the Vedas. Afterward, thinking them all foolish, I rejected what I had read.

Devīdāsa: Why did you think those books were foolish?

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Child, a person should examine his own heart. How can others do it for him? How can others understand his heart?

Devīdāsa could see that Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa was honest, intelligent, and very learned. Devīdāsa had never studied Vedānta. In his heart he thought, "If he is merciful to me, I can learn Vedānta from him." Thinking in this way, he said, "Am I qualified to study Vedānta?"

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: You know Sanskrit well, so you may easily study Vedānta.

Devīdāsa: If you feel merciful to me, then please teach it to me. I would learn it from you.

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: These are my words: I am a penniless servant of the Vaiṣṇavas. Because I attained the mercy of a saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī, I stay here and always chant the holy names of Lord Hari. I have very little opportunity to teach anyone Vedānta. Also, I have heard that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who is the spiritual master of the entire world, has forbidden the Vaiṣṇavas to hear or explain Śaṅkara's Śarīraka-bhāṣyā commentary on Vedānta. Therefore now I will neither study nor teach Śaṅkara's commentary. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is the son of Śacī-devī and the spiritual master of all living entities, taught the right commentary of Vedānta-sūtra to Śrī Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya. His commentary is recorded in the notebooks of many Vaiṣṇavas. If you make a copy of that commentary, then perhaps I can help you. Go to Kāñcana-palli and you may get a copy of that commentary from the home of Śrīmān Kavikarṇapūra.

Devīdāsa: I will try. You are a great scholar of Vedānta. You have spoken honestly with me. Why should I not study the Vaiṣṇava commentary on Vedānta?

Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa: In the past I have studied and taught Śaṅkara's commentary. There is also Śrī Rāmānujācārya's Śrī-bhasya and many other commentaries also. The Bengali Vaiṣṇavas have the commentary that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave to Śrī Gopīnātha Acārya. I have not seen any commentary better than that. No one can dispute the Supreme Personality of Godhead's own explanations of the Vedānta-sūtras. Commentaries on the Vedānta-sūtras should include many quotations from the Upaniṣads. If one simply writes what he thinks, and does not support his arguments with quotations from the Upaniṣads, learned persons will not accept his commentary.

Happy at heart to hear these words, Devīdāsa Vidyāratna offered daṇḍavat obeisances to Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa. Then Devīdāsa entered his father's cottage and told him all that had been said. Filled with happiness, his father said, “Devī, you have studied and taught many books. Now you should research the the eternal nature of the soul."

Devīdāsa: Father, I had earnestly hoped to bring you away from Śrī Godruma. That is why I came here. Please be merciful. Come back just once and fulfill everyone's desires. Especially my saintly mother yearns to see your feet just one more time.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: I have taken shelter of the Vaiṣṇavas' feet. I have made a solemn vow that I shall never return home, for even a visit would obstruct my devotional life. In the past you have all worshiped Lord Viṣṇu. You may all visit me.

Devīdāsa: Father, what kind of answer is that? At our home we are all servants of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. We do not dishonor the holy names of Lord Hari. I am always ready to serve a Vaiṣṇava guest! Are we not Vaiṣṇavas?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: If you think your activities are the same as the Vaiṣṇavas' activities, then you are not a Vaiṣṇava.

Devīdāsa: Father, why am I not a Vaiṣṇava?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: A Vaiṣṇava renounces temporary material duties and takes

shelter of his eternal spiritual duty.

Devīdāsa: Still, I have one doubt. You have given a very good analysis of the scriptures. The Vaiṣṇavas' activities of hearing (śravaṇa), chanting (kīrtana), remembering (smaraṇa), serving the feet (pāda-sevana), worship (arcana), obeisances (vandana), carrying out the orders (dāsya), friendship (sakhya), and surrendering everything (ātma-nivedana) are activities mixed with materialism. Are they not all impelled by material motives? I think you are unreasonably attached to these things. Worshiping the Deity of the Lord, fasting, and worshiping the Lord by offering Him material things are all material activities. How can they be eternal?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: Son, I have thought about these things for many days. Please think about this carefully. There are two classes of human beings: 1. they who are interested in this material world, the here and now, and 2. they who are interested in the highest goal of life. The materialists are interested only in material happiness, material fame, and material exalted status.

Human beings who are interested in the highest goal of life are divided into three classes: 1. the devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, 2. they who are attached to impersonal speculation, and 3. they who desire mystic powers.

They who desire mystic powers are eager to attain the results offered by the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas. By performing these karma-kāṇḍa activities they attain extraordinary powers. By performing yāgas, yajñas, and yoga one can attain these powers. They think that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is obliged to give them the results of their karma-kāṇḍa activities.

The next group is they who are attached to impersonal speculation. By cultivating impersonal knowledge such persons strive to become the Supreme. Some of them say the Supreme Personality of Godhead exists, and others of them say He does not exist. Some of them say the Supreme Personality of Godhead is merely an imagination and that by worshiping this imaginary God one gradually attains impersonal knowledge. Others of them say that one must use the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, as a tool to attain impersonal knowledge. Then when one attains impersonal knowledge, the tool of worship should be thrown away. According to them, when one attains the result of worshiping the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that worship becomes transformed into impersonal knowledge. In their opinion neither the Supreme Personality of Godhead nor the worship of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are eternal.

The third class of human beings who are interested in the highest goal of life is the devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In deed, the devotees are the true seekers of the highest goal of life. In the opinion of the devotees there is one Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has neither beginning nor end. Employing His potencies, He manifests the individual spirit souls and the material world. The individual spirit souls are all His servants. Eternal service to the Lord is the soul's eternal duty and eternal nature. On his own power, the individual soul is not able to do anything. By performing materialist activities (karma) the individual soul cannot attain any result that is eternal. However, by obeying and serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead the individual soul can, by the Lord's mercy, attain the fulfillment of all his desires.

The previous two classes of human beings are called: 1. karma-kāṇḍī (they who perform material pious deeds), and 2. jñāna-kāṇḍī (impersonalists). The third

class is called īśa-bhakta (devotees of the Supreme Personality of Godhead). The karma-kāṇḍīs and jñāna-kāṇḍīs are proud to call themselves seekers after the highest spiritual goal. However, the truth is that they are materialists. They are materialists because they are pushed by material motives. Whatever pious deeds they perform are all pushed by personal, material motives.

The present day worshipers of Śiva, Durgā, Gaṇeśa, and Sūrya are all followers of the jñāna-kāṇḍa. When such persons engage in the devotional activities that begin with hearing and chanting, their goal to to attain impersonal liberation and become one with the Supreme.

They who do not have material sense gratification or impersonal liberation as their goal when they perform the devotional activities that begin with hearing and chanting are devotees of Lord Viṣṇu. They worship the Deity form of Lord Viṣṇu.

The form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternal, spiritual, and all-powerful. If the Supreme Personality of Godhead were not the highest object of worship, then it may be said that the worship of Him is temporary and not eternal.

Son, the service you offer to the Deity form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead will not bring you the highest spiritual benefit. Why not? Because you do not think the Lord's form is eternal. Therefore you are not a devotee of the Lord. Do you understand the difference between worship that is eternal and worship that is temporary and pushed by material motives?

Devīdāsa: Yes. If one does not think that the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then one's worship of the Lord is not eternal worship. But why can one not employ a temporary kind of worship to seek the eternal truth?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: You cannot say that the worship you perform is eternal worship. The worship the Vaiṣṇavas perform is eternal. The form of the Lord is eternal, their worship of that form is eternal, and all in relation to them are eternal. Therefore the Vaiṣṇava religion is eternal.

Devīdāsa: The Deity form of the Lord is a statue made by a human being. How can such a form be eternal?

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: The Deity form worshiped by the Vaiṣṇavas is not like that. First, the Supreme Personality of Godhead is not formless, like the impersonal Brahman. The form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is all powerful, eternal, and filled with knowledge and bliss. That is the Lord's form that should be worshiped. In the beginning the Lord's form is manifested within the individual spirit soul. Thus the Lord's form appears in the living entity's heart. When bhakti-yoga (devotional service) is manifested in the heart, then the Lord's form also appears there. When a devotee sees in his heart the spiritual form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the devotee knows that this is the same form manifested externally as the Deity. The impersonalists do not worship the form of the Supreme Lord in this way. They think the Deity is a statue made of material elements, a statue that while it is being worshiped is imagined to be the same as the impersonal Supreme. However, the truth is that the Deity form of the Lord is not at all a statue made of material elements. In this way the impersonalists and the devotees have very different conceptions of the worship of the Deity of the Lord. By the mercy of a bona-fide spiritual master one may accept Vaiṣṇava initiation. Then one is able to directly see that the Deity of the Lord is not a statue made of material elements.

Devīdāsa: I see that. The Vaiṣṇavas are not fanatics. They see very subtle things.

The worship of the Deity form of the Lord and the worship of a material statue are very different indeed. However, I do not see any difference in the external actions of these two kinds of worship. The difference is in the spiritual faith of the worshiper. I will think about this subject for a few more days. Father, I have one big doubt. As far as I am able to understand, the impersonalists worship of the Lord is merely a form of cheating and trickery. At a later time I will place this question before your feet.

After speaking these words, Devīdāsa Vidyāratna went with Ś_ambhunātha to their host's house, where the spent the remainder of the afternoon. Still, they did not find an opportunity to talk among themselves. Everyone at that house found all their happiness in singing the holy names of Lord Hari.

The next afternoon they all went to the paramahaṁsa bābājī's terrace. There Devīdāsa Vidyāratna, Ś_ambhunātha, and Lāhirī Mahāśaya stayed close together. At that time the kāzī of Brāhmaṇa-puṣkariṇī also came there. Seeing the kāzī, the Vaiṣṇava respectfully stood up. Happily greeting the Vaiṣṇavas, the kāzī entered the terrace. The paramahaṁsa bābājī said to him, "We are now fortunate, for a descendant of the Cānda Kāzī who received the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu has come to visit us. Please give your mercy to us." The kāzī then said, "It is by the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu that I have received the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas. Lord Caitanya is the master of my life. I do not do anything without first offering my daṇḍavat obeisances to Him."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya was fluent in the language of the Muslims. He had studied the Koran and also many books of the sufis. To the kāzī he addressed this question: "What is your idea of liberation?"

The kāzī replied, "Where you use the word `jīva' (individual spirit soul), we use the word `ru'. The ru has two states of existence: 1. ru-mujarradi, and 2. ru-tarkibi. What you call `cit' (spirit) we call `mujarrad'. What you call `acit' (matter) we call `jisam'. The spiritual world (mujarrad) is beyond material time. The material world (jisam) is subject to time's control. The `tarkibi-ru', or `baddha-jīva' (conditioned soul), is filled with material desires. His mind is filled with material ideas. The `mujarrad-ru' (liberated soul) is pure and free from these contaminations. A person who says, `alam misal' (I am spirit) is able to become a `mujarradi-ru' (liberated soul). By the gradually development of `esk' (spiritual love) the `ru' (soul) becomes purified. A great saint goes to the abode of God. He does not stay in the material world. In that spiritual world he is the servant and God is the master. The soul and God have that relationship eternally. The attainment of that pure relationship with God is called liberation. The sufis explain the Koran in that way, but not everyone is able to understand this explanation. By the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Cānda Kāzī understood this and taught this to me. In that way I know that you are all pure devotees of the Lord.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: What is the teaching that is at the root of the Koran?

Kāzī: there are many teachings in the Koran. I cannot single out a particular kind of worship to tell you. However, the purpose of life is to worship God. When they see the supremely blissful Supreme God, all people become plunged into transcendental bliss. Lord Caitanya has explained in this way.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: How does the Koran describe the form of God?

Kāzī: The Koran says that God has no form. However, Lord Caitanya told the

Cānda Kāzī that the meaning of these words of the Koran is that God has no material form. The Koran does not mean to say that God does not have a spiritual form. The prophet himself saw the form of God, which is filled with transcendental love. He also described all the rasas, but only in a concealed way.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: What do the sufis say?

Kāzī: their philosophy is "anal hak", which means "I am God". In this way the philosophy of the Vedic impersonalists and the Muslim sufis is the same.

Lāhirī Mahāśaya: Are you a sufi?

Kāzī: No. I am a pure devotee. I have surrendered my life to Lord Caitanya.

Thus talking about many things, the saintly kāzī and the Vaiṣṇavas treated each other with great respect. Finally the meeting ended with a great chanting of the holy names of Lord Hari.

Chapter Six
Nitya-dharma O Jāti-varṇādi-bheda
Eternal Religion and the Differences of Caste

Devīdāsa Vidyāratna was a teacher. For many days he had complete faith that the brāhmaṇas were the best of all castes. He thought, "None but the brāhmaṇas could understand the spiritual goal of life. Without first taking birth in a brāhmaṇa family no one can attain liberation. It is by birth that one becomes a brāhmaṇa." When the heard the conversation the Vaiṣṇavas had with Cānda Kāzī's descendent, he became very disgusted. He could not enter into an understanding of the truths explained by the saintly kāzī. In his mind he thought, “The Yavana caste certainly acts strangely. No one can understand the meaning of what they say. Ah well, father could read Persian and Arabic. He has spent many days studying religion. But why does he respect the Yavanas so? In that assembly why did Vaiṣṇava dāsa and the paramahaṁsa bābājī show so much respect to a Yavana, whose contaminating touch makes one take a bath?"

That night he said, "Ś_ambhu, with the fire of logic I will burn the philosophy of the offenders into ashes. It was in Navadvīpa that Sārvabhauma and Śiromaṇi discussed the nyaya-sastra. It was in Navadvīpa that Raghunātha churned the twenty-eight truths from the smṛti-śāstras. How can Hindus and Yavanas mingle together in this same Navadvīpa? Perhaps the teachers of Navadvīpa do not understand how they should act. In one or two days this Vidyāratna will do something to set this situation right."

Nine hours had passed. Covered by the malice of clouds, the sun had not yet been able to glance upon the earth. At dawn it rained with thudding sounds of "dipdip". During the twelfth half-hour Devi and Śambhu ate kichari. The Vaiṣṇavas were delayed in their mādhukarī begging for alms. By the time the third three-hour watch had passed all the Vaiṣṇavas had honored prasādam. Now they

stayed in one part of the mālatī and mādhavī vine terrace and chanted the holy names on their beads. The paramahaṁsa bābājī, Vaiṣṇava dāsa, paṇḍita Ananta dāsa, who had just come from Nṛsiṁha-pall\i, Lāhir\i Mahāśaya, and Yādava dāsa from Kuliyā were happily chanting the holy names on their tulas\i beads. At that time Vidyāratna Mahāśaya, Caturbhuja Padaratna from Samudragara, Cintāmaṇi Nyāyaratna from Vārāṇasī, Kālīdāsa Vāsaspati from Pūrvasthalī, and the famous paṇḍita Kṛṣṇa Cūḍāmaṇi all came there. The Vaiṣṇavas very respectfully offered sitting places to their brāhmaṇa paṇḍita guests. The paramahaṁsa bābājī said, "It is said that a day overcast with clouds is a bad day indeed. However, for us it has become a good day, for many learned paṇḍitas who live in holy places have mercifully placed the dust of their feet in my cottage. Because they were naturally humbler than a blade of grass, the Vaiṣṇavas, saying, "We offer our respectful obeisances to the brāhmaṇas", bowed down to offer their respects. Thinking themselves very learned and important, the brāhmaṇas responded by offering blessings. Vidyāratna had invited them there for a great debate. Because they were all younger than him, the brāhmaṇas bowed down before Lāhirī Mahāśaya. Because he now understood the real truth, Lāhirī Mahāśaya at once reciprocated by bowing down before the brāhmaṇas.

Among these paṇḍitas, Kṛṣṇa-cūḍāmaṇi was the most eloquent. In Vārāṇasī, Mithilā, and many other places he had defeated many paṇḍitas with the great power of his logic. He was short, splendidly dark, and grave. His eyes glistened like two stars. It was he who began the discussion with the Vaiṣṇavas.

He said, "Saying amongst ourselves, `Today we shall see the Vaiṣṇavas', we have now come here. We do not think everything you do is very good, but still we think your single-pointed devotional service is very good indeed. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself has said (Bhagavad-gītā 9.39):

api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag-vyavasito hi saḥ

"Even if one commits the most abominable actions, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated."*

"We offer our respectful obeisances to these words of Bhagavad-gītā. Therefore I have come here to see many saintly persons. However, we have another purpose also. It is this: On the pretext of devotional service you associate with Yavanas. I want to talk with you about that. One of you expert in debate should now please step forward."

Hearing Cūḍāmaṇi's words, the Vaiṣṇavas became unhappy. The saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī said, "I am a fool. What do I know of debates? As great saints have acted in a saintly way, so we also try to act. You please repeat the teachings of the scriptures and we will listen in silence."

Cūḍāmaṇi said, "What kind of talk is this? If the Hindus do not understand the scriptures, then the whole world will perish. You will act in a way that violates the

scriptures and then you will claim you are following the great saints. What is this? Of what saints do you speak? If they are persons who follow the scriptures and teach the message of the scriptures, then they are saints indeed. But if the people follow anyone and everyone, calling them all great saints, and If they defend their actions by quoting the words `mahājano yena gataḥ sa panthā' (One should accept whatever progressive path the mahājanas advocate *), then how can there be any auspiciousness in this world?"

Hearing Cūḍāmaṇi's words, the Vaiṣṇavas assembled in one of the cottages to decide what should be done. They came to this conclusion: When great saints are criticized, the Vaiṣṇavas should, if they are able, defend them in debate. The paramahaṁsa bābājī did not participate in this discussion. Although the paṇḍita Ananta dāsa Bābājī had seen the farther shore of the nyāya-śāstra, everyone decided that Vaiṣṇava dāsa should argue in the debate. Everyone could understand that Devīdāsa Vidyāratna was the real cause of all this trouble. Staying among them, Lāhirī Mahāśaya openly said, "Devi is very proud. His mind became agitated when he saw us associating with the saintly kāzī. That is why he has brought all these paṇḍitas." Taking the dust of the paramahaṁsa bābājī's feet, Vaiṣṇava dāsa said, "I carry the Vaiṣṇavas' command upon my head. Today all my scholarship will be successful."

By then all the clouds had gone. A sitting place was arranged in the grove of malati and madhavi vines. on one side were the brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas and on the other were all the Vaiṣṇavas. All the Vaiṣṇava paṇḍitas from Śrī Godruma and Madhyadvīpa came. Many brāhmaṇas and students from nearby also joined the meeting. It was not a small meeting. One one side were a hundred brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas, and on the other were two hundred Vaiṣṇavas. Ordered by the Vaiṣṇavas, Vaiṣṇava dāsa Babaji peacefully sat in front. Then something wonderful happened. When they saw it, the Vaiṣṇavas happily shouted out the holy name of Lord Hari. The wonderful event was this: a cluster of malati flowers spontaneously fell on Vaiṣṇava dāsa's head. The Vaiṣṇavas said, "This is a sign of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mercy."

On the other side Kṛṣṇa-cūḍāmaṇi turned up his nose and said, "You may think that, but flowers will not do. The tree is known by its fruits."

Without showing any pride, Vaiṣṇava dāsa declared, “Today's meeting in Navadvīpa is just like a meeting in Vārāṇasī. This is a source of great joy. Although I live in Bengal, I stayed for a long time in Vārāṇasī. There I studied and I also spoke in many meetings. Therefore I am not accustomed to speak in Bengali. I wish that for today's meeting the questions and answers shall be in Sanskrit. Although Cūḍāmaṇi had labored greatly in his scripture study, aside from memorizing some verses he could not speak Sanskrit. Taken aback by Vaiṣṇava dāsa's proposal, he said, "Why? For a meeting in Bengal it is best to speak the Bengali language. I am not like the paṇḍitas in the western provinces. I cannot speak Sanskrit. Seeing this, everyone could understand the Cūḍāmaṇi was becoming afraid to debate with Vaiṣṇava dāsa. Speaking together with one voice, everyone requested Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī to speak in Bengali, and he agreed.

To start the debate, Cūḍāmaṇi asked, "Is caste eternal? Are the Yavanas and the Hindus different castes? Does a Hindu fall down by associating with Yavanas?"

Vaiṣṇava dāsa answered, "In the nyāya-śāstra it is said that caste is eternal. However, the true difference is not seen among human beings born in different

countries in different situations. The real differences are birth as a cow, or a goat, or a human being. These are real differences."

Then Cūḍāmaṇi said, "Yes. What you say is true. Still, are the Hindus and Yavanas in different castes?"

Vaiṣṇava dāsa replied, "Yes. In one sense there is a difference of caste, but that caste distinction is not eternal. The human race is one. Differences of language, country, garments, caste, and the like are only imaginary differences.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Are human beings different according to the differences of their birth? If this is not so then is the difference between a Hindu and a Yavana only the difference of their clothing and other external things?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: According to his past karma, the soul accepts a higher or a lower birth. The differences of caste are considered according to how human beings are qualified to perform different kinds of work. The four castes are brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra. All others are outcastes.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Are the Yavanas not outcastes?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Yes. In the conclusion of the scriptures they are outcastes. They are outside the four castes.

Cūḍāmaṇi: If this is so, then how can a Yavana become a Vaiṣṇava, and how can a pious Vaiṣṇava associate with a Yavana?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: One who engages in pure devotional service is a Vaiṣṇava. Simply by being human one is qualified to be a Vaiṣṇava. Because they have taken a low birth, the Yavanas may not be qualified to perform the duties of the different castes. Nevertheless, they are perfectly qualified to engage in all the activities of devotional service. One who does not understand the subtle differences of the karma-kāṇḍa, jñāna-kāṇḍa, and bhakti-kāṇḍa parts of the Vedas cannot be said to be truly learned in the scriptures.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Good. By acting rightly one becomes pure in heart. When the heart is purified, one is qualified to understand transcendental knowledge. Among they who have attained transcendental knowledge some are impersonalists and some are Vaiṣṇavas, who believe is spiritual variety. In the beginning of spiritual life one must perform pious deeds (karma). If one's pious deeds have attained their completion, one cannot become a Vaiṣṇava. However, the Muslims are not qualified to perform pious deeds. Therefore, how can they ever become qualified to engage in devotional service?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Even outcastes can become qualified to engage in devotional service. This accepted by all the scriptures. In the Bhagavad-gītā (9.32) it is written:

māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya
ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tatha śūdrās
te 'pi yānti parāṁ gatim

"O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birthwomen, vaiśyas (merchants), as well as śūdras (workers) approach the supreme destination."*

Here the word "āśraya" means "engage in devotional service". Also, in the Kāśī-khaṇḍa it is said:

brāhmaṇaḥ kṣatriyo vaiśyaḥ
śūdro yad ivetaraḥ
viṣṇu-bhakti-samāyukto
jñeyaḥ sarvottamottamaḥ

"Either a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, śūdra, or outcaste, a person is most exalted if he engages in devotional service to Lord Viṣṇu."

In the Nārada Purāṇa it is also said:

śvapaco 'pi mahī-pāla
viṣṇu-bhakto dvijādhikaḥ
viṣṇu-bhakti-vihīno yo
yatiś ca śvapacādhikaḥ

"O king, a dogeater who is devoted to Lord Viṣṇu is better than a brāhmaṇa. A sannyāsī who is not devoted to Lord Viṣṇu is also inferior to such a dogeater devotee."

Cūḍāmaṇi: There are many scripture quotes like that. How should these quotes be understood? That we must see. How can the defect that is attained by birth be removed by any means other than another birth?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: The defect of a low birth comes from prārabdha-karma (past karma that has begun to bear fruit). When one chants the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, those karmic reactions are thrown far away. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.16.44) it is said:

yan-nāma sakṛc chravaṇāt
pukkaśo 'pi vimucyate saṁsārāt

"Merely by hearing the holy name of Your Lordship only once, even caṇḍālas, men of the lowest class, are freed from all material contamination."*

It is also said (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 6.2.46):

nātaḥ paraṁ karma-nibandha-kṛntanaṁ
mumukṣatāṁ tīrtha-padānukīrtanāt

na yat punaḥ karmasu sajjate mano
rajas-tamobhyām kalilaṁ tato 'nyathā

"Therefore one who desires freedom from material bondage should adopt the process of chanting and glorifying the name, fame, form and pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, at whose feet all the holy places stand. One cannot derive the proper benefit from other methods, such as pious atonement, speculative knowledge, and meditation in mystic yoga, because even after following such methods one takes to fruitive activities again, unable to control his mind, which is contaminated by the base qualities of nature, namely passion and ignorance."*

It is also said (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.33.7):

aho bata śvapaco 'pi garīyān
yaj-jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam
tepus tapas te juhuvur sāsnur āryā
brahmānūcur nāma gṛṇanti ye te

"Oh, how glorious are they whose tongues are chanting Your holy name! Even if born in the families of dogeaters, such persons are worshipable. Persons who chant the holy name of Your Lordship must have executed all kinds of austerities and fire-sacrifices and achieved all the good manners of the Aryans. To be chanting the holy name of Your Lordship, they must have bathed at holy places of pilgrimage, studied the Vedas, and fulfilled everything required."*

Cūḍāmaṇi: Why is it, then, that an outcaste who chants the holy name of Lord Hari is not qualified to perform yajñas and other rituals?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: To perform yajñas and other rituals one needs to take birth in a brāhmaṇa's home. A person who takes birth in a brāhmaṇa's home is not qualified to perform Vedic rituals until after he has received the sacred thread, so an outcaste who has become purified by chanting Lord Hari's holy name but who has not taken birth in a brāhmaṇa's home cannot perform yajñas and other rituals. However, the various activities of devotional service are immeasurably better than the performance of Vedic yajñas.

Cūḍāmaṇi: What kind of conclusion is that? That a person not qualified for an ordinary thing can be qualified for an exalted thing! What is the clear proof for that?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Human activities are of two kinds: 1. material and 2. spiritual. Even after becoming qualified, one may not necessarily be able to perform certain material activities. For example, a person born in a Yavana family may become purified and, spiritually speaking, may become a genuine brāhmaṇa. Still, according to the material conception, he is still not qualified to marry a brāhmaṇa's daughter.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Why not? What is wrong with that?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: It is wrong to violate social custom. They who are proud of their material activities do not break social custom, and they who are qualified to make spiritual advancement do not break social custom either.

Cūḍāmaṇi: How does one become qualified to perform material activities? How does one become qualified to perform devotional service?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: One's nature, birth, and other things qualify one to engage in material activities. Faith in the truth qualifies one to perform devotional service.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Without overwhelming me with Vedānta vocabulary, please clearly tell me: What are the natures needed to perform the different kinds of duties?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Some qualities in a brāhmaṇa's nature are: 1. peacefulness, 2. self-control, 3. austerity, 4. purity, 5. satisfaction, 6. tolerance, 7. honesty, 8. devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. 9. mercy, and 10. truthfulness. Some of the qualities in a kṣatriya's nature are: 1. power, 2. strength, 3. determination, 4. heroism, 5. tolerance, 6. generosity, 7. perseverance, 8. gravity, 9. service to the brāhmaṇas, and 10. leadership. Some of the qualities in a vaiśya's nature are: 1. religiousness, 2. charity, 3. faith, 4. humbleness, and 5. eagerness to become wealthy. Some of the qualities in a śūdra's nature are: 1. service to the brāhmaṇas, cows, and demigods, and 2. being satisfied with whatever is one's situation in life. Some of the qualities in an outcaste's nature are: 1. impurity, 2. untruthfulness, 3. theft, 4. atheism, 5. senseless quarreling, 6. lust, 7. anger, and 8. desire for material sense gratification. The scriptures teach that the different castes are determined by seeing these qualities. To determine the castes by birth alone is the materialistic practice of modern times. A person's natural inclinations and natural ability to learn different skills are to some extent determined by birth. Thus one's nature makes him qualified to perform specific duties. The nature of many people is determined by their birth. From childhood they manifest certain specific tendencies. In this way it is seen that one's nature is determined by his birth. However, birth is not the only factor determining one's nature and one's fitness to perform certain kinds of work. There are many other factors also. For this reason the scriptures affirm that in determining a person's fitness for a certain kind of work, one should examine his nature and qualities.

Cūḍāmaṇi: What did you mean when you said the words “faith in the truth"?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: When a person has in his heart sincere faith and trust in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, that is called faith. When a person is materialistic, has an impure heart, in his heart has a false conception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and is selfish, proud, and eager for fame, his faith is called "insincere". Some saintly persons say that “sincere faith" means "faith that follows the scriptures' teachings". This kind of sincere faith makes one qualified to engage in devotional service..

Cūḍāmaṇi: Various persons may possess this "faith that follows the scripture's teachings", but they are not necessarily all exalted great souls. Are such persons qualified to engage in devotional service?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: A person's nature makes him qualified to perform specific duties, but it does not necessarily qualify him to engage in devotional service. Please look at the explanation written in this page of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.20.27-30, and 32-33):

jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu
nirvi/ṇṇaḥ sarva-karmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān
parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ

tato bhajeta māṁ prītaḥ
śraddhālur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamāṇaś ca tān kāmān
duḥkhodārkāṁś ca garhayan

"having awakened faith in the narrations of My glories, being disgusted with all material activities, knowing that all sense gratification leads to misery, but still being unable to renounce all sense enjoyment, My devotee should remain happy and worship Me with great faith and conviction. Even though he is sometimes engaged in sense enjoyment, My devotee knows that all sense gratification leads to a miserable result, and he sincerely repents such activities.***

proktena bhakti-yogena
bhajato māsakṛn muneḥ
kāmā hṛdayyā naśyanti
sarve mayi hṛdi sthite

"When an intelligent person engages constantly in worshiping Me through loving devotional service as described by Me, his heart becomes firmly situated in Me. Thus all material desires within the heart are destroyed.***

bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś
chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsya karmāṇi
mayi dṛṣṭe 'khilātmani

"The knot in the heart is pierced, all misgivings are cut to pieces, and the chain of fruitive actions is terminated when I am seen as the Supreme Personality of Godhead.*

yat karmabhir yat tapasā
jñāna-vairāgyataś ca yat
yogena dāna-dharmena
śreyobhir itarair api

sarvaṁ mad-bhakti-yogena
mad-bhakto labhate 'ñjasā

svargāpavargaṁ mad-dhāma
kathañcid yadi vāñchati

"Everything that can be achieved by fruitive activities, penance, knowledge, detachment, mystic yoga, charity, religious duties, and all other means of perfecting life is easily achieved by My devotee through loving service unto Me. If somehow or other My devotee desires promotion to heaven, liberation, or residence in My abode, he easily achieves such benedictions."***

In this way faith in devotional service develops.

Cūḍāmaṇi: What if I have no respect for Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam teaches the conclusion oF all the scriptures. The scriptures are one. If you do not respect Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, then you insult all the other scriptures. I do not need to show evidence from many scriptures. Does everyone accept Bhagavad-gītā? Think about that. When you first spoke from your mouth came a verse from Bhagavad-gītā, a verse that contains the teachings of all the scriptures. In the Gītā (9.30-32) it is said:

api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ

"Even if one commits the most abominable actions, if he is engaged in devotional service, he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated.*

kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā
śaśvac-chāntiṁ nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

"He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.*

māṁ hi pārtha vyapāśritya
ye 'pi syuḥ pāpa-yonayaḥ
striyo vaiśyās tatha śūdrās
te 'pi yānti parāṁ gatim

"O son of Pṛthā, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower

birthwomen, vaiśyas (merchants), as well as śūdras (workers) approach the supreme destination."*

These verses mean that a person who has faith in Me alone (ananya-bhāk) and who engages in the activities of devotional service, which begin with hearing and chanting Lord Hari's holy names and the descriptions of Lord Hari, renounces all impious deeds, which are naturally sources of misery. He renounces materialistic activities and he is considered saintly. In this way he follows the glorious spiritual path. One path is the path of karma-kāṇḍa, which begins with the duties of varṇāśrama. A second path is the path of jnāna-kāṇḍa, which begins with speculative knowledge and renunciation. The third path is to stay among the devotees and have faith in the holy name of Lord Hari and the descriptions of Lord Hari. Sometimes these three paths are considered yogas. In this way they are called karma-yoga, jnāna-yoga, and bhakti-yoga. Some people practice these different yogas. Thus they are called karma-yogī or jñāna-yogī. Among all these yogīs, the bhakti-yogī is the best, for in bhakti-yoga one attains limitless auspiciousness. At the end of the first six-chapter section of Bhagavad-gītā (6.47) one may see the following conclusion:

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ
mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

"And of all yogīs, he who abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all."*

One must properly understand the meaning of Bhagavad-gītā 9.31. This verse means that a person why faithfully engages in devotional service quickly casts far away all faults in his character and activities. A person who engages in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes pious, for the Supreme Personality of Godhead is Himself the root of all piety. The Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself is conquered by devotional service. When the Supreme Personality of Godhead stays in a person's heart, the bondage of māyā is at once thrown far away. Such a person need not adopt any other process to become free from māyā. Whether he performs material pious deeds or not, a devotee's heart is naturally filled with piety and saintliness. Lust is then thrown far away, and in its stead peacefulness enters his heart. The Supreme Lord Himself promises: "My devotee will never perish.* The karmī or jñānī may fall into bad company, but My sincere devotee will never fall into bad company, for he always has Me as his companion. Therefore he will never fall down. Whether born in a sinful family or a brāhmaṇa family, a devotee always has the supreme goal of life in the palm of his hand."

Cūḍāmaṇi: Look, my scriptures says the qualification that comes from birth is the best. I was born in a brāhmaṇa's home. By chanting the Gāyatrī mantra and

performing other like duties I will gradually attain transcendental knowledge and at the end I must attain liberation. How does faith arise? I do not know. I see that the Gītā and Bhāgavatam teach that faith leads to devotional service. Please explain what the soul must do to attain that faith.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Faith is part of the soul's eternal nature. The duties of varṇāśrama and other like duties arise when the soul's temporary nature is manifested. That is the conclusion of all the scriptures. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (7.19.1) it is said:

yadā vai śraddadhāti atha manute, nāśraddadhan manute, śraddadhad eva manute, śraddhātveva vijijñāsitavyeti śraddhāṁ bhagavo vijijñāsa iti.

" `A person who has faith can understand. A person who has no faith cannot understand. A person who has faith can understand. Therefore one should ask about faith.' `O master, I wish to know about faith'."

Some philosophers define the word "faith" as “trust in the words of the Vedas and the spiritual master". That is not a wrong definition. However, it is not very clear. In my sampradāya "faith" is defined in these words (Amnāya-sūtra 57):

śraddhā tv anyopāya-varjam bhakty-unmukhī citta-vṛtti-viśeṣaḥ

"Faith is a specific activity performed in the heart. It makes one desire to engage in devotional service. It is different from the other means of spiritual advancement."

By associating with devotees and repeatedly hearing from them, a person becomes convinced in his heart that ordinary pious deeds (karma), impersonal speculation (jñāna), and the gymnastics of yoga will not help him reach the eternal destination, and that destination cannot be attained by any means other than sincerely taking shelter of Lord Hari's feet. When one thinks in this way he naturally attains faith in the words of the Vedas and the spiritual master. The nature of this faith is described in these words (Amnāya-sūtra 58):

sā ca śaraṇāpatti-lakṣaṇā

"Faith is characterized by taking shelter of the Lord and surrendering unto Him."

Thus it is seen that taking shelter of the Lord and surrendering unto Him is the external symptom of faith. This surrender and taking shelter are described in these words (Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11.417):

ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ
prātikūlyasya varjanam
rakṣiṣyatīti viśvāso
goptṛtve varaṇaṁ tathā
ātma-nikṣepa-kārpaṇye
ṣaḍ-vidhā śaraṇāgatiḥ

"The six divisions of surrender are the acceptance of those things favorable to devotional service, the rejection of unfavorable things, the conviction that Kṛṣṇa will give protection, the acceptance of the Lord as one's guardian or master, full self-surrender, and humility."*

Thus one makes the following vow: "I will do whatever is favorable for pure devotional service, and I will reject whatever is not favorable for it. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is my protector. By being active in impersonal speculation (jñāna), yoga, and other like activities, I cannot attain anything of value. I cannot protect myself. I will serve the Lord as far as I am able, and He will protect me. In this way I will be protected. Who am I? I am His property. Whatever He wishes, that I will do. In this way I will offer myself to Him. I own nothing. I am poor and lowly." In this way one understands his lowly position. When this vow, along with trust, confidence that the Lord will give protection, complete self-surrender, and humility are manifested in the heart, that is called “faith". When this faith is manifested in the heart one is qualified to engage in devotional service. This faith is the first step to becoming pure and eternally liberated. This faith is part of the soul's eternal nature. All spiritual paths that differ from this faith are temporary in their nature.

Cūḍāmaṇi: I understand that much. But how is this faith attained? You have not told me that. If faith is created by pious deeds, then my argument is stronger, for one who does not perform the pious duties and rituals of varṇāśrama cannot attain faith. The Yavanas do not perform these pious varṇāśrama duties, so how can they become qualified to engage in devotional service?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: It is true that faith is created by pious deeds, for the Nārada Purāṇa declares:

bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta-
saṅgena parijāyate
sat-saṅgaḥ prāpyate pumbhiḥ
sukṛtaiḥ pūrva-saṁcitaiḥ

"Devotional service is attained by associating with devotees. The association of devotees is attained by past pious deeds."

Pious deeds are of two kinds: 1. eternal, and 2. temporary. The pious deeds that

bring association with devotees and devotional service are called eternal pious deeds. The pious deeds that bring material sense gratification and impersonal liberation are called temporary pious deeds. The pious deeds that bring eternal results are called eternal pious deeds. The pious deeds that bring temporary results are called temporary pious deeds. All kinds of material sense gratification are clearly temporary in their nature. They are not eternal. many think that impersonal liberation is eternal, but such persons do not understand the real nature of impersonal liberation. The individual soul is pure, eternal, and unchanging. The individual soul imprisoned in the material world of illusions is in his temporary nature. When his prison shackles are cut and he is released, that moment is called "liberation". The act of becoming liberated from the prison occurs in a single moment. Therefore the act of becoming liberated is not in itself eternal. There is the moment of liberation, and that moment comes to an end. When the soul's temporary nature is destroyed, the result is liberation. When liberation does not occur, then the temporary state is manifested. Attraction to Lord Hari's feet never comes to an end. That attraction is part of the soul's eternal nature. No impartial person will claim that these aspects of the soul's nature are temporary in nature. So-called devotional service that ends when liberation is attained is temporary in nature. That so-called devotion is actually a specific kind of material activity. However, the devotional service that exists before, during, and after liberation is eternal. It is the eternal nature and duty of the soul. Liberation is merely a less-important by-product of that devotional service. In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (1.2.12) it is said:

parīkṣya lokān karma-citān brāhmaṇo
nirveda-māyān nāsty akṛtaḥ kṛtena
tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham

"Seeing the true nature of the higher worlds attained by pious karma, a brāhmaṇa does not desire them. To learn transcendental subject matter, one must approach the spiritual master. In doing so he should carry fuel to burn in sacrifice. The symptom of such a spiritual master is that he is expert in understanding the Vedic conclusion, and therefore he constantly engages in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."*

Pious fruitive work (karma), impersonal speculation (jñāna), and yoga are all temporary pious deeds. Association with devotees and the performance of activities that lead to devotional service are eternal pious deeds. A person who for many previous births has performed such eternal pious deeds attains faith. A person who performs temporary pious deeds may attain many different results, but faith in pure devotional service is not one of them.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Please clearly describe association with devotees and the performance of activities that lead to devotional service. What kind of pious deeds are these?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Conversing with a pure devotee, serving him, and hearing his

explanations, all these I call association with devotees. Chanting the holy names in towns and cities in the company of other devotees, and other like activities, are all activities of devotional service. Giving charity and performing yoga, when connected to devotional service, are activities that lead to devotional service. In the scriptures it is said that cleaning the temple of Lord Hari, offering a lamp to tulasī-devī, fasting on ekādaśī, and other like activities, are activities of devotional service. Even if they are performed without pure faith, or even if they are performed accidentally, these pious activities still increase one's devotion for the Lord. When these pious deeds gradually become powerful, after many births they lead to pure faith in the association of devotees and the performance of pure devotional service. The word "vastu-śakti" means that every thing has a certain innate power. The activities of devotional service have the power to increase one's love and devotion for the Lord. Even if they are performed without faith, or even if they are performed with contempt, they still bring good results, what to speak of when they are performed with faith. In the Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa it is said:

madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānāṁ
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma

"Kṛṣṇa's name is the sweetest of sweet things, the most auspicious of auspicious things, the transcendental fruit of the vine of all Vedic literature. O best of the Bhṛgus, chanted even once, either with faith or contempt, it delivers the chanter."*

Thus thee pious deeds that increase one's devotion for the Lord are all eternal pious deeds. As these pious deeds gradually become powerful, they lead to faith in the association of devotees and the performance of pure devotional service. Because of his past temporary misdeeds a person may take birth in a Yavana's home, and because of past eternal pious deeds he may also attain faith in pure devotional service. What is surprising about that?

Cūḍāmaṇi: I say that if a person has performed even a small number of the pious deeds that lead to devotional service, then his other deeds must all be pious deeds also. One who is born as a Yavana cannot possibly have performed only pious deeds, and therefore it is not possible that in the past he performed the pious deeds that lead to devotional service.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: One should not have such a belief. Eternal pious deeds and temporary pious deeds are independent of each other. One does not need the other to exist. It is said that a hunter who was filled with many sins and misdeeds by accident fasted and kept an all-night vigil on a day sacred to Lord Śiva, and because of performing this eternal pious deed he attained devotion to Lord Hari. It is said (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.13.16), "vaiṣṇavānāṁ yathā śambhuḥ" (a great Vaiṣṇava like Lord Śiva). Because of these words I accept that Lord Śiva is supremely worshipable, and a great Vaiṣṇava also. Therefore by observing his holy day one can certainly attain devotion to Lord Hari.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Then you say it is possible to perform eternal pious deeds

accidentally?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: All is an accident. Even the path of karma is like that. It was by accident that the individual soul first fell into the cycle of karma. What was that chance accident? the followers of karma-mīmāṁsā claim that karma has no beginning, but the truth is that there is a root from which karma has grown. In the individual soul's aversion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the accident that is the root of karma. As that is believed to be an accident, so eternal pious deeds may also be believed to be chance accidents. In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.6-7) it is said:

samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno
'nīśāya śocati muhyamānaḥ
juṣṭaṁ yadā paśyati anyam īśam
` asya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ

"Although the two birds are on the same tree, the eating bird is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his friend who is the Lord, and knows His glories, at once the suffering bird becomes free of all anxieties."*

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.51.53 and 3.25.22) it is said:

bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareśe tvayi jāyate ratiḥ

"O my Lord! O infallible Supreme Person! When a person wandering throughout the universes becomes eligible for liberation from material existence, he gets an opportunity to associate with devotees. When he associates with devotees, his attraction for You is awakened. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the highest goal of the supreme devotees and the Lord of the universe."*

satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyaṇa-kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramiṣyati

"The spiritually powerful message of Godhead can be properly discussed only in the society of devotees, and it is greatly pleasing to hear in that association. If one hears from devotees, the way of transcendental experience quickly opens, and gradually one attains firm faith that in due course develops into attraction and

devotion."*

Cūḍāmaṇi: In your opinion is there no difference between a Hindu and a Yavana?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: There are two kinds of difference: 1. spiritual, and 2. material. Spiritually, Hindus and Yavanas are not different. However, materially there is a difference.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Why do you speak with the pompous words of the Vedānta? What is the material difference between the Hindus and Yavanas?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: I speak of material social customs. According to the material idea, a Yavana is untouchable. Thus, in the materialists' idea, one should neither touch nor associate with a Yavana. Thus, a Hindu touched by a Yavana must at once bathe with water. Also, a Hindu should not accept food or other things from a Yavana. Because it is attained by committing sinful deeds, a Yavana's body is horrible and should be avoided. Therefore it is untouchable.

Cūḍāmaṇi: If this is so, then how can the Hindus and Yavanas be the same spiritually? Please clearly explain.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: The scriptures declare:

bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma

"O best of the Bhṛgus, the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa delivers the chanter."*

These words mean that the Yavanas and everyone else can attain the supreme spiritual goal of life by chanting the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In this way the Hindus and Yavanas may become equals. A human being who does not perform eternal pious deeds like chanting Lord Kṛṣṇa's name is declared by the scriptures to be "dvi-pāda-paśu" (an animal pretending to be a human being). This is because such a person has no faith in the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Although such a person may have taken birth as a human being, he is not really human. In truth he is an animal. The Mahābhārata explains:

mahā-prasāde govinde
nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatāṁ rājan
viśvāso naiva jāyate

"O king, a person whose past pious deeds are small cannot have faith in Lord Govinda, the remnants of food offered to Him, His holy name, or His devotees."

Eternal pious deeds, which purify the soul, are called “great pious deeds". Temporary pious deeds, which are performed without spiritual faith, are called "small pious deeds". The remnants of food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa, Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name, and the pure Vaiṣṇavaḥthese four are spiritual. They

reveal the spiritual truth.

Cūḍāmaṇi (with a smile): What kind of talk is this? This is just the Vaiṣṇavas' fanatic dogma. How can rice, dal, and curry be spiritual? There is nothing that you will not claim.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Do what you like, but please do not criticize the Vaiṣṇavas. That is my request. In a debate, only the various arguments should be considered. Why do you need to verbally attack the Vaiṣṇavas? The remnants of foods offered to the Lord are beyond the touch of the material world. One should not eat foods that are not thus offered to the Lord, for eating the remnants of food offered to the Lord illumines the way to the spiritual world and drives away all that is foolish and material. Therefore Śrī Iśopaniṣad (Mantra 1) explains:

īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhuñjītā
mā gṛdhaḥ kasyasvid 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."*

Whatever exists in the material universe has a relationship with the potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. A person who sees that everything has a relationship with the Lord's potency will not attempt to enjoy the things of this external material world. If a spiritually conscious soul accepts only what he must to maintain his material body in this world, and if he understands that everything is the Supreme Personality of Godhead's mercy, then he will not fall down. That is the way a person eager to attain the spiritual world will act. Therefore the remnants of food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa are called “mahā-prasāda" (great mercy). Still, you are not attracted to these spiritual thingsThat is your misfortune.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Let's change the subject. Let's consider ordinary material things: How should one behave with Yavanas?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: As long as a person is a Yavana, we should ignore him. However, if by performing eternal pious deeds, the Yavana becomes a Vaiṣṇava, then I will not use the word “Yavana" to refer to him. The scriptures declare (Padma Purāṇa and Itihāsa-samuccaya):

śūdraṁ vā bhagavad-bhaktaṁ
niṣādaṁ śvapacaṁ tathā
vīkṣyate jāti-sāmānyāt
sa yāti narakaṁ dhruvam

"He goes to hell who thinks in terms of his birth and caste, and who thus sees a

Vaiṣṇava as a śūdra, a barbarian, or an outcaste."

na me priyaś catur-vedī
mad-bhaktaḥ śvapacaḥ priyaḥ
tasmai deyaṁ tato grāhyaṁ
sa ca pūjyo yathā hy aham

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: A scholar learned in the four Vedas is not truly dear to Me. An outcaste who has become My devotee is truly dear to Me. To him gifts should be given. From him blessings should be accepted. He should be worshiped as much as I."

Cūḍāmaṇi: I understand. If this is so, then why cannot a Vaiṣṇava householder marry his daughter to a Yavana Vaiṣṇava, or why cannot he himself marry the daughter of a Yavana Vaiṣṇava?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: In ordinary material understanding, when a person is born in a Yavana family he remains a Yavana until his death. However, in the spiritual understanding, when he engages in devotional service he is a Yavana no longer. Ten kinds of ordinary social rites are described in the Smṛti-śāstra. Marriage is one of them. If a householder Vaiṣṇava is a Hindu, then he has a status within the four castes and it is proper that he should marry within his own caste, for in ordinary material dealings it is best to accept the temporary duties assigned to the four castes. One does not become a Vaiṣṇava merely by rejecting the duties of the four castes. A true Vaiṣṇava who do whatever is favorable for devotional service. If a person becomes spiritually advanced, and thus qualified to ignore or renounce the duties of the four castes, then he may do so. Then he may renounce all duties of the four castes. If the duties of the four castes are not favorable for one's devotional service, then they may be easily rejected. If association with the Yavanas is not favorable for devotional service, then a faithful Yavana Vaiṣṇava should reject their association. What is the difference between a Hindu Vaiṣṇava who properly rejects the duties of the four castes and a Yavana Vaiṣṇava who rejects association with Yavanas? Both have rejected what is material and inferior. Spiritually they are brothers. However, this may not be true for a householder Vaiṣṇava. Even though his associates and duties may not always be favorable for his advancement in devotional service, he should not renounce them prematurely. He may renounce them only when he is properly qualified. However, when his attachment to devotional service becomes very strong, he will naturally renounce unfavorable association and duties. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.32) the Supreme Personality of Godhead explains:

ājñāyaivaṁ guṇān dośān
mayādiṣṭān api svakān
dharmān santyajya yaḥ sarvān
māṁ bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ

"Understanding these virtues and faults I have described, a sincere devotee renounces all ordinary material duties and worships Me alone. Such a devotee is the best of all."

In the concluding statements of Bhagavad-gītā (18.66) the Supreme Personality of Godhead declares:

sarva-dharmān parityajya
māṁ ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."*

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.29.54) it is said:

yadā yasyānugṛhṇāti
bhagavān ātma-bhāvitaḥ
sa jahāti matiṁ loke
vede ca pariniṣṭhitām

"When a person is fully engaged in devotional service, he is favored by the Lord, who bestows His causeless mercy. At such a time, the awakened devotee gives up all material activities and ritualistic performances mentioned in the Vedas."*

Cūḍāmaṇi: If a Yavana becomes a sincere Vaiṣṇava, can you take food, drink, and other things with him?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Sannyāsī Vaiṣṇavas may take mahā-prasāda with them. Householder Vaiṣṇavas who are materialistic may not be so inclined. However, there is no rule forbidding one from even taking the remnants of food left by any other Vaiṣṇavas. Indeed, one should take their remnants.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Why is it, then, that in Vaiṣṇava temples Yavana Vaiṣṇavas are not allowed to touch the Deities?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: It is an offense to call a Vaiṣṇava born in a Yavana family a "Yavana Vaiṣṇava". Simply by being a Vaiṣṇava, he is qualified to serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. If a householder Vaiṣṇava engaged in serving the Deity of the Lord is, in the opinion of materialistic persons, outside the caste-rules of varṇāśrama-dharma, the Vaiṣṇava is at fault only from the point of view of persons eager to follow material customs. Still, a sannyāsī Vaiṣṇava should not worship the Deity, for if he worships the Deity then his status as a person beyond the caste-system becomes ruined. Instead, in his heart he should worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of Śrī

Rādhā.

Cūḍāmaṇi: I understand. Now please tell what you think about the brāhmaṇas.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Brahmanas are of two kinds: 1. brāhmaṇas by nature, and 2. brāhmaṇas only by birth. They who are brāhmaṇas by nature are mostly Vaiṣṇavas. Serious thinkers from every philosophical camp will honor such a brāhmaṇa. They who are brāhmaṇas by birth are honored because of ordinary social custom. That the Vaiṣṇavas should be honored as the genuine brāhmaṇas is confirmed by the following words of scripture (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.9.10):

viprād dvi-ṣaḍ-guṇa-yutād aravinda-nābha-
pādāravinda-vimukhāt śvapacaṁ variṣṭham
manye tad-arpita-mano-vacanehitārha-
prāṇaṁ punāti sa kulaṁ na tu bhūrimānaḥ

"If a brāhmaṇa has all twelve of the brahminical qualifications (as they are stated in the book called Sanat-sujāta) but is not a devotee and is averse to the lotus feet of the Lord, he is certainly lower than a devotee who is a dogeater but who has dedicated everythingmind, words, activities, wealth, and life to the Supreme Lord. Such a devotee is better than such a brāhmaṇa because the devotee can purify his whole family, whereas the so-called brāhmaṇa in a position of false prestige cannot purify even himself.*

Cūḍāmaṇi: The śūdras are not allowed to study the Vedas. If a śūdra becomes a Vaiṣṇava would he not then allowed to study the Vedas?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Regardless of the caste in which he was born, a pure Vaiṣṇava becomes a brāhmaṇa according to spiritual calculations. The Vedas are divided into two parts: 1. the Veda describing ordinary rituals and duties, and 2. the Veda describing the spiritual truth. They who are brāhmaṇas because of social custom are allowed to study the Veda describing ordinary rituals and duties, and they who are brāhmaṇas according to spiritual calculations are allowed to study the Veda that describes the spiritual truth. Regardless of the caste in which he was born, a pure Vaiṣṇava is perfectly qualified to study and teach the Veda that describes the spiritual truth. This is described in the following words of Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.4.21):

tam eva dhīro vijñāya
prajñāṁ kurvīta brāhmaṇaḥ

"A wise brāhmaṇa should study the part of the Veda that describes the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

It is also said (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 3.8.10):

yo vā etad akṣaraṁ gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ

"He is a miserly man who does not solve the problems of life as a human and who thus quits this world like the cats and dogs, without understanding the science of self-realization."*

yo vā etad akṣaraṁ gārgy viditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa brāhmaṇaḥ

"He is a brāhmaṇa who does solve the problems of life as a human and who quits this world knowing the truth of the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead."

They who are brāhmaṇas because of social custom are described in these words of Manu-saṁhitā (2.168):

yo 'nadhītya dvijo vedam
anyatra kurute śramam
sa jīvann eva śūdratvam
āśu gacchati sānvayaḥ

"A brāhmaṇa who does not study the Vedic literatures, and who instead laboriously studies many other books about material things becomes at once, in this life, and along with his entire family, a śūdra."

The qualification of a person entitled to study the Veda that describes the spiritual truth is stated in these words (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.23):

yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

"Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed."*

The word "parā bhakti" here means "pure devotional service". I cannot say more on this subject. Please understand it as far as you are able. The summary conclusion of all this is: A person who has faith in pure devotional service is qualified to study the part of the Veda describing spiritual truth, and a person who has attained pure devotional service is qualified to teach the part of the Veda describing spiritual truth.

Cūḍāmaṇi: Is your conclusion, then, that the part of the Vedas describing spiritual truth teaches only the Vaiṣṇava religion and does not teach any other religion?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: There is only one religion. There is no such thing as two religions. That one religion is called "the eternal religion" or "the Vaiṣṇava religion". Other religions are temporary. They serve as steps leading up to the Vaiṣṇava religion. In the Eleventh Canto (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.3) the Supreme Personality of Godhead explains:

kālena naṣṭā pralaye
vāṇīyaṁ veda-samjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā
dharmo yasyāṁ mad-ātmakaḥ

"By the influence of time, the transcendental sound of Vedic knowledge was lost at the time of annihilation. Therefore, when the subsequent creation took place, I spoke the Vedic knowledge to Brahmā because I Myself am the religious principles enunciated in the Vedas."***

The Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.15 and 1.3.9) explains:

sarve vedā yat padam āmananti. . .tat te padam saṅgraheṇa bravīmi.

"All the Vedas describe the abode of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. . . Now I will briefly describe that abode to you."

tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam

"The realm of Lord Viṣṇu is the supreme spiritual abode."

When the discussion had reached this point the faces of Devī Vidyāratna and his associates had become pale and withered. The great paṇḍita teachers were completely demoralized. It was now five o'clock. Everyone said: "Let us end the meeting now." Everyone agreed, and the meeting ended. With one voice the brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas praised the learning of Vaiṣṇava dāsa. Chanting the holy names of Lord Hari as they went, the Vaiṣṇavas returned to their homes.

Chapter Seven
Nitya-dharma O Saṁsār
Eternal Duties, Household Life, and the Material World

On the bank of the Sarasvatī River was an ancient merchant town named Saptagrāma. For a long time a thousand merchants and bankers have lived there. By the mercy of Lord Nityānanda, since the time of Śrī Uddharaṇa Datta these merchants have enthusiastically chanted the holy names of Lord Hari. Fearing that much money would be spent, a merchant named Caṇḍī dāsa would not join the people of the town in chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. By living very frugally, he had accumulated a lot of money. His wife, Damayantī, who had contracted this nature from her husband, would not give due respect to Vaiṣṇavas or guests. In their youth this merchant couple had four sons and two daughters. Marrying off first one and then the other daughter, the couple carefully kept their great wealth to give to their sons. When Vaiṣṇavas never visit a home, the children in there do not naturally become very kind or generous. These qualities become stunted. As the children grew up they became more and more selfish. Eager to get their inheritance, they yearned for their parent's deaths. The unhappiness of the merchant couple knew no bounds. One by one the sons were also married. Imbibing their husband's nature, the daughters-in-law also began to wish their husbands' parents would die. When they became able, the sons divided their father's wealth, and set themselves up as merchants.

One day Caṇḍī dāsa called together his sons and said, “Look. By living frugally since childhood, I have accumulated some wealth for your sakes. For all this time your mother and I have not eaten good food or dressed in nice clothing. Now we are growing old and you should take care of us. That is your duty. However, I see that you are not inclined to take care of us, and that has made me very sad. I have some wealth hidden away, and I will give to whomever amongst you acts like a good son.

Hearing these words, the sons and their wives became silent. Meeting in another place, they all decided that the best thing would be to send father and mother far away and then take the hidden money, for there was no saying to whom the old man would wrongly give it. All were sure the wealth was hidden in the father's bedroom.

The father's eldest son was named Hari-caraṇa. One morning he said to his father, "Father, you and mother so go and see Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. In that way your human life will be successful. I have heard that in the age of Kali no holy place is sacred and auspicious like Navadvīpa. To travel to Navadvīpa is neither difficult nor expensive. If you cannot walk, for two paṇas a boat can take you there. If you wish, a Vaiṣṇava lady is willing to accompany you there.

Caṇḍī dāsa consulted with his wife, Damayantī. She was very happy. The two talked. "Your words the other day brought our sons to their senses. We are not so weak that we cannot walk. Passing through Kalnā and Śāntipura, let us go to Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa."

Noting an auspicious day, the two began their pilgrimage. Walking and walking, on the next day they came to Ambikā. Staying there at a merchant's place, they cooked and ate their meal. A man from Saptagrāma came there and told them, “Your sons broke into your room and took all your belongings. They will not allow you to return home. They have taken all your hidden wealth."

Hearing this, Caṇḍī dāsa and his wife lamented greatly. On that day they would

not eat. They wept and wept. The Vaiṣṇava lady accompanying them said, "Don't be attached to your home. Continue traveling. Renounce the world. Meet the Vaiṣṇavas. They for whom you have done so much have now become your enemies. Now you cannot return home. Continue traveling. You can stay in Navadvīpa. By begging you can eat. All will be well."

Hearing of what their sons and daughters-in-law had done, Caṇḍī dāsa and his wife said again and again, "We will not return home. It is better that we give up our lives. That would be best."

After that they stayed at the home of a Vaiṣṇava in Ambikā-grāma. After two or four days they went to see Śāntipura, and then they went to Navadvīpa. There they stayed in Māyāpura, in the home of a relative who was a merchant. They stayed for two or four days and then went to see the seven village of Navadvīpa, and, on the other side of the gaṅgā, the seven villages of Kuliyā-grāma. After a few days love for their sons and daughters-in-law again arose in their hearts.

Caṇḍī dāsa said, "Come. Let us go to Saptagrama. Will not our sons love us even a little?" Then the Vaiṣṇava lady who was accompanying them said, "Have you no shame? They will kill you. Hearing this, the old couple became afraid. They said to her, "O saintly Vaiṣṇava, please return to your home. We will live alone. We will approach a saintly person, learn from him, and live by begging."

The Vaiṣṇava lady left. The merchant couple gave up all hope of returning home. They considered building a new home in the Chakari Caṭṭa neighborhood of Kuliyā-grāma. After begging from many good people, they were able to build a cottage. In sacred Kuliyā-grāma past offenses are all forgiven. When a person lives there his past offenses are thrown far away. That is what is said about that place.

One day Caṇḍī dāsa said, "O mother of Hari, why do you continue like this? Don't say anything more about your sons. Don't even think of them. In our past lives we must have committed many, many offenses. That is why we took birth in the homes of merchants. Because of that low birth we became misers and refused to serve Vaiṣṇavas and guests. If here we can make a little money, we should use it to serve guests. Then our next birth will be good. I have set my mind to open a grocery store. I will approach some good people, beg five coins from each, and start a grocery. After a few days of striving in that way, Caṇḍī dāsa finally opened a small store. Every day he earned a small profit. After eating a full meal, every day the husband and wife fed a guest. Caṇḍī dāsa lived better than he did before.

Caṇḍī dāsa was a little educated. In his spare moments at the store he would read Guṇarāja Khāna's book Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vijaya. He was honest in buying and selling and he would serve guests. In this way five or six months passed. When they learned his story, the people of Kuliyā-grāma began to have faith in Caṇḍī dāsa.

It was in that neighborhood that Yādava dāsa lived. Yādava dāsa was a householder Vaiṣṇava. He would read Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala. Sometimes Caṇḍī dāsa would listen to him reading. Yādava dāsa and his wife liked to serve the Vaiṣṇavas. Seeing them, Caṇḍī dāsa and his wife also came to like serving the Vaiṣṇavas.

One day Caṇḍī dāsa asked Yādava dāsa, "What is the material world?" Yādava dāsa replied, "On the other shore of the Gaṅgā, on the island of Godruma, live many learned Vaiṣṇavas. Go there. Ask them this question. I go there sometimes and in that way I learn many things. Nowadays the Vaiṣṇava paṇḍitas in Śrī Godruma better scripture scholars than even the brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas. Yesterday

and assembly of brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas were defeated in debate by Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī. He will give a good answer to your question.

That afternoon Yādava dāsa and Caṇḍī dāsa crossed the Gaṅgā. Damayantī was now accustomed to serve the Vaiṣṇavas. The miserliness in her heart had lessened. She said, "I will go with you to Śrī Godruma." Yādava dāsa said, "The Vaiṣṇavas there are not householders. They are renunciants. I think they will not be happy to have you in their midst." Damayanti said, "I will offer daṇḍavat obeisances from afar. I will not enter into the middle of the grove. I am an old lady. They will not be angry with me." Then Yādava dāsa said, "The custom is that women may not go there. It is better that you merely wait nearby and accompany us when we return."

At nine in the morning the three of them crossed the Gaṅgā and approached Pradyumna-kuñja. At the entrance to the forest grove Damayantī offered daṇḍavat obeisances and sat down under an old banyan tree. Yādava dāsa and Caṇḍī dāsa entered the forest grove and devotedly offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the Vaiṣṇavas sitting in the place of mādhavī and mālatī vines.

The paramahaṁsa bābājī was sitting there. On his four sides were Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa, Lāhirī Mahāśaya, Ananta dāsa Bābājī, and many others. Yādava dāsa approached and sat down. Caṇḍī dāsa sat beside him.

Saintly Ananta dāsa Bābājī asked, "Who is the new man?" Yādava dāsa repeated all of Caṇḍī dāsa's story. Ananta dāsa Bābājī smiled and said, "Yes. That is what is called `the material world.' He who knows the true nature of this world is wise. He who is trapped in the cycle of birth and death in this world is truly an object of pity."

Caṇḍī dāsa's heart gradually become purified. One who performs eternal pious deeds attains auspiciousness. Honoring the Vaiṣṇavas and reading and hearing the Vaiṣṇava scriptures were the beginning of Caṇḍī dāsa's eternal pious deeds. By performing these pious deeds again and again he became pure in heart and attained sincere faith in pure devotional service. When he heard Ananta dāsa's words, Caṇḍī dāsa, his heart now beginning to melt, said, "Today I make this request: Please be merciful and tell me clearly: What is the material world?"

Śrī Ananta dāsa: Caṇḍī dāsa, your question is very serious. I wish that either the paramahamsa bābājī or Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī would give the answer.

The Paramahaṁsa Bābājī: This is a serious question. Śrī Ananta dāsa Bābājī is qualified to give the answer. Today we will all listen to the instruction he gives.

Ananta dāsa: I must obey your order. I will speak as far as I have understanding. I will begin by remembering the lotus feet of my spiritual master, Śrīla Pradyumna Brahmacārī, who is an exalted personal associate of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

The individual spirit soul has two state of existence: 1. the liberated state, and 2. the state of bondage in the prison of the material world. An individual soul who is a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is not bound by the illusory potency māyā. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy such a soul is liberated from the material world of māyā. He is a liberated soul. His state of existence is the liberated state. On the other hand, a soul who tries to avoid Lord Kṛṣṇa falls into the gaping mouth o the illusory potency māyā. Such a soul is imprisoned in the material world. His state of existence is residence in the material world. A soul liberated from māyā is always conscious of his original spiritual identity. His whole life is service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Such a soul does not reside in the material world. He resides in one of the pure spiritual worlds. Goloka, Vaikuṇṭha, and Vṛndāvana are the names of some of these pure spiritual worlds. The souls free from māyā are limitless in number. They cannot be counted.

The souls bound in māyā's prison are also limitless in number. They cannot be counted either. A soul averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa, is bound by Lord Kṛṣṇa's shadow-potency māyā, who binds that soul with ropes of goodness, passion, and ignorance. Because of the difference of these three ropes, the imprisoned souls are placed in many different states of existence. The variety of those states is astonishing. They who think for a moment will see this astonishing variety. These souls manifest an astonishing variety of material bodies, an astonishing variety of states of existence, an astonishing variety of forms, an astonishing variety of natures, an astonishing variety residences, and an astonishing variety of movements. When he first enters the material world, the soul is covered by a new sense of identity. In his pure state of existence the soul thinks "I am a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa". However, in the state of material bondage the soul thinks: "I am a human being." "I am a demigod." "I am an animal." I am a king." I am a brahmana." I am an outcaste." I am suffering." "I am hungry." "I am insulted." "I am generous." “I am a husband." "I am a wife." "I am a father." "I am a son." "I am an enemy." “I am a friend." "I am learned." "I am handsome." "I am wealthy." "I am poor." “I am happy." "I am sad." "I am strong." “I am weak." In this way the soul may have different conceptions of his identity. This is called "false-ego". There is also another thing called "false possessiveness". In the grip of false-possessiveness, the soul thinks: "This is my house. "This is my thing. "This is my wealth." "This is my body." “This is my son and my daughter." "This is my wife." "This is my husband." "This is my father." “This is my mother." "This is my caste into which I was born." "This is my power." "This is my form." "This is my virtue." "This is my knowledge." “This is my renunciation." "This is my wisdom." “This is my activity." "This is my good fortune." “These are my servants and dependents." In this way the soul uses the word "my" in many different ways. This great variety of "I"s and ""My"s are called "the material world".

Yādava dāsa: I see how there are many "I"s and “My"s in the state of material bondage. But are there no “I"s and "My"s in the liberated state?

Ananta dāsa: In the liberated state the "I"s and "My"s are all spiritual and free of fault. There is manifested the soul's original spiritual identity, which was originally created by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Because of these different spiritual identities, in the spiritual world there are many different "I"s. Although all souls there are Lord Kṛṣṇa's servants, they have a great variety of spiritual relationships with the Lord. All there different relationships manifest the idea of "My".

Yādava dāsa: If this is so, then what is the fault in the great variety of "I"s and "My"s manifest among the souls bound in the material world?

Ananta dāsa: the fault is this: In the soul's pure state the ideas of "I" and "My" are based on reality. However, when the soul resides in the material world these ideas of "I" and "My" are artificial impositions. They are not real. They are illusions. In the material world they are all temporary, unnatural, and the sources of fleeting pleasures and pains.

Yādava dāsa: Then is the material world an illusion?

Ananta dāsa: The material world is not an illusion. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's will it is a

reality. However, a soul who enters this world has many illusory conceptions of "I" and “My". Those false conceptions are illusions./ the māyāvadis, who are all offenders, claim that this world is an illusion.

Yādava dāsa: Why do we have illusory material relationships?

Ananta dāsa: The individual soul is a tiny particle of spirit. The first situation of the soul is on the boundary line that separates the spiritual and material worlds. In that condition the souls that do not forget their original relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa come under the control of the spiritual potency and are drawn into the spiritual world. Becoming eternal associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa, they enjoy the bliss of serving Him directly. The souls who are averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa and who wish the enjoy the pleasures offered by māyā are drawn into the world of māyā. That is why we now reside in the material world. When we enter the material world we forget our true spiritual identity. Then we think "I am the enjoyer of māyā." Then māyā encircles us with a great variety of false identities.

Yādava dāsa: Why, then, though we endeavor to attain it, do we not succeed in regaining the consciousness of our original spiritual identity?

Ananta dāsa: Those endeavors are of two kinds: 1.appropriate, and 2. inappropriate. Appropriate endeavors inevitably throw far away all material illusions about our identity. On the other hand, how can one succeed if his endeavors are not appropriate?

Yādava dāsa: What are inappropriate endeavors? Please tell me.

Ananta dāsa: When a soul purifies his heart by performing the duties of karma-kāṇḍa, takes shelter of the impersonal Brahman, and thinks "Now I will become free of māyā", his endeavors are all inappropriate. When a soul ties to attain spiritual perfection by performing astanga-yoga and entering a trance of samādhi, his endeavor also is inappropriate. There are many other kinds of inappropriate endeavor also.

Yādava dāsa: Why are these endeavors not appropriate?

Ananta dāsa: they are not appropriate because many obstacles stop one from attaining the desired results by practicing them, and because there is only the most slender chance that one will succeed by practicing them. We were thrust into this material world because we committed an offense. We will not be able to throw away our material condition of life without first attaining the mercy of that person we offended. Without His mercy we will not attain our original pure state.

Yādava dāsa: What are the appropriate means?

Ananta dāsa: Association with devotees and surrender. Association with devotees is described in these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.30):

ata ātyantikaṁ kṣemaṁ
pṛcchāmo bhavato 'naghāḥ
saṁsāre 'smin kṣaṇārdho 'pi
sat-saṅgaḥ śevadhir nṛṇām

"Therefore, O completely sinless ones, I ask you to kindly tell me what the supreme good is. After all, even half a minute's association with pure devotees within this world of birth and death is a priceless treasure for any man."***

If you ask, "How can the souls in this material world attain the supreme good," then I say, "if one has a moment's association with the devotees of the Lord, then one will attain the supreme good." The Supreme Personality of Godhead describes surrender in these words of Bhagavad-gītā (7.14):

daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī
mama māyā duratyayā
mām eva ye prapadyante
māyām etāṁ taranti te

"This divine energy of Mine, consisting of the three modes of material nature, is difficult to overcome. But those who have surrendered unto Me can easily cross beyond it."*

Here the Lord says, "My divine māyā potency consists of the three material modes of goodness, passion, and ignorance. By his own endeavor, a human being cannot cross beyond this māyā. Therefore this māyā is very difficult to overcome. However a person who surrenders unto Me and takes shelter of Me can cross beyond this māyā."

Caṇḍī dāsa: O saintly one, I am not able to understand all these explanations very well. This much I understand: I am originally a pure being. Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, I have fallen into māyā. I am bound in the prison of the material world. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy I may be released. If I do not attain Lord Kṛṣṇa mercy, I will stay in this condition.

Ananta dāsa: Yes. Now you accept this much. Your teacher, Yādava dāsa, knows all these truths, and you have learned them from him. In the book Śrī Prema-vivarta, Śrī Jagadānanda, who is a close associate of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has said:

*cit-kaṇa*jīva, kṛṣṇa*cin-maya bhāskar*
*nitya kṛṣṇe dekhi*kṛṣṇe karen ādar

"The individual soul is a tiny particle of spirit, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is a great sun of spirit. The liberated soul always gazes at Lord Kṛṣṇa. The liberated soul always worships Lord Kṛṣṇa.

kṛṣṇa bahirmukha hana bhoga-vāñchā kare
nikaṭa-stha māyā tare jāpaṭiyā dhare

"As soon as one becomes inimical to Kṛṣṇa and desires sense gratification, he is

immediately struck down by the illusory energy of the Lord.*

piśācī paile jena mati-cchanna hay
māyā-grasta jīver hay se bhāva uday

"When a living entity is conditioned by material nature, he is exactly like a person haunted by a ghost.*

āmi siddha kṛṣṇa dāsa ei kathā bhule
māyāra naphara hanā cira-dina bule

"Forgetting the words `In my perfect state I am servant of Kṛṣṇa', he serves māyā for a long time.

kabhu rājā, kabhu prajā, kabhu vipra śūdra
kabhu duḥkhī, kabhu sukhī, kabhu kīṭa kṣudra

"Sometimes he is a king. Sometimes he is a citizen. Sometimes he is a brāhmaṇa. Sometimes he is a śūdra. Sometimes he is sad. Sometimes he is happy. Sometimes he is a tiny insect.

kabhu svarge, kabhu martye, narake vā kabhu
kabhu deva, kabhu daitya, kabhu dāsa, prabhu

"Sometimes he is in Svargaloka. Sometimes he is in the earthly realms. Sometimes he is in hell. Sometimes he is a demigod. Sometimes he is a demon. Sometimes he is a servant. Sometimes he is a master. Sometimes he is a servant.

ei-rūpe saṁsāra bhramite kona jan
sādhu-saṅge nija-tattva avagata han

"Thus he wanders in the material worlds. When he attains the association of devotees, he can understand the truth about himself.

nija-tattva jani āra saṁsāra na cay
kena vā bhajinu māyā kare kaya hay

"When he understands the truth about himself he no longer wishes to stay in the material world. Then he laments, `Why did I serve māyā for so long?'

kende bole, ohe kṛṣṇa, āmi taba dās
tomāra caraṇa chāḍi haila sarva-nāś

"He weeps and cries out, `O Kṛṣṇa, I am Your servant. By leaving Your feet, I lost everything.

kākuti kariyā kṛṣṇe ḍāke eka-bār
kṛpā kari kṛṣṇa tāre chāḍāna saṁsār

"When the soul once cries for Kṛṣṇa in this way, Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes merciful and helps him leave the material world.

māyāke pichane rākhi kṛṣṇa-pāne cāy
bhajite bhajite kṛṣṇa-pāda-padma pāy

"Then the soul turns away from māyā. Again and again worshiping Kṛṣṇa, the soul attains Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet.

kṛṣṇa tāre dena nija cic-chaktira bal
māyā ākarṣaṇa chāḍe haiyā durbal

"Kṛṣṇa then places that soul under the protection of His internal potency. Maya then loses her power. Māyā no longer attracts that soul.

sādhu-saṅga kṛṣṇa-nāma ei-mātra cāi
saṁsāra jinite āra kona vastu nāi

"This is attained by associating with devotees and chanting the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. There is no other way to escape the material world of birth and death."

Yādava dāsa: O saintly bābājī, you speak of association with devotees, but devotees also live in the material world. They also suffer in the material world. How is it possible that they can deliver other souls?

Ananta dāsa: Devotees live in the material world. Still, there material world that is their home is very different from the material world that is home to the souls bewildered by māyā. Looking at them from the outside, they seem to be the same world. But within they are very different. There are always some devotees in the material world. Still, the non-devotees do not choose to associate with them. The association of devotees is rarely attained. The souls devoured by māyā may be divided into two groups: 1. they who, mad to enjoy the tiny pleasures of māyā, worship the material world, and 2. the intelligent souls who, not attracted to the pleasures of māyā, hope to attain better pleasures. In this way the residents of the material world are divided into two groups: 1. the unintelligent, and 2. the intelligent. Some call these two groups: 1. they who desire material sense gratification, and 2. they who desire liberation. The phrase "they who desire liberation" does not refer to the impersonalists. It means "they who, burned by the flames of the world of repeated birth and death, seek to understand their true spiritual identity. The Vedic literatures call such persons "they who desire liberation". When such persons renounce the desire to attain impersonal liberation and instead engage in worshiping and serving the Supreme Personality of Godhead, their worship is called pure devotional service. The scriptures do not order that one should renounce the desire for liberation. Rather, the moment he understands the truth of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the individual spirit soul, the person desiring liberation becomes at once liberated. This is explained in the following words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.14.3-5):

rajobhiḥ sama-saṅkhyātāḥ
pārthivair iha jantavaḥ
teṣāṁ ye kecanehante
śreyo vai manujādayaḥ

"In this material world there are as many living entities as atoms. Among these living entities a very few are human beings, and among them few are interested in following religious principles.*

prāyo mumukṣavas teṣāṁ
kecanaiva dvijottama
mumukṣūṇāṁ sahasreṣu
kaścin mucyeta sidhyati

"O best of the brahmanas, Sukadeva Gosvami, out of many persons who follow religious principles, only a few desire liberation from the material world. Among many thousands who desire liberation, one may actually achieve liberation, giving up material attachment to society, friendship, love. country, home, wife, and children. And among many thousands of such liberated persons, one who can understand the true meaning of liberation is very rare.*

muktānām api siddhānāṁ
nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
su-durlabhaḥ praśāntātmā
kotiṣv api mahā-mune

"O great sage, among many millions who are liberated and perfect in knowledge of liberation, one may be a devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa, or Kṛṣṇa. Such devotees, who are fully peaceful, are extremely rare."*

As the number grains of sand in the world cannot be counted, so the number of individual spirit souls also cannot be counted. Among these souls a small number seek eternal auspiciousness. Most are interested in material sense gratification. Of they who seek the highest spiritual good, most are interested in liberation, which means to escape the material world. Of thousands and thousands of souls seeking liberation, some few attain the perfection of truth and actually become liberated. Of millions and millions of liberated souls, some few become peaceful devotees of Lord Nārāyaṇa. A devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa is very rare. A devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa is even more rare. Even though they may live in the material world, the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa experience a life that is different from the life of the materialists. The devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa experience two conditions of existence.

Yādava dāsa: You have said that there are four kinds of intelligent persons. What are their different states of existence, and what is association with devotees?

Ananta dāsa: There are four kinds of intelligent persons: 1. they who are the the beginning stage of being intelligent, 2. they who desire to attain liberation, 3. they who are liberated, and 4. they who have attained perfection, or in other words, the devotees of the Lord. For persons at the beginning states of being intelligent, association with persons who desire liberation is good. The liberated souls may be divided into two groups: 1. liberated souls who taste the nectar of the spiritual mellows, and 2. the mayavadis, who falsely imagine that they are not different from the Supreme. These mayavadis are considered offenders. All classes of people are forbidden to associate with them. In the Tenth Canto (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.2.31) it is said:

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ

"O lotus-eyed one, those who think they are liberated in this life but do not render devotional service to You must be of impure intelligence. Although they accept sever austerities and penances and rise to the spiritual position, to impersonal Brahman realization, they fall down again because they neglect to worship Your lotus feet."*

The fourth kind of intelligent person, the devotees, are divided into two groups: 1. they who worship the Lord in His feature of opulence, and 2. they who worship the Lord in His feature of sweetness. Association with such devotees is beneficial in every way. Especially, if one takes shelter of a devotee who is attached to the Lord's feature in sweetness, the nectar of pure devotional service rises within his heart.

Yādava dāsa: You have said that there are two kinds of devotees. Please describe them more clearly, so even unintelligent persons like myself can understand.

Ananta dāsa: The devotees are of two kinds: 1. householder devotees, and 2. devotees who have renounced householder life.

Yādava dāsa: What is the situation of a householder devotee in the material world. Please kindly explain this.

Ananta dāsa: The word "householder" does not mean "one who builds a house". Rather, the word means “a person who accepts a wife and stays with her in a house". A devotee in this situation is called a "householder devotee". A soul bound in the prison of the illusory potency māyā, enters the material world through the doors of the five knowledge-acquiring senses. Through the door of the eyes he sees forms and colors. Through the door of the ears he hears sounds. Through the door of the nose he smells fragrances. Through the door of the skin he touches. Through the door of the tongue he tastes. Entering the material world through these five doors, the soul becomes attached to the world. As he becomes attached to the material world, the soul goes farther and farther from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the heart. That is why the material world is called "the external world". They who are mad after enjoying the material world are called hedonists. The householder devotees of the Lord are not eager to please their senses. Therefore they are not like the hedonists. For a householder devotee, his wife is the maidservant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. His sons and daughters are also all the servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When with his eyes he sees the Deity form of Lord Kṛṣṇa or the form of things related to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the householder devotee becomes happy. When with his ears he hears the topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa or the biographies of the great devotees, the householder devotee becomes happy. When with his nose he smells the tulasī leaves and fragrances offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the householder devotee becomes filled with bliss. With his tongue the householder devotee tastes the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa and remnants of food offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa. When with his skin he touches the feet of the Lord's devotees, the householder devotee becomes happy. His hopes, actions, desires, hospitality, and service to the Deity are all used in the service of Lord Kṛṣṇa. His entire life is a great festival of 1. mercy to others, 2. the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and 3. service to Vaiṣṇavas. In this way a devotee householder remains aloof from hedonism. In the age of Kali it is very appropriate that the individual souls become householder Vaiṣṇava. In that way there is no fear that they will fall down. Also, by following this path one may attain the full perfection of devotional service. Many self-realized Vaiṣṇava spiritual masters are householders. Their children also are pure devotees. In this way association with bouseholder devotees of the Lord is especially beneficial to the souls in this world.

Yādava dāsa: Householder Vaiṣṇavas are naturally under the control of the smārta paṇḍitas. If the Vaiṣṇavas try to be independent of them, there is trouble. In this situation how is it possible to engage in pure devotional service?

Ananta dāsa: For marrying off sons and daughters, for performing funeral rites,

and for a few other rituals it may be necessary to engage smārta paṇḍitas. Still, there is no need to engage them for the spiritual activities that are most dear to the heart. Look, for maintaining the material body all are dependent on others. Even they who proudly think themselves independent are in truth still dependent on others. When one suffers from disease, he must take medicine. When one is hungry, he must eat food. To ward off the cold, one must accept clothing. Because of the sun, rain, and other difficulties one must build a house. For these and many other things one needs to maintain his material body, one must depend on others. To be independent is merely, as far as possible, to limit these situations of depending on others. The truth is, however, that no one can be completely independent and still maintain his material body. Still, to be independent as far as possible is good and helpful for devotional service. If one observes all these previously described rituals in relation to Lord Kṛṣṇa, then there is no fault in observing them. For example, if marriage is accepted not only to beget good children and worship the Prajāpati, but also to engage one's wife and family in devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa and to make one's home a temple of Lord Kṛṣṇa, then household life is favorable for devotional service. Let the materialists, the Vedic priests, and others say what they will, one still attains the spiritual benefit of these devotional activities. On the śrāddha day one should first worship Lord Kṛṣṇa, offer the remnants of that offering as pinda to his ancestors, and then feed the brahmana Vaiṣṇavas. These activities are favorable for a householder's devotional service. When these smarta rituals may be performed in the context of devotional service. Then that are not at all unfavorable to pure devotional service. Ordinary activities should be done with a sense of detachment and renunciation. Spiritual activities should be performed in the association of devotees. Then one will not be at fault. Look. Most of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu's personal associates were householder devotees. From time without beginning many great rājarṣis (saintly kings) and devarṣis (divine sages) were householder devotees. Dhruva Mahārāja, Prahlāda Mahārāja, the Pāṇḍavas, and many others were all householders. Householder devotees of the Lord are worshiped by al the world.

Yādava dāsa: If householder devotees are so worshipable and qualified to attain all spiritual love, then why do some devotees renounce householder life?

Ananta dāsa: Among the householder devotees, for some it is appropriate to renounce household life. However, in the material world the number of these devotees is very small and association with them is very rare.

Yādava dāsa: What makes a man qualified to renounce household life?

Ananta dāsa: Human beings have two kinds of activities: 1. external activities, and 2. internal activities. In the language of the Vedas these activities are called "parāk" and “pratyak". When a pure spirit soul forgets its original spiritual form, misidentifies himself as a subtle material body (of mind, intelligence, and false ego), and, exits through the door of the material senses, he becomes attracted to the external world of material sense objects. These are called “external activities". When the direction is reversed, and the soul goes from the material sense objects to the mind and then to the original form of the soul, then these are called “internal activities". As long as the desire to perform external activities is strong, one should stay in the association of devotees, and without offense perform these external activities with the idea that this material world is Lord Kṛṣṇa's property. By thus taking shelter of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, in a very short time the

external direction of one's activities becomes reversed and one's activities are then directed inward. When one is thus fully engaged in internal spiritual activities, he becomes qualified to renounce household life. If one tries to renounce household life before one reaches that stage, then there is the danger that he will fall down. Household life is then a school where one gains experience and learns the true nature of the spirit soul. When the education is complete, one may leave the school.

Yādava dāsa: What are the symptoms of a devotee qualified to renounce household life?

Ananta dāsa: The first symptom is that 1. one is not enthusiastic to associate with women. Other symptoms are: 2. mercy to all living entities, 3. considering that activities to accumulate money are not very important, 4. endeavoring to attain a home and clothing only when they are genuinely needed, 5. faith in Lord Kṛṣṇa, 6. love and devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa, 7. considering that it is not good to associate with worldly people, 8. thinking praise and criticism are the same, 8. aversion to material activities, and 9. not being concerned whether one lives or dies. These symptoms are described in the following words of the scriptures (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.45, 3.25.22, and 11.2.55):

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāny bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

"A person advanced in devotional service sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he always sees the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the cause of all causes and understands that all things are situated in Him."*

mayy ananyena bhāvena
bhaktiṁ kurvanti ye dṛḍhām
mat-kṛte tyakta-karmāṇas
tyakta-svajana-bāndhavāḥ

"Such a sādhu engages in staunch devotional service to the Lord without deviation. For the sake of the Lord he renounces all other connections, such as family relationships and friendly acquaintances within the world."*

visṛjati hṛdayaṁ na yasya sākṣād
dharir avaśābhihito 'py aghaugha-nāśaḥ
praṇaya-rasanayā dhṛtāṅghri-padmaḥ
sa bhavati bhāgavata-pradhāna uktaḥ

"Hari, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who destroys everything inauspicious for His devotees, does not leave the hearts of His devotees even if they remember Him and chant about Him inattentively. This is because the rope of love always binds the Lord within the devotees' hearts. Such devotees should be accepted as most elevated."*

When these qualities manifest in a householder devotee, that devotee finds himself unable to continue with his household duties. At that time he renounces household life. Such a renounced devotee is rare. Association with such a devotee brings great good fortune.

Yādava dāsa: Nowadays I see that some young men renounce household life, accept the garments of a renunciant, build a temple, and serve the Lord. As time passes they eventually fall into evil association with women, but they do not give up chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. To maintain the temple they beg alms at different places. Are such devotees householders or renunciants?

Ananta dāsa: You ask many questions at once. Can I reply in a single answer? Being young or old has no bearing on renunciation. By purification in past lives or in this life a young man may become qualified to renounce household life. From his very birth Sukadeva Gosvami was qualified for renunciation. One should see if the qualification is genuinely there. It should not be artificial. If he is genuinely renounced, there is no harm in a young man accepting the renounced order.

Yādava dāsa: What is genuine renunciation and what is artificial renunciation?

Ananta dāsa: Genuine renunciation is strong. It does not break in any situation. Artificial renunciation is based on the desire to be honored by others. This kind of renunciation is marked by cheating and impiety. Thinking "a devotee who renounces household life is worshiped and respected," and hoping to be worshiped in this way, a man artificially renounces the world. Such renunciation brings no benefit. Rather, it is the source of great inauspiciousness. As soon as he attains his end and he accepts the order of renunciation, his qualifications disappear. From that moment his true wickedness is manifested.

Yādava dāsa: When a devotee renounces family life should he accept the garments of a renunciant?

Ananta dāsa: When he has definitely thrown far away the desire for household life, a devotee may live in the forest (as a renunciant) or he may live at home (as a householder). In either situation he remains a renounced soul, who has nothing to do with the material world. Such a great devotee purifies the entire world. Among these renounced souls some accept the external signs of the renounced order and wear the kaupīna and kanthā. At the time of accepting the kaupīna and kanthā, they take a firm vow of renunciation in the presence of other renounced Vaiṣṇavas. This is called, "entering the renounced āśrama" or “accepting the garments of a renunciant". If one accepts the garments of a renunciant, what is the harm? One who has thus renounced the world should not stay in contact with his relatives. He should stay away from them. He should not desire to enter either his home or another's. A person who is genuinely renounced should be cautious in dealing with others. A person advanced in renunciation does not need to wear the garments of a renunciant. Still, for some persons wearing the garments of renunciation is useful. It is said (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.29.45):

sa jahāti matiṁ loke
vede ca pariniṣṭhitam

"When a person is fully engaged in devotional service, he is favored by the Lord, who bestows His causeless mercy. At such a time, the awakened devotee gives up all material activities and ritualistic performances mentioned in the Vedas."*

Yādava dāsa: From whom should one accept the garments of a renunciant?

Ananta dāsa: One should accept the garments of a renunciant from a Vaiṣṇava who has renounced household life. A householder devotee has not experienced the ways of one who has renounced household life, therefore a householder devotee should not give initiation into the renounced āśrama. The reason for this is written in these words of the scriptures (Śrī Brahma-vaivarta Purāṇa):

aparīkṣyopadiṣṭaṁ yat
loka-nāśāya tad bhavet

"If one teaches a religious principle he does not himself follow, that teaching pushes the world closer to destruction."

Yādava dāsa: What thoughts arise in the mind of a spiritual master who is about to give initiation into the renounced āśrama?

Ananta dāsa: First the spiritual master should see whether the disciple is qualified. Has this householder devotee bee4n able, by engaging in devotional service, to control his mind and senses and act in a spiritual way? Is he free of the desire to associate with a woman? Has he uprooted the thirst for money and the desire to eat sumptuous foods? the spiritual master will stay near the disciple and observe him for some day. When he knows for certain that the disciple is qualified, the spiritual master will initiate him into the renounced order. He will not initiate any disciple before knowing that he is qualified. If he gives an unqualified person initiation into the renounced order, the spiritual master himself will fall down.

Yādava dāsa: Now I see. Accepting the renounced order is not simply a matter of speaking words with one's mouth. It is very difficult. Pretenders who are not qualified to be spiritual masters are making it a common thing. Now is only the beginning. No one knows what will be the end.

Ananta dāsa: In order to keep this system pure, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu punished Choṭa Haridāsa, whose offense was very slight. The followers of Lord Caitanya should always remember the punishment of Choṭa Haridāsa.

Yādava dāsa: After accepting the order of renunciation should one build a temple and worship the Deity of the Lord?

Ananta dāsa: No. A person who has accepted the renounced order should live by begging every day. In that way he should maintain his life. He will not enter a

situation of dealing with material affairs, as will come from building a temple. He will live in a secluded cottage, or in a temple managed by a householder. He will not do anything that requires money. He will always offenselessly chant the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Yādava dāsa: What do you say about a renunciant who builds a temple and then lives like a householder?

Ananta dāsa: I say he is a person who eats his own vomit. First he vomits, and then he eats what he has vomited.

Yādava dāsa: Is he not a Vaiṣṇava?

Ananta dāsa: he has become a materialist. He breaks the rules of scripture and the rules of being a Vaiṣṇava. Why should you associate with him? He has renounced the ways of pure devotional service and accepted the role of a cheater. How is he like the Vaiṣṇavas?

Yādava dāsa: If he has not given up chanting the holy names of Lord Hari, how can you say he has ceased to be a Vaiṣṇava?

Ananta dāsa: Chanting the holy names of Lord Hari and committing offenses to the holy name of Lord Hari are different things. When a person commits sin on the strength of chanting the holy name, that is an offense to the holy name. You should stay always very far away from offenses to the holy name.

Yādava dāsa: Should his household life not be called “household life dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa"?

Ananta dāsa: It should not be called that. In household life dedicated to Lord Kṛṣṇa there is no cheating or hypocrisy. That household life is completely honest and sincere. That household life is not based on an offense.

Yādava dāsa: Then I suppose he is inferior to a regular householder devotee.

Ananta dāsa: He is not a devotee. How can you consider his status, high or low, among the devotees?

Yādava dāsa: How can he be rescued?

Ananta dāsa: When he gives up all his offenses, always chants the holy name, and sheds tears of repentance, he may be counted again among the devotees.

Yādava dāsa: O saintly bābājī, householder devotees live under the shelter of the varṇāśrama system. May a householder devotee leave the varṇāśrama system?

Ananta dāsa: Ah! The Vaiṣṇava religion is very broad and generous. Another name for the Vaiṣṇava religion is “Jaiva-dharma" (the religion for all human beings). This means that every human being is qualified to join the Vaiṣṇava religion. Even outcastes may embrace the Vaiṣṇava religion and live as householders. For them there is no varṇāśrama. They who break the varṇāśrama rules of sannyāsa may, by associating with devotees, attain pure devotional service. Then they may be householder devotees. For them there are no rules of varṇāśrama. They who because of their misdeeds have left the varṇāśrama system may still, along with their children, take shelter of pure devotional service in the association of the devotees. Then they are householder devotees. But they are not part of the varṇāśrama system. Householder devotees are of two kinds: 1. They who follow the varṇāśrama system, and 2. they who do not follow the varṇāśrama system.

Yādava dāsa: Of these two which is the best?

Ananta dāsa: He who has more devotion is the best. If neither have any devotion then according to the material point of view the follower of varṇāśrama is

better because he is pious and the other is an outcaste. However, from the spiritual point of view they are both degraded, for neither has any devotion.

Yādava dāsa: is a householder devotee allowed to wear the garments of a renunciant?

Ananta dāsa: No, for he cheats himself and he cheats the world also. Those are his two faults. If a householder wears a kaupina and the other garments of renunciant then that householder mocks and insults the true renunciants.

Yādava dāsa: O saintly bābājī, do the scriptures describe how one should accept the garments of a renunciant?

Ananta dāsa: Not very specifically. People of every caste may become Vaiṣṇavas. However, in the opinion of the scriptures, none but the brāhmaṇas may accept sannyāsa. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.11.35), after describing the features of the different castes, Nārada Muni explains:

yasya yal lakṣaṇaṁ proktaṁ
puṁso varṇābhivyañjakam
yad anyatrāpi dṛśyeta
tat tenaiva vinirdiśet

"If one shows the symptoms of being a brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, or śūdra, as described above, even if he has appeared in a different class, he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification."*

This verse means, "A person's caste is determined by his personal characteristics, and they were previously described. Thus the scriptures declare that a person born in a non-brahmana family should be considered a brahmana if he is seen to have the qualities of a brahmana, and that such a brahmana may become qualified to accept sannyāsa. This is the opinion of all the scriptures. From the spiritual point of view, this is proved. Still, they who look at things from the material point of view do not accept it.

Yādava dāsa: Caṇḍī dāsa, they certainly answered your question.

Caṇḍī dāsa: Of all the instructions that came from the saintly and honorable bābājī's mouth, this much I understand: The individual soul is eternally the servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Forgetting Kṛṣṇa, the soul takes shelter of a material body and, pushed by māyā's modes of nature, he experiences material happiness and distress. The result of his material activities is that he must wear around his neck a garland of birth, old age, and death. Sometimes he is born in an exalted situation and sometimes in a lowly situation. He takes birth after birth, and in each birth he has a new conception of who he is. As he stays in a fragile material body that may be torn apart at any moment, hunger, thirst, and other promptings push him to act in various ways. Unable to attain what he wishes, he is troubled in many ways in this world. His material body grows old and torments him in many ways. Again and again quarreling with wife and children, he is pushed so far that sometimes he even commits suicide. To get money he sometimes commits many sins. He suffers punishment from the king, the insults of his neighbors, and great variety of other troubles. He is separated from his loved ones, he loses his wealth, and he is robbed

by thieves. Again and again he suffers many troubles. When he grows old his relatives refuse to care for him. This makes him suffer greatly. His old body is troubled by mucus, rheumatism, and host of other troubles. Finally he dies. Then he is again pushed into a mother's womb. Still, as long as he is alive in that material body, lust, anger, greed, delusion, pride, and envy remain very powerful and they refuse to give any place to intelligence. That is life in the material world. Now I know the meaning of the phrase "the material world". Again and again I offer my daṇḍavat obeisances to the saintly bābājī. It is the Vaiṣṇavas who are the true spiritual teachers of the world. By the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas I have learned the truth about the material world.

After hearing the instructions of Ananta dāsa Bābājī, all the Vaiṣṇavas called out, "Well done!" and began to chant the holy names of Lord Hari. Gradually many Vaiṣṇavas gathered there. Then Lāhirī Mahāśaya sang a song he wrote:

e ghora saṁsāre, paḍiyā mānava na pāya duḥkher śeṣ
sādhu-saṅga kori, hari bhaja jadi, tabe anta hay kleś

"Fallen into the horrible material world, a person suffers without end. Still, of he associates with devotees and worships Lord Hari, a person will make his sufferings come to an end.

biṣaya anale, jwaliche hṛdaya, anale baḍe anal
aparādha chāḍi' laya kṛṣṇa-nāma, anale paḍaye jal

"The heart burns in the fire of sense gratification. The fire burns more and more. Avoiding offenses, chant the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa. That will pour water on the fire.

nitāi caitanya, caraṇa-kamale, āśraya laila jei
kālidās bole jībane maraṇe, āmār āśray sei

"He who has taken shelter of the lotus feet of Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda is my shelter in life and death. Thus says Kālidāsa."

As these words were sung, Caṇḍī dāsa began to dance with great joy. He happily rolled in the dust touched by the Vaiṣṇava bābājīs' feet. He wept. Everyone said, "Caṇḍī dāsa has become very fortunate."

After some time Yādava dāsa Bābājī said, "Come, Caṇḍī dāsa, now we must cross the river." Caṇḍī dāsa joked, “If you carry me across, I will cross." After offering daṇḍavat obeisances to Pradyumna-kuñja, the two of them left. There they saw Damayantī. Again and again offering daṇḍavat obeisances, she said, "Alas! Why did I take birth as a woman? If I had taken birth as a man I could have easily

entered this forest grove, seen the saintly devotees, touched the dust from their feet, and made my life a great success. Birth after birth I will serve the Vaiṣṇavas in Śrī Navadvīpa. In that way I will pass my days."

Then Yādava dāsa said, "Ah! Godruma is a very sacred place. Simply be entering this place, a soul attains pure devotion. This Godruma is the pastime place of the master of our lives: Lord Caitanya, the son of Śacī. It is identical with holy Vṛndāvana, the village of cowherds. Understanding this truth, Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī wrote the following prayer (Śrī Navadvīpa-śataka 36):

na loka-vedoddhṛta-mārga-bhedair
āviśya saṅkliśyata re vimudhāḥ
hatheṇa sarvaṁ parihṛtya gauḍe
śrī-godrume parṇa-kuṭīṁ kurudhvam

"Fools, the path of the world and the Vedas will bring you only trouble! Give up everything and make yourself a leaf-hut in Śrī Godruma in Gauḍa-deśa!"

The three of them crossed the Gaṅgā and returned to Kuliyā-grāma. From that day forward Caṇḍī dāsa and his wife Damayantī became wonderful Vaiṣṇavas. Understanding the truth about them, the illusory material world no longer touched them. Service to Vaiṣṇavas, continual chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and mercy to all living entities were the ornaments they wore. Glorious became that merchant couple! Glorious is the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas! Glorious is the holy name of Lord Hari! Glorious is the land of Śrī Navadvīpa!

Chapter Eight
Nitya-dharma O Vyavahār
Eternal Religion and Ordinary Activities

One afternoon, after honoring prasāda, the Vaiṣṇavas of Śrī Godruma gathered in a secluded forest grove on the northeast side of Śrī Gaura Lake. There Lāhirī Mahāśaya sang a song that awakened in them the ecstatic love of Vraja. He sang:

(gora) kata līlā karile ekhāne
advaitādi bhakta-saṅge nācile e bane raṅge
kālīya-damana-saṅkīrtane
e hrada haite prabhu, nistārile nakra prabhu,
kṛṣṇa jena kālīya-damane

"How many pastimes did Lord Caitanya enjoy here with Advaita and the other

devotees? Here He chanted the names of Lord Kṛṣṇa and danced. As Lord Kṛṣṇa rescued Kālīya, here our Lord rescued a crocodile."

When the song was ended the Vaiṣṇavas discussed the similar natures of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya's pastimes. Then two or four Vaiṣṇavas from Baragachi came there. They offered daṇḍavat obeisances, first to Gaura Lake and then to the Vaiṣṇavas. The Vaiṣṇavas honored them and offered sitting places. In that secluded grove was an old banyan tree. Around its roots the Vaiṣṇavas had built a stone platform. They all informed the visitors from Baragachi that the tree was honored with the name Nitāi-baṭa (Lord Nityānanda's banyan tree), for Lord Nityānanda liked to sit under it.

Sitting under Lord Nityānanda's banyan tree, the Vaiṣṇavas talked about spiritual life. Among the Vaiṣṇavas from Baragachi was a youth who wanted to ask a question. He suddenly said, “I want to ask a question. Someone please answer it and make me happy."

In that secluded grove lived Hari dāsa Bābājī, who was a very learned scholar. He almost never left that place. He was almost a hundred years old. On some rare occasions he would go to Pradyumna-kuñja and meet with the paramahaṁsa bābājī. He had personally seen Lord Nityānanda sitting under that banyan tree. He had one desire. He wished that when he left his body it would be at that place. He said, "Son, now that the paramahaṁsa bābājī's associates have assembled here, why should you worry about the answer to your question?"

Then the Vaiṣṇava from Baragachi asked his question. “The Vaiṣṇava religion is the eternal religion. How should a person who has taken shelter of the Vaiṣṇava religion act in relation to others. I wish to understand this very thoroughly."

Glancing for a moment at saintly Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī, Hari dāsa Bābājī said, "O Vaiṣṇava dāsa, nowadays no one in Bengal is learned and devoted like you. You should answer this question. You had the association of Śrīla Sarasvatī Gosvāmī and you were personally taught by the paramahaṁsa bābājī. You are thus very fortunate. You have certainly attained the mercy of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu."

Saintly Vaiṣṇava dāsa Bābājī humbly said, "O great soul, you personally saw Lord Nityānanda, who is an incarnation of Lord Balarāma. In the assembly of many great souls you taught many students. Please be merciful and give some instruction to us. All the Vaiṣṇavas there begged Hari dasa Bābājī to answer the question. The bābājī at last agreed. After first offering daṇḍavat obeisances to Lord Nityānanda under that banyan tree, the saintly bābājī began to speak.

"Addressing them all as "servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa", I offer my obeisances to every soul in this material world. It is said (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Adi 6.85):

keha māne, keha na māne, saba tanra dāsa

"Some accept Him whereas others do not, yet everyone is Lord Kṛṣṇa's servant."*

"I place upon my head these words of the saintly devotees. Although every soul is by nature a perfect servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa, some souls, because of ignorance or

bewilderment, do not accept that they are His servant. They are one group. Other souls, however, do accept that they are His servants. They are another group. Thus, ion this material world the souls may be divided into two groups: 1. they who turn away from Lord Kṛṣṇa, and 2. they who are eager to approach Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the material world most of the souls prefer to turn away from Lord Kṛṣṇa. many of these souls do not accept any religion. There is no need to say much about these persons. They have no idea what should and should not be done. For them their own personal happiness is the be-all-and-end-all of their lives. Persons who accept religion have an idea of what should be done. For their benefit, the great Vaiṣṇava Manu has written (Śrī Manu-saṁhitā 6.92):

dhṛtiḥ kṣamā damo 'steyaṁ
śaucam indriya-nigrahaḥ
dhīr vidyā-satyam akrodho
daśakaṁ dharma-lakṣaṇam

"The ten features of religious life are: 1. patience, 2. forgiveness, 3. self-control, 4. honesty, 5. cleanliness, 6. sense-control, 7. knowledge, 8. wisdom, 9. truthfulness, and 10. freedom from anger."

"Among these, six are features that benefit the performer. They are: 1. patience, 2. self-control, 3. cleanliness, 4. sense-control, 5. knowledge, and 6. wisdom. The remaining four are done for the benefit of others. They are: 1. patience, 2.. honesty, 3. truthfulness, and 4. freedom from anger. Devotional service to Lord Hari is not clearly mentioned in this list of ten features. These ten features of religious life are taught here for the benefit of ordinary people. It cannot be said that by faithfully following the teaching of this verse one will attain perfect auspiciousness, for Śrī Viśṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa explains:

jīvitaṁ viṣṇu-bhaktasya
varaṁ paṇca-dināni ca
na tu kalpa-sahasrāṇi
bhakti-hīnasya keśave

"To live for five days as a devotee of Lord Viṣṇu is far better than to live for a thousand kalpas as a person who has no devotion for Lord Keśava."

"They who are not devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa cannot be said even to be human beings. They who are not devotees are all counted as animals walking on two legs. It is said (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.19):

śva-viḍ-varāhoṣṭra-kharaiḥ
saṁstutaḥ puruṣaḥ paśuḥ
na yat karṇa-pathopeto

jātu nāma gadāgrajaḥ

"Men who are like dogs, hogs, camels, and asses praise those men who never listen to the transcendental pastimes of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the deliverer from evils."*

"Here the question is not what these persons should or should not do. The question is only how should persons who have taken shelter of the path of devotional service act in relation to these persons. Of that I will speak. They who have taken shelter of the path of devotional service may be divided into three groups: 1. kaniṣṭha (neophyte), 2. madhyama (intermediate), and 3. uttama (advanced). Although he has taken shelter of the path of devotional service, a neophyte is not yet a true devotee. He is described in these words (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.47):

arcāyām eva haraye
pūjāṁ yah śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

"A prākṛta, or materialistic devotee, does not purposefully study the śāstra and try to understand the actual standard of pure devotional service. Consequently he does not show proper respect to advanced devotees. He may, however, follow the regulative principles learned from his spiritual master or from his family who worships the Deity. He is to be considered on the material platform, although he is trying to advance in devotional service. Such a person is a bhakta-prāya (neophyte devotee), or bhaktābhāsa, for he is a little enlightened by Vaiṣṇava philosophy."*

"Thus one who faithfully worships the Deity of the Lord but does not faithfully worship the Lord's devotees, is a materialistic devotee (prākṛta-bhakta). The conclusion, then, is that faith is the seed of devotional service. To faithfully worship the Deity of the Lord is to engage in devotional service. Still, if one does not also worship the Lord's devotees, his worship is not pure devotional service. His worship is not devotional service in its complete form. His worship is merely stepping into the entrance of the house of devotional service. The scriptures (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.84.13) explain:

yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ
yat tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

"A human being who identifies this body made of three elements with the self, who considers the by-products of the body to be his kinsmen, who considers the

land of birth as worshipable, and who goes to the place of pilgrimage simply to take a bath, rather than meet men of transcendental knowledge there, is to be considered as an ass or a cow."*

"The meaning is this: Although in the beginning devotional service consists of worship of the Deity and nothing else, and although dry, materialistic logic is not recommended, for it crushes the heart into powder, it is nevertheless necessary that one understand that the Deity of the Lord and service to the Deity are pure and spiritual. All living entities in the material world are spiritual by nature. Among these living entities they who are devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa especially manifest their pure and spiritual nature. The devotee and Lord Kṛṣṇa are two different pure and spiritual identities. To understand their true spiritual natures one must understand the relationships between the material world, the individual soul and Lord Kṛṣṇa. A person who understand these relationships and simultaneously worships the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa and serves the Lord's devotees acts rightly. When one faithfully worships the spiritual truth in this way, it is said that he has "faith in the scriptures". A person who worships the Deity of the Lord but does not understand the relationships that exist between the various spiritual entities has only a materialistic kind of faith. Although he stands at the entrance to the house of devotional service, his service is not pure devotional service. That is the conclusion. A person thus standing at the entrance to the house of devotional service is described in these words of the scriptures:

gṛhīta-viṣṇu-dīkṣāko
viṣṇu-pūjā-paro naraḥ
vaiṣṇavo 'bhihito 'bhijñair
itaro 'smād avaiṣṇavaḥ

"A person who has accepted a Vaiṣṇava initiation and who devotedly worships Lord Viṣṇu is said by the wise to be a Vaiṣṇava. All others are not Vaiṣṇavas."

"Persons born in families who generation after generation are initiated by their family priest in the chanting of Viṣṇu-mantras, and who thus worship the Deity of the Lord with materialistic faith are neophyte (kaniṣṭha) or materialistic devotees. They are not pure devotees. Over them the shadow of devotional service is strongly cast. However, the reflection of devotional service is not manifested in them, for the reflection of devotional service is counted among the offenses. Therefore they who possess this reflection are not Vaiṣṇavas. However, from the shadow of devotional service may come a great good fortune, for such a neophyte devotee may gradually become an intermediate (madhyama) and eventually and advanced (uttama) devotee.

However that may be, persons at that stage of spiritual advancement are not yet pure devotees. They may worship the Deity of the Lord with material faith and they may manifest the ten signs of piety in dealing with ordinary persons. Still, the scriptures' descriptions of the devotees' ways are not meant to describe them. To convert non-devotees into devotees is not in their power. The ways of the

intermediate (madhyama) devotees are described in these words (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.46):

īśvare tad-adhīneṣu
bāliśeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitri-kṛpopekṣā
yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ

"An intermediate, second-class devotee shows love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is friendly to all devotees, and is very merciful to neophytes and ignorant people. The intermediate devotee neglects those who are envious of devotional service."*

"The behavior described in this verse is the behavior of one who follows the eternal religion. Temporary or material activities are not described here. In a Vaiṣṇava's life such behavior must be followed. Other kinds of behavior, as long as they do not contradict this behavior, may be adopted when necessary.

"A Vaiṣṇava relates to four kinds of persons: 1. the Supreme Personality of Godhead, 2. the devotees, who are surrendered to the Lord, 3. innocent persons, and 4. they who are enemies of devotional service. To these four kinds of persons a Vaiṣṇava shows love, friendship, mercy, and neglect. To the Supreme Personality of Godhead he shows love, to the devotees he shows friendship, to the innocent people in general he shows mercy, and to persons filled with hate he shows neglect.

"First he shows love to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of all, he shows love (prema). The word "prema" means “pure devotional service". The characteristics of pure devotional service are described in these words (Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu):

anyābhilāṣitaṁ śūnyaṁ
jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanaṁ 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."*

"These words describe the devotional service of an intermediate (madhyama) Vaiṣṇava, service that reaches up to the stages of ecstasy (bhāva) and pure spiritual love (prema). By itself, without the addition of the qualities described here, worshiping the Deity of the Lord with faith is the activity of a neophyte devotee. This means that a neophyte devotee does not have the qualities of pure devotional service, which are: 1. being without desire for material profit or gain through

fruitive activities or philosophical speculation, and 2. rendering transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa favorably. However, on the day that these qualities are manifested in his heart, such a person may be called an intermediate (madhyama) devotee. That is how a materialistic devotee becomes an intermediate devotee. As long as these qualities do not arise in his heart, he is a materialistic devotee. This means that he is considered only a shadow of a true devotee or a shadow of a true Vaiṣṇava. Here the word “kṛṣṇānuśīlanam" refers to spiritual love (prema). However, the word "ānukūlyena" refers to all four qualities of an intermediate devotee: 1. favorable love for Lord Kṛṣṇa, 2. friendship, 3. mercy, and 4. neglect.

"The second of these qualities is that one is friendly to the devotees, who are surrendered to the Supreme Lord. Any person in whom pure devotional service is manifested is considered a devotee surrendered to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Neophyte devotees are neither pure devotees nor are they surrendered to the Lord. Their tendency is to disrespect the true pure devotees. Therefore one should make friendship with intermediate and advanced devotees only. In answering a Kulīna-grāma devotee's question, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu described the neophyte, intermediate, and advanced devotees. He explained that the intermediate and advanced devotees are counted among the true Vaiṣṇavas, whereas the neophyte devotees, who do not know anything beyond worshiping the Deity, are not yet true Vaiṣṇavas. The true holy name of Lord does not appear on the mouths of such worshipers of the Deity. The name that appears on their mouths is only the shadow of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name (chāyā-nāmābhāsa). Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu ordered the intermediate (madhyama) householder devotees to serve all three classes of devotees, the three classes being: 1. a person on whose mouth the holy name of Lord is heard even only once, 2. a person on whose mouth the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is heard always, and 3. a person the sight of whom inspires one to chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. One should serve all these three kinds of Vaiṣṇavas. However, one should not serve a Vaiṣṇava who chants only a shadow of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. One should serve only a Vaiṣṇava who takes shelter of the pure holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. As there are different kinds of Vaiṣṇava, so there are different kinds of service to Vaiṣṇavas. The {.sy 168phrase "making friendship" includes associating with Vaiṣṇavas, conversing with them, and serving them. The moment one sees a pure Vaiṣṇava one should greet him, honor him, and offered both a sitting place and conversation. One must serve him in all these ways. One should never hate, envy, or insult him. One should not disrespect him if his body is ugly or if he suffers from some disease.

"The third of these qualities is that one is merciful to the innocent people in general. The phrase "innocent people in general" means "they who do not understand the spiritual truth", "they who are bewildered", and they who are foolish". Persons who are not educated, have not entered into the theories of the māyāvādīs and other offenders, have not learned how to hate devotees and devotional service, but, being overcome by powerful false-ego and false-possessiveness, do not yet have faith in the Supreme Personality of Godhead are called "the innocent people in general". Even if one is a great scholar, if he does not have faith in the Supreme Personality of Godhead, he is counted among the "innocent people in general". Even though he has approached the entrance to the

house of devotional service, a materialistic neophyte devotee may also be counted among the "innocent people in general", for such a devotee has not yet attained pure devotional service and does not yet clearly understand his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When such a devotee understands his relationship with the Supreme Personality of Godhead, associates with pure devotees, and chants the holy name with purity, then his status as one of the "innocent people in general" is thrown far away and he attains the status of an intermediate (madhyama) Vaiṣṇava. For an intermediate Vaiṣṇava it is absolutely essential that he be merciful to the innocent people in general. As far as possible he should invite them to his home. Even that is not enough. He should show mercy to such persons by helping them to attain faith in pure devotional service and attraction for the pure holy name of the Lord. Because they are not learned in the scriptures, the innocent people in general may easily fall down because of association with wicked persons. Therefore the intermediate devotee should mercifully give his association to the innocent people and gradually allow them to hear the glories of the holy names and the various teachings of the scriptures. A diseased person cannot cure himself. He must be cured by a physician. If the patient sometimes speaks angrily or commits other like offenses, he is to be forgiven. In the same way if an innocent person sometimes act improperly, he is to be forgiven. This is called mercy. An innocent person may have many misconceptions. He may have faith in the karma-kāṇḍa portion of the Vedas, faith in various non-devotional philosophies, an inclination to worship the Deity of the Lord in order to attain various material desires, faith in yoga and other like paths, disinterest in associating with pure Vaiṣṇavas, or attachment to varṇāśrama and other like things. In this way he may have many different kinds of misconceptions. When by good association, mercy, and spiritual instruction he gradually gives up these misconceptions, the neophyte devotee quickly becomes an intermediate devotee. Then he is a pure devotee. His worship of the Deity form of Lord Hari was thus the foundation upon which he built the house of all spiritual auspiciousness. Of this there is no doubt. He does not make the mistake of trying to follow one of the myriad of competing philosophies. Because he does not make this mistake, he has a scent of true faith. When he worships the Deity of Lord Hari, a follower of the māyāvādī philosophy or other like philosophies does not have even the slightest true faith in the Deity. Such a person is an offender. In is for this reason that Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.47) describes him with the phrase “śraddhayehate" (He worships with faith). In their hearts the followers of the māyāvādī philosophy and other like philosophies think, "The supreme spirit has no form. The Deity form that we worship is merely the product of our imagination." How can such persons have faith in the Deity form of the Lord? In this way the māyāvādī's worship of the Deity and the most neophyte Vaiṣṇava's worship of the Deity are very different. It is for this reason, that, even though he does not have the various virtues of a Vaiṣṇava, al least he is not a māyāvādī, that the neophyte is called a “materialistic Vaiṣṇava". In this way he is considered a Vaiṣṇava. By the mercy of saintly devotees, such a neophyte gradually becomes elevated. This is inevitable. Second class pure Vaiṣṇavas are inevitably merciful to them. Then the neophyte devotee's worship of the Deity and chanting of Lord Hari's holy name do not remain shadows of the real thing. Quickly they manifest their true spiritual nature.

"The fourth of these qualities is that one neglects hateful persons. One should

understand the different kinds of hateful persons. Envy is a synonym of hatred. Hatred is the opposite of love. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the only true object of love. The opposite of love for Him is hatred of Him. This hatred is manifested in five ways:

1. to not believe in the existence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead
2. to believe that the living entity himself has created God
3. to not believe that God has a form
4. to not believe that the individual souls are eternally subordinate to God
5. to be merciless

"Persons contaminated by hatred do not have pure devotion. Neither do they have the materialistic devotion manifested by neophytes who worship the Deity. These five kinds of hatred bring with them, as a by-product, attachment to material sense gratification. It is sometimes seen that the third and fourth of these kinds of hatred may bring one to austerities so severe that one kills himself in the process. This is seen in the lives of the māyāvādī sannyāsīs. How should a pure devotee relate to all these hateful persons? A pure devotee should avoid them.

"Avoiding them does not mean that one should renounce all ordinary dealings one human being naturally has with another. It does not mean that if a hateful person falls into danger or want one should not try to help him. A householder devotee has many relationships with others. By marriage he has many relatives. By buying and selling various goods he has many relationships. By owning property and protecting animals he has many relationships. By acting to treat diseases and relieve other's sufferings he has many relationships. The king and his subjects have many kinds of relationships. Avoiding hateful persons does not mean suddenly renouncing all these different kinds of relationships. In ordinary material dealings one may have relationships with such persons, but in spiritual activities such persons should be shunned. As the result of past karma a family member may be such a hateful person. Should such a person be cast out of the family? No. Without becoming attached, behave with that person as is expected in ordinary dealings, but do not share that person's ideas of spiritual life. In this way one should avoid that person. Meeting for spiritual activities, conversing about spiritual activities, and helping and serving one another in spiritual life are the different kinds of spiritual association. To avoid such association is called “neglect of hateful persons". If he hears the praises of pure devotional service or teachings about pure devotional service, a person who accepts the philosophy of hateful persons will only argue needlessly. In this way neither he nor you will be benefited. Avoiding such barren debates, associate with him only in ordinary material things. If you say that you will consider such a hateful person among the innocent people in general and you will be merciful to him and thus benefit him, then I say you may very well harm both him and yourself. If you must try to do good to him, then do it very carefully.

"An intermediate (madhyama) pure devotee should act in these four ways. If such an intermediate devotee is reluctant to act in these ways then he commits the fault of acting improperly, in a way he is not qualified to act. Thus he avoids acting properly, in the ways he is qualified. This is a great fault, as the scriptures explain:

sve sve 'dhikāre yā niṣṭhā
sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ
viparyayas tu doṣaḥ syād
ubhayor eṣa nirṇayaḥ

"One who accepts the duties for which he is qualified is praiseworthy, and who who does not is subject to blame. That is the right conclusion."

"Thus an intermediate (madhyama) devotee should perform the activities of pure devotional service, follow the scriptures, love the Supreme Personality of Godhead, make friendship with pure devotees, be merciful to the innocent people in general, and neglect persons who hate the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Different degrees of advancement in devotional service on the part of one's devotee friends may elicit different degrees of friendship. Different degrees of sincerity on the part of innocent persons may elicit different degrees of mercy. Different degrees of hatred on the part of hateful persons may elicit different degrees of avoidance. Considering these differences, an intermediate devotee should behave, in his spiritual activities, differently with different persons. Material activities should be performed honestly and they should be secondary to spiritual activities."

Then Nityānanda dāsa from Baragachi asked, "What are the material activities of these devotees you have described?" Hari dāsa Bābājī replied, "Son, if you ask this question of me, then I cannot give a good explanation. I am an old man, my memory is short, my mind is not powerful, I easily forget."

Hari dāsa was a very strict bābājī. No fault could ever be seen in him. Still, when this inappropriate question was asked, he gave this reply. When they heard his words, everyone was stunned.

After again bowing down before the banyan tree of Lord Nityānanda, Hari dāsa said, "When his love and devotion become intensified, then an intermediate (madhyama) devotee becomes an advanced (uttama) devotee. The qualities of an advanced devotee are written in these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.45):

sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāny bhagavaty ātmany
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ

"A person advanced in devotional service sees within everything the soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Consequently he always sees the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the cause of all causes and understands that all things are situated in Him."*

An advanced (uttama) Vaiṣṇava sees that the Supreme Personality of Godhead loves all souls and all souls love the Supreme Personality of Godhead. For an advanced devotee there is no other love. Whatever other kind of love he may

manifest in different situations is all but a transformation of that spiritual love. Look. Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī is an advanced devotee. Still, he insulted Kaṁsa by calling him "the vicious sinner of the Bhoja dynasty". However, that insult was really manifested from love. It was based on spiritual love and there was not any malice in it. When pure love becomes his entire life, then a person is called "the best of devotees". In this state the differing degrees of love, friendship, mercy, and neglect described before are no longer manifested. Now everything is spiritual love. For such a person there is no difference between neophyte, intermediate, and advanced devotees. Indeed, for him there is no difference between devotees and non-devotees. Such a state is very rarely attained.

A neophyte devotee does not serve Vaiṣṇavas and an advanced devotee does not think that some persons are Vaiṣṇavas and others are not. Therefore it is only the intermediate devotees who honor and serve Vaiṣṇavas. An intermediate devotee must serve the three kinds of Vaiṣṇavas: 1. he who once chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, 2. he who always chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and 3. he who, simply by being seen, makes others chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus Vaiṣṇavas should be served according to the degree of their advancement, whether they are a good Vaiṣṇava, a better Vaiṣṇava, or the best Vaiṣṇava. No one can judge who is a good Vaiṣṇava and who is an intermediate Vaiṣṇava. Only an advanced Vaiṣṇava can understand that. If an intermediate (madhyama) Vaiṣṇava tries to say this, he will commit an offense. Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu hinted this in His instructions to the residents of Kulīna-grāma. All intermediate devotees should honor that teaching more than even the Vedas. Someone may ask: What are the Vedas, or Śruti? The answer is given: The Vedas are the orders of the Supreme Personality of Godhead." After speaking these words, Hari dāsa was silent for a moment. Then the visitor from Baragachi said, "May I ask a question?" Hari dāsa Bābājī replied, "As you like."

Young Nityānanda dāsa asked, "Saintly bābājī, what kind of Vaiṣṇava am I? Am I a neophyte Vaiṣṇava or an intermediate Vaiṣṇava? An advanced Vaiṣṇava I certainly am not."

Saintly Hari dasa Bābājī smiled and said, "Can a person who accepts the name Nityānanda dāsa not be an advanced Vaiṣṇava? Our Nityānanda is very merciful. Even when He is beaten, He gives love in return. How can words properly glorify a person who chants Lord Nityānanda's name and becomes His servant.

Nityānanda dāsa: I would like to know truthfully what my position is.

Hari dāsa: Son, tell me all about yourself. If Lord Nityānanda gives me the power to say, I will tell you.

Nityānanda dāsa: I was born in a lowly family in a village on the bank of the Padmavatī. I was married at a young age. I did not learn how to be wicked. When I my wife died, thoughts of renunciation came to my mind. In Baragachi I saw many Vaiṣṇavas who had renounced family life. Everyone was respectful to them. Desiring to be honored like that, and inspired by the temporary feeling of renunciation my wife's death brought, I accepted the garments of a Vaiṣṇava renunciant. After some days wickedness came into my mind. My Vaiṣṇava friend was a very good person. Now he stays in Vraja. He gave me good advice, protected mew with his good association, and kept my mind pure. Now my mind no longer wants to leave the right path. It likes to chant a hundred thousand holy names

every day. I understand that the Supreme Personality of Godhead and His holy name are not different. Both are perfectly spiritual. I observe ekādaśī according to the scriptures and I water tulasī. When the Vaiṣṇavas sing the holy names together, I join in the singing. I drink the nectar water that has washed the Vaiṣṇavas' feet. I read Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala. I do not desire opulent food and clothing. I do not like to hear gossip. When I see how the Vaiṣṇavas are filled with ecstatic love, I also become ecstatic and I roll in the dust that has touched their feet. In spite of all this, to a certain extent I still desire fame. Now please tell me: To what class of Vaiṣṇava do I belong? How should I behave?

Showing a little smile, Hari dāsa Bābājī said to Vaiṣṇava dāsa, "You say. To what class of Vaiṣṇava does Nityānanda dāsa belong?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: From what I have heard he has left the neophyte stage and become an intermediate devotee.

Hari dāsa: I also think that.

Nityānanda dāsa: Good. From the mouth of a great soul I now know my true position. Please give your mercy to me, so I may gradually become an advanced devotee.

Hari dāsa: When you first accepted the garments of a sannyāsī, you desired material fame. That inappropriate desire meant that then you were still fallen. In spite of that, the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas brought auspiciousness to you.

Nityānanda dāsa: I still have a slight desire for fame. In my mind I think, "Bewildered by the tears in my eyes and many other symptoms of ecstatic love, the people will worship me."

Hari dāsa: You should struggle to renounce those thoughts. Don't keep thoughts like those. There is the danger they will diminish your devotional service. If you allow them to diminish your devotion, you will again become a neophyte devotee. Even after lust, anger, and other vices have left, the desire for fame may stubbornly stay with a Vaiṣṇava. It does not go away very easily. A single drop of sincere love for the Lord is better than an elaborate pretense of that love.

Touching the dust of Hari dāsa Bābājī's feet, Nityānanda dāsa Bābājī said, "Please have mercy on me." Hari dāsa at once embraced him and made him sit down. How wonderful is the result attained by a Vaiṣṇava's touch! Tears streamed from Nityānanda dāsa's eyes. Taking a blade of grass between his teeth, he said, "I am very fallen and lowly. I am very fallen." Hari dāsa Bābājī embraced him and wept. How wonderful it all was! Nityānanda dāsa had attained the true goal of life. After a short time, when all the symptoms of ecstatic love had subsided, in his heart Nityānanda dāsa accepted Śrī Hari dāsa as his spiritual master. Then Nityānanda dāsa asked a question.

Nityānanda dāsa: What are the primary and secondary features of a neophyte devotee's devotional service?

Hari dāsa: The two primary features of a neophyte devotee's devotional service are: 1. faith that the Supreme Personality of Godhead's form is eternal, and 2. worship of the Lord's Deity form. The secondary features of a neophyte devotee's devotional service are: 1. hearing about the Lord, 2. chanting the Lord's glories, 3.

remembering the Lord, and 4. a host of other activities, beginning with offering obeisances to the Lord.

Nityānanda dāsa: Without having faith that the Lord's form is eternal, no one can be a Vaiṣṇava. Also, without worshiping the Deity form of the Lord according the rules of worship, no one can be a Vaiṣṇava. I can understand why these two are the primary features. However, I do not understand why the other features are secondary.

Hari dāsa: A neophyte devotee does not understand the true nature of pure devotional service. Hearing and chanting the Lord's glories, as well as other like devotional activities are all part and parcel of pure devotional service. However, a person who does not understand the true nature of devotional service, does not think these are the primary activities of devotional service. Such a person considers these activities secondary. The three modes of material nature are: 1. goodness, 2. passion, and 3. ignorance. When the performer takes shelter of these material modes, he considers these devotional activities to be secondary. When the performer is free from the influence of the material modes, he considers these activities, which begin with hearing and chanting the Lord's glories, to be the primary features of devotional service. When a person is thus free of the material modes, he is a an intermediate (madhyama) devotee.

Nityānanda dāsa: A neophyte devotee is still contaminated by mental speculation, fruitive work, and non-devotional desires. Why is he still considered a devotee?

Hari dāsa: Faith is the root of devotional service. Anyone who has faith is qualified to engage in devotional service. A neophyte devotee stands at the entrance to the house of devotional service. Of that there is no doubt. The word “faith" means "trust". Because he trusts that the form of the Lord is a reality, the neophyte devotee is qualified to engage in devotional service.

Nityānanda dāsa: When will such a person attain true devotion to the Lord?

Hari dāsa: When he becomes free from mental speculation and fruitive work, when he desires only to engage in unalloyed devotional service, when he understands that honoring a guest is different from honoring a devotee, and when he desires to serve the devotees, that service being very conducive to the attainment of true devotion, then he becomes an intermediate (madhyama) devotee, a pure devotee.

Nityānanda dāsa: Pure devotional service is manifested at the same time one attains knowledge of his relationship with the Lord. When does he attain knowledge of that relationship, knowledge that makes him eligible to engage in pure devotional service?

Hari dāsa: When he is no longer contaminated by māyāvāda philosophy, then his awareness of his true relationship with the Lord and his engagement in pure devotional service are manifested simultaneously.

Nityānanda dāsa: How many days does that take?

Hari dāsa: A person who in the past performed many pious deeds will attain it quickly.

Nityānanda dāsa: What is the first result these past pious deeds bring?

Hari dāsa: Association with devotees.

Nityānanda dāsa: What result is gradually attained by associating with devotees?

Hari dāsa: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.25) explains:

satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyaṇa-kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhakitr anukramiṣyati

"In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin."*

Thus, a person who, in the association of devotees, hears about Lord Hari, gradually attains faith and other virtues.

Nityānanda dāsa: How does one attain association with devotees?
Hari dāsa: I have already explained that. It is by past pious deeds. It is said (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.51.53):

bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareśe tvayi jāyate ratiḥ

"O my Lord! O infallible Supreme Person! When a person wandering throughout the universes becomes eligible for liberation from material existence, he gets an opportunity to associate with devotees. When he associates with devotees, his attraction for You is awakened. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the highest goal of the supreme devotees and the Lord of the universe."*

Nityānanda dāsa: If, in the association of devotees, a neophyte devotee worships the Deity of the Lord, can it be said that the neophyte devotee does not by that action also serve the devotees there?
Hari dāsa: By associating with devotees one gradually attains faith in the Deity form of the Lord. However, one must worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead and also serve His devotees. As long as one does not have faith in both the Lord and His devotees, one will not attain true faith and one will not be qualified to engage in pure devotional service.
Nityānanda dāsa: Through what stages does a neophyte devotee pass as he makes spiritual advancement?
Hari dāsa: First he has faith in the Deity, but he has not yet lost the desire for material things and non-devotional talk. Every day he worships the Deity. Devotees come to visit the temple where he worships the Deity. He honors the

devotees as he would any visitors. The neophyte devotee sees the activities of these more advanced devotees. He hears them discussing the scriptures and the Vaiṣṇava philosophy. Thus hearing and hearing and seeing and seeing, he develops respect for the good character of the more advanced devotees. Then he himself gradually becomes purified. Gradually his interest in mental speculation and fruitive activities becomes less and less. Then his heart becomes purified and the material desires in it are thrown far away. Hearing and hearing about Lord Hari's nature and activities, he becomes learned in the scriptures. Studying again and again the truths that Lord Hari is beyond the touch of the material modes of nature, Lord hari's holy name is beyond the touch of the material modes of nature, and the devotional activities that begin with hearing and chanting the glories of Lord Hari are also beyond the touch of the material modes of nature, he gradually comes to understand the truth of his relationship with Lord Hari. When that understanding becomes perfect, he becomes an intermediate (madhyama) devotee of the Lord. Then he spontaneously associates with and serves the devotees. Then he can understand that the devotees who have accepted a spiritual master are different from ordinary guests.

Nityānanda dāsa: Many neophyte devotees do not become advanced in this way. Why is that?

Hari dāsa: When his association with persons who hate devotional service is strong, he quickly loses the right to be a neophyte devotee. Then his interest in mental speculation and fruitive actions becomes strong. Sometimes the neophyte devotee neither makes advancement nor falls away.

Nityānanda dāsa: When does that happen?

Hari dāsa: When the neophytes association with devotees and persons who hate devotional service is of equal strength. Then it is seen that he neither advances, nor does he fall away.

Nityānanda dāsa: When does he definitely make advancement?

Hari dāsa: When his association with devotees is great and his association with persons who hate devotional service is small. Then he makes swift advancement.

Nityānanda dāsa: What are the sins and virtues of the neophyte devotee?

Hari dāsa: In the beginning a neophyte devotee may be much like the mental speculators (jñānīs) and fruitive workers (karmīs). However, as he makes advancement in devotional service, his sins and defects are thrown far away. Then his desire to please the Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes strong.

Nityānanda dāsa: O master, I have understood this description of the neophyte devotees. Now please describe to me the primary qualities of the intermediate (madhyama) devotees.

Hari dāsa: The primary qualities of the intermediate (madhyama) devotees are: 1. Unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, 2. friendship with persons who identify themselves as devotees, think "Kṛṣṇa is my Lord", and visit holy places, and 3. mercy to the innocent persons who do not understand the truth, and 4. neglect of persons who hate devotees. The primary activities of the intermediate devotees are these: 1. By understanding the soul's relationship (sambandha) with Lord Kṛṣṇa, and 2. by engaging in devotional service (abhidheya) to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the intermediate devote 3. attains the highest goal (prayojana), which is the perfection of love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Without committing offenses, the intermediate devotees perform various kinds of devotional services in the association of other devotees,

services that begin with the chanting of Lord Hari's holy name.

Nityānanda dāsa: What are the secondary qualities of an intermediate devotee?

Hari dāsa: The way an intermediate devotee lives his life is his secondary quality. He lives in such a way that he obeys Kṛṣṇa's will and he serves Kṛṣṇa favorably.

Nityānanda dāsa: Is he not able to sin or commit offenses?

Hari dāsa: In the beginning he may be a little prone to sin or offend, but gradually he throws these things far away. In the beginning these faults may be present, but in time they become completely destroyed. They become like chick-peas crushed into powder. Thus an intermediate devotee's life is characterized by appropriate renunciation (yukta-vairāgya).

Nityānanda dāsa: Are philosophical speculation (jñāna), fruitive action (karma), and the desire for things outside the realm of devotional service not present even slightly in his life?

Hari dāsa: In the beginning there may the dim reflection of these things, but at the end they are torn up by their roots. In the beginning they may sometimes be visible, but in the course of time they are never seen again.

Nityānanda dāsa: Do the intermediate devotees wish to continue living in the material world? If so, why?

Hari dāsa: They wish to continue living in the material world only so they may attain the perfect stage of pure devotional service. They do not wish to live in the material world for its own sake, nor do they do not wish to attain liberation for its own sake.

Nityānanda dāsa: Why do they not wish for death? What happiness can they find in this dull and inert material body? By Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy will they not at once attain their original spiritual forms when they die?

Hari dāsa: They want whatever Kṛṣṇa wants. If Kṛṣṇa wishes that something happen, it will happen. They do not need to wish for anything independently.

Nityānanda dāsa: Now I understand the qualities of an intermediate (madhyama) devotee. What are the secondary qualities of an advanced (uttama) devotee?

Hari dāsa: His only secondary qualities are the actions he performs with his body, actions impelled by pure spiritual love (prema) free from the material modes (nirguṇa). Therefore these actions cannot be seen as true secondary qualities.

Nityānanda dāsa: O master, a neophyte (kaniṣṭha) devotee does not renounce householder life, and an intermediate (madhyama) devotee may live either as a householder or a sannyāsī. Is it possible for an advanced (uttama) devotee to remain as a householder?

Hari dāsa: These conditions are present in all the stages of devotional service. It is not that simply by remaining as a householder or by accepting sannyāsa one becomes situated in a particular stage of advancement in devotional service. An advanced devotee may remain in householder life. The residents of Vrajapura were all householders. Yet they were all certainly advanced devotees. Many of Lord Mahāprabhu's personal associates were householders. They were also certainly advanced devotees. Rāmānanda Rāya is the first proof of that.

Nityānanda dāsa: O master, if an advanced devotee is a householder and an intermediate devotee is a sannyāsī, how should they act in regard to each other?

Hari dāsa: The less-advanced devotee should offer daṇḍavat obeisances to the

more advanced devotee. This rule applies only to intermediate devotees. An advanced devotee is not very interested in things like offering obeisances. He sees the Supreme Lord present in the hearts of all living beings.

Nityānanda dāsa: Should many Vaiṣṇavas gather together to hold festivals and honor the Lord's prasādam?

Hari dāsa: Devotees often gather together. At these times householders who are intermediate devotee like to offer prasādam to the other devotees. From the spiritual point of view no one should object to this. However, it is not good to make a great pompous display of serving the Vaiṣṇavas. That is in the mode of passion. Otherwise one should certainly offer prasādam to saintly Vaiṣnavas. In that way one honors the Vaiṣṇavas. If one wishes to serve the Vaiṣṇavas in this way, one should invite only pure Vaiṣṇavas.

Nityānanda dāsa: In my home place of Baragāchī it is customary to honor the descendants of great Vaiṣṇavas. Householders who are neophyte devotees invite them to honor prasādam. Is this proper?

Hari dāsa: Are these descendants of great Vaiṣṇavas pure devotees?

Nityānanda dāsa: I don't see pure devotion in all of them. They say they are Vaiṣṇavas. Some wear the kaupīna of a sannyāsī.

Hari dāsa: How this custom started I cannot say. It is not right. This happens because a neophyte devotee does not have the power to understand who is truly an advanced Vaiṣṇava.

Nityānanda dāsa: Is it right to give special honor to the descendent of a great Vaiṣṇava?

Hari dāsa: A Vaiṣṇava should be honored. If the descendent of a great Vaiṣṇava is himself a pure Vaiṣṇava then certainly he should be honored according to the level of his own advancement in devotional service.

Nityānanda dāsa: And if the descendent of a great Vaiṣṇava is himself only an ordinary man?

Hari dāsa: Then he should be counted among the ordinary men. He should not be honored or counted among the Vaiṣṇavas. Still, one should always remember Śrī Mahāprabhu's teaching (Śikṣāṣtaka 3):

tṛṇād api su-nīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā māna-dena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

"One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor but is always prepared to give all respects to others, can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord."*

This means that one should be humble and give appropriate honor to all other people. To a Vaiṣṇava one should give the honor proper for a Vaiṣṇava. To one who is not a Vaiṣṇava one should give the honor that one should give to every human being. A person who does not honor others is not qualified to chant the holy names of Lord Hari.

Nityānanda dāsa: What kind of humility is appropriate?

Hari dāsa: One should not proudly think, "I am a great brāhmaṇa", "I am wealthy", "I am a great scholar", "I am a great Vaiṣṇava", "I am a great sannyāsī". One should not aspire to be honored by others. One should not think, "I should be honored, for I am exalted in many ways". Instead, one should think, "I am very poor and fallen. I am lower than a blade of grass".

Nityānanda dāsa: From this I can understand that without being humble and merciful one cannot be a Vaiṣṇava.

Hari dāsa: That is true.

Nityānanda dāsa: Does the goddess of devotion (bhakti-devī) require humbleness and mercy from the devotees?

Hari dāsa: Devotional service is independent. Devotional service is beautiful by itself. It does not need to be decorated by good qualities. Those two virtues: humility and mercy, are not separate from devotional service. They are spontaneously included with devotional service. A person who has devotion to the Lord is naturally humble. He naturally thinks, "I a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I am poverty-stricken. I do not have anything. Kṛṣṇa is my only treasure, my everything, the be-all-and-end-all of my life." When a person is situated in devotional service, his heart melts with love for Kṛṣṇa. Because such a person sees all other living beings as servants of Kṛṣṇa, his heart also melts with love for them. Thus he has mercy on them. In this way mercy is naturally included within devotional service. Forgiveness is situated between mercy and humility. In this way one thinks, “I am poor and fallen, how can I be qualified to punish others?" When this though joins with mercy, forgiveness is born. In this way forgiveness is also naturally included within devotional service. Kṛṣṇa is eternal and real (satya), the individual spirit soul is eternal and real, the individual spirit soul's service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is also eternal and real, and the individual soul's temporary sojourn in the material world is also real. In this way the relationship between the individual soul and Kṛṣṇa, a relationship that is manifested as devotional service, is eternal and real. Therefore eternal spiritual reality, humility, mercy, and forgiveness are four things naturally included in devotional service.

Nityānanda dāsa: How should a Vaiṣṇava relate to persons of other religions?

Hari dāsa: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.2.26) gives this explanation:

nārāyaṇa-kalāḥ śāntāḥ
bhajanti hy anasūyavaḥ

"Those who are serious about liberation are certainly non-envious, and they respect all. Yet they reject the horrible and ghastly forms of the demigods and worship only the all-blissful forms of Lord Viṣṇu and His plenary portions."*

The Vaiṣṇava religion is the only religion. There is no other religion but that. The other religions that are present in this world are either steps in the staircase leading to the Vaiṣṇava religion, or else perverted reflections of the Vaiṣṇava religion. When other religions are steps leading to the Vaiṣṇava religion, these

religions should be appropriately honored. When other religions are perverted reflections of the Vaiṣṇava religion, one should ignore them, and without malice or envy, place his thoughts on the truths of devotional service. In this way one should avoid attacking other spiritual paths. When his auspicious day comes, the follower of another religion one will naturally become a Vaiṣṇava. Of this there is no doubt.

Nityānanda dāsa: Then one should not preach the Vaiṣṇava religion?

Hari dāsa: One should preach in every way possible. Our Lord Mahāprabhu has given us all the duty to preach the Vaiṣṇava religion. He said (Śrī Caitanya-caritaṁṛta, Adi-līlā 7.92 and 9.36):

nāca gāo bhakta-saṅge kara saṅkīrtan
kṛṣṇa-nāma upadeśi' tāra' sarva-jan

"My dear child, continue dancing, chanting, and performing saṅkīrtana in association with devotees. Furthermore, go out and preach the value of chanting Kṛṣṇa-nāma, for by this process You will be able to deliver all fallen souls."*

ata eva āmi ājñā dilun sabākāre
jāhān tāhān prema-phala deha' jāre tāre

"Therefore I order every man within this universe to accept this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement and distribute it everywhere."*

However, keep this in mind: Unworthy persons must first be made worthy before you give them many instructions about the holy name. In certain situations one should remain silent. Do not give elaborate explanations in situations where your words become an obstacle to preaching.

Overwhelmed with love by hearing saintly Haridāsa Bābājī's sweet words, Nityānanda dāsa began to roll about on the ground in ecstasy. Then all the assembled Vaiṣṇava chanted the holy names of Lord Hari. They all offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the saintly bābājī. Then that day's meeting in the secluded grove came to an end, and everyone returned to his own place.

Chapter Nine
Nitya-dharma O Prākṛta-vijñān Evaṁ Sabhyatā
Eternal Religion and Modern Science-Civilization

Living among the Vaiṣṇavas in Godruma for three or four years, Lāhirī Mahāśaya became pure in heart. He always chanted the holy names of Lord Hari. He wore simple clothing. He had neither sandals nor wooden slippers. His pride of caste was now thrown far away. Whenever he saw a Vaiṣṇava, he would at once offer daṇḍavat obeisances and insist on taking the dust of that Vaiṣṇava's feet. He would search for pure Vaiṣṇavas and accept the remnants of their meals. Sometimes his sons would visit. understanding his situation, they would not propose that he return home. Everyone could see that Lāhirī Mahāśaya was a Vaiṣṇava bābājī. Following the conclusion accepted by the Vaiṣṇavas of Śrī Godruma, he understood that renunciation was needed within the heart, and the the external trappings of renunciation were not important. Following the example of Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, he would take one piece of cloth and divide it into four. Those would be his garments. He still wore a sacred thread around his neck. Sometimes his sons would try to give him money. Saying, "I do not accept money from materialists", he would not take it. Once Candraśekhara tried to give him a hundred coins to have a great festival for the Vaiṣṇavas. Remembering the example of Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Lāhirī Mahāśaya refused the money.

One day the paramahaṁsa bābājī said, "O Lāhirī Mahāśaya, you never act in any way improper for a Vaiṣṇava. Though I am the sannyāsī, you who teach me what true renunciation is. If you accept a Vaiṣṇava name from me, then everything will be complete."

Lāhirī Mahāśaya replied, "You are my parama-guru. Whatever you wish, that will be done."

The saintly bābājī said, "You come from Śāntipura, therefore I will call you Advaita dāsa."

Offering daṇḍavat obeisances, Lāhirī Mahāśaya accepted the merciful gift of his new name. From that day forward, everyone called him Advaita dāsa, and the cottage where he performed devotional service they called Advaita-kuṭīra.

Advaita dāsa had a childhood friend named Digambara Caṭṭopadhyāya. Holding various high posts in the Mohammedan government, he had become wealthy. Attaining old age, he retired from his government post, returned to his home town of Kalna, and tried to find Kālidāsa Lāhirī. He heard that Kālid\asa L\ahirī had gone to Śrī Godruma, accepted the name Advaita d\asa, and was always chanting the holy names of Lord Hari.

Digambara Caṭṭopadhy\aya was a fanatical devotee of Goddess Durg\a. His response to hearing a Vaiṣṇava's name was to cover his ears with his hands. Hearing that his old friend had become fallen in that way, he declared, "O Vāmana dāsa, arrange for a boat. I will go to Navadvīpa and rescue my unfortunate old friend, Kālidāsa. Quickly arranging for the boat, Vāmana dāsa returned and informed his master. Digambara Caṭṭopadhyāya was very intelligent. He was learned in the Tantras, and he was also learned in the ways of the Mohammedans. Arguing in Persian and Arabic, he could even defeat the best Mohammedan scholars. Arguing about the Tantras, he made the best brāhmaṇa scholars speechless. His name was well known in Delhi, Lucknow, and other places. In his leisure time he had written a book titled *Tantra-saṅgraha* (An Anthology from the Tantras). He was learned in many subjects and could discourse on many scripture passages.

Proudly grasping his *Tantra-saṅgraha*, Digambara stepped into the boat. After a six hour journey the boat landed at Śrī Godruma. Staying in the boat, he send an intelligent messenger to Śrī Advaita dāsa.

Śrī Advaita dāsa was sitting in his cottage and chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. Digambara Caṭṭopadhyāya's messenger approached and bowed down. Advaita dāsa asked him, "Who are you and why have you come?" The messenger replied, "I am sent by Śrī Digambara Caṭṭopadhyāya. He asks this question: `O Kālidāsa, do you remember me, or have you forgotten?'

Śrī Advaita dāsa replied, "Digambara? Where? My childhood friend! Do I have the power to forget him? Has he taken shelter of the Vaiṣṇava religion?" The messenger said, “He is sitting in a boat by the landing place. I cannot say whether he has become a Vaiṣṇava." Advaita dāsa said, “Why does he stay at the landing place? Why does he not come to my cottage?" Hearing this, the messenger left.

After an hour, Digambara Caṭṭopadhyāya appeared at Advaita-kuṭīra with three or four gentlemen. Digambara always was generous at heart. When he saw his old friend, his heart became filled with joy. Singing some verses he himself had written, he embraced Advaita dāsa. He sang:

.ce on
(kāli) tomār līlā-khelā ke jāne mā tri-bhuvan
kabhu puruṣ kabu nārī kabhu matta hao go raṇe

brahmā ha'ye sṛṣṭi kor sṛṣṭi nāśa ha'ye hor
viṣṇu haye biśva-byāpī pāla go mā sarba-jane

kṛṣṇa-rūpe bṛndābane bāṁśī rājāo bane bane
ābār gaura ha'ye nabadwīpe mātāo sabe saṅkīrtane

"O Mother Kālī, who in the three worlds knows all about Your transcendental pastimes? Sometimes You are a man, sometimes a woman, and sometimes a ferocious warrior. You become Brahmā and create the world. You become Śiva and destroy it. You become all-pervading Viṣṇu and protect everyone. You become Kṛṣṇa and play the flute in Vṛndāvana forest. You become Gaura and make all of Navadvīpa wild with the chanting of the holy names."

Advaita dāsa said, "My brother, come in. Come in." Digambara sat on a leaf-seat. Tears of love glistened in his eyes. He said, "Dear brother Kālidāsa, where shall I go? Now you are sannyāsī and you have given up duties and demigods. How hopeful I was when I first came from the Punjab. Our boyhood friends: Pesa, Pagla, Khenda, Girisa, Ise Pagla, Dhana Mayara, Kele Chutor, Kanti Bhattacarji, all have died. Only You and I remain. I thought some days I would cross the Ganges and visit you at Śāntipura, and other days you would cross the Ganges and visit me at Ambikā. In the few days that remain for us, we would sing together and study the Tantras together. Alas, bad luck has struck my head. You have become a bullheaded fool, useless in this world and the next. Look at yourself. Tell me: How

has this happened to You?"

Advaita dāsa could see that this person was very bad company. He began to think how he could escape the hands of his childhood friend. He said, "Brother Digambara, do you remember how one day when we were playing dandaguli we gradually came to that old tamarind tree?

Digambara: Yes, yes. I remember. That was near Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita's house. The tamarind tree where Gaura-Nitāi used to sit.

Advaita: As we were playing you said, "Don't touch that tamarind tree! Aunt Śacī's son used to sit here. If we touch this tree we will become sannyāsīs."

Digambara: I remember. I could see that you liked the Vaiṣṇavas. I said, "You will fall into Gaurāṅga's trap."

Advaita: Brother, for a long time I was like that. I was always just about to fall into that trap. Now I have fallen in.

Digambara: Catch hold of my hand and come out. It is not good to stay in a trap.

Advaita: Brother, I am very happy in this trap. I pray that I shall stay here forever. Just once you should touch this trap and see what it is like.

Digambara: I have seen. In the beginning it is happiness. But in the end it is a hoax.

Advaita: Do you think the trap where you live will bring you happiness at the end? My mind says it will not.

Digambara: Let us see. We are servants of Goddess Mahāvidyā. In this life we have happiness, and in the next life we also have happiness. You think that you are happy, but I don't see that you are happy. In the end there will be no end to your sufferings. Why does someone become a Vaiṣṇava? I cannot say. Look, We enjoy eating fish and meat and other things. We are happy. We are more civilized than you. We enjoy all the good things modern science provides. You have renounced all these good things. And in the end for you there will be no escape.

Advaita: Why, brother, will there be no escape for me?

Digambara: If Mother Nistāriṇī becomes averse, then even Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva cannot escape. Mother Nistāriṇī is the primordial power. She gives birth to Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva. By her power she protects them. When the great mother wills, the great pot of the material universe will again enter her womb. Have you worshiped the mother, so she will have mercy on you?

Advaita: Is Mother Nistāriṇī conscious, or is she unconscious matter?

Digambara: She is consciousness personified. All her desires are at once fulfilled. It is by her wish that spirit was created.

Advaita: What is spirit, and what is matter?

Digambara: Vaiṣṇavas only worship. They know nothing of philosophy. Spirit and matter are like the two halves of a chick-pea. Unhusk it, and there are two halves. Leave the husk untouched, and there is one chick-pea. Spirit is conscious, and matter is unconscious. When consciousness and unconsciousness join and become one, that is called Brahman.

Advaita: Is your mother female or male?

Digambara: Sometimes she is male and sometimes female.

Advaita: Spirit and matter are like the two halves of a chick-pea. Which is the mother and which the father?

Digambara: You are eager to know the truth? We know the truth very well. The

truth is that matter is mother and spirit is father.

Advaita: Who are you?

Digambara: When I am bound by ropes of illusion I am an individual soul. When those ropes are untied, I am Lord Sadāśiva.

Advaita: You are spirit? You are not matter?

Digambara: I am spirit. Mother is matter. When I am bound by illusion she is my mother. When I am free of illusion she is my wife.

Advaita: Now the truth is out! Now doubt is gone. Where did you get these truths?

Digambara: Brother, you are always saying, “Vaiṣṇava! Vaiṣṇava!" I am not like that. I have associated with many sannyāsīs, brahmacārīs, and tantrik saints. I have studied the Tantras day and night. That is how I have attained this knowledge. If you like, I can teach it to you.

Advaita: (thinking to himself) How horrible! How unfortunate! (aloud) Very good. Please explain one thing to me: What is civilization, and what is modern science?

Digambara: 1. To speak in such a way that pleases respectable people, 2. to wear clothing that pleases them, and 3. to eat foods they like, to do things like them, and not to do anything to displease them. You do not do any of these three!

Advaita: How is that?

Digambara: You do not associate with others. You are very unsocial. The Vaiṣṇavas have never learned the art of flattering others with sweet words. When they see someone they always tell him to chant the name of Hari. Can't they say something else? When people see your clothing they refrain from inviting you to visit them. You wear a stupid tuft of hair on the top of your head and a bastketful of beads around your neck, and your own garment is a loin-cloth! You only eat vegetables and roots! You are not civilized, even slightly.

Advaita: (thinking to himself) If I quarrel with him, he will go away. That would be good for me. (aloud) Does this kind of civilization make one's next life auspicious?

Digambara: It does not make the the next life auspicious. If there is no civilization how will society become uplifted? First society must be uplifted. When it is uplifted, then people may try to improve the next life.

Advaita: Brother, if you do not become angry, I could say something.

Digambara: You are my boyhood friend. I would give up my life for your sake. Why would I not peacefully tolerate a single statement of yours? We are civilized men. Even if we are angry, sweet words still stay on our mouths. The more we hide our true feelings, the more civilized we become.

Advaita: Human life is for only a few days. Still, it contains many troubles. In this very short life one should sincerely worship Lord Hari. The "civilization" you talk about is only a way to cheat the soul. Therefore I say that this "civilization" is only another word for “cheating". When men walk on the path of truth, they are simple and honest. When men's actions are a collection of lies, their hearts are full of cunning, their deeds are sins, and their words are empty flattery. That is your “civilization". True civilization is not like that. In true civilization men are honest and sincere. Nowadays people merely hide the wickedness in their hearts, and that hiding they call "civilization". The true meaning of “civilization" is "honesty and goodness". What you call "civilization" is only cheating and wickedness.

Civilization that is sinless is found only among the Vaiṣṇavas. So-called "civilization" that is filled with sins is liked only by they who are not Vaiṣṇavas. The “civilization" you describe has nothing to do with the soul's eternal nature. If wearing fashionable clothes that please others is the true mark of civilization, then prostitutes are the most civilized. The purpose of clothing is only to cover the body. Clothing should be neat and clean, and free from unclean odors and other faults. Food should be pure and nutritious. There is nothing wrong with food like that. You think only that food should be palatable. You don't consider whether it is pure or not. Liquor and meat are naturally impure and unholy. A “civilization" that lives by enjoying them is only a collection of sins. What you call "modern civilization" is the civilization of Kali-yuga.

Digambara: Have you forgotten the very civilized society of the Muslim emperors? You should see how the people dress fashionably and speak politely in the Muslim emperor's court!

Advaita: That is only material politeness. What does a man lose if he is unaware of this exaggerated politeness? Brother, you spent too many days working for the Muslims. That is why you defend the Muslim ways. True civilization is when men are free from sins. "Civilization" that encourages sin is the civilization of Kali-yuga. That kind of civilization is only a pathetic joke.

Digambara: Look, the modern idea is "humanism". They who don't accept modern civilization aren't considered human. Fashionable clothing that makes women attractive and masks their imperfections are very popular nowadays.

Advaita: You consider whether this is good or bad. I see that the people who advance this modern civilization are only clever opportunists. Partly because they are superstitious and partly because they like to conceal their own flaws, these people like this dishonest "civilization". Will a wise man be happy in such a civilization? This civilization of rogues can be kept together only by meaningless words and by brute force.

Digambara: Some say that the people of the world are gradually becoming more educated. As they become more educated, they will become more civilized, and as the people become more civilized, the earth will gradually become Svargaloka.

Advaita: Those philosophers are smoking gāñjā. Anyone who believes those stories is rich in blind faith. They who don't believe those stories are fortunate. There two kinds of knowledge: 1. spiritual, and 2. material. I don't think spiritual knowledge is increasing. In many places spiritual knowledge collapsing. I think it is material knowledge that is increasing. Does material knowledge touch the soul eternally? When material knowledge increases, then the heart becomes attracted to material things and has contempt for the spiritual truth. I agree that material knowledge is increasing, but from that knowledge comes a dishonest civilization. That "civilization" brings great misfortune to the soul.

Digambara: Why misfortune?

Advaita: As I said before, human life is very short. The soul is like a traveler briefly staying at an inn. He should use this short time to attain spiritual perfection. If the travelers are concerned only with how to be most comfortable at the inn, the time they should be spending on planning their journey is lost. As material knowledge increases, the time spent on spiritual things will decrease. I think that material knowledge should be accepted only as far as is needed in ordinary affairs. There is no need for more material knowledge or its lady friend,

material civilization. For how many days will the benefits of this world last?

Digambara: I have fallen into the company of a fanatic sannyāsī. Is society not important?

Advaita: Different kinds of society bring different results. If one associates with Vaiṣṇavas, then there is a good result. If one associates with materialists, then the results are not good for the soul. Let us stop talking of this. What is material science?

Digambara: Many kinds of material sciences are described in the Tantras. Whatever knowledge, skill, and beauty are present in the material world are all described in material science. Military science, medicine, music, and astronomy are all examples of material sciences. The material nature is the first power (again I describe the spiritual truth!). She gave birth to the material world. From her it is manifested. By her power it is filled with wonderful variety. One by one, all forms come from her. One by one, all kinds of knowledge come from her. When a person understands this, Mother Nistāriṇī frees him from sin and he becomes liberated. The Vaiṣṇavas will not seek out Mother Nistāriṇī. However, we attain liberation by understanding these truths. Look, by the careful study of material knowledge Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, the famous Hakim, and many other great souls in the yavana countries have written many, many books.

Advaita: You said that the Vaiṣṇavas are not interested in science. That is not true. Why not? The Vaiṣṇavas are interested in the science of pure knowledge, which is described in these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's four nutshell verses (2.9.30):

jñānaṁ parama-guhyaṁ me
yad-vijñāna-samanvitam
sarahasyaṁ tad-aṅgaṁ ca
gṛhāṇa gaditaṁ mayā

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead said: Knowledge about Me as described in the scriptures is very confidential, and it has to be realized in conjunction with devotional service. The necessary paraphernalia for that process is being explained by Me. You may take it up carefully."*

Pleased by Brahmā's devotional service, the Supreme Personality of Godhead gave him this instruction even before the material world was created. In this way the Lord taught him the pure Vaiṣṇava religion. The Lord said: "O Brahmā, knowledge about Me as described in the scriptures is very confidential, and it has to be realized in conjunction with devotional service. The necessary paraphernalia for that process is being explained by Me. You may take it up carefully."* O Digambara, there are two kinds of knowledge: 1. spiritual knowledge, and 2. material knowledge. Because it is attained through the material senses, material knowledge is very impure. Neither is it needed for spiritual advancement. It is needed only for the conditioned soul's life in the material world. Spiritual knowledge is called "śuddha-jñāna" (pure knowledge). That eternal knowledge is the foundation-stone of the Vaiṣṇavas' temple of devotional service. Spiritual

knowledge and material knowledge are very different. They are opposites. You call material knowledge "science", but it is not science at all. You call medical knowledge and other kinds of material knowledge "science", but it is spiritual knowledge, which is different from material knowledge, that should be called “science". "Knowledge" and "science" are synonyms. Direct perception of the spiritual truth is called “knowledge". When it eclipses material knowledge, pure spiritual knowledge is called "science". Thus these two are actually the same thing, called either "knowledge" or "science" in different circumstances. You call material knowledge "science". The Vaiṣṇavas call the proper use of material knowledge "science". Military skill, medicine, astronomy, chemistry, and all other kinds of material knowledge have no eternal relation to the soul. Therefore they have no bearing at all on the soul's eternal activities and eternal duties. The Vaiṣṇavas do not criticize the materialists who perform Vedic rituals (karma-kāṇḍa) for material elevation. Why not? Indirectly their attempts for material elevation help the spiritual advancement of the Vaiṣṇavas. You may call material knowledge "material science". What is wrong with that? It is foolish to squabble over names.

Digambara: Well, if there were no progress in material knowledge, it would not be so easy for you to pass your life in devotional service. Therefore you also should strive for material progress.

Advaita: Different people, with different desires, try in different ways, and the Supreme Controller gives each person the fruits of his actions.

Digambara: Why do people have different desires?

Advaita: Desires are created by past karma. One whose material desires are strong becomes learned in material things and expert in material work. What is produced in this way may help the Vaiṣṇavas in their service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, the Vaiṣṇavas themselves need not become expert in these different skills. Look, a carpenter may make a cart, and householder Vaiṣṇava may use that cart to carry the Deity of the Lord. Bees may gather honey, and the devotees of the Lord may take the honey a employ it in the Lord's service. Not everyone in this world is interested in spiritual advancement. From their different desires different kinds of work are manifested. men are of different kinds, some exalted and others lowly. They whose desires are lowly may work in different ways, and they whose desires are lofty may use the result of that work for good purposes. Pushed by these differences, the circle of the world turns. Materialistic men work in different ways, and what they produce may helpful to the spiritualists, the Vaiṣṇavas. The materialists do not understand how they are helping the Vaiṣṇavas. Still, bewildered by Lord Viṣṇu's māyā potency, they act in that way. Thus the entire world unknowingly serves the Vaiṣṇavas..

Digambara: What is the illusory potency of Lord Viṣṇu you mentioned?

Advaita: In the Caṇḍī-māhātmya of the Mārkaṇḍeya Purāṇa it is said:

yogamāyā hareḥ śaktir
yayā sammohitaṁ jagat

"The entire world is bewildered by Lord Hari's māyā potency."

These words describe Lord Viṣṇu's māyā potency.

Digambara: Then who is the goddess I know as Mother Nistāriṇī?

Advaita: She is Lord Viṣṇu's māyā potency.

Digambara: (opening his book about the Tantras) Look! Here it says, "My Mother is the form of spiritual consciousness. Her desires are at once fulfilled. She is beyond the touch of the three modes, but still She manifests the three modes." Your māyā potency of Lord Viṣṇu is not beyond the three modes. How can you say that your māyā potency of Lord Viṣṇu is the same as my Mother? When I see how you Vaiṣṇavas are such closed-minded fanatics, it does not make me happy at all.

Advaita: Brother Digambara, please don't be angry. After so many days you have seen me again. I want to make you happy. If I say "the māyā potency of Lord Viṣṇu", how have I become small-minded? Lord Viṣṇu is the all-knowing Supreme Personality of Godhead. All that exists is His potency. The word "potency" does not mean a substance. Rather it means the quality that a substance possesses. Therefore the statement that a potency is the root of all existence goes counter to the truth. A potency cannot exist apart from its substance. An original substance with a spiritual form must first be accepted. After all, the commentary on Vedānta-sūtra declares:

śakti-śaktimator abhedaḥ

"The potency and the possessor of the potency are not different."

The meaning, then, is that the potency does not exist apart from its substance. The only true substance is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the master of potencies. The nature of the potency is either to be a quality of the Supreme Lord, or submissive to His will. When it is said that the potency has pure consciousness, that means that because the potency and the master of potencies are not different, therefore, like the master of potencies, the potency also has a form of spiritual consciousness, has desires that are at once fulfilled, and is beyond the touch of the three modes. It is not a mistake to say these things. Will and consciousness are qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. By itself, the potency does not possess will, but rather it carries out the will of the Supreme. For example, you have power, and by Your will, your potencies act. If you say, "the power acted", then that means that the possessor of the power was actually behind the action. To say that "the power acted" is only to use a figure of speech. In truth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead has only one potency. When she performs spiritual actions, she is called the spiritual potency, and when she performs material actions, she is called the material potency, or māyā. The Vedas (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8) explain:

parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śruyate

"The potency of the Supreme is manifested in many different ways."

The potency that manifests the three modes is the material potency. She creates and destroys the material universes. Those are her duties. In the Purāṇas and Tantras this potency is called by many names, such as Viṣṇu-māyā, Mahā-māyā, and Māyā. Allegorically she is also called "the mother of Brahmā. Viṣṇu, and Śiva", "the killer of Śumbha and Niśumbha", and other like names that describe her different activities. As long as he remains deeply enmeshed in material consciousness, the soul is under her power. When he attains pure spiritual knowledge, the soul can understand the nature of his original spiritual form. Then he is freed from the ropes of Māyā. Then he is under the power of the spiritual potency. Then he becomes happy.

Digambara: Are you under the power of one of these potencies, or are you not?

Advaita: Yes. We are also a potency. We are “jīva-śakti", individual souls. When we become free from the ropes of the māyā potency, we are in the power of the spiritual potency.

Digambara: Then you are also a śākta, a worshiper of the potency.

Advaita: Yes. The Vaiṣṇavas are naturally śāktas. We are the servants of Śrī Rādhikā, who is the spiritual potency. Under Her patronage we worship and serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. Who is more of a śākta than we? I don't see any difference between the śāktas and the Vaiṣṇavas. They who do not take shelter of the spiritual potency, but only take shelter of the material potency Māyā may be śāktas, but they are not Vaiṣṇavas. They are materialists. In the Nārada-paṇcarātra, Goddess Durgā explains:

tava vakṣasi rādhāhaṁ
rāse vṛndāvane vane

"O Kṛṣṇa, I am Rādhā, who stays on Your chest during the rāsa dance in Vṛndāvana forest."

Thus from Durgā-devī's words we can understand that the Lord does not have two potencies. There is only one potency, who manifests Herself as the spiritual potency Rādhikā and the material potency Viṣṇu-māyā. When the potency is free from the material modes, she is called the spiritual potency, and when she is within the sphere of the material modes, she is called the material potency.

Digambara: You said that you yourself are a potency, the "jīva-śakti". What potency is that?

Advaita: In Bhagavad-gita (7.4-5), the Supreme Personality of Godhead explains:

bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ
khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false egoaltogether these eight comprise My separated material energies.*

apareyam itas tv anyāṁ
prakṛtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho
yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat

"Besides this inferior energy, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine, which are all living entities who are struggling with material nature and are sustaining the universe."*

Digambara, do you know the glory of Bhagavad-gītā? It is the best of all scriptures. It solves all the problems of life. It explains that the individual souls are superior to dull matter, and that they are one of the potencies of the Lord. The wise call the individual souls "taṭastha-śakti" (marginal potency). The marginal potency is superior to dull matter and inferior to the Lord's cit-śakti (internal potency). Therefore the individual spirit souls are one of the potencies of the Lord.

Digambara: Kālidāsa, have you seen this Bhagavad-gītā?

Advaita: Yes. I have read that book.

Digambara: What does it teach?

Advaita: Brother Digambara, men praise molasses only as long as they have not tasted sugar-candy.

Digambara: My brother, you are a fanatic. Devī-bhāgavata and Devī-gītā are honored by everyone. You Vaiṣṇavas alone have not heard of them.

Advaita: My brother, have you read Devī-gītā?

Digambara: No. Why should I lie? I tried to make a manuscript copy of them, but I was not able.

Advaita: How can I say that a particular book, which I have not read, is good of bad? Am I the fanatic, or are you?

Digambara: My brother, I am always afraid of you. You were always very talkative. As a Vaiṣṇava you are even more talkative. Whatever I say, you refute.

Advaita: I am a fool. But I can see that there is no pure religion but the Vaiṣṇava religion. For a long time you held a grudge against the Vaiṣṇavas. That is why you could not see that path that leads to your own auspiciousness.

Digambara: (a little angry) Is it! I do so much worship and devotion, and you say I cannot see the path to my own good! Have I been walking the wrong path all along? Look! Here is the *Tantra-saṅgraha!* How I labored on it! Now that you are a Vaiṣṇava you like to blaspheme modern science and modern civilization! What can I do to convince you? Go to civilized people as see whether they praise you or me!

Advaita: (thinks to himself) How good it will be when this very bad company runs away! (aloud) Very well! Brother, when you die you will see how much

benefit modern science and modern civilization have given you!

Digambara: Kālidāsa, you are being foolish. Is there anything after death? As long as you stay in this world try to become famous among civilized men, and try to enjoy the five material pleasures. Enjoy. At the time of death Mother Nistāriṇī will take you to a good place. She will protect you. Death will come at its own time. Why should you suffer before then? When you die, and the ingredients of your body mingle with the the other ingredients of the world, where will you be? This world is an illusion. It is Māyā, Yogamāyā, and Mahā-māyā. It is she who gives you pleasure here, and it is she who will give you liberation after death. Nothing exists but the potency. From the potency you have come. Into the potency you will enter at the end. Serve the potency! Just see the power in the knowledge she gives! Try to increase your own spiritual power! At the end you will see that there is nothing but the spiritual potency! What gañjā did you smoke to dream up the fantastic story that an all-knowing personal God exists? By believing that story you attained only suffering. In the next life what benefit will you earn that I will not also get? I do not know. What is the use of believing in a personal God? Serve the potency! You will merge into the potency. In her you will rest forever.

Advaita: My brother, you are very attached to the material potency. If an all-knowing personal God exists, what will be your fate after death? What is happiness? Happiness is peace of mind. Renouncing material pleasures, I have found peace and happiness inside my heart. If something good exists after death, I will attain it. You are not peaceful and happy. The more you enjoy, the more your thirst for evermore pleasure increases. You have never known real happiness. Again and again you call out “Pleasure!" "Pleasure!" One day you will become plunged in an ocean of sufferings.

Digambara: Whatever will be, will be. Why do you shun the company of good people?

Advaita: I do not shun the company of good people. I already have their company. I only shun the wicked.

Digambara: Who are these wicked?

Advaita: Please don't become angry when you hear. I say this (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 4.30.33):

yāvat te māyayā spṛṣṭā
bhramāma iha karmabhiḥ
tāvad bhavat-prasaṅgānāṁ
saṅgaḥ syān no bhave bhave

"Dear Lord, as long as we have to remain within this material world due to our material contamination and wander from one type of body to another and from one planet to another, we pray that we may associate with those who are engaged in discussing Your pastimes. We pray for this benediction life after life, in different bodily forms and on different planets."*

Again, in the Seventh Canto it is said:

asadbhiḥ saha saṅgas tu
na kartavyaḥ kadācana
yasmāt sarvārtha-hāniḥ syād
adhaḥ-pātaś ca jāyate

"One should never associate with materialists and non-devotees. By their association all is lost. By their association one falls into the lower worlds."

In the Katyāyana-saṁhitā it is said:

varaṁ hutavaha-jvālā
pañjarāntar-vyavasthitiḥ
na śauri-cintā-vimukha-
jana-samvāsa-vaiśasam

"Even if one is forced to live within a cage of iron or in the midst of a blazing fire, he should accept this position rather than live with nondevotees, who are through and through against the supremacy of the Lord."*

In the Third Canto it is said (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 3.31.33-34):

satyaṁ śaucaṁ dayā maunaṁ
buddhiḥ śrīr hrīr yaśaḥ kṣamā
śamo damo bhagaś ceti
yat-saṅgād yāti saṅkṣayam

"(By associating with unrighteous people, a person) becomes devoid of truthfulness, cleanliness, mercy, gravity, spiritual intelligence, shyness, austerity, fame, forgiveness, control of the mind, control of the senses, fortune, and all such opportunities.*

teṣv aśānteṣu mūḍheṣu
khaṇḍitātmaṣv asādhuṣu
saṅgaṁ na kuryāc chocyeṣu
yoṣit-krīḍā-mṛgeṣu ca

"One should not associate with a coarse fool who is bereft of knowledge and self-realization and who is no more than a dancing dog in the hands of a woman."*

In the Garuḍa Purāṇa it is said:

antaṁ gato 'pi vedānāṁ
sarva-śāstrārtha-vedy api
yo na sarveśvare bhaktas
taṁ vidyāt puruṣādhamam

"Even though one may have gone to the other side of all the Vedas, and even though one is well-versed in all the revealed scriptures, if one is not a devotee of the Supreme Lord, he must be considered the lowest of mankind."*

IN Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.1.18) it is said:

prāyaścittāni cīrṇāni
nārāyaṇa-parāṅmukham
na niṣpunanti rājendra
surā-kumbham ivāpagāḥ

"My dear king, as a pot containing liquor cannot be purified even if washed in the waters of many rivers, nondevotees cannot be purified by processes of atonement even if they perform them very well."*

In the Skanda Purāṇa it is said:

hanti nindati vai dveṣṭi
vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣaṁ
darśane patanāni ṣaṭ

"A person who attacks, criticizes, or hates the Vaiṣṇavas, or who becomes angry with them, does not respectfully greet them, or is not pleased to see them, finds himself in the six hells."

Digambara, association with wicked people will never bring one any good. What will one gain by associating with them?

Digambara: What I fine fellow I have come to talk with! He thinks we are all wicked people! You stay with your pure Vaiṣṇavas! I am going home.

Advaita: (thinking to himself) It is almost done. Now I had best speak very sweetly to him. (aloud) Ah, now you must go home. You are my boyhood friend. I do not wish to see you go. If you are kind, then please stay. Stay for some time, take prasādam, and then go.

Digambara: Kālidāsa, you know very well that I eat only haviṣya, and I already had some haviṣya before I came here. I am glad to see you. I will come again if I find the time. I can't stay the night because I must follow the spiritual practices my guru gave me. For today, brother, I must go.

Advaita: Let us go then. I will walk with you to the boat.

Digambara: No. No. You do your own business. I have some friends with me.

After speaking these words, Digambara burst into a song glorifying Goddess Durgā, and left. Advaita dāsa returned to his cottage and, without encountering any more interruptions, chanted the holy names of Lord Hari.

Chapter Ten
Nitya-dharma O Itihāsa
Eternal Religion and History

A doubt arose in the mind of Śrī Harihara Bhaṭṭācārya, a teacher who lived in Agradvīpa. He discussed it with some people, but his doubt would not go away. It troubled his mind more and more. One day, when he was in the village of Arkaṭīlā, he asked Śrī Caturbhuja Nyāyaratna, "O saintly Bhaṭṭācārya, please tell me: How old is the Vaiṣṇava religion?" harihara Bhattacarya is an initiated Vaiṣṇava and he worships Lord Kṛṣṇa in his home. Nyāyaratna Mahāśaya has pursued twenty years of laborious study. He was not interested in any religion. He did not like talking about religion. Only when Goddess Durgā was worshiped would he show a slight religious sentiment. Harihara's question made him think, "This Harihara must be a supporter of Vaiṣṇavism. He could get me in some trouble. It is best to keep trouble away." Thinking in this way, Nyāyaratna Mahāśaya said, “What kind of question is this today? You have read many books. You even read the *Muktipāda*. Look, in the who of nyāya-śāstra there is no mention of the Vaiṣṇava religion. Why do you annoy me with this question?

Harihara said, "O Bhaṭṭācārya Mahāśaya, I come from a Vaiṣṇava family and I am an initiated Vaiṣṇava. I never had any doubts about the Vaiṣṇava religion. You know Tarka-cūḍāmaṇi of Vikramapura. Wishing to uproot the Vaiṣṇava religion, he preaches against it in many places in this country and others also. In this way he has earned a lot of money. In a gathering of mostly Durgā-worshipers he said the Vaiṣṇava religion is modern in its origins and has no substance or reality. He said only low-class people call themselves Vaiṣṇavas, and upper-class people have no respect for the Vaiṣṇava religion. When I heard this paṇḍita's conclusion at first I was pained at heart, but then, as I thought it over, I could see that before Prabhu Caitanyadeva there was no Vaiṣṇavism in Bengal. At that time almost everyone performed worship by chanting Durgā-mantras. Some few of us worshiped by chanting Vaiṣṇava mantras, but all of those Vaiṣṇavas wanted in the end to attain impersonal liberation and become Brahman. All those Vaiṣṇavas were

pañcopāsakas. However, after Prabhu Caitanyadeva Vaiṣṇavism assumed a new form. Now Vaiṣṇavas cannot bear to hear the words "mukti" and “brahman". What is their understanding of devotional service? I do not have the power to say. There is a saying "The followers of a one-eyed guru will be led astray". I see these Vaiṣṇavas are like that. My question is: "Did this kind of Vaiṣṇavism exist before, or was it only invented after the time of Caitanyadeva?"

Nyayaratna Mahasaya could see that Harihara's mentality was unusual. In other words, Harihara was not an orthodox Vaiṣṇava. When this thought entered his mind, his face blossomed with happiness. He said, "Harihara, you are a good scholar of nyāya-śāstra. I agree with your idea. Nowadays a new kind of Vaiṣṇavism has come. I am afraid to say anything against it. It is the Kali-yuga! We should be a little careful. Many rich and respectable gentlemen have accepted Caitanya's philosophy. They have no faith in us. They think we are their enemies. I think that in a few days our business will collapse. The Telis, Tamlis, and Suvarṇa-vaṇiks all have taken to talking about the scriptures. They have brought great trouble to us. Look, for a long time the brāhmaṇas had so arranged things that no other caste could read the scriptures. Even the kayasthas, who we next below the brāhmaṇas, could not chant the sacred syllable Oṁ. All followed what we said. But nowadays all these Vaiṣṇavas are discussing the spiritual truth. They have completely defeated us. Since the time of Nimāi Paṇḍita the Brāhmaṇa Religion has practically disappeared. O Harihara, Tarka-cudāmaṇi spoke the truth. Considering what they have seen or heard, others may say what they like about him. I say he has spoken well. When I hear the words of these Vaiṣṇava fools, my whole body burns with anger. They even say that Śaṅkarācārya's books are false, and his words are all māyā. They say that Lord Viṣṇu ordered him to speak a pack of lies. An then on top of that they say the Vaiṣṇava religion had no beginning. The Vaiṣṇava religion is barely a hundred years old! And now it has no beginning. As the saying goes:

udor piṇḍi budhor ghāḍe

"The fools find an innocent man, make him into a scapegoat, and attack him again and again."

Let them say what they like. Navadvīpa was as good in the past as it is bad in the present. Nowadays a few Vaiṣṇavas who live at Baragachi in Navadvīpa see the ideas of the entire world as foolish. Some two or three scholars amongst them have turned the whole country upside-down. The ideas that castes are rigidly fixed, that the whole world is an illusion, and that one should worship Goddess Durgā have all been crushed by them. Look. Nowadays there are not even many śrāddha ceremonies. What will happen to the professional brāhmaṇas?

Then Harihara said, "O Bhaṭṭācārya Mahāśaya, is there no remedy? In Māyāpura there are still five or six big, big brahmana scholars. Then on the other side of the Ganges there are many scholars of Smṛti and Nyāya. Why do they not join forces and attack Gadigacha?

Nyāyaratna said, "Yes! If they band together, the brāhmaṇa scholars can do it!

Of course the brahmana scholars tend to fight among themselves. They like to fight and they pretend that fighting among themselves is part of the job of being a scholar. I heard that some followers of Kṛṣṇa-cūḍāmaṇi went to Gadigacha for a debate and came back defeated. Now they won't even come out of their classrooms. Some have said that."

Harihara said, "O Bhaṭṭācārya Mahāśaya, You are our teacher. You are the teacher of many great scholars. By studying your commentaries on nyāya-śāstra, many have learned the art of tricking others by juggling words. Please go and defeat the Vaiṣṇava scholars once and for all. The Vaiṣṇava religion is a modern concoction. It is not the teaching of the Vedas. Please go and prove these truths. Then our pañcopāsanā worship, which is the teaching of all the previous authorities, will be saved."

In Caturbhuja Nyāyaratna's mind there was one fear. He was afraid that he would meet the same fate as Kṛṣṇa-cūḍāmaṇi and others who had already been defeated by the Vaiṣṇavas. He said, "Harihara, I will go there is disguise. You go there also. Pose as a scholar, and kindle the fire of debate in Gadigacha." Harihara said, "I must obey your order. Calling myself `Mahādeva', on Monday I will cross the Ganges."

Monday came. Accompanied by Śrī Caturbhuja Nyāyaratna of Arkaṭīlā, the three scholars Harihara, Kamalākānta, and Sadāśiva crossed the Ganges. After a little more than ten hours of traveling along the Ganges, they finally arrived at Śrī Pradyumna-kuñja. Again and again calling out “Haribol! Haribol!", like a small contingent of Durvāsā Munis, they entered the grove of mādhavī vines. Advaita dāsa came out, greeted them, gave them sitting-places, and asked, “What order would you like to give to me?" Harihara said, "We have come to discuss some things with the Vaiṣṇavas." Advaita dāsa replied, "the Vaiṣṇavas of this place do not engage in debates. But of you sincerely have some questions, then that is all right. The other day some scholars came, asked some questions, stirred up a great debate, and were left unhappy at the end. I will ask the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī, and then I will give you his answer. After speaking these words, he entered the cottage of the paramahaṁsa bābājī.

After a moment, Advaita dāsa returned among them and began to arrange sitting places for everyone. Entering the beautiful grove, the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī offered daṇḍavat obeisances first to the tulasī plant and then to the brāhmaṇa guests. He asked them, "O saintly ones, what order would you like to give to me?"

Then the Nyāyaratna said, "I have two questions to ask. Please answer them. Hearing this, the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī called for saintly Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa bābājī. When the Vaiṣṇavas were all seated comfortably, Nyāyaratna Mahāśaya asked, "First consider, and then speak: Is the Vaiṣṇava religion ancient or modern?"

Following the saintly paramahaṁsa bābājī's wish, Vaiṣṇava dāsa spoke. He said, "The Vaiṣṇava religion is eternal. It always existed."

Nyāyaratna: As I see it, there are two kinds of Vaiṣṇava religion. In one kind of Vaiṣṇava religion it is accepted that the Supreme is the formless Brahman. However, no one can actually worship something that is formless. Therefore one may imagine that the Supreme has a form, and by worshiping that imagined form, one gradually becomes pure in heart. When one becomes thus pure in heart,

knowledge of the formless Brahman naturally arises within him. Thus, by worshiping the imaginary forms of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, or Nṛsiṁha, one eventually attains knowledge of Brahman. They who accept this philosophy, worship the Deity of Viṣṇu, and chant Viṣṇu-mantras, consider themselves Vaiṣṇavas and count themselves among the pañcopāsakas. Another kind of Vaiṣṇava religion affirms that Lord Viṣṇu, Lord Rāma, or Lord Kṛṣṇa have real forms that are eternal. Then, by worshiping these forms and chanting Their mantras, the devotee attains eternal knowledge of Them, and Their mercy also. This Śaṅkara is in error, and his idea that the Supreme is formless is a pack of lies. Of these two kinds of Vaiṣṇava religion, which is eternal? Which of them always existed?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: The second one you mentioned is the real Vaiṣṇava. It is eternal. The first one is Vaiṣṇava religion in name only. It is the enemy of the true Vaiṣṇava religion. It is not eternal. It is only a collection of lies.

Nyāyaratna: I can understand that in your opinion the only true Vaiṣṇava religion is the philosophy of Caitanyadeva. Thus the Vaiṣṇava religion does not mean only the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Rāma, and Nṛsiṁha, it means worshiping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the other Deities according to the principles taught by Caitanya. Very good. However, how can you say that this kind of Vaiṣṇava religion is eternal?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: The four Vedas teach this kind of Vaiṣṇava religion. All the smṛti-śāstras teach this kind of Vaiṣṇava religion. All the Vedic histories (itihāsas) sing the glories of this kind of Vaiṣṇava religion.

Nyāyaratna: Caitanyadeva was born not even 150 years ago. From what I can see He is the first teacher of this kind of religion. If this is so, how can this kind of religion be eternal?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: As long as any souls ever existed, this kind of Vaiṣṇava philosophy existed also. The time when the individual souls first came into existence cannot be calculated according to material time. Actually, there never was a time when the individual souls first came into existence. As the individual souls are thus beginningless, so the Vaiṣṇava religion is also beginningless. Brahmā was the first individual soul to take birth in this universe. As soon as Brahmā was manifested, the words of the Vedas, which are the root of the Vaiṣṇava religion, were also manifested. This is recorded in the four essential verses of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.33-36). This is also described in these words of Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (1.1.1):

brahmā devānāṁ prathamaṁ sambabhūva
viśvasya kartā bhuvanasya goptā
sa brahma-vidyāṁ sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭhām
atharvāya jyeṣṭha-putrāya prāha

"Brahmā, who is the first demigod, the creator of the universe, and the protector of the worlds, spoke knowledge of the Supreme, the first of all kinds of knowledge, to his eldest son, Atharva."

This knowledge of the Supreme is also taught in these words of the Ṛg Veda (1.22.20):

oṁ tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padaṁ
sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ
divīva cakśur ātatam

"The lotus feet of Lord Viṣṇu are the supreme objective of all the demigods. These lotus feet of the Lord are as enlightening as the sun in the sky."*

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (5.4) it is said:

evam sa devo bhagavān vareṇyo
yoni-svabhāvān adhitiṣṭhaty ekaḥ

"The glorious Supreme Personality of Godhead alone rules all creatures."

In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.1.2) it is said:

satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma. yo veda nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ parame vyoman. so 'śnute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipaścitā.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is real, eternal, limitless, and all-knowing. One who understands the Supreme Lord residing in his heart goes to the spiritual world. There He associates with the all-knowing Supreme Lord. There all his desires are fulfilled."

Nyāyaratna: You say that the Ṛg Veda verse "tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam" describes your kind of Vaiṣṇava religion and not the Vaiṣṇava religion that follows the māyāvāda theory of impersonalism. How can you claim that?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: The Vaiṣṇava religion that is a part of impersonalism refuses to affirm that service to Lord Viṣṇu is eternal. That religion claims that by attaining spiritual knowledge a person himself becomes the Supreme. However, in the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.23) it is said:

nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛnute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām

"The Supreme Lord is not attained by expert explanations, by vast intelligence, nor even by much hearing. He is attained only by one who He Himself chooses. To such a person He manifests His own form."*

Service to the Lord and surrender to the Lord are the only true religion. By following that religion one attains the Lord's mercy, and only then is one able to see the Lord's eternal form. By cultivating impersonal speculation one will not attain that form of the Lord. By understanding these clear and unequivocal words of the Vedas, one can see that the pure Vaiṣṇava religion has its roots in the Vedas. The Vaiṣṇava religion that Śrīmān Mahāprabhu taught is the same religion that is taught in the Vedas. Of this there is no doubt.

Nyāyaratna: Does any Vedic passage affirm this idea that the worship of Kṛṣṇa, and not impersonal knowledge, is the highest attainment?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: In the Taittirīya Upaniśād (2.7.1) it is said:

raso vai saḥ

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the reservoir of transcendental mellows."*

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (8.13.1) it is said:

śyāmāc chavalaṁ prapadye śavalāc chyāmaṁ prapadye

"To attain Lord Kṛṣṇa, I surrender to Śrī Rādhā. To attain Śrī Rādhā, I surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa."

I can quote many Vedic passages proving that devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the highest attainment.

Nyāyaratna: Is the name "Kṛṣṇa" found in the Vedas?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Is not the word "śyāma" a name of Lord Kṛṣṇa? In the Ṛg Veda (1.22.164) it is said:

apaśyaṁ gopam anipadyamānam

"Then I saw a cowherd boy who will never die."

This is only one of many Vedic passages that describe Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of a gopa.

Nyāyaratna: These are all strained and twisted interpretations of the Vedic

passages.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: If one studies the Vedas thoroughly, he will see that these are the right interpretations. We should understand the Vedas according to the explanations given by the ancient sages.

Nyāyaratna: Now please narrate the history of the Vaiṣṇava religion.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: I have already said that when the first individual soul came into existence, the Vaiṣṇava religion came into existence with him. Therefore the demigod Brahmā is the first Vaiṣṇava. Lord Śiva is also a Vaiṣṇava. The original prajāpatis are all Vaiṣṇavas. Brahmā's mind-born son Nārada Gosvāmī is also a Vaiṣṇava. can you not see that the Vaiṣṇava religion was present at the moment the material universe was created? The truth is that not everyone is beyond the influence of the material modes. Whoever is genuinely free of the material modes is a genuine Vaiṣṇava. The Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa, and Purāṇas are all histories of the Vedic civilization. You have already seen that the Vaiṣṇava religion was present at the moment the material universe was created. When the scriptures describe the different demigods, human beings, and demons, there are descriptions of Prahlāda, Dhruva, and other Vaiṣṇavas from the very beginning. The Vedic histories have only recorded the names of some of the most famous. There is no saying how many hundreds of other great Vaiṣṇavas there were at the time of Prahlāda and Dhruva. Dhruva, Manu's sons, and Prahlāda are all grandsons of Prajāpati Kaśyapa. Therefore they lived at the very beginning of the universe. Of this there is no doubt. In the Vedic histories it is seen that the Vaiṣṇava religion was present at the very beginning of time. The kings of the Candra-vaṁśa and Sūrya-vaṁśa, as well as the great munis and ṛṣis, were all sincerely devoted to Lord Viṣṇu. These things are written in the descriptions of the three yugas: Satya, Tretā, and Dvāpara. In the Kali-yuga Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Madhvācārya, and Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī in the south and Śrī Nimbārka Svāmī in the west brought many thousands to the pure Vaiṣṇava religion. By there mercy perhaps half the people of Bhārata-varṣa crossed the ocean of māyā and found shelter at the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord. In Bengal you may see Lord Śacīnandana, who is the master of our hearts. How many fallen souls did He deliver? When you look at all these great souls, you do not see the glory of the Vaiṣṇava religion!

Nyāyaratna: Yes. But what kind of Vaiṣṇavas are Prahlāda and the others? What do you say?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: One must study the scriptures thoroughly. Rejecting the impersonalist theory that Śaṇḍa and Amarka taught him, Prahlāda instead made the holy names of Lord Hari the be-all-and-end-all of his life. Therefore Prahlāda was a pure devotee. Of this there is no doubt. The truth is that without careful and impartial investigation, one cannot understand the true meaning of the scriptures.

Nyāyaratna: If this is true, that the Vaiṣṇava religion existed from time immemorial, then what new thing did Caitanya Mahāprabhu teach, that He should be especially honored?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: The Vaiṣṇava religion is like a lotus flower. It blossoms slowly. First it is a bud. Then it is partly blossomed. Only slowly does it become like a fully-blossomed flower. At the time of the demigod Brahmā, the impersonalist theory, the practice of devotional service, and the knowledge of the Supreme Personality of Godhead as described in the four essential verse of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam were new sprouts just beginning to grow in the hearts of the living

entities. At the time of Prahlāda and the others the sprout had grown to become a bud. That you can see. At the time of Vyāsa Muni that bud slowly opened, and at the time of the great Vaiṣṇava ācāryas it became a flower. When Śrīmān Mahāprabhu came to this world that flower of love became fully blossomed and spread its sweet fragrance to everyone. Śrīmān Mahāprabhu revealed the most confidential secret of the Vaiṣṇava religion: the pure love attained by chanting the Lord's holy names. In this way he gave the greatest good fortune to the living entities in the material world. The chanting of the holy names of the Lord is such a valuable treasure. Who else but Lord Caitanya revealed the truth of this? Although this truth was certainly described in the scriptures, it had not been revealed to the people in general. Ah, before Lord Caitanya had the treasure house of the nectar of love of God ever been opened in this way?

Nyāyaratna: Well, if the chanting of the holy names is so sweet, why do the learned paṇḍitas not like it?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: In Kali-yuga the word “paṇḍita" no longer means what it once did. In the scriptures the word "paṇḍā" is defined as "brilliant intelligence", and therefore a person who has brilliant intelligence is called a "paṇḍita". Nowadays anyone who can spout meaningless jargon from the nyāya-śāstra or interpret the smṛti-śāstra in a way to please the people in general is called a "paṇḍita". Are such "paṇḍitas" able to understand and or to teach the truth of religion and the true meaning of the scriptures? Can anyone attain through the meaningless jargon of the nyāya-śāstra the spiritual truth, which is to be attained by impartial and careful study of all the scriptures? In truth only persons expert at cheating themselves and others are called paṇḍita in the Kali-yuga. These so-called paṇḍitas carry on great stormy debates over earthen pots and scraps of cloth. What is reality, what is the relationship between the individual souls and the Supreme, what the real spiritual need of all living entities, and how can that need be fulfilled, these paṇḍitas will never have a stormy debate to settle these things. Only when one understands the truths of these things will one be able to know the answer to the question: What is the value of the loving chanting of Lord Hari's holy names?

Nyāyaratna: Well, I'll certainly agree that there are hardly any good paṇḍitas nowadays. Still, why is it that the great brāhmaṇas born in exalted families refuse to accept your Vaiṣṇava religion? The brāhmaṇa caste is in the mode of goodness. Brāhmaṇas are naturally on the right path and naturally attracted to the highest religious principles. Why, then, are the brāhmaṇas so ferociously opposed to the Vaiṣṇava religion?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Since you have asked this question, it is right that I give the proper reply. Still, Vaiṣṇavas do not like to criticize others. Look, if you will not feel pain and anger in your heart, and if you desire to know what is the real truth, I can answer your question.

Nyāyaratna: Do it. I have studied the scriptures. I am in favor of peacefulness, self-control, and tolerance. Your words will not be intolerable for me. Please speak straight. I accept what is good and true.

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Look, Śrī Rāmānuja, Madhva, Viṣṇu Svāmī, and Nimbārka were all brāhmaṇas. They had thousands and thousands of brahmana disciples. In our Bengal our Mahāprabhu was a vaidika brāhmaṇa. Our Nityānanda Prabhu was a rāḍhīya brāhmaṇa. Our Advaita Prabhu was a rājendra brāhmaṇa. Our gosvāmīs and mahāntas were mostly brāhmaṇas. Thousands and thousands of great souls

who were the tilaka markings of great brāhmaṇa families took shelter of the Vaiṣṇava religion and preached the pure Vaiṣṇava religion to the people of the world. How can you say that exalted brāhmaṇas do not honor the Vaiṣṇava religion? This we know: All the brāhmaṇas who honor the Vaiṣṇava religion are are exalted brāhmaṇas. Only because of bad families, bad association, or bad education do some brāhmaṇas become enemies of the Vaiṣṇava religion. They do not become enemies because their brahminical principles are so great and exalted. They become enemies because they are degraded and unfortunate. The scriptures declare that in Kali-yuga there number of true brāhmaṇas is very few. These few brāhmaṇas become Vaiṣṇavas. When he accepts the Vaiṣṇava gāyatrī, which is the mother of all the Vedas, a brāhmaṇa becomes an initiated Vaiṣṇava. However, pushed by the faults of Kali-yuga, such a brāhmaṇa may then accept another, a non-Vedic initiation. In this way he loses his status as a Vaiṣṇava. Simply because you see they are few in number, please do not come to the wrong conclusion about the Vaiṣṇava brāhmaṇas.

Nyāyaratna: Why do many low-class people embrace the Vaiṣṇava religion?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: There is no doubt of that. Many low-class people are naturally very humble, and for this reason the Vaiṣṇavas consider them good candidates for their mercy. No one can become a Vaiṣṇava without first receiving the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas. Persons who are intoxicated with pride of caste, pride of wealth, or other kinds of pride cannot be humble. For them it is very difficult to attain the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Nyāyaratna: I don't like to know any more about it. I can see that eventually you will quote some hard words from the scriptures. It gives my heart great pain to hear these words, words like these of the Varāha Purāṇa:

rākṣasāḥ kalim āśritya
jāyante brahma-yoniṣu

"In the Kali-yuga demons take birth in the families of the brāhmaṇas."

I don't like to talk about these things. Now please say who you have no respect for our Śrī Śaṅkara Svāmī, who is a shoreless ocean of spiritual knowledge?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: Why do you say that? We say that Śrī Śaṅkara Svāmī is an incarnation of Lord Śiva Himself. Śrīmān Mahāprabhu taught us to honor him with the title Acārya. The only thing is we do not accept his māyāvada philosophy. The māyāvāda philosophy is not the religion taught in the Vedas. Actually, it is covered Buddhism. In order to give the demons a stable life, by the Supreme Lord's order the acārya distorted the true meaning of the Vedas, Vedānta, and Bhagavad-gītā, and taught the advaita-vāda, the philosophy of an impersonal God. Is the acārya at fault for that? Do people criticize him? Buddha was an incarnation of the Supreme Lord. He preached a philosophy opposed to the Vedas. Do the followers of the Vedas criticize him? If someone says, "It is not good for the Supreme Lord and the demigod Śiva to act in that way", then I reply: Why not? They are never cruel or unjust. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, the protector of the

universe, and His assistant Lord Śiva are both all-knowing and the givers of all good. They are never cruel or unjust. Their actions have a deep purpose the small individual souls have no power to understand. Therefore They should not be criticized. Because they are not intelligent enough to understand the purpose of the Lord, people may criticize Him, saying "It is not good for the Supreme Lord to act in this way. He should have acted in that way." Intelligent people never talk like that. Why was the impersonalist philosophy needed then to control the demonic people? Only the all-powerful Lord knows. Why is there a need to create the various life-forms and then destroy them at the end? We have not the power to know. These are the pastimes of the Lord. Persons who are devoted to the Lord feel bliss to hear of His pastimes. They are not eager to say the Lord acted wrongly or to question the virtue of the Lord's actions.

Nyāyaratna: Good. But why do you say that the māyāvāda philosophy is against the teachings of the Vedas and the Vedānta-sūtra?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: If you carefully consider the Vedas and the Vedānta-sūtra, then please tell me which mantras and which sutras support the māyāvāda conclusion? I will show the proper interpretation of all those mantras and sūtras. It may seem that some Vedic mantras show a dim reflection of the māyāvāda philosophy. However, when we look at what precedes and follows those mantras, in a moment the māyāvāda interpretation flees far away.

Nyāyaratna: My brother, I never studied the Upaniṣads and the Vedānta-sūtra. I can discuss anything about the nyāya-śāstra. In that debate I can turn a clay pot into a piece of cloth and a piece of cloth into a clay pot. A read as little little of the Gītā, but I did not really enter into it. Here I must stop. Well, I would like to as one more thing. You are a great paṇḍita, so you can give a good answer. Why do the Vaiṣṇavas have faith only in the prasādam remnants of Lord Viṣṇu and not in the remnants of the demigods and demigoddesses?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: I am not a paṇḍita. I am a great fool. If I can speak nicely that is only because of the mercy of my paramahaṁsa gurudeva. Everyone should know that. The ocean of the scriptures has no shore. No one can study all the scriptures. My gurudeva churned the ocean of the scriptures and gave me the cream of their final conclusions. In know that what he teaches is the final conclusion of all the scriptures. The answer to your question is this: The Vaiṣṇavas do not disrespect the prasādam remnants of the demigods and demigoddesses. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only Supreme God. The other demigods and demigoddesses are His obedient devotees. The Vaiṣṇavas respect the prasādam remnants left by the devotees of the Lord. They do not disrespect them. By accepting the prasadam remnants left by the devotees, one attains pure devotion to the Lord. The dust of the devotees' feet, the nectar water that has washed the devotees' feet, and the nectar food that has touched the devotees' lips, these three are all very wonderful and delightful. They should certainly be accepted. Here is the truth: If an impersonalist worships a demigod and offers food and other things to him, the demigod will not accept the worship, the food, or any other offering, because the person making the offering is contaminated by the impersonalist philosophy. There is abundant proof of that is in the scriptures. If you like, I can quote. The worshipers of the demigods are mostly impersonalists. The demigod-prasādam they offer destroys devotional service and creates an offense before Bhakti-devī, the goddess of devotion. If a pure Vaiṣṇava offers the prasādam tasted by Lord Kṛṣṇa to a demigod or a demigoddess,

that demigod or demigoddess happily accepts that prasādam and dances with joy. If a Vaiṣṇava then takes that praśadam, he becomes filled with happiness. Look, the commands given by the scriptures are most important. It is written in the yoga-śāstra that a person practicing yoga should not accept the prasādam of any demigod. This not not mean that a person practicing yoga should disrespect the prasādam remnants offered to the demigods. It merely means that renouncing these remnants is helpful for yoga meditation. In the same way, if a person is engaged in devotional service accepts prasadam remnants offered to any but the Lord He worships, the devotee cannot attain unalloyed devotion to his Lord. This does not mean that he disrespects the prasādam remnants offered to the demigods. Please know, then, that this is ordered by the scriptures and it is meant only to attain a particular goal.

Nyāyaratna: Good. I accept that answer. Why do you reject the animal sacrifices prescribed in the scriptures?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: the scriptures do not teach that one should kill animals. The scriptures declare:

mā hiṁsyāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni

"Don't do violence to any creature."

With these words the Vedas prohibit violence to animals. As long as he is in the grip of the modes of passion and ignorance, a man will yearn to associate with women, eat meat, and drink liquor. He does not wait to hear the Vedas command him before he does these things. The purpose of the Vedas is this: As long as a man is not situated in the mode of goodness, a man will not be able to renounce killing animals, drinking liquor, and yearning for the touch of a woman. It is the curb these propensities that the scriptures prescribe association with a woman in marriage, killing animals in sacrifice, and drinking liquor at certain ceremonies. In these ways a man's indulgence in these things is curtailed, and at the end he becomes able to renounce them completely. That is the purpose of the Vedas. The Vedas do not really teach that one should kill animals. That is described in these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.11):

loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā
nityā hi jantor na hi tatra codanā
vyavasthitis teṣu vivāha-yajña-
surā-grahair āśu nivṛttir iṣṭā

"In this material world the conditioned soul is always inclined to sex, meat-eating, and intoxication. Therefore religious scriptures never actually encourage these activities. Although the scriptural injunctions provide for sex through sacred marriage, for meat-eating through sacrificial offerings, and for intoxication thorough the acceptance of ritual cups of wine, such ceremonies are meant for the

ultimate purpose of renunciation."***

Therefore the Vaiṣṇavas do not protest if men in the modes of passion and ignorance kill animals in these circumstances. However, men in the mode of goodness should not perform such activities. To be violent to others is the way of the animals. Śrī Nārada Muni describes the way of the animals in these words (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 1.13.47):

ahastāni sa-hastānām
apadāni catuṣ-padām
phalgūni tatra mahatāṁ
jīvo jīvasya jīvanam

"Those who are devoid of hands are prey for those who have hands. Those devoid of legs are prey for the four-legged. The weak are the sustenance of the strong, and the general rule holds that one living being is food for another."*

Manu also explains (Manu-saṁhitā 5.56):

pravṛttir eṣā bhūtānāṁ
nivṛttis tu mahā-phalā

"Everyone in material life is attracted to furthering the way of attachment (pravṛtti-mārga), but the greatest treasure is to be gained by following the path of detachment (nivṛtti-mārga)."*

Nyāyaratna: Good. Why do the Vaiṣṇavas object to performance of śrāddha and other rituals to repay the debts one owes to his ancestors?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: If men who follow the karma-kāṇḍa rituals of the Vedas perform the śrāddha ceremony, the Vaiṣṇavas have no objection. However, the scriptures do say this (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.51):

devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇāṁ pitṛṇāṁ
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇī na rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇaṁ śaraṇyaṁ
gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam

"Anyone who takes shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, the giver of liberation, giving up all kinds of obligation, and has taken to the path in all seriousness, owes neither duties nor obligations to the demigods, sages, general living entities, family members, humankind, or forefathers."*

The conclusion, then, is that devotees who have surrendered to the Lord do not need to perform karma-kāṇḍa śrāddha ceremonies to repay the debts they owe to their ancestors. They worship the Supreme Personality of Godhead, offer the Lord's prasādam to their ancestors, and then honor that prasādam with their family. That is the śrāddha ritual they perform.

Nyāyaratna: When is one qualified to act in that way?

Vaiṣṇava dāsa: On the day when one has faith in the descriptions of Lord Hari and the holy name of Lord Hari one is counted as a Vaiṣṇava. This is described by the Supreme Lord Himself in these words (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.20.9):

tāvat karmāṇi kurvīta
na nirvidyeta yāvatā
mat-kathā śravaṇādau vā
śraddhā yāvan na jāyate

"As long as one is not displeased by fruitive activity and as long has one has no faith in hearing about Me, one has to follow the rituals of the Vedas."

Nyāyaratna: I am very pleased. When I see your scholarship and sharp intelligence, I have faith in the Vaiṣṇavas. I feel happiness in my heart. Harihara, why should we argue with these people? These people are very great scholars. They are very expert in understanding the scriptures. Whatever we may say to keep our business prosperous, Nimāi Paṇḍita is the greatest philosopher and Vaiṣṇava who ever took birth in the land of Bengal. Of this there is no doubt. Now let us cross the Ganges. The day is almost ended. Calling out "Haribol! Haribol!", Nyāyaratna and his companions departed. Singing "Jaya Śacīnananda!", the Vaiṣṇavas danced.

Chapter Eleven
Nitya-dharma O Byut-parasta Arthāt Pauttalikatā
Eternal Religion and Byut-parasta, or Deity Worship

On the Ganges' western shore is the village of Pāhāra-pura. That famous village is in the middle of Koladvīpa, which is within Navadvīpa. At the time of Śrīmān Mahāprabhu an especially respectable and influential man named Śrī Mādhava dāsa Caṭṭopadhyāya (also known as Ca'kari Caṭṭopadhyāya). Ca'kari had a son named Śrīla Vaṁśīvadanānanda Ṭhākura. By Lord Mahaprabhu's mercy, Śrī Vaṁśīvadanānanda became very great and powerful. Thinking him an incarnation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's flute, everyone called him Prabhu Vaṁśīvadanānanda. ,It was well

known that Mother Śrī Viṣṇupriyā was especially merciful to Prabhu Vaṁśīvadanānanda. After Mother Viṣṇupriyā disappeared, Vaṁśīvadanānanda moved the Deity form of the Lord from Śrī Māyāpura to Kuliyā Pāhāra-pura. When his descendants attained the mercy of Mother Śrī Jāhnavī and moved to Śrīpāṭ Bāghanāpārā, the worship of the Deity of Lord Mahāprabhu was continued by the pūjārīs living in Mālañca in Kuliyā-grāma.

The village of Kuliyā-grāma was situated across the ganges from the old city of Navadvīpa. In the area of Kuliyā were some famous small hamlets, such as the one named Cināḍāṅgā. A devotee merchant of Cināḍāṅgā once held a great spiritual festival in the temple at Kuliyā Pāhārapura. Many brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas and all the Vaiṣṇavas within thirty-two miles of Navadvīpa were invited to that festival. On the day of the festival the Vaiṣṇavas were coming from all directions. Śrī Ananta dāsa and others came from Śrī Nṛsiṁha-palli. Śrī Gorācānda Bābājī and others came from Śrī Māyāpura. Śrī Nārāyaṇa dāsa Bābājī and others came from Śrī Bilva-puṣkariṇī. Śrī Narahari dāsa and others came from Śrī Modadruma. The paramahaṁsa bābājī, Vaiṣṇava dāsa, and others came from Śrī Godruma. Śrī Śacīnandana dāsa and others came from Śrī Samudragar. The tilaka mark of Lord Hari's temple was on their foreheads, tulasī beads were around their necks, and all their limbs were resplendent with the marks of Lord Gaura and Lord Nityānanda. In every hand were beads for chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. Everyone loudly chanted:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

That was the mantra they sang. Some played the karatālas and sang:

saṅkīrtana mājjhe nāce gorā binodiyā

"Glorious Lord Gaura dances in the saṅkīrtana!"

Again and again some danced and sang:

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu Nityānanda
Śrī Advaita Gadādhara Śrīvāsādi bhakta vṛnda

Many tears fell from many eyes. Some limbs had hairs standing erect in ecstasy. Some fervently called out, "O Gaura-kiśora! Will Your eternal pastimes ever be seen by our eyes!" Some Vaiṣṇavas played mṛdaṅgas and repeatedly sang the holy names as they walked. The women from Kuilyā who were devotees of Lord Gaura became filled with wonder to see the ecstatic love the Vaiṣṇavas showed. Walking and walking, the Vaiṣṇavas finally came to the temple, which was now a theater

where there would be a play about Śrīmān Mahāprabhu. A cloth around his neck, the host merchant fell at the Vaiṣṇavas' feet and spoke many humble words. Then the Vaiṣṇavas took their seats within the theater. The pūjāris came and placed prasadam flower-garlands around the Vaiṣṇavas' necks. Then the play *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala* began. As they heard the nectarean pastimes of Lord Caitanya, the Vaiṣṇavas manifested different kinds of sāttvika-bhāva ecstasies. As everyone was thus plunged in an ocean of transcendental bliss, one of the gatekeepers approached the temple authorities and said that the head mullah of Satsahaika Paragana had come, was now seated in the courtyard with his associates, and wanted to talk with a Vaiṣṇava paṇḍita. The temple authorities informed the assembled bābājī paṇḍitas. The nectar of the play thus thus interrupted, the Vaiṣṇavas became unhappy. Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī of Madhyadvīpa asked, "What is the mullah's intention?" Aware of the mullah's intention, one the temple authorities said, "The mullah wishes to talk with the Vaiṣṇavas about the spiritual truth." He also said that the mullah had no rival among the Mohammedan scholars, he was very earnest about preaching his own religion everywhere, and he was not a fanatic who hated other religions. Also, the emperor at Delhi greatly respected him. The mullah also asked that only one or two Vaiṣṇava paṇḍitas engage in the conversation about scripture. He thought in that way the pure Vaiṣṇava religion would be defeated. Hearing that an opportunity to preach the Vaiṣṇava religion had now come, the desire to talk with this mullah arose in the hearts of some of the Vaiṣṇavas. Talking among themselves, they decided that Gorācānda dāsa Pandita Bābājī of Śrī Mayapura, Śrī Vaiṣṇava dāsa Pandita Bābājī of Śrī Godruma, Prema dāsa Bābājī of Jahnu-nagara, and Kali-pāvana dāsa Bābājī of Campahaṭṭa would go and talk with the mullah, and when the play Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala ended, everyone else would come and join them. Calling out, "Jaya Nityānanda!" the four bābājīs followed the mahānta to the outer courtyard. The outer courtyard was very pleasant. It was cool with the shade of a banyan tree. Seeing the Vaiṣṇavas coming, the mullah and his associates greeted them respectfully. Fully aware that all souls are servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Vaiṣṇavas offered daṇḍavat obeisances to Lord Vāsudeva residing in the hearts of the mullahs. Then the Vaiṣṇavas took their seats. It was a very beautiful sight. On one side were fifty white-bearded Mohammedan scholars, nicely dressed and decorated. Behind them some decorated horses were tethered. On the other side were four humble and effulgent Vaiṣṇavas. Behind them were many hindus who had come and taken their seats out of curiosity. The paṇḍita Gorācānda spoke first, "O noble ones, for what purpose have you remembered us poor people?" The saintly mullah Badaruddin Sahib humbly replied, “Salam! Please accept our respects. We have come to ask some questions. The paṇḍita Goracanda replied, "As far as I am able, I shall answer your learned questions. Badaruddin Sahib stepped forward and said, "Brothers, in Hindu society the worship of demigods and demigoddesses has existed for many days. In our holy Koran I see that Allah is one, not two. He has no form. To make an image of Him and to worship it is a great offense. I asked many brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas about this, and they said that although Allah is indeed formless, the mind cannot meditate on a formless thing, and therefore one should create an imaginary form of Allah, and that form should receive our worship and meditation. I am not able to accept these words very happily. Why not? To create an imaginary form like that is the work of Satan. We

call that `byut'. To worship `byut' is completely forbidden. By that worship one is pushed far away from pleasing Allah and one becomes worthy of punishment by Him. We have heard that your first preacher, Caitanyadeva took all the faults out of the Hindu religion. Still, He was in favor of this `byut' worship, or worship of a material thing. We want to know from the Vaiṣṇavas is: Why, after consulting the scriptures, have you not rejected this `byut' worship?"

Hearing this question from the mullah, the Vaiṣṇava paṇḍitas smiled within their minds. Openly they said, "This saintly paṇḍita babaji will give the answer to you." Replying with, "As you order", the paṇḍita Goracanda said, “He whom you call Allah, we call Bhagavān. Both these words refer to the same Supreme Personality of Godhead. He is called by different names in the Koran, the Purāṇas, and in different countries and languages. The name that best expresses all the qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead should be accepted. That is why we favor the name Bhagavān over Allah, Brahman, Paramātmā, and all other names. The word Allah means `He who has no superior'. We do not call superiority the best of the Lord's qualities. We say that wonderfulness is the best of His qualities. To be very big is certainly very wonderful. However, the opposite, to be very small, is also very wonderful. Therefore the name Allah does not reach to the highest limit of the Lord's wonderful qualities. The word Bhagavān, however, refers to all wonderful qualities human beings can know. It puts them all in one word. The ultimate of greatness and the ultimate of smallness are only one feature of Bhagavān. That He is the master of all potencies is a second feature of Bhagavān. Whatever a human being thinks is impossible, His inconceivable potency can easily accomplish. It is by the power of His inconceivable potency that He both has a form and does not have a form. If we say that He does not have a form, then we deny His inconceivable potency. By His inconceivable potency He has a form and He enjoys pastimes with His devotees eternally. Allah, Brahman, and Parmātmā are formless, therefore They do not have these wonderful features. Bhagavān is all-auspicious and all-famous. His pastimes are sweet like nectar. Bhagavān is sublimely handsome. With spiritual eyes, the liberated souls gaze on His handsomeness. Bhagavān has all knowledge. He is pure and perfect. He is beyond the touch of matter. His form is spiritual. He is beyond the material elements, or `byut'. Although He is the creator of the material world, Bhagavān is untouched by matter. He is independent. The word Bhagavān means `He who has six opulences'. Bhagavān has two features: 1. opulence, and 2. sweetness. The feature of sweetness is the best friend of the spirit souls. He is the Lord of our hearts. He is Kṛṣṇa or Caitanya. Therefore if someone says that the word of an imaginary form of Bhagavān is `byut' worship, or worship of matter, that is not in opposition to our philosophy. The Vaiṣṇava religion teaches that one should worship the Lord's eternal form (which is perfectly spiritual). According to the Vaiṣṇava philosophy this kind of worship of the Lord's form is not `byut' worship. If in any book it is said that this kind of worship is `byut' worship and is forbidden, then that book has no authority to forbid it. Everything depends on the faith within the heart. A person whose heart is free from `byut', who is beyond the material world, can worship the pure spiritual form of the Lord. You are Mullah Sahib. You are a great paṇḍita. Your heart is certainly free from the touch of matter. But are the hearts of your neophyte disciples free from the thought of `byut'? To whatever extent a man if filled with thoughts of `byut' to that extent his worship of God is really worship

of `byut'. With his mouth he says God is formless, and his mind is filled with thoughts of `byut'. The people in general find it very hard to worship the pure form of the Lord. Only a person who is specially qualified, who is beyond the touch of matter, can rise above thinking of `byut'. I request that you consider these points."

Mullah: I have considered these points, and I think that the six wonderful qualities of Bhagavān you have described are also ascribed to Allah in the holy Koran. There is no need to debate the etymology of the word Allah. Allah is Bhagavān.

Gorācānda: Good. Then you accept that the Supreme Being has opulence and handsomeness. Then it is accepted that he has a handsome form in the spiritual world, which is a place different from the material world. That form of the Lord is the Deity we worship.

Mullah: In our Koran it is also written that the Supreme has a spiritual form that is greater than the greatest. We accept that. However, when you make a statue of that spiritual form, that statue is material. Therefore I say that it is `byut'. Worship of `byut' is not the same as worship of He who is greater than the greatest. Please say what you think of this.

Gorācānda: In the Vaiṣṇava scriptures it is said that one should worship the pure and spiritual Deity form of the Lord. Exalted devotees would not worship the Deity form of the Lord if that form were made of earth or any other material element. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.48.13) it is said:

yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

"A human being who identifies this body made of three elements with his self, who considers the by-products of this body to be his kinsmen, who considers the Deity form of the Lord to be made of earth or other material elements, who goes to the place of pilgrimage simply to take a bath rather than to meet men of transcendental knowledge there, is to be considered as an ass or a cow."

In Bhagavad-gita (9.25) it is said:

bhūtāni yānti bhutejyāḥ

"They who worship matter remain in the material world."

Therefore the conclusion of the scriptures is that worship of matter is not allowed. That you can see. However, a certain point should be explained. Human beings are situated on different levels of knowledge and purity. A person situated in pure spiritual knowledge is able to worship the pure spiritual form of the Lord.

Persons situated on lower levels of spiritual awareness understand the Lord to a lesser degree, and they who are on the lowest level cannot understand the Lord's spiritual nature at all. When he meditates on God, a person on the lowest level inevitably imagines that God has a material form with material qualities. To think that the Deity form of the Lord is a statue made of clay is the same as to meditate in the mind on a Supreme that one imagines to have a form made of matter. Actually, for persons on that level of advancement, worship of the Deity form of the Lord is very beneficial. In fact, if there were no Deity worship, the people in general would be in an inauspicious condition. If an ordinary person eager to see God were not able to see the Deity form of the Lord, then he would lose hope that he would ever see the Lord. The followers of religions that forbid Deity worship are on a low level of spiritual advancement. They are materialistic and not interested in worshiping the Lord. Therefore Deity worship is the foundation of religion. Pure and wise saints gaze on the form of the Supreme Lord. Their hearts purified by devotion, they know that the Deity form of the Lord is pure spirit. As the heart becomes more and more purified by devotion, the worshiper gradually comes to understand that the Deity form of the Lord is a spiritual form reflected within the realm of the material world. Thus the Deity form is the spiritual form of the Lord, a form that the great saints have arranged to be reflected within the material world. An advanced devotees can directly perceive that the Deity form is perfectly spiritual. An intermediate devotee thinks the Deity form is a mental image. At first a neophyte devotee thinks the Deity is a statue made of material elements, but as he gradually become pure in heart, he also gradually comes to understand that the Deity is actually made of spirit. Therefore the Deity form of the Lord should be worshiped by all classes of devotees. To worship an imaginary form is forbidden. However, to worship the real eternal form of the Lord is very auspicious. Therefor the worship of the Deity of the Lord is established for all three classes of Vaiṣṇavas. There is nothing wrong in it. On the contrary, it brings the greatest auspiciousness. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.26) the Supreme Lord Himself declares:

yathā yathātmā parimṛjyate 'sau
mat-puṇya-gāthā-śravaṇābhidhānaiḥ
tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmaṁ
cakṣur yathaivāñjana-samprayuktam

"When a person purifies his heart by hearing and singing pure songs describing Me, he gradually becomes able to see spirit. He becomes like a person whose eyesight is restored by medicinal ointment."

In the material world the mind tends to be filled with material thoughts. In that condition the soul is not able to understand his true spiritual identity and he is also not able to serve the Supreme Lord, who resides in his heart as the Supersoul. By hearing and chanting the Lord's glories and by performing other kinds of devotional service, the soul gradually becomes powerful. Then the bonds of matter that hold him become slackened. As the bondage of matter becomes slackened, the

soul becomes stronger, and in the course of time the soul becomes exalted. He can directly see spirit, and he can act on the spiritual platform. Some say that one should far away all that has no relation to the Lord and one should act only to attain Him. However, one cannot become spiritual strong merely by dry knowledge. How can a conditioned soul get the power to suddenly renounce all that has no direct relation to the Lord? Can a prisoner in jail release himself simply by wishing to be free? the soul imprisoned in the material world has committed an offense to the Supreme Lord. He must find a way to lessen that offense. The spirit soul is by nature an eternal servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The root of the soul's offense is that he has forgotten that. Therefore, somehow or other he should turn his mind to think of the Lord. By gazing at the Deity form of the Lord, hearing the description of the Lord's pastimes, and other devotional activities, the soul gradually revives his original spiritual nature. The more the soul's original nature is revived, the more the soul can see spirit directly. Serving the Deity of the Lord, and hearing and chanting the Lord's glories are the only way for the neophyte devotee to make spiritual advancement. For this reason the great saints have established Deity worship in this world.

Mullah: Is it not better to meditate on an imaginary within the mind than to make an imaginary Deity form out of the material elements?

Gorācānda: They are the same. When the mind is material, it thinks only of material things. You may say, Brahman, the Supreme, is all-pervading". Still, the material mind will think Brahman is like the material element ether, which is also all-pervading. However, if I continue to meditate on Brahman in that way, in the course of time the real truth about Brahman will be manifested in my heart. Time and space are material. If the mind's meditation is not beyond time and space, then how can the mind meditate on something that is beyond the material world. Rejecting the Deity form as something made of earth, water, or other material elements, you meditate on an imaginary form of the Lord, a form made of time and space. That is worship of a material form of the Lord, a graven image of the Lord. A material so-called form of the Lord is not needed. The Lord is not material. His is spiritual. That is His nature. Therefore a process is given to the conditioned souls by which they can approach the spiritual Supreme Lord. ,By chanting the Lord's holy names, by narrating His pastimes, and by worshiping His Deity form, one gradually becomes more and more devoted to the Lord. When the worshiper attains pure devotion, he can see the spiritual form of the Supreme Lord. Philosophical speculation and fruitive work will not help one to see the Lord.

Mullah: the Supreme Lord is different from matter. It is said that Satan introduced the worship of material things in order to trap the souls in the material world. Therefore I think it is not good to worship material things.

Gorācānda: The Supreme Personality of Godhead is one without a rival. No one can possible compete with Him. Everything in this material world was created by Him and is dependent on Him. The Supreme Lord may be worshiped in many different ways. He is pleased by all these different kinds of worship. It is not that He will become an enemy if someone worships Him a particular way. He is all-auspicious. If you say that Satan does something, then I say that Satan does not have the power to do anything against the Supreme Lord's will. If Satan exists, then he must be an individual soul dependent on the Supreme Lord. However, I think that this Satan does not exist. Why not? Because in this material world

nothing can ever be done to thwart the Supreme Lord's will. There is not a single individual soul who is not dependent on the Supreme Lord. You may ask, `What is the origin of sin?' I reply: The individual soul is by nature a servant of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Awareness of this fact is knowledge. To forget this fact is ignorance. If an individual spirit soul forgets this fact, then he sows the seed of sins in the field of his heart. A person who always remains a liberated associate of the Lord does not plant the seed of sin in his heart. Instead of imagining this mythological Satan, one should honestly see the ignorance in his own heart. Therefore, even if one worships the Supreme Lord as present in the material elements, he commits no offense. Therefore Deity worship is necessary for the neophyte devotee and the source of great auspiciousness for the advanced devotee. Therefore the idea that Deity worship is not good is only a theory of some thinkers. It is not at all supported by the pure scriptures.

Mullah: Deity worship is not good for attaining love of God. It simply fills the mind with many material ideas.

Gorācānda: By studying the ancient history books we can see that your conclusion is wrong. many neophyte devotees begin their spiritual life by worshiping the Deity form of the Lord. As they continue the Deity worship in the association of the devotees, they gradually become advanced, and then they can directly see that the Deity is the spiritual form of the Supreme Lord Himself. Then they become plunged in a great ocean of spiritual love for the Lord. This is the undeniable truth: Association with the devotees of the Lord is the root of all that is good. By associating with spiritually advanced devotees of the Lord, one gradually attains spiritual love for the Lord. When one attains spiritual love for the Lord, the idea that the Deity form is material perishes. As one gradually becomes advanced, he attains great good fortune. Non-Aryan religions are generally opposed to deity worship. But look! How many followers of those religions have attained spiritual love for the Lord? They simply spend their time arguing with each other and hating each other. How can they understand loving devotion to the Lord?

Mullah: If one has love for the Lord, then there is no fault in His worshiping the Deity. However, how can the worship of a dog, a cat, a snake, a debauchee, or some other kind of being be worship of the Supreme Lord? The honorable prophet has specifically forbidden worship of "byut".

Gorācānda: The people in general are grateful to God. Whether they sin or not, they have faith in the supremacy of God, and they bow down before the wonders that are displayed in this world. Prompted by their gratitude to God, the ignorant aborigines bow down before the sun, the river, the mountain, or anything that is very big and grand. They offer themselves to these things and they reveal their hearts to them. Although there is certainly a great difference between spiritual love for the Lord and the worship of material things, the bewildered people who show their gratitude to God by bowing down before these material things gradually attain a good result. Therefore if you see with the eye of reason, you will not blame them for worshiping material things. If one meditates on a formless all-pervading God, or if without any spiritual love one offers namaz prayers or other prayers, then how is that different from worshiping a cat? It is our idea that one should do whatever is necessary to arouse one's love for God. If those neophytes are mocked or attacked, then the path of gradual spiritual advancement will be blocked. Dogmatic people refuse to honor the followers of other religions. They mock and

attack others who do not worship in the same way they do. They make a great mistake.

Mullah: Should it then be said that everything is God, and the worship of anything is the worship of God? Is the worship of sins worship of God? Is the worship of sinful desires worship of God? Is God pleased by any kind of worship?

Gorācānda: We do not say that everything is God. Rather, God is different from all else. Everything is created by God and dependent on Him. Everything has a relationship with God. By following the thread of that relationship, any thing may lead one to become curious about God. Therefore the sūtra says:

jijñāsāsvādanāvadhi

"Curiosity pushes one to taste things."

Therefore this kind of curiosity gradually pushes one to try to experience what is spirit. You are all great paṇḍitas. If you are merciful and generous, you will understand what is the truth of this. We are only poor Vaiṣṇavas. We do not like to enter into debates. If you give permission, we will now hear the musical play *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala.*

No one could understand what conclusion the mullah came to by hearing these arguments. After a short silence he said, “I am glad to hear your arguments. I will come on another day and ask about something else. Now it is late. We wish to return to our homes. After speaking these words, the mullah sahib and his followers mounted their horses and left for Sātasaikā Paragaṇa. The bābājīs happily called out the holy names of Lord Hari, and entered the temple to hear the play *Śrī Caitanya-maṅgala.*

Chapter Twelve
Nitya-dharma O Sādhana
Eternal Religion and Devotional Service in Practice

Śrī Navadvīpa-maṇḍala is the best of all holy places in the world. It is a thirty-two-mile eight-petal lotus flower. The whorl of that lotus flower is Śrī Antardvīpa. In the center of Antardvīpa is Śrī Māyāpura. To the north of Śrī Māyāpura is Śrī Sīmantadvīpa. In Simantadvīpa is a temple of Śrī Sinmanta-devi. To the north of that temple is Bilva-puṣkariṇī, and to the south is Brāhmaṇa-puṣkariṇī. The region that contains Bilva-puṣkariṇī and Brāhmaṇa-puṣkariṇī is called Simuliyā by the people in general. Therefore the village of Simuliyā-grāma is in the northern part of Śrī Navadvīpa. At the time of Śrī Mahāprabhu this place was the home of many, many paṇḍitas. This village was the home of Śacī-devi's father, Śrī Nīlāmbara Cakravarti. Not far from his house lived a vaidika brāhmaṇa named Vrajanātha Bhaṭṭācārya. By studying in a school at Bilva-puṣkariṇī, in a few days he had

attained great learning in nyāya-śāstra, learning that was like a shoreless ocean. All the famous paṇḍitas of Bilva-puṣkariṇī, Brāhmaṇa-puṣkariṇī, Māyāpura, Godruma, Madhyadvīpa, Amraghatta, Samudragar, Kuliyā, and many other places also were embarrassed and frustrated by Vrajanātha's skill in newer and newer logical arguments. In the assemblies where the paṇḍitas were invited, Vrajanātha Pañcānana became like a lion attacking a herd of elephants. Raising newer and newer arguments, he made the paṇḍitas burn with anger. Of these paṇḍitas a very hard-hearted logician decided to kill Pañcānana by casting a spell from the Tantras. Day after day he stayed in the cremation ground of Rudradvīpa and chanted mantras to kill his foe.

It was a frightening new-moon night. Blinding darkness filled every direction. At midnight in the cremation ground Naiyika-cūḍāmaṇi called out to his worshipable deity, "O mother, only you should be worshiped in the Kali-yuga! I have heard that you are very easily pleased by even a little chanting of your mantras and you easily grant boons. O mother with the terrifying face, your servant has performed great austerities and chanted your mantra for many days. Please be merciful this one time. O mother, I have many faults. Still, you are my mother. Please forgive my faults and appear before me. Again and again screaming, Tarka-cūḍāmaṇi offered oblations into the fire and chanted a mantra with Nyāya-pañcānana's name. What wonderful power did that mantra possess! At that moment the sky became covered with clouds. A powerful wind blew. A deafening thunder sounded. Again and again there was lightning. Many grotesque ghosts could be seen. Intoxicated by drinking the sacrificial wine, Cūḍāmaṇi called out, "O mother, please don't delay!" At that moment a voice spoke from the sky. "Do not worry. Nyāya-pañcānana will not continue as a logician for many more days. In a few days he will renounce logical debates. Then he will become silent. He will be your opponent no longer. Be peaceful and go home." Hearing this voice from the sky, Cūḍāmaṇi became happy. Again and again he offered daṇḍavat obeisances to Lord Śiva, the author of the Tantras. Then he returned home.

Vrajanātha Pañcānana became a dig-vijayī paṇḍita when he was only twenty-one years old. Day and night he studied the books of Gaṅgeśopadhyāya. Seeing many faults in Kānabhaṭṭa Śiromaṇi's commentary, he wrote his own. He never thought about material affairs. Neither would he turn his ear to spiritual life. His whole life was logic, filled with phrases like “ghaṭa, paṭa" and "avaccheda, vyavaccheda". Even when he was resting, sleeping, eating, or walking about, his heart was rapt in logic, thinking about the nature of time, reality, solids, liquids, and a host of other things. One day at sunrise at the Ganges' shore, as he was analyzing the sixteen categories enunciated by Gautama Muni, a new nyāya student asked, "O saintly Nyāya-pañcānana, have you heard Nimāi Paṇḍita's analysis of the atomic theory?" Nyāya-pañcānana roared like a lion, "Who is Nimāi Paṇḍita? Do you speak of Jagannātha Miśra's son? What was His argument? Please tell me." The new student said that some days before in Navadvīpa there was a great person named Nimāi Paṇḍita. He was very expert in considering many different arguments of the nyāya-śāstra. He thoroughly embarrassed and defeated Kānabhaṭṭa Śiromaṇi. Nimāi Paṇḍita had traveled to the farther shore of the ocean of the nyāya-śāstras. Even though He was so learned, in the end He considered the nyāya-śāstras to be insignificant. He came to consider all material knowledge unimportant. He became a sannyāsī and traveled from place top place preaching

the chanting of Lord Hari's holy names. The Vaiṣṇavas say He was the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, and they worship Him by chanting the "Gaura-Hari" mantra. O saintly Nyāya-pañcānana, please take a look at His logical arguments." After hearing this praise of Nimāi Paṇḍita's logical arguments, Pañcānana began to collect some of those famous arguments. It is the nature of a man that when he is very interested in a certain subject, he will honor the great teachers of that subject. Also, people tend not to honor great men while they are alive, but only after they are dead. Thus, after studying Nimāi Paṇḍita's logical arguments, Nyāya-pañcānana held Him in great esteem. He would say, "O Nimāi Paṇḍita, if only I had been born during Your time! Then I could have been Your student! Then I could have attained great learning! O Nimāi Paṇḍita, please just once enter my heart! You are in truth the Supreme Brahman. If this were not so, then how could these wonderful logical arguments have entered Your intelligence? You are in truth Lord Hari with a fair complexion. How can this not be? You created the most wonderful logical arguments. You destroyed the blinding darkness of ignorance. Now is especially the time of blinding ignorance. You are fair and effulgent. You throw the darkness of ignorance far away. You are Lord Hari Himself. How can this not be? You enchanted the minds of the entire world. With Your logical arguments You have certainly enchanted my mind." Again and again speaking words like these, Vrajanātha became like a madman. He called out, “O Nimāi Paṇḍita! O Gaura-Hari! Please be merciful to me!" he called out, "When will I be able to make logical arguments like Yours? Please be merciful to me, so I will become a most powerful scholar of the nyāya-śāstra!"

Vrajanātha thought, "The worshipers of Gaura-Hari must be attracted to Him as I am, because of His great skill in logic. I must see if they have any books about logic written by Him. Thinking in this way, Vrajanātha decided to associate with the devotees of Lord Gaurāṅga.

Thus Vrajanātha again and again loudly chanted, “Nimāi Paṇḍita! Gaura-Hari!" and many other holy names of the Lord. He also desired to associate with the devotees of Lord Gaura. These two acts brought him great spiritual merit just on the verge of bearing fruit. One day, as he was taking his meal, he asked his paternal grandmother, "O saintly grandmother, did you ever see Gaura-Hari? When she heard the name of Lord Gaurāṅga, Vrajanātha's grandmother began to think of her childhood. She said, "Ah, will the charming form of Gaurāṅga ever again come before my eyes? Who can remain a materialist after seeing Him? When He chanted the holy names of Lord Hari, even the animals, birds, trees, and vines all became stunned, overcome with spiritual love. When I think of Him, tears from my eyes stream over my chest." Vrajanātha asked, "O saintly grandmother, do you know any stories about Him?" The grandmother replied, "Yes. When Hew came to His maternal uncle's house with Mother Śacī, the elderly women of our family serve Him the vegetable śāka. Praising the śāka, He happily ate it. O Vrajanātha, when His mother brought the plate of śāka, he said, `Śāka is the favorite of the logician Nimāi Paṇḍita.' and he ate it with great relish. No one can describe how much Vrajanātha, who was completely uninterested in spiritual life, became attached to Nimāi Paṇḍita because of Nimāi's great learning in logic. He took a fancy to Nimāi. When he heard Nimāi's name he became happy. When he gave alms to a beggar, he always said "Jaya Śacīnanandana!" he would visit the paṇḍita bābājīs of Śrī Māyāpura, listen to them chant the holy names of Lord Gaurāṅga,

and ask them many questions about the Lord's victories in learned debate. In this way two or four months passed. Vrajanātha was now a changed man. Previously it was only the descriptions of Nimāi's learning in logic that pleased him. Now any talk about Nimāi pleased him. Now he was no longer interested in logic. The logician Nimāi no longer lived in his heart. Now it was the devotee Nimāi who lived there. When he heard the sounds of khola and karatālas, his heart danced. When he saw the pure devotees, he bowed down before them in his mind. Declaring that it was the birthplace of Lord Gaurāṅga, he worshiped the land of Navadvīpa. Vrajanātha was now polite and gentle. His opponents in the debating arena could see that his heart had become calm and cool. No longer was he eager to shower them with arrows of logical arguments. Nyāya-cūḍāmaṇi thought his worshipable deity had made Vrajanātha powerless. Now he felt safe.

One day, in a secluded place, Vrajanātha said to himself, "If Nimāi could abandon the path of logic and turn to the path of devotion, then what is the harm we do the same? When I was obsessed by logic, I could not hear the name of Nimāi with attention and devotion. Then the nyāya-śāstra had me in its grip. Then I ignored eating, sleeping, and everything else. Now I look at the world with different eyes. The arguments of the nyāya-śāstra no longer enters my mind. Now only the name Gaurāṅga enters my mind. Now when I see the Vaiṣṇavas dancing I think how beautiful the dancing is. But I am born in an exalted vaidika brāhmaṇa dynasty. My dynasty is honored in society. The Vaiṣṇavas are very respectable people. Still, it is not good that I join them. I worship Lord Gaura only within my thoughts. That is the only proper way for me to act. There are many Vaiṣṇavas at Śrī Māyāpura, at the place where the Kazi broke the drums and at the place where there are many sannyāsīs. When I see how their faces are effulgent, I become happy at heart. Among them Śrī Raghunātha dāsa bābājī greatly attracts my mind. I think I should study the bhakti-śāstras under his guidance. In the Vedas it is said (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.6):

ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ

"One should always gaze upon, hear about, think of, and meditate on the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Although the word "mantavyaḥ" (one should think about Him) here certainly refers to the nyāya-śāstras, where by logical analysis one gradually attains knowledge of the Supreme, I have already spent a long time studying logic. Now I think it is right for me to do a little more “śrotavyaḥ" (hearing about the Supreme). For a long time logic was my life and soul. Now I desire to take shelter of Lord Gaura-Hari's feet. A little after sunset I will go to see Śrī Raghunātha dāsa bābājī. I think that is the best thing to do."

The day was ended. The sun was almost invisible. A very gentle breeze blew from the south. In every direction the birds had gone to their nests. One by one the stars were visible in the sky. At that time the Vaiṣṇavas had begun the ārati and kīrtana in the courtyard of Śrīvāsa's home in Śrī Māyāpura. Vrajanātha then slowly entered and sat down under the bakula tree in the place in Śrīvāsa's courtyard

where the khola was broken. As he listened to the chanting in the ārati of Lord Gaura-Hari, his heart became softened. When the kīrtana ended, one by one the Vaiṣṇavas came and sat under the bakula tree also. When, proclaiming "Jaya Śacīnandana!", "Jaya Nityānanda!", "Jaya Rūpa-Sanātana!", and "Jaya Dāsa Gosvāmī!", elderly Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya also entered the courtyard, all the elder Vaiṣṇavas greeted him with daṇḍavat obeisances. In that situation Vrajanātha could not avoid also bowing down before him. Seeing the effulgence of Vrajanātha's face, the elderly bābājī embraced him and sat down beside him. He asked, "Bābā, who are you?" Vrajanātha replied, “I am a person who thirsts for the truth. I have decided to learn the truth from you. A Vaiṣṇava sitting nearby knew who Vrajanātha was. He said, "He is Vrajanātha Nyāya-pañcānana. In understanding nyāya-śāstra no paṇḍita in Śrī Navadvīpa is his equal. Nowadays he has attained a little faith in Lord Śacīnandana. Thus hearing the glories of Vrajanātha, the elderly bābājī politely said, "Bābā, you are a paṇḍita, and we are poor fools. You reside in the holy abode of our Lord Śacīnandana. It is you who should be merciful to us. Hoe can we teach you? It is you who should mercifully tell us about Lord Gaurāṅga, and thus make us cool and peaceful." As the two of them conversed, all the Vaiṣṇavas gradually left to fulfill their various duties. Only the old bābājī and Vrajanātha remained.

Vrajanātha said, "O saintly bābājī, I was born as a brāhmaṇa. Therefore I am very proud of my learning. I am so proud that I see the entire world as my possession. I do not know that I should honor saintly persons. How did I become fortunate, that I now have some faith in your saintly character and actions? How can I know that? I wish to ask one or two questions. Please answer them. I do not come to mock or trick you. Please tell me: What is the true goal of life and how may the spirit soul attain it? When I studied nyāya-śāstra I came to the firm conclusion that the Supreme Lord and the individual spirit soul are different eternally. It is only by the mercy of the Supreme Lord that the individual spirit soul can attain liberation. The Supreme Lord's mercy is then the means by which one attains liberation. By that means, then, one attains the goal of life. Many times I asked the nyāya-śāstra, `What is the true goal of life and how may the spirit soul attain it?', but the nyāya-śāstra gave me no answers. I was always thwarted. Please tell me your idea of what is the goal of life and the way to attain it."

Śrī Raghunātha dāsa bābājī was very wise. For many days he had lived at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, where he took shelter of Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's feet. There he spent every afternoon listening to Lord Gaura's pastimes from Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's own mouth. many times Śrī Raghunātha dāsa bābājī and Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja would discuss the spiritual truth, and if any doubt arose among them, they would ask Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī to give the answer. At that time Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī was the most prominent of the paṇḍita bābājīs. Many times he and Prema dāsa, the paramahaṁsa bābājī of Śrī Godruma, would discuss the nature of pure spiritual love for the Lord. Happy to hear Vrajanātha's question, he replied, "O saintly Nyāya-pañcānana, a person who after studying the nyāya-śāstra is eager to understand the true goal of life and the way to attain it is very fortunate in this world. Why should he not be considered fortunate? Nyāya-śāstra is an attempt to understand what is the most important thing. Scholars who understand that grasp the truth of the nyāya-śāstra. However, they who study nyāya-śāstra only to attain skill in debate do not reap the true fruit of nyāya. Their

labor is all for nothing. Their lives are wasted. What is attained when one follows the path that leads to the truth is called the true goal of life. The method one adopts to attain that goal is the way of attaining the true goal of life. According to their different qualifications, the individual souls trapped in the material world have differing conceptions of what is the true goal of life. Still, the true goal of life is only one. It is not two. According to their different qualifications, the spirit souls proclaim three different goals of life. They are: 1. bhukti (material sense gratification), 2. mukti (impersonal liberation), and 3. bhakti (devotional service). They who are yearn for material pleasures and are bound by ropes of material karma affirm that bhukti is the true goal of life. The scriptures are a kāmadhenu cow that fulfills all desires. Whatever one desires, there is a description somewhere in the scriptures of how to attain it. For they who desire material pleasures, the scriptures give the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas. The residents of the material world generally yearn for material pleasures, so the scriptures gives certain specific instructions to them. They who have material bodies generally think senses pleasures are the best and most important attainment. The material world is, after all, the abode of material sense pleasures. The material sense pleasures the soul attains from the time of birth until the time of death are called `pleasures this world', and the material sense pleasures one may attain after dying are called `pleasures of the next world'. There are many different kinds of pleasure in the next world. In Svargaloka and Indraloka there are the pleasures of seeing the apsarās' dancing, the pleasure of drinking heavenly nectar, smelling the flowers and other scented objected in the Nandana gardens, seeing the beauty of Indrapurī and the Nandana gardens, hearing the singing of the gandharvas and others, and living with the Vidyādharīs are all pleasures attainable in Svargaloka. To a lesser degree these same kinds of material sense pleasure are also available in Tapoloka and Maharloka. In Bhuloka (the earth) the material sense pleasures are gross. As one goes to higher and higher planets, the senses pleasures become more and more subtle. In this way they are different. Still, they are all material sense pleasure. It is not that any of them are not material sense pleasures. None of these planets are spiritual. The subtle body of mind, intelligence, and false ego is a perverted refection of spirit. In the higher material planets the pleasures are pleasures of the subtle body. All these different kinds of material pleasures are called `bhukti'. The conditioned souls trapped in the circle of karma take shelter of karmic activities in order to attain material sense pleasures. That is called their `sādhana', the means they adopt to attain what they see is the true goal of life. In the Yajur Veda (2.5.5) it is said:

svarga-kāmo 'śvamedhaṁ yajeta

"One who desires to attain Svargaloka should perform the aśvamedha-yajña."

Thus the aśvamedha-yajña, agniṣṭoma-yajña, viśvadeva-bali, iṣṭāpūrta, and dārśa-paurṇamāsī are some of the ways the scriptures give for the conditioned soul to attain material sense pleasures. In this way the materialists say that material sense pleasure is the true goal of life. Then there are other persons who, tortured

by the flames of trouble that must accompany life in the material world, know that the fourteen material worlds filled with sense pleasures are all unimportant and unworthy places, and therefore yearn to escape the circle of karmic reactions. These persons think that liberation is the true goal of life. They think that material senses pleasures are the ropes that bind them to the material world. Therefore they say, `Let they whose desire for material pleasures has not been destroyed follow the karma-kāṇḍa's prescription for attaining sense pleasures. Nevertheless, in the Bhagavad-gītā (9.21) it is said: *kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti* (When they have thus enjoyed heavenly sense pleasure , they return to this mortal planet again. Thus, through the Vedic principles, they achieve only flickering happiness*). In this śloka it is seen that material sense pleasure is not eternal. At a certain point is certainly wanes and perishes. It must perish. It is material, It is not spiritual. One should therefore strive to attain a result that is eternal. Liberation is eternal. Therefore liberation is the true goal of life for all spirit souls. The fourteen practices that begin with renunciation are the way to attain it. Therefore they are the way of attaining the true goal of life. Therefore to understand the true goal, of life and the way to attain it, one should study the jñāna-kāṇḍa portion of the Vedas.' The scriptures are like a kāmadhenu cow in that the scriptures give different attainments to different living entities according to their different qualifications. even if a spirit soul attains impersonal liberation, that liberation is not the final goal of life. The highest stage of impersonal liberation is called `nirvāṇa', where the individual souls imagine that they cease to exist. However, the spirit souls exist eternally. That is their nature. Therefore this imaginary `nirvāṇa' never actually occurs. That the individual spirit souls are eternal is confirmed by these words of Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.13):

nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām

`The Supreme Lord is eternal and the living beings are eternal. The Supreme Lord is cognizant and the living beings are cognizant.'*

In this way the Vedic mantras affirm that the individual spirit soul exists eternally. It is not possible for something that exists eternally to ever cease to exist. They who affirm that the individual spirit soul continues to exist even after liberation also affirm that neither `bhukti' (material sense pleasures) nor `mukti' (liberation) are the final, highest goal of life. These are lesser goals. All activities are in relation to a particular goal and a method of attaining that goal. The goal is called `sādhya', and the means by which one attains it is called `sādhana'. Think of it in this way: goals and ways of attaining them are like a links in a chain. What at first is considered a goal, later becomes a means and something else is the goal. In this way goals and means are like links in a chain, with each goal being eventually hanged into a means for a attaining new goal. Continuing in this way there is one final goal that does not become the means of attaining another goal. That final goal is `bhakti' (devotional service). Therefore devotional service is the final goal, because devotional service is the eternal nature of the individual spirit souls. The activities of human beings are all various links in this chain of goals and means.

The different kinds of karmic activities are different links in this chain. Following them, the different kinds of philosophical speculation (jñāna) are also links in this chain. After the links that are philosophical speculation, come the link `bhakti' (devotional service). The goal of fruitive activities (karma) is material sense pleasure (bhukti). The goal of philosophical speculation (jñāna) is impersonal liberation (mukti). The goal of devotional service (bhakti) is pure love of God (prema-bhakti). The final conclusion, then, is that bhakti is the final means, and the goal attained by bhakti is bhakti. Fruitive work (karma) and philosophical speculation (jñāna) are then only the primary and intermediate links in the chain of means and goals. They are not the final goal."

Vrajanātha: It is said in the scriptures (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.5.25 and 2.4.24):

kena kaṁ paśyet

"Who is the seer and who the seen?"

It is also said (Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10):

ahaṁ brahmāsmi

"I am Brahman."

It is also said (Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.5.3):

prajñānaṁ brahma

"Brahman is spiritual truth."

It is also said (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.70:

tat tvam asi śvetaketo

"O Śvetaketu, you are that."

In these and many other passages of scripture it is not at all seen that devotional service is the final goal. Therefore, how can it be wrong to say that impersonal liberation is the final goal?

Bābājī: I have already said that the goals are different according to the different desires of the living entities. They who yearn after material sense pleasures do not accept liberation as the final goal. To these persons the scriptures advise (Apastamba Śrauta-sūtra 2.1.1):

akṣayyam ha vai cāturmāsya-yājinaḥ

"They who perform the cāturmāsya-yajñas attain immortality."

There are also many other passages like this. Bābā, is the word "mukti" (liberation) of any use at all? The fruitive workers (karmīs) do not aspire for it. They ask, "Why is the word `mukti' (liberation) never mentioned in the mantras of the four Vedas?" One or two karmī philosophers claim that renunciation is only meant for the incompetent, and they are competent should be engaged in fruitive work (karma). These instructions are written in the scriptures so that persons situated in the lowest level of spiritual qualification may be steady in their duties. It is not auspicious for the living entities to shirk the duties that fit their spiritual qualification. When a person is steady in the duties for which he is qualified, he easily becomes qualified for the next level of duties. Therefore the Vedas do not criticize being steady in one's duties. Rather, one who criticizes the performance of duties himself falls down. The souls in this world who have become advanced in spiritual life have all reaped the good results of being steady in their duties. The impersonal path, where one employs philosophical speculation (jñāna) to attain liberation, is not revealed to persons qualified only for fruitive work (karma). The impersonal path, where one employs philosophical speculation (jñāna) to attain liberation, is not praised in the presence of persons qualified only for fruitive work. The Vedic mantras praise it only in the presence of persons qualified to follow the impersonal path. As the impersonal path is superior to the path of fruitive work, so the path of devotional service is superior to the impersonal path. By speaking words like "tat tvam asi" (You are that) and "aham brahmasi" (I am Brahman), the Vedic mantras make the impersonalist steady in his duty of acting to attain liberation. The Vedas are not to be blamed for doing that. Still, the impersonal liberation described there is not the ultimate stage. The final conclusion of the Vedic mantras is that the final goal is love of God and that goal is attained by performing devotional service.

Vrajanātha: Is it possible that the great maḥa-vākyas of the Vedas have describe only secondary goals and means?

Bābājī: You may call some mantras mahā-vākyas, but the Vedas themselves do not distinguish any particular mantras as better than the others. In order to claim that their doctrine is superior, the impersonalist teachers have labeled some mantras mahā-vākyas. In truth the sacred syllable Oṁ is the only mahā-vākya, and all other Vedic mantras are subordinate to it. If one wishes to call all the statements of the Vedas mahā-vākyas, there is nothing wrong in that. However, if one wishes to label one particular mantra the mahā-vākya, and all the others ordinary vākyas, then one commits an offense to the sacred Vedas. In the Vedas there is praise for fruitive work (karma), praise for impersonal liberation (mukti),

and praise for many other goals and means also. Still, one must consider everything as a whole and determine what is the final conclusion of all the Vedas. The Vedas are like a cow, and the milkman is Lord Kṛṣṇa. It is He who reveals the true purpose of all the Vedas. He explains (Bhagavad-gītā 6.46-47):

tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī
jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ
karmibhyaś cādhiko yogī
tasmād yogī bhavārjuna

"A yogī is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist, and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances be a yogī.*

yoginām api sarveṣāṁ
mad-gatenāntarātmanā
śradddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ
sa me yuktatamo mataḥ

"And of all yogīs, he who always abides in Me with great faith, worshiping Me in transcendental loving service, is most intimately united with Me in yoga and is the highest of all."*

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.23) it is also said:

yasya deve parā bhaktir
yathā deve tathā gurau
tasyaite kathitā hy arthāḥ
prakāśante mahātmanaḥ

"Only unto those great souls who have implicit faith in both the Lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of Vedic knowledge automatically revealed."*

In the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad (1.14) it is said:

bhaktir asya bhajanaṁ tad ihāumtropādhi-nairasyenāmusmin manasaḥ kalpanam

"Devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa is performed when the heart no longer desires any material benefit to be obtained in this life or the next. This is freedom from the bonds of karma."

In the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (1.4.8) it is said:

ātmānam eva priyam upāsīta

"One should worship the Supreme Lord, considering Him the most dear."

In the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.5.6) it is also said:

ātmā vā are draṣṭavyaḥ śrotavyo mantavyo nididhyāsitavyaḥ

"One should gaze on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, hear about Him, think of Him, and meditate upon Him."

One who analyzes these statements of the Vedas will easily see that devotional service is described in the Vedas as the means to attain the goal of life.

Vrajanātha: In the karma-kāṇḍa section of the Vedas it is said that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate awarder of the fruits of karma. In this way the karma-kāṇḍa enjoins one to have faith in devotional service. In the jnāna-kāṇḍa also, pleasing Lord Hari by engaging in His devotional service is described as one of the four means of attaining the goal. If devotional service is thus one of the means employed to attain sense gratification and impersonal liberation, then how can devotional service be the final goal of life? When sense gratification or impersonal liberation are attained, then the means employed top get them are thrown away. That is what is generally taught. Please give me some clear teaching on this point.

Bābājī: In the karma-kāṇḍa portion of the Vedas it is said that one should engage in devotional service in order to attain sense gratification, and in the jnāna-kāṇḍa portion of the Vedas it is said that to attain impersonal liberation one should engage in devotional service. That is true. Without first pleasing the Supreme Personality of Godhead, no one can attain any result. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the abode of all potencies. The individual spirit souls and the material worlds are only a small part of the Lord's potencies. The Supreme Lord is not pleased by fruitive work (karma) or impersonal speculations (jñāna). However, when karma and j{.sy 241}āna take shelter of devotional service, they can give certain results. Therefore it is said that in karma and jñāna the reflection of devotional service is present. However, the devotional service seen in karma and jñāna is not pure devotional service. It is merely a reflection of true devotional service, present there to give certain results. This reflection of devotional service is of two kinds: 1. the reflection of pure devotional service, and 2. the reflection of mixed devotional service. The reflection of pure devotional service I will describe later. The reflection of mixed devotional service is of three kinds: 1. the reflection of devotional service mixed with karma, 2. the reflection of devotional service mixed with j{.sy 241}āna, and 3. the reflection of devotional service mixed with

both karma and jñāna. At the time of performing a yaj{.sy 241}a one may say, "O Indra, O Sūrya, please be merciful and give me the result of this yajña." This is an example of the reflection of devotional service mixed with karma (karma-viddha-bhakty-ābhāsa). Some philosophers call this reflected devotional service karma-miśrā bhakti (devotional service mixed with karma), and others call it āropa-siddhā bhakti (artificial devotional service). Another example is seen in the words, “O Kṛṣṇa, pushed by fear of repeated birth and death, I now approach You. day after day I chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. Please be merciful and give me impersonal liberation." Another example is the words, "O Supreme Lord, You are Brahman, and I have fallen into the abyss of māyā. Please pick me up and make me one with You." These two statements are examples of the reflection of devotional service mixed with jñāna. Some philosophers call this kind of reflected devotional service j{.sy 241}āna-miśrā bhakti (devotional service mixed with j{.sy 241}āna), and others call it āropa-siddhā bhakti (artificial devotional service). All these reflections of devotional service are different from pure devotional service. The devotional service described by the Lord Himself in Bhagavad-gītā 6.47 (śradddhāvān bhajate yo māṁ) is pure devotional service. It is that kind of devotional service that we adopt as the means to attain the goal of prema (pure love of God). Karma and j{.sy 241}āna are the means to attain sense gratification and impersonal liberation. They are not the means for the individual spirit soul to regain his eternal nature."

After hearing all this, Vrajanātha could not ask any questions. He thought, "It will be good to make the argument for the nyāya-śāstra wait for a while as I think about this subtle points. The saintly babaji is especially learned about this topic. In time I will ask him questions and then I will learn what is the truth of this. Now it is night. I should return home." Then Vrajanātha said aloud, "O saintly babaji, I have learned many truths from you today. From time to time I will return. Please continue to instruct me. You are a very great teacher, and I am dependent on your mercy. There is one thing I wish to know. When I hear your reply I will depart. Did Lord Gaurāṅga the son of Śacī write any book of His teachings? I would like to have such a book."

Bābājī: Śrī Śrī Mahāprabhu did not write any book Himself. By His order His followers wrote many books. mahaprabhu personally wrote eight verses, called Śikṣāṣṭaka, which are like a jewels the devotees wear around their necks. The teachings in them are very profound. Studying these deep truths, the devotees have written a poem called *Daśa-mūla* (the Ten Roots). In this poem the foal ands the means are briefly described in terms of sambandha (the relationship of the living entities and the Supreme), abhidheya (the activities of that relationship), and prayojana (the final goal of life). You should begin by understanding this poem.

Vrajanātha replied, "As you order. Tomorrow evening I will return and learn this *Daśa-mūla* from you. You are my śikṣā-guru (instructing spiritual master). I offer daṇḍavat obeisances to you." The saintly bābājī politely embraced him and said, "Bābā, You purify the community of brāhmaṇas. Please come tomorrow evening. That will please me very much."

Chapter Thirteen
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana (Pramāṇa-vicāra O Prameya Arambha)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (Evidence and Truth)

The next evening Vrajanātha sat down under the bakula tree facing the courtyard of Śrīvāsa's home. The saintly elderly bābājī had developed a kind of paternal love for Vrajanātha. He was waiting for Vrajanātha to come. When Vrajanātha arrived, the bābājī at once came out from the courtyard. Embracing Vrajanātha, he took him to his cottage (bhajana-kuṭira) in a grove of jasmine vines to one side of Śrīvāsa's courtyard. Touching the dust of the saintly bābājī's feet, Vrajanātha and thought his life had now become successful. He humbly said, "O saintly bābājī, please teach me the ".*fn 2}Daśa-mūla*, which contains the essence of our Lord Nimāi's teachings."

His heart blossoming with happiness to hear this very appropriate question, the elderly saintly bābājī said, “Baba, I will explain the *Daśa-mūla* to you. You are a paṇḍita. Please carefully understand the truths described in these verses. The first verse is this:

āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṁ harim iha paramaṁ sarva-śaktiṁ rasābdhiṁ
tad-bhinnāṁśāṁś ca jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān tad-vimuktāṁś ca bhāvāt
bhedābheda-prakāśaṁ sakalam api hareḥ sādhanaṁ śuddha-bhaktiṁ
sādhyam tat-prītim evety upadiśati janān gauracandraḥ svayaṁ saḥ

"The Vedas teach that Lord Hari is the Supreme Truth. He has all potencies and He is an ocean of the nectar of transcendental mellows. The individual spirit souls, which are His parts-and-parcels, are divided into groups, some swallowed up by the material energy, and others free from her clutches. Everything that exists is simultaneously one and different from Him. Pure devotional service is the way to attain Lord Hari. The goal of life is to love Him. This Lord Gauracandra personally taught to the living entities."

In the verses that begin here, Śrīmān Gauracandra teaches ten truths to the faithful souls. Of these the first verse describes the various kinds of evidence, and the remaining nine verses describe various truths learned from these evidences. First the evidence is given, and then the truths that may be learned from that evidence. Evidence is called “pramāṇa". The verse I have just recited is an introductory verse that contains a summary of the ".*fn 2}Daśa-mūla*. The verse that follows it is the first verse of the *Daśa-mūla* proper. In verses two through eight the

relationship (sambandha) of the souls and the Lord is revealed. In verse nine the activities (abhidheya) of that relationship are described. In verse ten the true need of the living entities (prayojana) is described. The meaning of the introductory, summary verse is this: The word "āmnāyaḥ" means “the statements of the Vedas as they are understood through the disciplic succession". The Vedas, the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other Smṛti-śāstras that follow the Vedas, and the direct perception and other kinds of evidence that support the evidence of scripture are all called "pramāṇa", or evidence. These evidences support the following definite conclusions: 1. Lord Hari is the Supreme Truth, 2. He has all potencies, 3. He is an ocean of the nectar of transcendental mellows, 4. the two liberated and conditioned souls are His parts-and-parcels, 5. some souls are imprisoned by the material energy, and others free from her clutches, 6. the entire universe, which contains both matter and spirit, is inconceivably, simultaneously one and different from Him, 7. devotional service is the way to attain Lord Hari, and 8. the goal of life is to love Lord Kṛṣṇa.

After hearing this summary verse, Vrajanātha said, “O saintly bābājī, now is not the time for me to ask any questions. After you recite the first verse I will speak any questions that may rise in my heart. Hearing this, the elderly bābājī said, "Good. Good. I will recite the first of these mūla verses. Please listen carefully.

svataḥ-siddho vedo hari-dayita-vedhaḥ-prabhṛtitaḥ
pramāṇaṁ sat-prāptaṁ pramiti viṣayan tān nava-vidhān
tathā pratyākṣādi-pramiti-sahitaṁ sādhayati naḥ
na yuktis tarkākhyā praviśati tathā śakti-rahitā

`The self-evident Vedas, which by Lord Hari's mercy are obtained from the disciplic succession beginning with the demigod Brahmā, and which are accompanied by other sources of evidence, such as direct perception, are the evidence for the following nine truths. Ordinary logic, called `tarka', has no power to enter a discussion of these truths.' "

Vrajanātha: In there any evidence in the Vedas that Brahmā taught disciples?
Bābājī: Yes. There is. In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (1.1.1) it is said:

brahmā devānāṁ prathamaḥ sambabhūva
viśvasya kartā bhuvanasya goptā
sa brahma-vidyāṁ sarva-vidyā-pratiṣṭhām
atharvāya jyeṣṭha-putrāya prāha

"Brahmā, who sin the first demigod, the creator of the universe, the protector of the worlds, spoke knowledge of the Supreme, the first of all kinds of knowledge, to his eldest son, Atharva."

There it is also said (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.2.13):

yenākṣaraṁ puruṣaṁ veda satyaṁ
provaca taṁ tattvato brahma-vidyām

"Brahmā taught him the science of the eternal Supreme Person."

Vrajanātha: Is there any evidence that when they wrote the smṛti-śāstras the sages gave the proper interpretations of the Vedas?

Bābājī: In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, which is the crest jewel of all scriptures, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself explains (11.14.3):

kālena naṣṭā pralaye
vāṇīyaṁ veda-saṁjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā
dharmo yasyāṁ mad-ātmakaḥ

tena proktā sva-putrāya
manave pūrvajāya sā

"At the time of cosmic annihilation, the Vedas became lost. At the beginning of the next creation I again taught the Vedas to the demigod Brahmā, for the principles of true religion are My very heart. Then Brahmā repeated this knowledge to his first son Manu. Then the seven great sages, whose leader is Bhṛgu, learned this knowledge from Manu."

Vrajanātha: Why is there a Vaiṣṇava disciplic succession?

Bābājī: Misled by impersonalism, many people in the world have left the true path. If the devotees untainted by impersonalism do not have their own disciplic succession, the it will be very difficult to associate with true devotees of the Lord. In the Padma Purāāna it is written:

ssmpradāya-vihīnā ye
mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ
śrī-brahma-rudra-sanakā
vaiṣṇavāḥ kṣiti-pāvanāḥ

"Unless you are initiated by a bona-fide spiritual master in the disciplic succession, the mantra that you might have received is without any effect.* The four Vaiṣṇava disciplic successions, beginning from Lakṣmī-devī, Brahmā, Śiva, and Sanaka Kumāra, have purified the entire world."

Of all of these, the disciplic succession from Lord Brahmā is the oldest. The disciplic succession begins with Brahmā and extends even to the present day. The Vedas, Vedāṅgas, Vedānta, and other scriptures have been passed down unchanged from an ancient time, carefully preserved by the disciplic succession. Nothing has been changed or added to the scripture under the care the disciplic succession. Therefore no one should doubt that the Vedas and other scriptures that are accepted by the bona-fide disciplic succession are authentic. There is a great need for a bona-fide disciplic succession. Therefore from the earliest time the great saints have followed the bona-fide disciplic succession.

Vrajanātha: Are there complete lists of the disciplic successions?

Bābājī: The lists contain the names of only the most important ācāryas. It is their names that are included in the lists.

Vrajanātha: I wish to hear the list of ācāryas in the disciplic succession from Brahmā.

Bābājī: Here is the list:

paramvyomeśvarasyāsīc
chiṣyo brahma jagat-patiḥ
tasya śiṣyo nārado 'bhūd
vyāsas tasyāpi śiṣyatām

śuko vyāsasya śiṣyatvaṁ
prāpto jñānāvarodhanāt
vyāsāl labdha-kṛṣṇa-dīkṣo
madhvācāryo mahā-yaśāḥ

tasya śiṣyo naraharis
tac-chiṣyo mādhavo dvijaḥ
akṣobhyas tasya śiṣyo 'bhūt
tac-chiṣyo jayatīrthakaḥ

tasya śiṣyo jñānasindhus
tasya śiṣyo mahānidhiḥ
vidyānidhis tasya śiṣyo
rājendras tasya sevakaḥ

jayadharmā munis tasya
śiṣyo yad-gaṇa-madhyataḥ
śrīmad-viṣṇupurī yas tu
bhakti-ratnāvali-kṛtiḥ

jayadharmasya śiṣyo 'bhūd
brahmaṇyaḥ puruṣottamaḥ
vyāsatīrthas tasya śiṣyo
yaś cakre viṣṇu-saṁhitām

śrīmal-lakṣmīpatis tasya
śiṣyo bhakti-rasāśrayaḥ
tasya śiṣyo mādhavendro
yad-dharmo 'yaṁ pravartitaḥ

"Lord Brahmā is the direct disciple of Viṣṇu, the Lord of the spiritual sky. His disciple is Nārada, Nārada's disciple is Vyāsa, and Vyāsa's disciples are Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Madhvācārya. Padmanābha Acārya is the disciple of Madhvācārya, and Narahari is the disciple of Padmanābha Acārya. Mādhava is the disciple of Narahari, Akṣobhya is the direct disciple Madhava, and Jayatīrtha is the disciple of Akṣobhya. Jayatīrtha's disciple is Jnānasindhu, and his disciple is Mahānidhi. Vidyānidhi is the disciple of Mahānidhi, and Rājendra is the disciple of Vidyānidhi. Jayadharma is the disciple of Rājendra. Puruṣottama is the disciple of Jayadharma. Śrīmān Lakṣmīpati is the disciple of Vyāsatīrtha, who is the disciple of Puruṣottama. And Mādhavendra Purī is the disciple of Lakṣmīpati."*

Vrajanātha: In this verse it is said that the Vedas are the "only evidence", and direct perception along with the other sources of evidence, should be accepted only to help in understanding the Vedas. However, nyāya, saṅkhya, and the other philosophies are also sources of evidence. The Purāṇas, direct perfection, inference, comparison, the Vedas, the Vedic histories (itihāsa),. understanding something by its absence (anupalabdhi), circumstantial evidence (arthāpatti), and probability (sambhava) are all considered different sources of evidence. Why should it be considered that some kinds of evidence are more valuable than others. If direct perception and inference are not considered sources of evidence, then what kind of of knowledge will one be able to get? Please explain this so that I may understand.

Bābājī: Direct perception and other sources of evidence like it all depend on the material senses. The material senses of the conditioned soul are subject to four defects: 1. bhrama (mistakes), 2. pramāda (illusions), 3. vipralipsā (cheating), and 4. karaṇāpāṭava (sensory inefficiency). How can one attain true knowledge with such faulty instruments? The Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself appeared in the hearts of the great saints and sages as they were rapt in meditation on Him. The Lord them gave them the perfect knowledge that is the Vedas. Therefore without fear one can accept the Vedas as truth.

Vrajanātha: Please explain these four defects: mistakes, illusions, cheating, and sensory inefficiency.

Bābājī: When the imperfect material senses make mistakes in perceiving the world around it, that is called “bhrama". Seeing a mirage in the desert is an example of such a mistake. The intelligence of the conditioned souls is limited. Therefore, when such a limited intelligence tries to understand the unlimited Supreme Truth, the limited intelligence is bound to be illusioned in many ways. That is called "pramāda". An example of this is seen when the material intelligence, limited by time and space, questions how the Supreme Person could have created the material world of time and space. Doubt is called "vipralipsā". The material senses are not very efficient tools for acquiring knowledge. When they make mistakes again and again that is called "karaṇāpāṭava".

Vrajanātha: Do not sensory perception and other sources of knowledge have any value at all?

Bābājī: Is there a way to understand the material world except with the material senses and other like sources of knowledge? Still, all these sources of knowledge are powerless to understand the spiritual world. For the spiritual world the Vedas are the only source of knowledge. If sense perception and these other sources of evidence confirm the truths revealed in the Vedas, then the knowledge they give may be accepted. Therefore sense perception and other like sources of knowledge may be accepted only when the confirm the teachings of the self-perfect Vedas.

Vrajanātha: Are the Bhagavad-gītā, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and other like scriptures not sources of true knowledge?

Bābājī: The Bhagavad-gītā has come from the mouth of the Supreme Lord Himself. It is also called the Gītā Upaniṣad. It is counted as one of the Vedas. Because they are the teachings of Lord Gaurāṅga, the ten verses of *Daśa-mūla* are also one of the Vedas. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is an anthology of the truths described in the Vedas. It is the crest jewel of all sources of knowledge. If they confirm the Vedas' teachings, the other smṛti-śāstras are also sources of true knowledge. The tantra-śāstras are of three kinds: 1. those in the mode of goodness, 2. those in passion, and 3. those in ignorance. Among them, the pancarātras and other tantras in the mode of goodness expand the confidential portions of the Vedas' teachings. The word "tantra" comes from the verbal root "tan" (to expand). Therefore these tantras are also counted among the sources of true knowledge.

Vrajanātha: The Vedas consist of many different books. Among them which should be accepted and which not? Please tell me.

Bābājī: In the course of time certain unscrupulous men interpolated many new chapters, maṇḍalas, and mantras in the text of the Vedas. Therefore it is not that all the parts of the Vedas should be accepted. What in the course of time the acaryas in the bona-fide disciplic succession have accepted, that should be considered the actual Veda. What they have rejected as interpolations should not be accepted.

Vrajanātha: What books of the Vedas have the ācāryas of the bona-fide disciplic successions accepted?

Bābājī: The ācaṛyas have accepted the twelve upaniṣads named Iśa, Kena, Kaṭha, Praśna, Muṇḍaka, Māṇḍukya, Taittirīya, Aitareya, Chāndogya, Bṛhad-āraṇyaka, and Śvetāśvatara, as well as the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad, the Nṛsiṁha-tāpanī Upaniṣad, and other like tāpanī upaniṣads, as well as the brāhmaṇas, maṇḍalas, and other portions of the Ṛg, Yajur, Sāma, and Atharva Vedas. The ācāryas have accepted all these books as sources of genuine knowledge.

Vrajanātha: You said that material logic has no power to understand spiritual things. What is the proof of that?

Bābājī: In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.9) it is said:

naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā

"The spiritual truth cannot be understood by material logic."

In the Vedānta-sūtra (2.1.11) it is said:

tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt

"Transcendental topics cannot be understood by argument or logic."*

In these and other statement of the Veda and Vedānta it is seen that material logic is cannot be counted on as a source of true spiritual knowledge. In the Mahābhārata (Bhīṣma-parva 5.22) it is said:

acintyāḥ khalu ye bhāvā
na tāṁs tarkeṇa yojayet
prakṛtibhyaḥ paraṁ yac ca
tad acintyasya lakṣaṇam

"Anything transcendental to material nature is called inconceivable, whereas arguments are all mundane. Since mundane arguments cannot touch transcendental subject matters, one should not try to understand transcendental subject matters through mundane arguments."*

In these words of the Mahābhārata, the limits of material logic are seen. The conclusion of devotional service is also explained in these words written by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.32):

svalpāpi rucir eva syāt
bhakti-tattvāvabodhikā
yuktis tu kevalā naiva
yad asyā apratiṣṭhatā

"For persons who have a natural taste for understanding books like Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. devotional service is easier than for those simply accustomed to mental speculation and argumentative processes."*

Material logic cannot bring a definitive, conclusive understanding. This is described in the following words (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.33):

yatnenopādito 'py arthaḥ
kuśalair anumātṛbhiḥ
abhiyuktatarair anyair
anyathaivopapadyate

"A person may become governed by certain convictions derived by his own arguments and decisions. Then another person, who may be a greater logician, will nullify these conclusions and establish another thesis. In this way the path of argument will never be safe or conclusive."*

If this is so, then what is the use of material logic and argument?

Vrajanātha: O saintly bābājī, I accept that the self-perfect Vedas are the best of all sources of knowledge. If they try to contradict the Vedas, the logicians are merely speaking in vain. Now please recite the second verse of the *Daśa-mūla*.

Bābājī:

haris tv ekam tattvaṁ vishi-śiva-sureśa-praṇamitaḥ
tad evedaṁ brahma prakṛti-rahitaṁ tat-tanu-mahaḥ
parātmā tasyāṁśo jagad-anugato viśva-janakaḥ
sa vai rādhā-kānto nava-jalada-kāntiś cid-udayaḥ

"Lord Hari is the only Supreme Truth. Brahma. Siva, and Indra bow down before Him. The impersonal Brahman, which is completely untouched by matter, is the effulgence of His transcendental form. The all-pervading Supersoul is His expansion. He is the father of the material universes. He is the lover of Śrī Rādhā. His form is splendid like a dark monsoon cloud. He is completely spiritual."

Vrajanātha: the Upaniṣads teach that the impersonal Brahman is the highest truth and it is beyond the touch of matter. Why, then, does Śrīmān Gaura-Hari affirm that it is the effulgence of Lord Hari's body? Please explain that to me.

Bābājī: Lord Hari is the Supreme Personality of Godhead, bhagavān. The word "bhagavān" means "He who possesses six opulences". In the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (6.5.47) it is written:

aiśvaryasya samagrasya
vīryasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ
jñāna-vairāgyayoś caiva
ṣaṇṇāṁ bhaga itīṅganā

"Full wealth, strength, fame, beauty, knowledge, and renunciationthese are the six opulences of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."*

These six opulences are interrelated, like the limbs of a body. Which of them is the body? Which of them are the limbs? The body is the resting place of the limbs. The tree is the body, and the branches are the limbs. The whole form is the body, and the hands and feet are included among the limbs. The body is the resting place of the limbs. Of the Supreme Lord's opulences, His handsomeness is the body and

the other opulences are the limbs. Wealth, strength, and fame are three limbs. The effulgence of fame consists of knowledge and renunciation. Therefore these two are the effulgence of one of the limbs. They are the opulences of an opulence. They are not direct opulences themselves. Knowledge of changeless spirit and renunciation of matter are the parts of the body of the impersonal Brahman. The impersonal Brahman is the effulgence emanating from the spiritual worlds. The unchanging, inactive, formless, qualityless Brahman is not the independent highest truth. It is the form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead that is the independent highest truth. The light of a fire is not independent. It is the fire itself that is independent, and the light is merely one of the fire's qualities.

Vrajanātha: In many places in the Vedas, after the impersonal Brahman was described, the text declared, "Oṁ Śāntiḥ. Śāntiḥ. Harih. Oṁ". In the way the Vedas affirm the superiority of Lord Hari. Who is Lord Hari?

Bābājī: Lord Hari is Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who enjoy transcendental pastimes.

Vrajanātha: I will ask about this later. Now please tell me: What kind of expansion of the Supreme Lord (bhagavān) is the Supersoul (paramātmā), the father of the material universes?

Bābājī: Employing the two opulences of wealth and strength, the Supreme Lord created the material world of māyā. After creating the world, the Lord expanded Himself as Viṣṇu and entered it. When the Lord expands Himself, each expansion is perfect and complete. This is described in the following words of Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (5.1):

pūrṇam adaḥ pūrṇam idaṁ
pūrṇāt pūrṇam udacyate
pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya
pūrṇam evāviśiṣyate

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is perfect and complete, and because He is completely perfect, all emanations from Him, such as this phenomenal world, are perfectly equipped as complete wholes. Whatever is produced of the complete whole is also complete in itself. Because He is the complete whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance."*

Therefore the Supersoul (paramātmā), is Lord Viṣṇu, who is perfect and complete, who has entered the material world, and who protects the material world. Lord Viṣṇu thus manifests in three forms, as: 1. Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. The Karaṇā Ocean, which is also known as the Virajā River, lies on the boundary that separates the spiritual and material worlds. To that place Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu goes and reclines on the Kāraṇa Ocean. Thus He is Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. Glancing at her from far away, the Lord employs Māyā-devī to create the material world. The Lord Himself describes this in these words of Bhagavad-gītā (9.10):

mayādhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ
sūyate sa-carācaram

"The material nature is working under My direction, O son of Kuntī, and it is producing all moving and unmoving beings."*

In the Vedas it is said (Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.1):

sa aikṣata

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead glanced over the material creation."*

It is also said (Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.1):

sa imāl lokān asṛjata

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead created this entire material world."*

Then the Supreme Lord, whose glance is so powerful, expands Himself as Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu and enters the material world. The particles of light that constitute Lord Mahā-Viṣṇu's glance are the conditioned spirit souls. Into the heart of each conditioned soul, the Lord enters in a form the size of a thumb. That form is called Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu or Hiraṇyagarbha. Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual spirit soul both reside in the heart. This is described in the following words of Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.6):

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā

"The individual spirit soul and the Supersoul, Supreme Personality of Godhead, are like two friendly birds sitting on the same tree."*

In this way the Śruti-śāstra explains that the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual spirit soul are like two birds. The bird that is the Supreme Personality of Godhead gives the fruits of karma, and the bird that is the individual spirit soul tries to enjoy the material world. In Bhagavad-gītā (10.41-42), the Supreme Lord declares:

yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ
śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā
tat tad evāvagaccha tvaṁ

mama tejo-'ṁśa-sambhavam

"Know that all beautiful, glorious, and mighty creations spring from but a spark of My splendor.*

athavā bahunaitena
kiṁ jñātena tavārjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam
ekāṁśena sthito jagat

"But what need is there, Arjuna, for all this detailed knowledge? With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire creation."*

Therefore the Supersoul (paramātmā), who creates, enters, protects, and controls the material world, is an expansion of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (bhagavān).

Vrajanātha: I accept that the impersonal Brahman is the effulgence of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's body and that the Supersoul is His expansion. Now please tell me: What is the proof that Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

Bābājī: The Supreme Personality of Godhead has all opulence and sweetness eternally. When His opulence is manifested, He is Lord Nārāyaṇa, the master of the spiritual world and the origin of Lord Maha-Viṣṇu. Thus when His pastimes of opulence are manifest He is Lord Nārāyaṇa, and when His pastimes of sweetness are manifest, He is Lord K\rṣṇa. Lord K\rṣṇa possesses the highest limit of sweetness. The effulgence of His sweetness is so great that it eclipses all opulences that exist anywhere. Therefore the conclusion is that Lord Nārāyaṇa and Lord Kṛṣṇa are not different. However, in the spiritual world the greatest sweetness of transcendental mellows is present in Lord Kṛṣṇa. He is the highest resting place of all transcendental mellows. This is explained in the following words of the Ṛg Veda (1.22.164.31):

apaśyam gopam anipadyamaṇamā ca parā ca pathibhiś carantam. sa-sadhrīciḥ. sa viṣu-cirvasāna āvarīvarti bhuvaneṣv antaḥ.

"I have seen a certain gopa dressed in colorful garments and accompanied by many beautiful girls as He wanders the pathways in the spiritual world. That same gopa again and again enters the material worlds and stays in the hearts of the living beings."

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (8.13.1) it is said:

śyāmāc chavalaṁ prapadye śavalāc chyāmaṁ prapadye

"To attain Śrī Rādhā I surrender to Lord Kṛṣṇa. To attain Lord Kṛṣṇa I surrender to Śrī Rādhā."

These verses describe the liberated souls and their relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.3.28) it is said:

ete cāṁśāḥ kalāḥ puṁsaḥ
kṛṣṇas tu bhagavān svayam

"All of the above-mentioned incarnations are either plenary portions or portions of the plenary portions of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the original Personality of Godhead."*

In the Bhagavad-gītā (7.7) Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself declares:

mattaḥ parataraṁ nāynat
kiñcid asti dhanañjaya

"O conqueror of wealth (Arjuna), there is no truth superior to Me."*

In the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad (1.20) it is said:

eko vaśī sarvagaḥ kṛṣṇa īḍya
eko 'pi san bahudhā yo 'vabhāti

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is the worshipable, all-pervading supreme controller, and although He is one, He manifests in many forms."

Vrajanātha: Lord Kṛṣṇa has an average-sized form. How can He be present everywhere? If we accept that Lord Kṛṣṇa has a form, we must also accept that His form can only stay in one place at time. Limited in this way He must have many faults. Now He must fall under the control of the material modes. No longer can He be supremely independent. How can all these defects be removed from Lord Kṛṣṇa?

Bābājī: Bābā, you are a conditioned soul trapped in the material world of māyā. That is why you have all these doubts. As long as it is bound by the ropes of māyā, your intelligence will never be able to touch the transcendental reality. When it tries to understand the pure spiritual reality, it will assume that spirit has qualities

and forms just like those of matter. When it does this, the intelligence becomes worried that it has followed the wrong path. Then the intelligence begins to imagine that the Supreme Spirit has no form and no qualities. In this way the intelligence becomes cheated and cannot understand the truth about the Supreme Spirit. In truth the defects you think might affect the ordinary-sized form of Lord Kṛṣṇa do not have any bearing on His true spiritual form. The idea that the Supreme Spirit is "formless", "unchanging", and "inactive" are ideas obtained by looking for the exact opposites of what appears in the material world. These are also qualities of a certain kind. Qualities of another kind are Lord Kṛṣṇa's handsome form, His face blossoming with happiness, His lotus eyes, His lotus feet, which give peacefulness to the devotees, and all His graceful limbs perfect for enjoying transcendental pastimes. This pure spiritual form of Lord Kṛṣṇa is one feature of the Lord. When these two features, the personal and impersonal, are considered, it is seen that the average-sized form of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the most handsome and pleasing. This is described in the following words of Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra:

nirdoṣa-guṇa-vigraha ātma-tantro
niścetanātmaka-śarīra-guṇaiś ca hīnaḥ
ānanda-mātra-kara-pāda-mukhodarādiḥ
sarvatra ca svagata-bheda-vivarjitātmā

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is supremely independent. His form and qualities are free of any possible flaw. His body is not like the bodies made of matter. His hands, feet, face, belly, and all the other parts of His body are all made of transcendental bliss and nothing else. Lord Kṛṣṇa is not different from His body. He does not reside in a material body different from Himself, as the conditioned souls in the material world do. He and His body are one."

Lord Kṛṣṇa's form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss. His qualities are not material. Nothing about Him is material in even the slightest degree. He is not limited by material time and space. His form is fully present in every place for all time. He is one. His form has all knowledge. The material world is so large it cannot be measured by the conditioned souls. It is natural that a form of average size could never be present everywhere in the material world. However, in the spiritual world all qualities have limitless power. Therefore the average-sized form of Lord Kṛṣṇa can be present everywhere. That is actually one of its natural qualities. In the material world an average-sized form cannot be all-pervading. However, the supremely handsome spiritual form of Lord Kṛṣṇa is certainly all-pervading. The extraordinary qualities of that form are very different from the qualities of material forms. That spiritual form is very glorious. Can anyone be more glorious than the all-pervading Supreme Spirit? In the material world everything is limited by time and space. What is the glory of a form that is free from the limits of time and present everywhere? Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental abode of Vraja is described in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, which calls it "Brahma-pura". That abode is perfectly spiritual. It has all spiritual wonders. Its activities are all

spiritual. Its places are spiritual. Its land and water are spiritual. Its rivers and trees are spiritual. Its sky is spiritual. Its sun, moon, and stars are all spiritual. They have not the slightest drop of any material flaw. Rather they are filled with spiritual bliss. O bābā, the Navadvīpa-Māyāpura where you are sitting now is that same spiritual world. However, because you are trapped in Māyā's net you cannot reach out and touch it. When you attain the mercy of a great saintly person you will see that everything in this place is spiritual. Then you will be living in the spiritual world of Vraja. Where did you get the idea that the average-sized form of Lord Kṛṣṇa could have any flaws? The glory of Lord Kṛṣṇa's average-sized spiritual form is far from what your material intelligence can understand. This has happened because in the past you committed many impious deeds.

Vrajanātha: O saintly bābājī, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's forms, beauty, features, pastimes, companions, homes, forest-groves, and all else of Them are purely spiritual. A wise man will not doubt that. However, in what times and places do They manifest Their forms, abodes, and pastimes?

Bābājī: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the master of all potencies. He can make any impossible thing possible. There is nothing surprising in this. He is playful and enjoys transcendental pastimes. Whatever He wishes is at once accomplished. He has all powers. If He wishes, He can bring His transcendental form and abode to the material world. There is no doubt of that.

Vrajanātha: The doubt is this. By His own will Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in the material world. However, the people who see Him tend to think that His "transcendental abode" is a material place like other material places, His “transcendental form" is a material form like the forms of ordinary human beings, and His "transcendental pastimes in Vraja" are ordinary material activities. Why do they see like that? If it is true that Lord Kṛṣṇa has mercifully appeared within the material word, why do not all people see that His form is spiritual?

Bābājī: One of Lord Kṛṣṇa's limitless transcendental qualities is His mercy to His devotees. Employing His hlādinī śakti, He gives His devotees the power to see that everything about Him is spiritual. To His devotees He reveals everything about His transcendental pastimes. However, the non-devotees' eyes, ears, and other senses, which are contaminated by many offenses, cannot see any difference between the pastimes of the Lord and ordinary historical narratives of human activities.

Vrajanātha: Did not Śrī Kṛṣṇa descend to this material world to show mercy to the people in general?

Bābājī: His descent to this world brings all auspiciousness. When He descends to this world and manifests His transcendental pastimes, the devotees can see that His form and pastimes are purely spiritual. The non-devotees surely see them as material. Still, merely by seeing them, the non-devotees gain great spiritual merit. When this spiritual merit accumulates and becomes very great they become able to have faith in pure devotional service. Therefore the Lord's descent to this world brings a great benefit to the conditioned souls.

Vrajanātha: Why are Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes not clearly described in every page of the Vedas?

Bābājī: On every page the Vedas again and again sing the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. In some places they are described directly, and in other places they are only hinted at. When the words of the texts directly refer to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the

description is direct. An example of that is the following words of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad:

śyāmāc chavalaṁ prapadye śavalāc chyāmaṁ prapadye

"To attain Śrī Rādhā I take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa. To attain Lord Kṛṣṇa I take shelter of Śrī Rādhā."

In these words and the words that follow it in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad, the liberated souls and their service to Lord Kṛṣṇa in the different rasas is clearly described. When the words only hint at the description of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the description is indirect. In the conversations of Yājñavalkya, Gārgī, and Maitreyī (in the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad), the description of Lord Kṛṣṇa is at first indirect, and then at the end direct. In some places the Vedas have described Lord Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes directly, and in other places, chanting the glories of the impersonal Brahman and the Supersoul, the Vedas have described Lord Kṛṣṇa only indirectly. In truth, the Vedas have taken a vow to chant the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajanātha: O saintly bābājī, Lord Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Truth. Of this there is no doubt. However, what is the status of Brahmā, Siva, Indra, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, and the other demigods worshiped in this world? Please tell me. Many brahmanas say that Śiva is the Supreme Truth and no one is higher than Him. I was born in the family of such a brāhmaṇa, and I have heard and repeated this idea since childhood. What is the truth of this? Please tell me.

Bābājī: Now I will describe to you the relative merits of the ordinary living entities, the demigods and demigoddesses worshiped in this world, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Please listen. I will now repeat to you a list of some of Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities. They are described in these words of a great philosopher (Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu:

ayaṁ netā suramyāṅgaḥ
sarva-sal-lakṣaṇānvitaḥ
ruciras tejasā yukto
balīyān vayasānvitaḥ

"Kṛṣṇa, the supreme hero, has the most beautiful transcendental body. This body possesses all good features. It is radiant and very pleasing to the eyes. His body is powerful, strong, and youthful.*

vividhādbhuta-bhāṣā-vit
satya-vākyaḥ priyam-vadaḥ
vāvadūkaḥ su-pāṇḍityo
buddhimān pratibhānivitaḥ

"Kṛṣṇa is the linguist of all wonderful languages. He is a truthful and very pleasing speaker. He is expert in speaking, and He is a very wise, learned, scholar, and a genius.*

vidadgdhaś caturo dakṣaḥ
kṛtajñaḥ sudṛḍha-vrataḥ
deśa-kāla-supatra-jñaḥ
śāstra-cakṣuḥ śucir vaśī

"Kṛṣṇa is very expert in artistic enjoyment. He is highly cunning, expert, grateful, and firmly determined in His vows. He knows how to deal according to time, person, and country, and He sees through the scriptures and authoritative books. He is very clean and self-controlled.*

sthiro dāntaḥ kṣamā-śīlo
gambhīro dhṛtimān samaḥ
vadānyo dhārmikaḥ śūraḥ
karuṇo mānya-māna-kṛt

"Lord Kṛṣṇa is steady, His senses are controlled, and He is forgiving, grave, and calm. He is also equal to all. Moreover, He is magnanimous, religious, chivalrous, and kind. He is always respectful to respectable people.*

dakṣiṇo vinayī hrīmān
śaraṇāgata-pālakaḥ
sukhī bhakta-suhṛt prema-
vaśyaḥ sarva-śubhaṅkaraḥ

"Kṛṣṇa is very simple and liberal, He is humble and bashful, and He is the protector of the surrendered soul. He is very happy, and He is always the well-wisher of His devotee. He is auspicious, and He is submissive to love.*

pratāpī kīrtimān rakta-
lokaḥ sādhu-samāśrayaḥ
nārī-gaṇa-mano-hāri-
sarvārādhyaḥ samṛddhimān

"Kṛṣṇa is very influential and famous, and He is the object of attachment for everyone. He is the shelter of the good and the virtuous. He is attractive to the

minds of women, and He is worshiped by everyone. He is very, very rich.*

varīyān īśvaraś ceti
guṇās tasyānukīrtitāḥ
samudra iva pañcāśad
durvigāhā harer amī

"Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme, and He is always glorified as the Supreme Lord and controller. Thus all the previously mentioned transcendental qualities are in Him. The fifty qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead above mentioned are as deep as the ocean. In other words, they are difficult to fully comprehend.*

jīveṣv ete vasanto 'pi
bindu-bindutayā kvacit
paripūrṇatayā bhānti
tatraiva puruṣottame

"These qualities are sometimes very minutely exhibited in living beings, but they are fully manifest in the Supreme Personality of Godhead.*

atha pañca-guṇā ye syur
aṁśena giriśādiṣu

"Apart from these fifty qualities, there are five other qualities found in the Supreme Personality of Godhead that are partially present in demigods like Śiva.*

sadā svarūpa-samprāptaḥ
sarva-jño nitya-nūtanaḥ
sac-cid-ānanda-sāndrāṅgaḥ
sarva-siddhi-niṣevitaḥ

athocyante guṇāḥ pañca
ye lakṣmīśādi-vartinaḥ
avicintya-mahā-śaktiḥ
koṭi-brahmāṇḍa-vigrahaḥ

avatārāvalī-bījaṁ
hatāri-gati-dāyakaḥ
ātmārāma-gaṇākarṣīty
amī kṛṣṇe kilādbhutāḥ

"These qualities are: 1. the Lord is always situated in His original position, 2. He is omniscient, 3. He is always fresh and youthful, 4. He is the concentrated form of eternity, knowledge and bliss, and 5. He is the possessor of all mystic perfection. There are another five qualities, which exist in the Vaikuṇṭha planets in Nārāyaṇa, the Lord of Laksmi. These qualities are also present in Kṛṣṇa, but are not present in demigods like Lord Śiva or in other living entities. These are: 1. inconceivable supreme power, 2. generating innumerable universes from the body, 3. being the original source of all incarnations, 4. bestowing salvation upon enemies killed, and 5. the ability to attract exalted persons who are satisfied in themselves. Although these qualities are present in Nārāyaṇa, the dominating Deity of the Vaikuṇṭha planets, they are even more wonderfully present in Kṛṣṇa.*

sarvādbhuta-camatkāra-
līlā-kallola-vāridhiḥ
atulya-madhura-prema-
maṇḍita-priya-maṇḍalaḥ

tri-jagan-mānasākarṣi-
muralī-kala-kūjitaḥ
asamānordhva-rūpa-śrī-
vismāpita-carācaraḥ

"Apart from these sixty transcendental qualities, Kṛṣṇa has an additional four transcendental qualities, which are not manifest even in the personality of Nārāyaṇa. These are: 1. Kṛṣṇa is like an ocean filled with eaves of pastimes that evoke wonder within everyone in the three worlds. 2. In His activities of conjugal love, He is always surrounded by His dear devotees who possess unequaled love for Him. 3. He attracts the minds of all three worlds by the melodious vibration of His flute. 4. His personal beauty and opulence are beyond compare. No one is equal to Him, and no one is greater than Him. Thus the Supreme Personality of Godhead astonishes all living entities, both moving and nonmoving, within the three worlds. He is so beautiful that He is called Kṛṣṇa.*

līlā premṇā priyādhikyaṁ
mādhuryaṁ veṇu-rūpayoḥ
ity asādhāraṇaṁ proktaṁ
govindasya catuṣṭayam

"Above Nārāyaṇa, Kṛṣṇa has four specific transcendental qualitiesHis wonderful pastimes, an abundance of wonderful associates who are very dear to Him (like the gopīs), His wonderful beauty, and the wonderful vibration of His flute. Lord Kṛṣṇa is more exalted than ordinary living beings and demigods like Lord Śiva. He is even more exalted than His own personal expansion Nārāyaṇa."*

These sixty-four opulences are fully, eternally and splendidly manifest in Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose pure spiritual form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss. The last four opulences are present only in the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They are not present in even the Lord's pastime incarnations. Now that these four qualities are excluded, the remaining sixty qualities are fully and splendidly manifest in Lord Nārāyaṇa, who is the master of the spiritual sky, and whose form is perfectly spiritual. When the next five opulences are excluded, the remaining fifty-five opulences are present in Lord Śiva and other exalted demigods. Drops of the remaining fifty opulences may be seen in the individual spirit souls. Śiva, Brahmā, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa, and Indra are partial expansions of the Lord. Given jurisdiction to rule over certain affairs in the material universe, they are considered incarnations of the Lord's opulences. Still, they are individual souls, servants of the Supreme Lord. By their mercy many people attained pure devotional service. They are rulers over the conditioned souls, and that is why they are objects of worship in the material world. The worship of them gradually leads to worship of the Supreme Lord. If they give to certain souls the gift of pure devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, those souls consider them spiritual masters and worship them eternally. Lord Śiva, who is filled with devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is considered non-different from the Supreme Lord Himself. That is why people addicted to the ideas of impersonalism take shelter of Him and consider Him the highest form of the Supreme.

Chapter Fourteen
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Śakti-vicāra)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (The Lord's Potencies)

When he thought of what he heard the previous night from the elderly bābājī, Vrajanātha became filled with bliss. He thought, "Ah! The teachings of Lord Gaurāṅga are wonderful! When I hear them my heart becomes filled with nectar. When I hear them from the saintly bābājī's mouth, my thirst to hear them increases more and more. No part of them seems illogical. They seem to be supported by the scriptures. I cannot understand why the brāhmaṇas criticize them. I think they criticize because they are impersonalists. Thinking in this way, Vrajanātha came to Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī's cottage. Seeing the saintly bābājī, Vrajanātha offered daṇḍavat obeisances. The saintly bābājī happily embraced him and made him sit down next to him. With an earnest heart he said, "O master, I wish to hear the third verse of the *Daśa-mūla*. Please kindly recite it. The hairs of his body upright with spiritual happiness, the saintly bābājī recited:

parākhyāyāḥ śakter apṛthag api sa sve mahimani
sthito jīvākhyāṁ svām acid-abhihitām tāṁ tri-padikām

svatantrecchā-śaktiṁ sakala-viṣaye preraṇa-paraḥ
vikārādayaiḥ śūnyaḥ parama-puruṣo 'yaṁ vijayate

"Glory to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is never touched by material changes. He is not different from His spiritual potency. He is situated in His own transcendental glory. From Him are manifested His spiritual potency by which all His desires are fulfilled, His potency of the individual spirit souls, and His potency of inanimate matter."

Vrajanātha: The brāhmaṇas say that when the Supreme is the impersonal Brahman He has no potency. It is only when He appears as the Supreme Controller that He has potencies. What do the Vedas teach about this?

Bābājī: In every feature of the Lord His potencies are manifested. The Vedas (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8) declare:

na tasya kāryaṁ kāraṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca dṛśyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
sva-bhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

"He does not possess bodily form like that of an ordinary living entity. There is no difference between His body and His soul. He is absolute. All His senses are transcendental. Any one of His senses can perform the function of any other sense. Therefore, no one is greater than Him or equal to Him. His potencies are multifarious, and thus His deeds are automatically performed as a natural sequence."*

The Lord's icchā-śakti, the potency that fulfills all His desires, is described in these words (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 1.3):

te dhyāna-yogānugatā apaśyan
devātma-śaktiṁ sva-guṇair nigūḍhām
yaḥ kāraṇāni nikhilāni tāni
kālātma-yuktāny adhitiṣṭhaty ekaḥ

"Rapt in meditation, the sages then saw the mysterious potency and transcendental qualities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the first cause, who alone dominates the secondary causes, from time to the individual living entity."

The Lord's jīva-śakti, the potency that is the individual spirit souls, described in these words (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.5):

ajām ekāṁ lohita-śukla-kṛṣṇāṁ
bahvīḥ prajāḥ sṛjamānāṁ sarūpāḥ
ajo hy eko juṣamāno 'nuśete
jahāty enāṁ bhukta-bhogām ajo 'nyaḥ

"An unborn man enjoys an unborn red, white, and black woman who bears many children like herself. Another unborn man first enjoys and then forsakes her."

{Translator's Note: The unborn woman is the material nature. The colors red, white, and black are the modes of passion, goodness, and ignorance. The many children are the ingredients of the material universes. The first unborn man is the conditioned soul. The second unborn man is the soul who, after trying to enjoy matter, finally renounces the world and attains liberation.)

The Lord's māyā-śakti, the potency that is the material world, is described in these words (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.9):

chandāṁsi yajñāḥ kratavo vratāni
bhūtaṁ bhāvyaṁ yac ca vedā vadanti
asmān māyī sṛjate viśvam etat
tasmiṁś cānyo māyayā sanniruddhaḥ

"The Vedas describe a bewildering variety of hymns, prayers, sacrifices, rituals, vows, austerities, history, and predictions of the future. Simply by studying the Vedas, it is very difficult for the conditioned soul, illusioned by māyā and trapped in the material world, to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of the illusory potency and the creator of the material universes."*

The words "parāsya śaktiḥ" (in Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8) indicate that of all the Lord's potencies one is the most important. The Vedas never say that the Supreme has a feature without potencies. When He has qualities, He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. When He has no qualities, He is the impersonal Brahman. It is the Lord's most important potency that manifests His feature as impersonal Brahman. In this way it is seen that the impersonal Brahman does indeed have a potency. That most important potency has been described in the Vedas in many places, where it is called by many names, such as “parā śakti", "svarūpa-śakti", and "cit-śakti". The impersonalists imagine that the impersonal Brahman has no potencies. The truth is that the impersonal Brahman is beyond the understanding of the impersonalists. The Vedas affirm that the Supreme has two features, one with qualities and the other without qualities. That the impersonal feature of the Lord has potencies is explained in these words of the Vedas said (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.1):

ya eko 'varṇo bahudhā śakti-yogād
varṇān anekān nihitārtho dadhāti

"Although he has no qualities, by His potencies the Supreme created the great variety of the material world."

That the personal feature of the Lord has potencies is explained in these words of the Vedas (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 3.1):

ya eko jālavān īśata īśanībhiḥ
sarvāl lokān īśata īśanībhiḥ

"Employing His potencies, the Supreme Person created the material world."

In this way you can see that the Supreme is never bereft of His potencies. The self-manifest Supreme Lord is always accompanied by them. The self-manifest Lord who is the master of three eternal potencies is described in this mantra of the Vedas (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.16):

sa viśva-kṛd viśva-vid ātma-yoniḥ
jñaḥ kālākāro guṇī sarva-vid yaḥ
pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ
saṁsāra-mokṣa-sthiti-bandha-hetuḥ

"The Supreme Lord, the creator of this cosmic manifestation, knows every nook and corner of this creation. Although He is the cause of creation, there is no cause for His appearance. He is fully aware of everything. He is the Supersoul, the master of all transcendental qualities, and He is the master of this cosmic manifestation in regard to bandage to the conditional state of material existence and liberation from that bondage."*

The three potencies of the Lord are described in this verse. Here the word "pradhāna" refers to the Lord's māyā-śakti, the word "kṣetrajna" refers to the potency of the individual spirit souls, and the word "kṣetrajna-pati" refers to the Lord's spiritual potency. The idea that when the Supreme manifests His impersonal feature He has no potencies, and when He manifests His personal feature He has potencies is an idea created in the fertile workshop of the impersonalists' imaginations. In truth the Lord is always the master of all potencies. When the Lord is situated in His own glory, and when His original, natural condition is manifest, in order words, when He is manifested as the Supreme Person, He is always accompanied by His potencies. Thus His desires are always fulfilled.

Vrajanātha: If He is always accompanied by His potencies, and if everything is done by His potencies, then How is He independent, and how is it that His desires are always fulfilled?

Bābājī: In the scriptures it is said:

śakti-śaktimator abhedaḥ

"The potencies and the master of potencies are not different."

The potencies thus do whatever the master of potencies desires. The duty of the māyā-śakti is to manifest the material universe. The duty of the jīva-śakti is to manifest the many individual spirit souls. The duty of the cit-śakti is to manifest the spiritual world. After assigning these different duties to the cit-śakti, jīva-śakti, and māyā-śakti, the Supreme Lord steps back, untouched and unchanged. If these actions are performed because of His desire, how can He remain aloof and unconcerned? If He desires that certain things be done, he will certainly be affected by the result.

Vrajanātha: When the scriptures say the Lord is not affected, the meaning is that the Lord never undergoes any material changes. His material potency is a reflection of His internal, spiritual potency. Whatever the material potency māyā does may be real, but it does not exist eternally. The changes that māyā produces do not last eternally. Therefore the Lord never undergoes any material changes. Whatever changes the Lord may manifest in His desires or in His pastimes are all manifested by His spiritual potency, cit-śakti. These changes are manifestations of His spiritual love, and therefore they are free of any fault or impurity. They are included within spiritual knowledge. Although it is by His wish that the māyā-śakti creates the material world, the Supreme Lord remains perfectly spiritual in His nature. In the great varieties created by His spiritual potency, cit-śakti, there is no touch of matter, or māyā. When they hear the descriptions of the great variety manifested by the Lord's spiritual potency, ordinary people, whose intelligence cannot conceive of anything beyond matter, assume that those descriptions must be descriptions of material things. Thus they are like people who, suffering from jaundice, see everything is yellow, or they are like people who, standing in the shade of a cloud, cannot see the sun. The root meaning is this: The material potency is a reflection of the spiritual potency. Therefore the variety manifested in the material world is a reflection of the variety manifested in the spiritual world. To one who looks superficially they seem to be the same. However, the truth is that they are exact opposites. A mirror's reflection of a man's body seems just like the original body. However, the position of all the various limbs is inverted in the reflection. In the reflection the right hand is on the left and the left hand is on the right. Therefore, material eyes see the varieties of the spiritual and material worlds to be the same, although to spiritual eyes see that they are indeed opposites. Actually the material variety is a perverted reflection of the spiritual variety. Superficially they seem the same, but in truth they are different. Free from material changes, and His every desire at once fulfilled, the Supreme Personality of

Godhead controls the material potency, māyā, and gives her various tasks to fulfill.

Bābājī: Which of Lord Kṛṣṇa's potencies is Śrī Rādhikā?

Vrajanātha: Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of potencies in His perfect, original form. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the potency in its perfect, original form. Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the original manifestation of the Lord's internal, spiritual potency. As musk is not different from its fragrance, and as fire is not different from its power to burn, so Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, who enjoy the nectar of transcendental pastimes together, are eternally different and not different from each other. From the internal potency, Śrī Rādhā, are manifested the three potencies "cit-śakti" (spirit), "jīva-śakti" (the individual souls), and “māyā-śakti" (matter). These three are seen to be three different kinds of kriyā-śakti (potency of action). The cit-śakti is also called "antaraṅga-śakti", and the jīva-śakti is also called "taṭastha-śakti". The māyā-śakti is also called "bahiraṅga-śakti". Although it is one, the Lord's internal potency assumes these three forms in order to act in these different ways. All the eternal opulences of the internal potency are full manifested in the cit-śakti. An atomic fragment of each of these opulences is present in the jīva-śakti, and a perverted reflection of them is present in the māyā-śakti. The internal potency is also manifested a three other ways. These three manifestations are called: 1. hlādinī, 2. sandhinī, and 3. samvit. They are described in these words of the *Daśa-mūla*:

sa vai hlādinyāyāḥ praṇaya-vikṛter hlādana-rataḥ
tathā samvic-chakti-prakaṭita-raho-bhāva-rasitaḥ
tayā śrī-sandhinyā kṛta-viśada-tad-dhāma-nicaye
rasāmbhodhau magno vraja-rasa-vilāsī vijayate

"Glory to Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who enjoys nectar pastimes in Vraja, who is plays in a nectar ocean of transcendental mellows, who enjoys the feelings of ecstatic love brought by the Hlādinī-śakti, who tastes the nectar of the confidential love brought by the samvit-śakti, and who resides in the pure transcendental abode created by the sandhinī-śakti."

Thus the Lord's internal potency manifests three features: 1. hlādinī, 2. sandhinī, and 3. samvit. The hlādinī-śakti, which in its complete form is Śrī Rādhā, the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, brings transcendental bliss to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The form of the highest ecstatic love (mahā-bhāva), is the very dear and pleasing to Lord Kṛṣṇa. She expands into many other forms. She expands as the eight principal gopīs (aṣṭa-sakhī), the dear gopīs (priya-sakhī), the gopīs speaking joking words (narma-sakhī[vi]), the gopīs more dear than life (prāṇa-sakhī), and the most dear gopīs (parama-preṣṭha-sakhī). These four kinds of gopīs are manifested for different kinds of devotional service. These gopīs are eternally-perfect souls who reside in the spiritual world of Vraja. The samvit-śakti manifests the different relationships of the people of Vraja. The sandhinī-śakti manifests the land, water, villages, forests, hills like Govardhana Hill, pastime-places of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rādhā, Their gopa and gopī friends, Their servants, the cows, and all the other residents of Vraja, their spiritual forms, and the paraphernalia used in their pastimes. Pushed by the feelings of ecstatic love brought by the hlādinī-śakti, Lord Kṛṣṇa is always

filled with transcendental bliss. The activities of love are brought by the samvit-śakti, activities like Lord Kṛṣṇa attracting the gopīs by playing on the flute, His herding the cows, and His rāsa-dance pastimes. To perform all these activities, Lord Kṛṣṇa takes shelter of His samvit-śakti. Always swimming in the nectar of transcendental mellows, Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys pastimes in the land of Vraja, a land manifested by the sandhinī-śakti. Of all spiritual abodes, the land of Vraja is the best.

Vrajanātha: You have said that the internal potency is manifested as the hlādinī, samvit, and sandhinī potencies. A tiny fragment of the internal potency is the jīva-śakti, and a perverted reflection of the internal potency is the māyā-śakti. Please tell me how the hlādinī, samvit, and sandhinī potencies work in the jīva-śakti and māyā-śakti.

Bābājī: In the jīva-śakti, which is an atomic fragment of the internal potency, a fragmental part of these three potencies is present. There the hlādinī-śakti is manifested as the eternal bliss of the impersonal Brahman, the samvit-śakti is manifested as the individual souls' awareness of impersonal Brahman, and the sandhinī-śakti is manifested as the atomic spiritual forms of the spirit souls. You wished to know about the individual spirit souls. That is how you should understand them. In the māyā-śakti, the hlādinī-śakti is manifested as material happiness, the samvit-śakti is manifested as material knowledge, and the sandhinī-śakti is manifested as the fourteen material worlds and the external material bodies of the conditioned souls.

Vrajanātha: If their activities are so easily explained, why are the Lord's potencies called "inconceivable"?

Bābājī: When they are considered one by one, each feature is easily understood. However, when all the features are considered together, they are beyond understanding. In the material world mutually contradictory qualities do not exist together in the same place, for they would negate each other. It is the inconceivable nature of Lord Kṛṣṇa's potency that in the spiritual world all mutually contradictory qualities exist happily together and the result is very beautiful and pleasing. In Lord Kṛṣṇa the qualities of having a form and being formless, being all-pervading and having a form present in one place only, being active and inactive, being unborn and being the son of Nanda, being the all-worshipable Supreme Lord and being a gopa boy, being all-knowing and having the limited knowledge possessed by a human being, having qualities and having no qualities, being beyond conception and being sweet like nectar, being limited and unlimited, being far away and very near, being completely aloof and also being afraid of the gopīs' jealous anger are simultaneously present. These and numberless other mutually contradictory qualities happily stay together in Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form, in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental abode, and in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes. That these mutually contradictory qualities help Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, making them more beautiful and pleasing is beyond human conception. Therefore it is said that the Lord's potencies are inconceivable.

Vrajanātha: Is this idea supported by the Vedas?

Bābājī: This is accepted everywhere in the Vedas. In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (3.19) it is said:

apāṇi-pādo javano grahītā
paśyaty acakṣuḥ sa śṛṇoty akarṇaḥ
sa vetti vedyaṁ na ca tasyāsti vettā
tam āhur āgryam puruṣaṁ mahantam

"Learned transcendentalists explain that God is the greatest, the original person. He has no material hands, but He can take anything. He has no material legs, but He can travel faster than anyone. He has no material eyes, but He sees everything. He has no material ears, but He hears everything. He knows everything, but no one knows Him."*

In the Iśa Upaniṣad (mantras 5 and 8) it is said:

tad ejati tan naijati
tad dūre tad v antike
tad antar asya sarvasya
tad u sarvasyāsya bāhyataḥ

"The Supreme Lord walks and does not walk. He is far away, but He is very near as well. He is within everything, but yet He is outside of everything."*

sa paryagāc chukram akāyam avraṇam
asnāviraṁ śuddham apāpa-viddham
kavir manīṣī paribhūḥ svayambhūr
yāthātathyato 'rthān vyadadhāc chasvatībhyaḥ samābhyaḥ

"Such a person must factually know the greatest of all, who is unembodied, omniscient, beyond reproach, without veins, pure, and uncontaminated, the self-sufficient philosopher, who has been fulfilling everyone's desires since time immemorial."*

Vrajanātha: Is it written in the Vedas that by His own will the Supreme Lord sometimes descends to the material world?

Bābājī: Yes. In many places. In the Kena Upaniṣad, in a conversation of Śiva and Umā, it is said that Indra and the demigods became very proud because they had conquered the demons. As the demigods were telling each other how wonderful they were, the Supreme Lord assumed a wonderful form and appeared among them, asked them why they were so proud, and gave them a single blade of grass to burn up with their own power. In this way the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who has wonderful powers, manifested His form among the demigods. An example of a mantra from that passage is (Kena Upaniṣad 3.6):

tasmai tṛṇaṁ nidadhāv etad daheti. tad upapreyāya sarva-jāvena tan na śaśāka dagdhum. sa tata nivavrte naitad śākam vijñātum yad etad yakṣam iti

"Placing a blade of grass before him, the Supreme Lord said: `Burn this.' With all his power, Agni attacked the blade of grass, but could not burn it. Returning to the demigods, Agni said: `I do not know who this yakṣa is'."

The hidden meaning of this passage is that the Supreme Lord is a person with an inconceivably handsome form, and who His own will he descends to the material world and enjoys pastimes with the individual spirit souls.

Vrajanātha: It is said that the Supreme Lord is an ocean of the nectar of transcendental mellows. where is this said in the Vedas?

Bābājī: In Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.1) it is clearly said:

yad dvaitam sukṛtaṁ raso vai saḥ. rasaṁ hy evāyaṁ labdhvānandī bhavati. ko hy evānyāt kaḥ prāṇyāt. yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt. eṣa hy evānandayati.

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the reservoir of transcendental mellows. When one understands the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the reservoir of pleasure, Kṛṣṇa, he actually becomes transcendentally blissful.* Who could breathe without the Lord giving breath? Who could be happy without the Lord giving happiness. It is He who gives transcendental bliss."

Vrajanātha: If He has a form of the nectar of bliss, why can the people of the material world not see Him?

Bābājī: The individual souls imprisoned in the material world are of two kinds. One faces Kṛṣṇa and the other turns his back on Kṛṣṇa. The soul that turns away from Kṛṣṇa cannot see Kṛṣṇa handsomeness. Instead he gazes on material sense objects and fixes his mind in thinking of material sense objects. The soul that turns toward Kṛṣṇa turns away from the material world of māyā. He is able to see the t form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In the Kaṭha Upaniśād (2.1.1) it is said:

parāñci khāni vyatṛṇat svayambhūs
tasmāt parāṅ paśyati nāntarātman
kaścid dhīraḥ pratyag-ātmānam aikṣad
āvṛta-cakṣur amṛtatvam icchan

"A person eager for material pleasures cannot see the Supreme Personality of Godhead within his heart. Only a wise man who turns from the world of matter can see the Lord within his heart."

Vrajanātha: The Vedas say that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is "raso vai saḥ" (the reservoir of spiritual nectar). How do the Vedas describe the Lord's nectar spiritual form?

Bābājī: In the Gopāla-tāpanī Uapniṣad (1.10) it is said:

gopa-veṣam. . .

. . .sat-puṇḍarīka-nayanaṁ
meghābhaṁ vaidyutāmbaram
dvi-bhujaṁ jñāna-mudrāḍhyaṁ
vana-mālinam īśvaram

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead is a cowherd boy. His eyes are handsome lotus flowers, His complexion a dark monsoon cloud, and His garments lightning. He has two arms. He is rich in transcendental knowledge. He wears a garland of forest flowers."

Vrajanātha: From this I can understand that the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the eternal spiritual form of the Lord in the spiritual world. He is the form of spiritual nectar, He is the shelter of all. He is not attained by impersonal speculation or any other non-devotional means. They who follow the path of aṣṭāṅga-yoga search after the Supersoul, who is His plenary portion. The impersonal Brahman is the effulgence of His transcendental body. He is endowed with all spiritual qualities. He is the highest object of worship in the world. He is not easy to see. He is beyond conception. What method may a human being adopt to understand Him? The brāhmaṇas cannot understand Him and neither can the caṇḍālas understand Him. What method should one adopt in order to understand Him? It is very difficult to know how to please Him.

Bābājī: In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.2.13) it is said:

tam ātma-sthaṁ ye 'nupaśyanti dhīrās
teṣāṁ śāntiḥ śāśvatī netareṣām

"Only saintly persons who can see, within and without, the same Supreme Lord, can actually attain to perfect and eternal peace."*

Vrajanātha: They who see the Supreme Lord within their hearts attain eternal peace. However, what method should one adopt to see the Lord in this way? That's what I would like to see. That's what I don't understand.

Bābājī: In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.23) it is also said:

nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo

na medhayā na bahunā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanum svām

"The Supreme Lord is not attained by expert explanations, by vast intelligence, nor even by much hearing. He is attained only by one who He Himself chooses. To such a person He manifests His own form."*

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.14.28) it is said:

athāpi te deva padāmbuja-dvaya-
prasāda-leśānugṛhīta eva hi
jānāti tattvaṁ bhagavan-mahimno
na cānya eko 'pi ciraṁ vicinvan

"My Lord, if one is favored by even a slight trace of the mercy of Your lotus feet, he can understand the greatness of Your personality. But those who speculate in order to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead are unable to know You, even though they continue to study the Vedas for many years."*

O bābā, our Lord is very merciful. The Lord of our hearts is Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Simply by studying and understanding the scriptures one does not attain Him. Simply by being very intelligent or studying from many teachers one does not attain Him. Only to one who says, "Kṛṣṇa is my Lord", does Lord Kṛṣṇa mercifully reveal His eternal spiritual form of knowledge and bliss. Think about this and you will easily understand it.

Vrajanātha: Is anything written in the Vedas about Lord Kṛṣṇa's spiritual abode?

Bābājī: It is described in many places. In some places it is called "para-vyoma" (the spiritual sky), in other places "samvyoma" (the great sky), in other places “brahma-gopāla-purī" (the city of Lord Gopāla), and in other places "gokula" (the world of the surabhi cows). It is described in these words of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.8):

ṛco akṣare parame vyoman
yasmin deva adhi viśve niṣeduḥ
yas tam na veda kim ṛcā kariṣyati
ya iti tad vidus ta ime samāsate

"In the eternal spiritual sky the demigods and the Vedic hymns serve the Supreme Personality of Godhead. What will he who does not know Him do with the Vedic hymns? They who know Him have attained the goal of life."

In the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (2.2.1) it is said:

divye brahma-pure hy eṣa vyomny ātmā pratiṣṭhitaḥ

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead stays in the effulgent spiritual world."

In the Puruṣa-bodhinī-śruti it is said:

gokulākhye māthura-maṇḍale dve pārśve candrāvalī rādhikā ca

"In the spiritual world named Gokula, in the circle of Māthura, the Supreme Personality of Godhead stays, with Rādhā and Candrāvalī at His sides."

In the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad it is said:

tāsāṁ madhye sākṣāt brahma-gopāla-purī

"In the spiritual sky is the city of Lord Gopāla."

Vrajanātha: Tantrika brāhmaṇas say that the potency of Lord Śiva is the "ādyā śakti" (original potency). Why do they say that?

Bābājī: The potency of Lord Śiva is the māyā-śakti. From māyā the three material modes: goodness, passion, and ignorance are manifested. The brāhmaṇas are in the mode of goodness. They purely worship Goddess Māyā, who is the origin of material goodness. They who are in the mode of passion worship Goddess Māyā as the mother of the mode of passion. They who have taken shelter of the mode of ignorance worship Māyā as Goddess Vidyā, the controller of the mode of blinding darkness. In truth, Māyā is a transformation of the potency of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Māyā is not a separate potency. Māyā is a shadow or a reflection of the Supreme Lord's original spiritual potency. Māyā imprisons the conditioned souls and she also sets them free. Persons averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa she imprisons in the material world and punishes. Persons who are favorably inclined to Lord Kṛṣṇa she places in the mode of goodness and gives knowledge of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Persons shackled and imprisoned by Māyā cannot see that Māyā herself is a reflection of the Supreme Lord's original potency. It is these persons who claim that Māyā is the "ādyā śakti" (original potency). A person bewildered by Māyā may reach the right conclusion if he has performed many pious deeds. One who has not performed pious deeds will not.

Vrajanātha: Among the servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa in Gokula is mentioned someone named "Durgā-devī". Who is that “Durgā"?

Bābājī: She is Yogamāyā. She is the seed that grows into the changed forms

accepted by the cit-śakti (spiritual potency). She stays in the spiritual world, and there she is considered identical with the Lord's internal potency. It is by her power that the Lord's spiritual potency is reflected as the material potency māyā. The Durgā of the material world is a maidservant of her, Yogamāyā, who is the Durgā of the spiritual world. This spiritual Durgā assists in Lord Kṛṣṇa's spiritual pastimes. Manifested as Yogamāyā, in the spiritual world she makes the nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes by convincing the gopīs that they are married to others and Kṛṣṇa is their paramour (parakīya-bhāva). She also arranges for the Lord's rāsa-līlā pastimes. This is described in these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.29.10):

yogamāyām upāśritaḥ

"Taking shelter of His Yogamāyā potency, Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoyed the rāsa dance."

The meaning of these statements is this: Among the many spiritual pastimes arranged by the Lord's internal potency are some activities that seem to be situated in ignorance, although in truth they are not situated in ignorance at all. When these activities that superficially appear to be situated in ignorance are useful to make the nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes sweeter, Yogamāyā arranges that they are manifested. In this way the nectar of the Lord's pastime is understood.

Vrajanātha: I wish to understand something about the spiritual abode (dhāma) of the Lord. Please be kind and explain this to me: Why do the Vaiṣṇavas use the word "śrīdhāma" in relation to Navadvīpa?

Bābājī: Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma and Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma are not different. This Māyāpura is the highest spiritual abode. Śrī Māyāpura is to Navadvīpa what Śrī Gokula is to Vraja. Māyāpura is the holiest place in Navadvīpa. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.9.38) it is said:

channaḥ kalau

"O Lord, in the age of Kali, however, You do not assert Yourself.* In that age Your incarnation is hidden."

As the Supreme Lord's incarnation is hidden in the Kali-yuga, so the Supreme Lord's abode, Śrī Navadvīpa, is also hidden. In the age of Kali there is no holy place like Śrī Navadvīpa. A person who understands the spiritual nature of Śrī Navadvīpa has become qualified to reside in the spiritual world of Vraja. Material eyes see Vraja and Navadvīpa are both material places, made of the five material elements. Only persons who have become fortunate to have their spiritual eyes opened are able to see the truth of these holy abodes.

Vrajanātha: I wish to know the truth about Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma.

Bābājī: "Goloka", "Vṛndāvana", and “Śvetadvīpa" are the names of the

innermost places in the spiritual world. In Goloka the Lord's svakīya pastimes are manifested, in Vṛndāvana the pārakīya pastimes are manifested, and in Śvetadvīpa other pastimes are manifested. Gokula, Vṛndāvana, and Śvetadvīpa are not different in nature. Śrī Navadvīpa is therefore not different from Śvetadvīpa and Vrndavana. The residents of Śrī Navadvīpa are most fortunateThey are the eternal associates of Lord Gaurāṅga. It is because in past lives they performed many pious deeds that now they are able to reside in Śrī Navadvīpa. The transcendental mellows (rasa) that were not reveled in Śrī Vrndavana have been revealed in Śrī Navadvīpa. When a person becomes qualified, he is able to taste the sweetness of those mellows.

Vrajanātha: What is the size of Navadvīpa-dhāma?

Bābājī: The circumference of Śrī Navadvīpa is sixteen krośas (32 miles). The holy abode of Navadvīpa is an eight-petal lotus flower. Eight of the dvīpas form the eight petals, and the island in the middle is the whorl of the lotus. The eight islands that are petals of the lotus are: Sīmantadvīpa, Godrumadvīpa, Madhyadvīpa, Koladvīpa, Ṛtudvīpa, Jahndvīpa, Modadrumadvīpa, and Rudradvīpa. The whorl in the middle of the lotus is Antardvīpa. IN the middle of Antardvīpa is Śrī Māyāpura. A soul who performs sādhana-bhakti (devotional service in practice) in Navadvīpa-dhama, or especially in Śrī Māyāpura, quickly attains the perfection of prema (pure love of God). In the center of Śrī Navadvīpa is the very holy place of Śrī Jagannātha Miśra's home. The most fortunate devotees are able to see Lord Gaurāṅgadeva enjoying His eternal pastimes in this holy place.

Vrajanātha: Does the Lord's internal potency arrange for Lord Gaurāṅgadeva's pastimes?

Bābājī: As Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are arranged by the internal potency, so Lord Gaurāṅga's pastimes are arranged in the same way. There is is not the slightest difference between Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Gaurāṅga. In his notebook, Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī explains (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Adi 1.5):

rādhā-kṛṣṇa-praṇaya-vikṛtir hlādinī śaktir asmād
ekātmānāv api bhuvi purā deha-bhedaṁ gatau tau
caitanyākhyaṁ prakaṭam adhunā tad-dvayaṁ caikyam aptaṁ
rādhā-bhāva-dyuti-suvalitam 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 Śrīmati Rādhārāṇī although He is Kṛṣṇa Himself."*

Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Caitanya are both manifested eternally. No one has the power to say which of Them came first and which second. It cannot be said that Lord Caitanya was manifested first and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa were manifested second. Neither can it be said that Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa were manifested first and Lord Caitanya was manifested second. The truth is that Lord Caitanya and Śrī Śrī

Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa both exist eternally. All the pastimes of the Supreme are eternal. A person who thinks that of the pastimes and of Lord Caitanya and the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the pastimes of one is more important and the pastimes of the other is less important, does not understand the truth. He does not understand the nectar of the Lord's pastimes.

Vrajanātha: If Śrī Gaurāṅga is the original form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, then how should one worship Him?

Bābājī: As one worships Lord Kṛṣṇa by chanting the names and mantras of Lord Kṛṣṇa, so one should worship Lord Gaura by chanting the names and mantras of Lord Gaurāṅga. One may worship Lord Gaura by chanting Kṛṣṇa-mantras, or for that matter one may worship Lord Kṛṣṇa by chanting Gaura-mantras. They are all the same. Anyone who thinks Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Gaura are different is a fool. He is a servant of Kali-yuga.

Vrajanātha: If Lord Caitanya is the hidden (channa) incarnation described in the Seventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, how are there any mantras to worship Him?

Bābājī: The Tantras that openly give mantras for worshiping the openly manifested incarnations of the Lord secretly reveal the mantras for worshiping the secret, hidden incarnation of the Lord. People whose intelligence is not crooked can understand the presence of these mantras.

Vrajanātha: How does one worship the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, while one is engaged in worshiping Lord Gaurāṅga?

Bābājī: There are two ways one may worship the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, while one is engaged in worshiping Lord Gaurāṅga. These two ways are: 1. arcana-mārga (Deity worship) and 2. bhajana-mārga (the practices of devotional service). In the path of arcana-mārga one worships Gaura-Viṣṇupriyā, and in the path of bhajana-mārga one worships Gaura-Gadādhara.

Vrajanātha: Which potency of Lord Gaurāṅga is Śrī Viṣṇupriyā?

Bābājī: Generally the devotees say she is the Lord's Bhū-śakti. but the truth is that she is the samvit-śakti accompanied by the essence of the hlādinī-śakti. This means that she is the Goddess of Devotion, Bhakti-devī, and during Lord Gaurāṅga's advent she comes to help Him preach the glories of the holy name. As the nine islands of Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma embody the nine kinds of devotional service, so Śrīmati Viṣṇupriyā is also the nine kinds of devotional service personified.

Vrajanātha: Can it be said, then, that Śrī Viṣṇupriyā is the Lord's internal potency?

Bābājī: How can there be any doubt? Is not the internal potency (svarūpa-śakti) the same as the samvit-śakti accompanied by the essence of the hlādinī-śakti?

Vrajanātha: O master, soon I will learn the proper way to worship Lord Gaura, but now a question has entered my mind. The cit-śakti, jīva-śakti, and māyā-śakti are manifested from the Lord's internal potency (svarūpa-śakti), and the hlādinī-śakti, samvit-śakti, and sandhini-śakti are also manifested from the internal potency. All that is done is apparently done by the Lord's potencies. The spiritual world, spiritual bodies, spiritual relationships, and spiritual pastimes are all manifested by the Lord's potencies. Does Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of all these potencies, do anything Himself?

Bābājī: That is a difficult question. Are you trying to attack an old man with arrows of logical puzzles? The question is simple, and it has a simple answer. Still, it is hard to find a person qualified to understand the simple answer to this question. I will speak. You please try to understand my words. Lord Kṛṣṇa's name, forms, qualities, and pastimes are all manifested by His potencies. Still, Kṛṣṇa's supreme independence and His desires are not manifested by His potencies. They are part of His nature. They are manifested by the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone. Lord Kṛṣṇa can do anything He wishes. He is the shelter of His potencies. Kṛṣṇa is the enjoyer. His potencies are enjoyed by Him. Kṛṣṇa is independent. His potencies are dependent on Him. At every turn the independent Supreme Personality of Godhead is surrounded by His potencies. Still, He remains always perfect and always independent. Although He is always surrounded by His potencies, He is also always their master. When human beings understand the Supreme they must do it through the aid of the Lord's potencies. Therefore it is hard for them to understand that the Supreme Lord is the master of all potencies, and He is actually beyond the influence of His potencies. However, a devotee who has attained love (prema) for the Lord can directly see that the Supreme Lord is the master of all potencies and is beyond their influence. Devotional service (bhakti) is one of the Lord's potencies, and therefore is feminine in nature. Following the Lord's internal potency, the potency of devotional service can bring one to the position where one can directly perceive the masculine nature of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the independent, self-willed supreme male.

Vrajanātha: If there is a being beyond the influence of the potencies, that being must be the impersonal Brahman described in the Upaniṣads.

Bābājī: The impersonal Brahman described in the Upaniṣads has no desires. The "puruṣa" described in the Upaniṣads is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supreme male. He is filled with desires. These two are different in many ways. Impersonal Brahman has no qualities. Kṛṣṇa, completely independent of His potencies, has a host of qualities. They are part of His character as the supreme male, the supreme enjoyer, and the supreme independent being. In truth, Kṛṣṇa and His potencies are not different. The potency that allows us to see Kṛṣṇa is also Kṛṣṇa Himself. Why not? Lord Kṛṣṇa's beloved, His potency Śrī Rādhā, is feminine. Śrī Rādhā is the most exalted potency. She serves Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa also serves Her. They worship each other, and in this way they are different from each other.

Vrajanātha: If the fact that Kṛṣṇa has desires and enjoyments are proofs of His masculine nature, then how is it that Rādhā has desires and still a feminine nature?

Bābājī: Śrīmatī Rādhā's desires are subordinate to Kṛṣṇa's desires. She never desires anything or does anything that has no relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Whatever Kṛṣṇa desires, She desires. She desires to serve Kṛṣṇa. That is Rādhā's desire. Rādhā is the pūrṇa-śakti (complete potency) or ādya-śakti (original potency). Kṛṣṇa is the supreme male. He is the master and controller of His potency.

At this point in their conversation, Vrajanātha took permission to depart. After offering daṇḍavat obeisances to the saintly bābājī, Vrajanātha happily returned to his home in Bilva-puṣkariṇī. Seeing that day by day he was changing, his grandmother said that it was time for him to get married. Vrajanātha would not listen to her. Day and night he thought about what the saintly bābājī was teaching him. Thinking, “These teachings are very pleasing to my heart. Now I will hear

more teachings, teachings sweet like nectar," he happily went to Śrīvāsa's courtyard.

Chapter Fifteen
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya Prayojana (prameyāntargata jīva-vicāra)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (The Individual Spirit Souls)

This day Vrajanātha came a little too early to Śrīvāsa's courtyard. The devotees living in Śrī Godruma had come to Śrīvāsa's courtyard to see the evening ārati. Paramahaṁsa Bābājī Śrī Prema dāsa, Vaiṣṇava dāsa, Advaita dāsa, and all the other devotees had already entered the temple to see the ārati. Seeing the residents of Śrī Godruma, Vrajanātha thought, "Now I have their association. My life is now a great success." Seeing humble, devoted, smiling Vrajanātha, everyone gave him their blessings. When after a short time they left, going south to return to Śrī Godruma, the saintly elderly bābājī noticed that tears were streaming from Vrajanātha's eyes. Saintly Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī had by this time developed strong affection for Vrajanātha. He asked Vrajanātha, "Baba, why are you weeping?" Vrajanātha humbly replied, "O master, your teachings and association has brought an upheaval in my thoughts. Now my heart understands how worthless the material world is. My heart yearns to take shelter of Lord Gaura's feet. In my mind there is one question: Who am I in reality, and why do I live in the material world?

Bābājī: Good. With this question you have made me fortunate. When his auspicious day comes, a soul places this question before all others. When you hear the fifth verse of *Daśa-mūla* and its explanation, doubts will not longer live in your heart.

sphuliṅgā ṛddhāgner iva cid-aṇavo jīva-nicayā
hareḥ sūryasyaivāpṛthag api tu tad-bheda-viṣayāḥ
vaśe māyā yasya prakṛti-patir eveśvara iha
sa jīvo mukto 'pi prakṛti-vaśa-yogyaḥ sva-guṇataḥ

"As sparks fly from a blazing fire, or rays of light fly from the sun, so the individual spirit souls come from the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Hari. As the sparks and rays of light are at once different and not different from their source, so the individual souls are different and not different from Lord Hari. Lord Hari is the supreme controller. He is the master of the material world. The illusory

potency māyā is under His control. The individual soul is not like Him. Even when he is liberated, the soul is capable of coming under māyā's control."

Vrajanātha: That is a wonderful conclusion! I wish to hear the evidence the Vedas give for it. The words of the Supreme Lord (Bhagavad-gītā) are worthy evidence by themselves. However, when they are supported by the words of the Upaniṣads, they are more easily accepted by the people in general.

Bābājī: These truths are revealed in many passages of the Vedas. I will recite one or two of them. Please listen carefully. In the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (2.2.20 and 4.3.9) it is said:

yathāgneḥ kṣudrā visphuliṅgā vyuccaranty evam evāsmād ātmanaḥ. . . sarvāṇi bhūtāni vyuccaranti.

"As tiny sparks fly from a fire, so all individual souls have come from the Supreme."

tasya vā etasya puruṣasya dve eva sthāne bhavata idaṁ ca para-loka-sthānaṁ ca sandhyaṁ tṛtīyaṁ svapna-sthānaṁ tasmin sandhye sthāne tiṣṭhann ete ubhe sthāne paśyatīdaṁ para-loka-sthānaṁ ca.

"A person has two places: the spiritual world and the place where the spiritual world meets another world. There is also a third place, a place of dreams. Standing between them, the soul sees on one side the spiritual world and on the other the place of dreaming."

This passage describes the the individual soul's (jīva-śakti), which can reside in either the spiritual or material worlds (taṭastha). In the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.3.18) it is also said:

tad yathā mahā-matsya ubhe kule 'nusaṇcarati purvāṁ cāparaṁ caivam evāyaṁ puruṣa etāv ubhāv antāv anusaṇcarati svapnāntaṁ ca yuddhāntaṁ ca.

"As a large fish in a river may go to one shore or the other, so a person may go to one world or another. He may go to a world where he is awake, or may go to a world made of dreams."

Vrajanātha: How does the Vedānta philosophy define the word "taṭastha"?

Bābājī: The place where a river's waters meet with the land of the shore is called the "taṭa". The "taṭa" is then the place where water meets land. What is the nature of this "taṭa"? It is like the thinnest of threads that runs along the boundary of land and water. A "taṭa" is like the finest of lines, so small that the gross material

eyes cannot even see it. In this example the spiritual world is like the water and the material world is like the land. The thin line that separates them is the "taṭa". That boundary place is the abode of the individual spirit souls. The individual spirit souls are like atomic particles of sunlight. The souls can see both the spiritual world and the material world created by Māyā. The Lord's spiritual potency, cit-śakti, is limitless, and the Lord's material potency, māyā-śakti, is gigantic. Standing between them, the individual spirit soul is very tiny. The individual spirit souls are manifested from the taṭastha-śakti of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore the souls are naturally situated on the boundary (taṭastha) of matter and spirit.

Vrajanātha: What is this "taṭastha" nature of the individual souls?

Bābājī: Standing between them, the soul can see these two worlds. The "taṭastha" nature of the souls refers to the fact that they must be under the control of one of these two potencies. The actual place of the "taṭa" (shore may change. What was once dry land may be covered with water, and what was once covered by water may again become dry land. If he turns his gaze upon Lord Kṛṣṇa, the soul comes under the shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa's spiritual potency. But if he turns away from Kṛṣṇa and turns his gaze to the material potency, māyā, then the soul is caught in māyā's trap. That is what is meant by "the soul's taṭastha nature".

Vrajanātha: Does māyā have anything to do with the nature of the spirit souls?

Bābājī: No. The spirit souls are completely spiritual. However, because they are atomic in size, the souls are not very strong. That is why māyā can dominate them. However, in the soul's nature there is not the slightest scent of māyā.

Vrajanātha: I heard from my teacher that when it is surrounded by māyā, the impersonal Brahman becomes the individual spirit soul. When a small portion of the great sky is surrounded by the walls of a clay pot, it becomes the sky within a pot. In the same when the impersonal Brahman is surrounded by māyā, it becomes the individual soul. What does this mean?

Bābājī: That is just impersonalism (māyāvāda). How can māyā have the power to touch the Supreme Brahman? If you say that Brahman has no potency, then how can māyā even approach Brahman? The māyā potency has no independent power. How can she have any effect on the Brahman? It cannot be said that the great Brahman becomes covered by māyā and is then forced to suffer in different ways. That is not possible. If Brahman's spiritual potency is always awake and vigilant, how can the insignificant māyā-śakti defeat her and proceed to create the individual souls from Brahman in this way? The Supreme Brahman is limitless and immeasurable. How can the limitless Brahman be broken into smaller souls in the same way the great sky is broken into the little skies within a series of clay pots? The idea that māyā can have some effect on the Brahman cannot be accepted. Māyā has nothing to do with the creation of the individual spirit souls. Although they are atomic in size, the individual spirit souls are superior to māyā.

Vrajanātha: At another time another teacher said that the individual spirit soul is a reflection of Brahman. As the sun is reflected on the water, so the Supreme Brahman, reflected on māyā, becomes the individual soul. What does that mean?

Bābājī: That is also impersonalism. Brahman has no limit. Something that is unlimited cannot be reflected anywhere. The Vedas do not teach that Brahman is limited. This reflection-theory should be rejected.

Vrajanātha: Another time a dig-vijayī sannyāsī said that the individual spirit

soul does not really exist. The ides of the individual soul is only an illusion. When the illusion is thrown far away, only the undivided Brahman remains. What does that mean?

Bābājī: That is also impersonalism. That idea has no root in the truth. In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (6.2.1) it is said:

ekam evādvitīyam

"Brahman is one without a second."

Do these words of the Vedas mean that only Brahman, and nothing else, exists? If nothing but Brahman exists, then from where has this illusion come? Whom does this illusion bewilder? If you say this illusion bewilders Brahman, then you make Brahman a pathetic being. If you say this illusion bewilders something other than Brahman, they you contradict the idea that only Brahman exists.

Vrajanātha: Another time a brāhmaṇa paṇḍita of Navadvīpa said that only the individual spirit soul exists. In a dream he experiences material happiness and suffering. When he wakes up from the dream, he discovers that he is Brahman. What does this mean?

Bābājī: That is also impersonalism. Brahman has a dream and becomes the individual soul? What proof do they have for that? The scriptures give the examples of mistaking the glittering on a seashell's surface for silver and mistaking a rope for a snake, but these examples do not prove the impersonalist idea that Brahman alone exists. These words are only a great network of word-jugglery meant to bewilder the people in general.

Vrajanātha: The individual soul is not created by māyā. That I accept. Māyā has the power to dominate the individual soul. That I understand. This is my question: Does the spiritual potency (cit-śakti) place the individual soul on the border (taṭastha) of matter and spirit?

Bābājī: No. The cit-śakti is the full manifestation of Lord Kṛṣṇa's potency. Whatever she creates is eternally perfect (nitya-siddha). The individual spirit souls are not eternally perfect. By engaging in the activities of devotional service (sādhana) they may become perfect (sādhana-siddha) and thus enjoy spiritual bliss exactly like that enjoyed by the eternally perfect (nitya-siddha) beings. The four kinds of gopī-friends (sakhī) of Śrīmatī Rādharāṇī are eternally perfect beings (nitya-siddha). They are manifested from the form of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who is the cit-śakti Herself. All the individual spirit souls are manifested from Lord Kṛṣṇa's jīva-śakti. The cit-śakti is Lord Kṛṣṇa's complete potency (pūrṇa-śakti). The individual souls (jīva-śakti) are counted among Lord Kṛṣṇa's incomplete potencies (apūrṇa-śakti). From the complete potency complete and perfect things are manifested. From the incomplete potency all the individual souls, who are atomic fragments of consciousness, are manifested. Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests different kinds of entities according to the different kinds of potencies He employs to create them. When He is manifested in His cit-śakti, He appears as Kṛṣṇa and as Nārāyaṇa, the master of Vaikuṇṭha. When He is manifested in the jīva-śakti, He

appears as Baladeva, His pastime form (vilāsa-mūrti) in Vraja. When He is manifested in the māyā-śakti, He appears as the three forms of Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, Garbhodakaśāyī Viṣṇu, and Kṣīrodakaśāyī Viṣṇu. In Vraja He appears in His original form, as Kṛṣṇa, a form manifested by His complete potency. Appearing as Baladeva, He manifests His śeṣa-tattva (nature of Lord Śeṣa). In this way He manifests the eight kinds of services the eternally liberated associates offer to Him. Again in Vaikuṇṭha He appears as Śeṣa-Saṅkarṣaṇa and manifests the eight kinds of service His eternal associates offer to Lord Nārāyaṇa. Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa incarnates as Maha-Viṣṇu. He becomes the resting-place of the jīva-śakti and appears as the Supersoul in the hearts of all the individual souls residing in the material world. All these individual souls are attracted to māyā. As long as they do not attain the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and take shelter of the Lord's spiritual hladini-śakti, they are defeated by Māyā. Numberless souls are defeated by Māyā and cast into Her prison. They are the followers of Māyā's three modes. The conclusion is this: the individual souls are manifested by the jīva-śakti. They are not manifested by the cit-śakti.

Vrajanātha: I have heard that the spiritual world is eternal and the individual spirit souls are also eternal. How is it possible for eternal things to be born, created, or manifested? If there was a time when they were not manifested and they only appear at a certain point in time, how can they be eternal?

Bābājī: The time and space present in the spiritual world is different from the time and space you experience now in the material world. In the material world time has three phases: past, present, and future. In the spiritual world time is not broken in that way. There time is an eternal present. In the spiritual world things do not come into being. Everything exists in an eternal present. When we who living in the world of material time and space try to describe the spiritual world, we tend to say things like, "The individual souls were created", "the individual souls were imprisoned by Māyā", "the spiritual world was manifested", and "the individual souls are spiritual and were not created by māyā". When we talk in these ways we certainly show how much we are influenced by staying in this world of material time. As long as we stay in Māyā's prison we cannot avoid talking in this way. That is why when we describe the individual souls or the nature of spirit we cannot avoid speaking in terms of material time. Therefore we tend to speak in terms of past and future. Therefore a person who tries to understand the spiritual world properly tries to speak in terms of an eternal present. Baba, logic cannot help us understand these things. Here logic should be rejected. Then you will be able to see the nature of spirit. When he forgets that he is eternally a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the individual soul enters Māyā's prison. Originally all souls are Vaiṣṇavas. However, they become two groups: 1. nitya-baddha (eternally imprisoned by Māyā), and 2. nitya-mukta (eternally liberated). A human being bewildered by matter cannot describe these things. Still, a saintly devotee can attain the spiritual vision to see these spiritual truths directly. My words are inevitably influenced by matter. I will describe these things as far as I am able. My words will inevitably be imperfect. O baba, you will be able to see the pure spiritual truth. However, logic will not help you. Why will logic not help? Because logic is useless in grasping what is beyond the mind's understanding. I know you will not be able to understand this all at once. Still, the more you follow the spiritual path the more you will be able to see the difference between matter and

spirit. Your body is material. All the body's actions are material. But the truth is that You yourself are not material. You are a tiny particle of conscious spirit. The more you understand that truth, the more you will be able to perceive your own identity and the truth that you are superior to the material world. You will not understand this merely by hearing me tell you about it. As you follow the path of regularly chanting the holy names of Lord Hari, these spiritual truths will gradually spontaneously appear before you. Then you will understand the spiritual world. As long as the mind and words are influenced by matter, try as one may one will not be able to touch the spiritual truth. The Vedas (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.4.1) explain:

yato vāco nivartante
aprāpya manasā saha

"The descriptive power of speech fails in the realm of the Absolute Truth and the speculative power of the mind cannot achieve Him."*

My advice to you is: Don't ask anyone what they think of these conclusions. Experience them yourself. I can only give a hint about them.

Vrajanātha: I say this: If the individual souls are like sparks from a blazing fire or atomic particles of sunlight, then what is the function of the jīva-śakti potency?

Bābājī: Kṛṣṇa is self-effulgent, like a blazing fire or the sun. Kṛṣṇa is like a blazing fire. In the center of the fire is the cit-śakti is present in fullness. In addition to the center there is also a great expanse illuminated by the fire. The same way the Kṛṣṇa-sun illuminates a great area with sunlight. The rays of sunlight are particles of His internal potency (svarūpa-śakti). Those atomic particles that constitute those rays of sunlight are the individual spirit souls. The internal potency (svarūpa-śakti) manifests the Kṛṣṇa-sun planet itself. The sunlight emanating from that planet is manifested by the cit-śakti, and the individual particles of light are manifested by the jīva-śakti. Therefore the individual spirit souls are manifested by the jīva-śakti. This is described in the following words of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.8):

parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate

"The Lord's spiritual potency is manifested in many different ways."

In this way the Lord's spiritual potency manifests the jīva-śakti-sunlight, which shines on the borderline (taṭa) of the spiritual and material worlds. In this way the eternal individual spirit souls are manifested.

Vrajanātha: A blazing fire is material, the sun is material, and sparks are material. Why are material examples used here to describe the spiritual truth?

Bābājī: I have already explained that when we try to use material words to describe spiritual things, the faults of matter tend to slip into the description. In this situation we have no choice but to use examples like the fire or the sun. In truth, Lord Kṛṣṇa is much greater than the sun. Lord Kṛṣṇa's circle of spiritual potencies is much greater than the circle of the sun's light. Lord Kṛṣṇa's effulgence is much greater than the sun's light. In this case certain features that may be similar are considered, but in many other way the two things being compared are not at all alike. The sun and the sunlight are beautiful and glorious, and the spiritual truth is also beautiful and glorious. However, the sun is material and it also burns things to ashes, and has many other like qualities also. These qualities are absent in the spiritual truth. When we say that milk is like water, we mean that as water is a liquid, so milk is also a liquid. We do not mean that milk and water are identical in all respects. If that were so, why would we designate one things as milk and another as water? Therefore, when we use an example to describe something, the example shows a similarity in only one point. The two things compared are not alike in everything.

Vrajanātha: The individualsoul-sunlight is simultaneously one and different from the Kṛṣṇa-sun. How is this possible?

Bābājī: In the material world when one things is manifested from another, the thing manifested is either different from or identical with its source. That is the nature of material things. When an egg comes from a bird, the egg and bird are then distinct. The egg does not remain a part of the bird. As long as they are not cut off, the hair and nails of a human body remain part of it. In the world of spirit the situation is different. When they are emanated from the spiritual sun, the rays of spiritual sunlight remain simultaneously one and different from their source. The rays of light and the atomic particles of which those rays are constituted are not different from the sun that is their origin. In the same way the sunlight of the jīva-śakti, and the atomic particles of which that sunlight is composed, which particles are the individual spirit souls, are not different from the Kṛṣṇa-sun that is their origin. In this way the individual spirit souls are not different from Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, the individual souls are all individual persons, and each of them has free-will. In this way they are each eternally different from Lord Kṛṣṇa. In this way the individual spirit souls are simultaneously one and different from Lord Kṛṣṇa. This is so eternally. In this way the nature of spirit is different from that of matter. The paṇḍitas also give another example from the material world. It is this: There is a large lump of gold, and from that lump a bracelet is fashioned. Because is is gold, the bracelet is not different from the gold lump. Still, because it is a bracelet, it is also different from the lump of gold. The example here does not hold in all its details, but in one point it holds. The Kṛṣṇa-sun and the individualsouls-sunlight are one in the sense that they are both spirit, but they are different in the sense that one is the complete spirit and the other is a tiny particle of spirit. The impersonalists' example of the “sky within the clay pot and the great sky expanded everywhere" does not properly explain the spiritual truth.

Vrajanātha: If spirit and matter are different, then why are these examples used?

Bābājī: The nyāya philosophers like to divide the components of the material world into various categories, and then claim that these divisions are eternal. Matter and spirit are not really different from each other in that way. As I said before, matter is merely a perverted manifestation of spirit. The perverted

manifested and the original pure form from which it has come may share many similar features. The perverted manifestation is certainly different from the original pure form, but still the two share many similarities. Ice is a perverted manifestation of water. Ice is different from water. Still water and ice may both be cold and may share many other qualities also. There may also be differences. Cold and hot water do not share the quality of coldness. However, they do share the quality of liquidity. Therefore a perverted manifestation may have many qualities like those present in the pure manifestation that is its origin. Because matter is a perverted manifestation of spirit, spirit and matter do have some similar qualities. These similar qualities may provide material examples to describe spiritual things. Here the example of "arundhatī-darśana-nyāya" (showing the position of the star Arundhatī in the sky by using an object on the earth as a point of reference. In this way one may say, “If you look between these two branches of this tree, the star in the sky shining there is Arundhatī") is appropriate. In this way examples drawn from material things can be used to reveal spiritual truths. Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are perfectly spiritual. They have not even the slightest scent of matter. Lord Kṛṣṇa's Vraja pastimes in Vraja, which are described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, are perfectly spiritual and not material. When they are read to a circle of human hearers, they produce different results according to the qualifications of the different people hearing them. When people very attached to matter hear these pastimes they enjoy the material poetic language and, as far as they are concerned, think they are hearing description of an ordinary romantic couple. People of an intermediate qualification think in terms of the "arundhatī-darśana-nyāya". They think these pastimes are examples drawn from the material world to reveal spiritual truths. Persons who are most qualified know that these pastimes are spiritual activities far beyond the realm of matter. These person dive into an ocean of nectar happiness to hear of these pastimes. Without speaking examples like these, how can one teach the people about the spiritual truth? The material mind and material words are defeated when they try to describe these things. How will the souls imprisoned in the material world attain an auspicious life? We do not see any way other than by speaking examples like the example of "arundhatī-darśana-nyāya". Material things are either one or different. Spiritual things are not like that. Lord Kṛṣṇa, His jīva-śakti potency, and the the individual spirit souls manifested from that potency are all inconceivable. You should accept that they are simultaneously one and different.

Vrajanātha: In what ways are the individual spirit soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead different?

Bābājī: First I will explain how the individual spirit soul and the Supreme Personality of Godhead are eternally one. After that I will explain how They are eternally different. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is consciousness, a knower, an enjoyer, a thinker, self-manifested, and visible to others. He is also the knower of all fields of activity and He is full of desires. The individual spirit soul is also consciousness, a knower, an enjoyer, a thinker, self-manifested, and visible to others. He is also the knower of a field of activity and he is also full of desires. Because He is the master of all potencies, the Supreme Personality of Godhead has these qualities to the highest degree. On the other hand, the individual spirit soul, possessing only very slight power, has these qualities in a very slight degree. Although they are different in the sense that one is perfect and complete and the

other is very small and atomic, the Supreme Personality of Godhead and the individual spirit soul are alike in that They both possesses these qualities. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the master of all potencies. He is the controller of the svarūpa-śakti (internal potency), jīva-śakti, and māyā-śakti. These potencies are all His obedient maidservants. He is their master. Whatever He wishes, they do. That is the nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The individual spirit soul has a very tiny drop of these qualities. He is subordinate to the Lord's other potencies. The word “māyā" is used in the *Daśa-mūla* (in the verse quoted in the beginning of this chapter) to mean not only the Lord's material potency but also His internal potency (svarūpa-śakti). The dictionaries explain:

mīyate anayā iti māyā

"That which measures is called `māyā'."

According to this explanation, the word "māyā" refers to the potency of Lord Kṛṣṇa that manifests the spiritual world, the individual spirit souls, and the material world. Understood in this way, the word "māyā" refers to the Lord's internal potency (svarūpa-śakti), not to His material potency. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the master of this māyā potency. The individual spirit souls are under the control of this māyā potency. This is described in the following words of the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.9-10):

yasmān māyī sṛjate viśvam etat
tasmiṁś cānyo māyayā sannirūḍhaḥ

"It is very difficult for the conditioned soul. illusioned by māyā and trapped in the material world, to understand the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the controller of the illusory potency and the creator of the material universes.*

māyāṁ tu prakṛtiṁ vidvān
māyinaṁ tu maheśvaram
tasyāvayava-bhūtais tu
vyaptaṁ sarvam idaṁ jagat

"One should know that although māyā (illusion) is false or temporary, the background of māyā is the supreme magician, the Personality of Godhead, who is Maheśvara, the Supreme Controller."*

In these verses the word "mayi" refers to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the controller of māyā, and the word "prakṛti" refers to His complete potency. This glorious quality (being the controller of māyā) belongs to the Supreme Personality of Godhead alone. The

individual souls do not possess it. Even the liberated souls cannot attain this quality. In the Vedānta-sūtra (4.4.17) it is said:

jagad-vyāpāra-varjanam

"Even after he attains liberation, the individual soul does not have the power to create the material world."

therefore the conclusion of Vedānta-sūtra is that the individual souls are eternally different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. The circle of the wise accept this conclusion. This eternal difference is not an imagination. It is eternally real. The difference between the soul and the Lord will never be destroyed. Therefore you should know that the statement "The individual spirit soul is eternally a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa" is one of the most important teachings of the scriptures.

Vrajanātha: If they are eternally different, then how are they not different? Should we accept the idea that when he attains nirvāṇa, the soul becomes one with the Supreme?

Bābājī: baba, it is not like that. At no time does the individual soul become non-different from the Supreme.

Vrajanātha: Then why do you say that the soul is simultaneously one and different from the Lord?

Bābājī: In the sense that they are both spiritual in nature, Lord Kṛṣṇa and the individual soul are eternally not different. Otherwise, their natures are eternally different. Their oneness is eternal, and their difference is also eternal. Their oneness does not refer to the other qualities of their natures. In other qualities their difference is more prominent. Therefore, if one says that a house is simultaneously "the property of Devadatta" and "without Devadatta's presence", then even though Davdatta may be absent, the idea that it remains his property is the more important of the two ideas. Now I will give another material example. The sky is a material thing. If some portion of the sky is contained within a clay pot, the existence of the great sky outside the pot remains more important than the sky within the pot. In the same way the eternal difference between the Supreme Lord and the individual spirit soul is more important than their oneness.

Vrajanātha: Please describe the soul's eternal nature more clearly.

Bābājī: the individual spirit soul is an atomic fragment of consciousness. He has knowledge. He has ego, or a sense of self, and he calls himself by the word "I". He is an enjoyer, and thinker, and a knower. The soul has an eternal form. That form is spiritual and subtle. That form has hands, feet, eyes, nose, ears, and other limbs, all handsome and graceful, superficially like the limbs of an ordinary material body. That body is made of a spiritual atom. It is very handsome. It is spiritual. That is the eternal form of the individual spirit soul. When the soul is imprisoned by Māyā, the soul's original spiritual body is covered by two material bodies. One of these bodies is called "liṅga-śarīra" (the subtle body) and the other is called "sthūla-śarīra" (the gross body). The liṅga-śarīra covers the atomic spiritual form

of the individual spirit soul. From the time the soul is first imprisoned in the material world until the time he is released, the liṅga-śarīra cannot be removed. When the soul takes birth in another body, he enters a different sthūla-śarīra (gross body). He does not enter a different liṅga-śarīra. He keeps the same liṅga-śarīra. The liṅga-śarīra is one. On the other hand, the soul periodically leaves one sthūla-śarīra and, impelled by his material desires, accepts another sthūla-śarīra. Thus, following the path of the five fires described in the Vedas, the soul attains a new sthūla-śarīra, These five fires, beginning with "citāgni", “vṛṣṭy-agni", "bhojanāgni", and "reto-havanāgni" are described in the Chāndogya Upaniṣad and the Vedānta-sūtra. In this way one birth follows another. According to the desires he had in his previous births, the soul attains a particular kind of new body. In this way he attains a certain kind of material nature and a particular status among the castes. According to the way he acts in the varṇāśrama system, he gets an appropriate new body at the time of death. Meanwhile his original spiritual form remains covered, first by the liṅga-śarīra, and secondly by the sthūla-śarīra.

Vrajanātha: What is the difference between the eternal spiritual body and the liṅga-śarīra?

Bābājī: The eternal body is an atomic particle of spirit. It has no defects. The soul may properly apply the word "I" to this body alone. The liṅga-śarīra is composed of material perversions of the soul's original mind, intelligence, and ego.

Vrajanātha: How can mind, intelligence, and ego be material? If they are material, how can they be conscious of anything?

Bābājī: Lord Kṛṣṇa explains in the Bhagavad-gita (7.4-6):

bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ
khaṁ mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā

"Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence, and false egoaltogether these eight comprise My separated material energies.*

apareyam itas tv anyāṁ
prakrtiṁ viddhi me parām
jīva-bhūtāṁ mahā-bāho
yayedaṁ dhāryate jagat

"Besides this inferior nature, O mighty-armed Arjuna, there is a superior energy of Mine, which are all living entities who are struggling with material nature and are sustaining the universe.*

etad yonīni bhūtāni
sarvāṇīty upadhāraya

ahaṁ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ
prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā

"Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I am both its origin and dissolution."*

Look at these words of Gita Upaniṣad. Here two natures: superior (parā) and inferior (aparā) are described. The superior nature is the jīva-śakti, and the inferior nature is the māyā-śakti. Because it is a particle of spirit, the jīva-śakti is here called "superior". On the other hand, the māyā-śakti is made of matter, and therefore it is called “inferior". The individual spirit souls are different from the inferior, material potency. The inferior potency has eight elements: the five gross elements and the three subtle elements of mind, intelligence, and false ego. When they are manifested in the material potency, mind, intelligence, and ego are material in nature. These three form a body made of consciousness, but that consciousness is not spiritual, it is material consciousness. From the material mind all else is manifested. The mind is thus conscious of material objects and engaged in directing material activities. This the material mind is the root from which material things grow. It is not the root of spiritual things. In the material consciousness is placed the conception of what is good and what is not good. This is called "intelligence". This intelligence is material in nature. From this material intelligence material ego is manifested. This kind of ego is not spiritual in its nature. When these three material elements (material mind, intelligence, and ego) combine they form a second body, which is called the liṅga-śarīra. The material ego of this material liṅga-śarīra then covers the eternal spiritual ego of the individual spirit soul. In the soul's eternal spiritual form, the spiritual ego understands its relationship with the spiritual Kṛṣṇa-sun. When the soul attains liberation, this original spiritual ego becomes uncovered and is openly manifested. As long as the liṅga-śarīra covers the soul's eternal spiritual form, the soul tends to identify itself as matter. At that time the truth, that the soul is spiritual, is almost completely lost. The liṅga-śarīra is made of subtle matter, and because it is subtle it is easily covered by another body, the sthūla-śarīra, which is made of gross matter. When the covering of the sthūla-śarīra is in place, the ego identifies with one of the castes or other groups (varṇas) of this world. Because they are perverted manifestations of their counterparts in the soul's original spiritual body, the material mind, intelligence, and ego think they are really conscious of the world around them.

Vrajanātha: I understand now that the individual soul has a eternal spiritual form each limb of which is very graceful and beautiful. When the soul is imprisoned by Māyā, that original spiritual form is covered by the liṅga-śarīra. In this way the soul's beauty is covered and hidden. Then the liṅga-śarīra is covered by the gross sthūla-śarīra. In this way the soul's original form is completely hidden by a a great apparatus of material things. My question is this: Is the liberated soul completely perfect and free of any defect?

Bābājī: Although he is free of defects, the atomic spiritual soul is not perfect. Why not? He is very tiny and very weak. For this reason one defect may be seen in

the individual soul: because he is so weak, when he comes into contact with the māyā-śakti, the soul is easily overpowered and his original form becomes covered. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.32), the demigods speak the following prayer to the Supreme Lord:

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy aṣṭa-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ

"O lotus-eyed one, those who think they are liberated in this life but do not render devotional service to You must be of impure intelligence. Although they accept severe austerities and penances to rise to the spiritual position, to impersonal Brahman realization, they fall down again because they neglect to worship Your lotus feet."*

Therefore, even when he is liberated, the individual spirit soul is not very great and is always imperfect. That is the truth of the individual spirit souls. The Vedas declare that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the controller of Māyā, but on the other hand the individual spirit souls are so weak that at any moment they may be overpowered by Māyā.

Chapter Sixteen
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya Prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Māyā-kavalita Jīva-vicāra)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (The Individual Souls Swallowed by Māyā)

After he had heard the *Daśa-mūla's* teachings about the individual spirit soul, Vrajanātha lay in his bed in his own home and deeply thought, " `Who am I?' that question was answered. Now I know who I am. I am an atomic particle of light shining from the spiritual sun of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I am atomic in size, and therefore I possess consciousness, a spiritual identity, and a single drop of spiritual bliss. I have a form made of a tiny fragment of spirit. I am very tiny, and my form is somewhat like the moderately-sized form of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I cannot see my spiritual form. That is my misfortune. That I am now very eager to see this spiritual form means that now I have become fortunate. Why did I fall into this unfortunate situation? I must understand that very clearly. Tomorrow I will place this question before Śrī Gurudeva's feet. He thought about it again and again. After six hours of the night had passed, the goddess of sleep came like a thief and gradually stole

away his wakefulness. When the night was ending he dreamed that he had renounced the material world and accepted the garments of a Vaiṣṇava. When his sleep broke he thought, "Now the Lord will take me from this material life." He went to the family shrine of Goddess Durgā. His students came, fell at his feet, and requested, "We have come to study logic. Please teach us the book *Kusumāñjali*. That is our wish." Vrajanātha humbly replied, "Like Nimāi Paṇḍita, I too have closed my books. I have made my mind place its gaze on a different path. Please find another teacher." One by one, the students left. Then the matchmaker Caturbhuja Miśra visited Vrajanātha's grandmother with a proposal for Vrajanātha's marriage. He said, "Vijayanātha Bharṭṭācārya comes in a good family. His daughter is very beautiful. She would be good for your grandson. The Bhaṭṭācārya has not yet promised his daughter to anyone." Hearing this marriage proposal, Vrajanātha's grandmother became very happy. Vrajanātha thought, "What a calamity! Now I have decided to renounce the world. How can any good come from this talking of my marriage? With Vrajanātha on one side and his mother, grandmother, and the elderly ladies of the family on the other, there was much talking about it. In that way the day passed. At sunset there were clouds, thunder, and rain. That day Vrajanātha did not go to Māyāpura. The night passed. The next day there was more talk about the marriage. Vrajanātha could not peacefully take his meals or do anything else. At sunset Vrajanātha approached the elderly bābājī's cottages. He offered daṇḍavat obeisances. The saintly bābājī said, "Last night it rained, so you could not come. Now I am very glad to see you." Vrajanātha replied, "O master, many calamities have fallen upon me. Later I will tell you about them. For now I will ask this question: The individual soul is pure spirit. Why does the calamity of residing in the material world fall upon him?" The saintly bābājī smiled and recited this verse:

svarūpārthair hīnān nija-sukha-parān kṛṣṇa-vimukhān
harer māyā daṇḍyān guna-nigaḍa-jālaiḥ kalayati
tathā sthūlair liṅgair dvi-vidhāvarānaiḥ kleśa-nikarair
mahā-karmālānair nayati patitān svarga-nirayau

"Covering them with gross and subtle material forms, chaining them with the modes of material nature, and pulling them with the painful ropes of karma, Māyā leads to Svargaloka and to hell the criminal souls who, forgetting their own spiritual welfare, have turned from Kṛṣṇa and become intent on their own happiness."

In Goloka, which is manifested by Lord Baladeva, and in Vaikuṇṭha, which is manifested by Lord Saṅkarṣaṇa, numberless individual souls are eternal associates of the Lord. There they taste the nectar of worshiping and serving the Lord. They are always inclined to spiritual things. They seek the happiness of worshiping the Lord. They are always eager to serve the Lord. Empowered by the Lord's jīva-śakti and cit-śakti, they always have great spiritual strength. They never touch Māyā. They do not even know that a potency called māyā-śakti exists. Staying in the middle of the circle of the spiritual world, they are very far away from Māyā. They

always swim in the ocean of pleasure that is worshiping and serving the Lord. They know nothing of suffering, material pleasure, or selfish pleasure. They are eternally liberated. Love for the Lord is their entire life. What are grief, death, and fear they do not know. When He glances at Māyā, Lord Kāraṇodakaśāyī Viṣṇu sends numberless atomic spirit souls to the material world. Because they are now on Māyā's side, the many creations of Māyā now enter the pathway of their eyes. The4se souls have all the qualities of the soul I have already described. However, because they are atomic in size, from the border of matter and spirit (taṭastha) they must place their glance on either the spiritual world or the material world. The individual souls are very weak. How can this not be? These souls did not obtain the spiritual strength that comes from the Lord's mercy, mercy that comes from properly serving Him. That is why these souls develop a desire to enjoy the pleasures that Māyā offers. These souls enter Māyā's world, and there Māyā imprisons them for what seems an eternity. When these souls again turn to spiritual life and service to the Lord, they can attain the Lord's mercy, which will give them spiritual strength. Then they can return to the spiritual world. Baba, I am very unfortunate. I have forgotten that I am eternally a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I have entered Māyā's world, and here Māyā keeps me imprisoned. I have forgotten my own spiritual welfare. I am very unfortunate!

Vrajanātha: O master, why did some souls leave the borderline of matter and spirit and enter the world of Māyā? Why did other souls go to the spiritual world?

Bābājī: Lord Kṛṣṇa's own qualities are present in a very small degree in the individual spirit souls. Because Lord Kṛṣṇa has free will, so the individual souls eternally possess a small quantity of free will also. When that free will is used properly, the individual soul is favorable to Kṛṣṇa and turns toward Him. When the free will is misused, the soul is averse to Kṛṣṇa and turns away from Him. Then the soul tries to enjoy Māyā. Puffed up with petty pride, the soul thinks, "I am the enjoyer of matter." Then the pure spiritual form of the soul becomes covered by the five kinds of ignorance that begin with illusion and false-ego. Thus is is the proper or improper use of free will that bring us either liberation or imprisonment in the material world.

Vrajanātha: Lord Kṛṣṇa is supremely merciful. Why, then, did He make the individual spirit souls so weak that they fall into Māyā's world?

Bābājī: As He is merciful, so Kṛṣṇa is also playful. Desiring many different kinds of pastimes with individual spirit souls in many different conditions of life, He created many exalted conditions, which culminate in "mahā-bhāva" (great ecstatic spiritual love for the Lord), and He also created, with the help of Śrī Rādhā's expansion Māyā, the degraded material conditions of life, which reach their nadir in "ahaṅkāra" (the soul's misidentification with matter). In this way, by the influence of Śrī Rādhā there is the attainment of limitless transcendental bliss, and by the influence of Māyā there is a descent into the lower depths. The souls that thus enter Māyā's abyss are not interested in their own spiritual well-being. They are averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa and interested in their own selfish pleasure. Thus they go down lower and lower. However, supremely merciful Lord Kṛṣṇa sends His own personal associates from His own spiritual world into the material world to make these souls favorable to Him and to lift them out of the abyss. In this way some of the fallen souls gradually become elevated and eventually return to the spiritual

world, where they become eternal associates of the Lord.

Vrajanātha: Why must the individual souls suffer so the Lord can enjoy pastimes like these?

Bābājī: What should be said is this: It is by the great mercy of the Lord that the individual souls have free will. Why not speak in that way? Inanimate matter is very lowly and unimportant because it has no free will. It is because they have free will that the individual souls can become masters of the world of matter. "Pain" and "pleasure" are two destinations the mind can attain. What you and I may call “pain", another person, who is attached to it, may call “pleasure". All material pleasures bring only pain at the end. They do not lead to anything but that. Therefore a person attached to material pleasures becomes unhappy at the end. When that unhappiness becomes very acute, the soul begins to desire happiness that is not mixed with sufferings. From that desire comes intelligence, and from that intelligence comes the spirit of inquiry. From the spirit of inquiry comes association with saintly persons, from association with saintly persons comes faith in spiritual life, and from faith in spiritual life one becomes gradually elevated. In this way what began as pain became at the end the giver of auspicious happiness. When it is heated and burnished, impure gold becomes pure. In the same way, when they suffer in Māyā's material world, the impure souls averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa and yearning to enjoy māyā become purified. That this suffering turns into the giver of happiness is the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore they who are far-sighted see that these sufferings of the conditioned souls eventually bring auspicious happiness. They are are short-sighted cannot see that. They see only sufferings.

Vrajanātha: Although they may bring happiness at the end, for the present the conditioned souls' sufferings are very painful. Could not the all-powerful Lord invent a different path, one without these sufferings?

Bābājī: Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys many different kinds of wonderful pastimes. This is one of His wonderful pastimes. A person who is supremely independent can enjoy many different kinds of pastimes, and this may be one of them. Why not? If the Lord has every kind of pastime, then no pastime may be rejected. If one pastime is substituted for another, then still some kind of troubles must be expected. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the supreme person and the creator. Everyone is subject to His will. If one person is subject to another's will, is there not some difficulty in that? If that difficulty eventually leads to happiness, then it is no difficulty at all. Why do you say it is suffering and difficulty? If to expand Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes the individual souls go through some difficulties, the difficulties are only happiness. Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are naturally full of bliss. If an individual soul of his own free will voluntarily leaves those pastimes and enters the world of Māyā and accepts the sufferings there, then if anyone is at fault it is the individual soul who is at fault. Kṛṣṇa is not at fault.

Vrajanātha: In that situation, what is the harm that Lord Kṛṣṇa does not give the soul free will? Kṛṣṇa knows everything. Therefore Kṛṣṇa knows if a certain soul will misuse his free will and bring suffering to himself. In that situation it is cruel of Kṛṣṇa to give such a person free will. Is it not?

Bābājī: Free will is a precious jewel. In the material world there are many inanimate material objects. None of them were given the jewel of free will. That is why inanimate objects are lowly and unimportant. If he had not been given free will, the individual soul would be lowly and unimportant, just like inanimate

objects. The individual soul is a tiny particle of spirit. Whatever qualities spirit has, the soul must also have. Free will is one of the qualities of spirit. Spirit can never be separated from its eternal qualities. Therefore, as a tiny particle of spirit, the soul must have free will. It is because they have free will that the individual souls are superior to inanimate matter and are the masters of the material world. The souls, who all have free-will, are all the dear servants of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When they misuse that free will and enter the world of māyā, merciful Kṛṣṇa weeps to see how they are suffering. Eager to deliver them, He follows the individual souls into the material world. Aware that the souls will not see His nectarean pastimes in the material world, He brings His inconceivable pastimes there. Seeing that the conditioned souls do not understand His pastimes, he descends to Navadvīpa and teaches them about His form, qualities, and pastimes, and about His own holy name, which is the best way for spiritual advancement, and He also teaches them by acting the role of His won devotee. baba, how can you place the blame on merciful Kṛṣṇa? Even though His mercy is fathomless, you remain unfortunate and very pathetic.

Vrajanātha: Is the māyā-śakti then our enemy and the cause of our misfortune? Kṛṣṇa is all-powerful and all-knowing. If Kṛṣṇa had driven Māyā far away, then the individual souls would not have to suffer.

Bābājī: Māyā is the reflection of the Lord's internal potency. She is a perverted manifestation of the Lord's pure spiritual potency. She purifies the criminal rebellious souls. She gives them a way to reform themselves. māyā is a maidservant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. She punishes the souls averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa. She gives them medicine and cures them. By forgetting "I am eternally a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa", the individual souls commit a crime. They are at fault. It is because of this crime that the witch Māyā punishes them. These criminal souls are sent to the prison that is the world of Māyā. As it is out of kindness that a king sends criminal to prison, so it is out of kindness that Lord Kṛṣṇa sends these criminal souls to the prison of the material world and placed Māyā there as the warden.

Vrajanātha: If the material world is a prison, then what are the shackles?

Bābājī: māyā's shackles are of three kinds: 1. shackles made of the mode of goodness, 2. shackles made of the mode of passion, and 3. shackles made of the mode of ignorance. The criminal souls are The criminal souls are bound with these shackles in different appropriate ways. Some souls may be bound with goodness shackles, others with passion shackles, and others with ignorance shackles. All are shackled. There may be golden shackles, silver shackles, or iron shackles. Shackles made of different elements do not cease to be shackles.

Vrajanātha: How can the shackles of Māyā bind the soul, which is an atomic particle of spirit?

Bābājī: Material things cannot touch spiritual things. When an individual soul gets the idea "I am the enjoyer of Māyā", the subtle covering of material ego is placed around him. Covered in this way by subtle matter, his feet are bound with the Māyā's shackles. The individual souls covered with material ego in the mode of goodness are the demigods residing in the higher material planets. Their feet are bound with the golden shackles of the mode of goodness. The individual souls covered with material ego in the mode of passion have a nature that is a combination of the natures of the demigods and the human beings. Their feet are bound with the silver shackles of the mode of passion. The individual souls

covered with material ego in the mode of ignorance are intoxicated by material pleasures. Their feet are bound with the iron shackles of the mode of ignorance. None of these shackled souls can leave the prison. All are troubled by many kinds of sufferings.

Vrajanātha: What activities are done by the souls in Māyā's prison?

Bābājī: Firstly they do what they can to enjoy material pleasures, and secondly they do what they can to avoid or negate the sufferings that come from the shackles they wear.

Vrajanātha: Please describe to me the first of these actions.

Bābājī: The sthūla-śarīra is the gross material body covering the soul. It has six stages of existence: 1. the birth of the material body, 2. its maintenance, 3. its decline, 4. its growth, 5. its change, and 6. its dissolution. The gross material body undergoes these six changes. Hunger, thirst, and other like desires are also part of the material body's nature. Pushed by the desire for material pleasures, the soul within the material body becomes an obedient servant of eating, sleeping, associating with women, and other material activities. To attain material pleasures he performs the ten pious rituals that begin with birth and end on the funeral pyre. He performs the eighteen kinds of yajñas described in the Vedas. He hopes, "By following the path of pious deeds (karma), I will enjoy with the demigods in Svargaloka. When I again enter the human realm, I will take birth in a brāhmaṇa's home and I will enjoy many happinesses." Or, the imprisoned soul may follow the impious path. By performing many sins, he enjoys sense pleasures. By the first course of action one attains Svargaloka and other higher material planets. Then, when his period of enjoyment ends, the soul again attains a human body. By the second course of action one goes to hell because of his many sins. When his period of suffering ends, the soul again attains a human body. In this way the soul imprisoned by Māyā travels on the wheel of karma. Day after day he struggles to enjoy material pleasures and he tastes the fruits of his actions. Thus, beginning at a time he cannot trace, the soul wanders in the material worlds. By performing pious deeds, he briefly enjoys, and by performing sins, he briefly suffers.

Vrajanātha: Now please describe the second kind of action.

Bābājī: Caught in a trap of many needs, the soul in a gross material body suffers. To drive away these sufferings, he acts in many ways. To drive away hunger and thirst, he struggles to get food and drink. So these things may come easily, he labors to collect money. To drive away the cold, he collects clothing. To stop the thirst for sense pleasures he becomes married and he performs many other activities also. To fill the needs and increase the happiness of his family and descendants, he labors hard. When the gross material body is attacked by disease, he must find medicines or other ways to cure it. To protect his property he enters disputes in the law courts. Tossed about by the six waveslust, anger, greed, bewilderment, pride, and envyhe engages in fighting, argument, violence to others, tormenting others, robbing others' wealth, cruelty, senseless pride, and a host of other evil deeds. So he can live independently, he builds his own house and performs other deeds. In this way the soul in Māyā's prison struggles day and night to attain pleasure and stop distress.

Vrajanātha: Had Māyā only covered the soul with the liṅga-śarīra (subtle body), would that not have been enough?

Bābājī: No. With just the liṅga-śarīra, no one can perform actions. Therefore

the covering of the sthūla-śarīra (gross body) is necessary. Following the results of actions performed by the sthūla-śarīra, various desires are created in the liṅga-śarīra. Following these desires, (at the time of his next birth) the soul attains an appropriate new sthūla-śarīra.

Vrajanātha: What is the relationship between actions and the results they bring? The mīmāṁsā philosophers say that God, who awards the results of actions, is only a fiction, that every action produces something called an "apūrva", and this "apūrva" gives the result of the action. Is this true?

Bābājī: The followers of karma-mīmāṁsā do not understand the true conclusion of the Vedas. Quickly glancing at the Vedic yajñas and other pious deeds, they come to a hasty conclusion. The true conclusion of the Vedas they do not grasp. The Vedas explain (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (4.6 and Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3.1.1):

dvā suparṇā sayujā sakhāyā
samānaṁ vṛkṣaṁ praiṣasvajāte
tayor anyaḥ pippalaṁ svādv atty
anaśnann anyo 'bhicakāśīti

"In the individual spirit soul and the Supersoul, Supreme Personality of Godhead, are like two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. One of the birds (the individual atomic soul) is eating the fruit of the tree (the sense gratification afforded by the material body), and the other bird (the Supersoul) is not trying to eat these fruits, but is simply watching His friend.*

Where is there any mention here of the mīmāṁsā philosophers' "apūrva"? Any conclusion that denies the existence of God cannot be good.

Vrajanātha: Why did you say that karma has no beginning?

Bābājī: Material desire is the root from which all karma (fruitive action) grows. Ignorance is the root from which material desire grows. That ignorance did not begin within the boundaries of material time. The ignorance that is the root of the individual soul's karma begins at the borderline of matter and spirit (taṭastha). Therefore the beginning of karma occurs outside the framework of material time. In that sense karma has no beginning.

Vrajanātha: What is the difference between "māyā" and "ignorance"?

Bābājī: Māyā is Lord Kṛṣṇa's potency. Using this potency, He created the material world to purify the rebellious souls. Māyā has two features: "avidyā" (ignorance) and “pradhāna" (the primordial form of matter). Avidyā directs her efforts to the individual souls, and pradhāna directs its efforts to inanimate matter. From pradhāna the material universes are manifested. From avidyā the material desires of the conditioned souls are manifested. Māyā also has two other features: "vidyā" (knowledge) and "avidyā" (ignorance). These two both direct their efforts to the individual spirit souls. Avidyā keeps the souls imprisoned in the material world, and vidyā releases them from that prison. When the criminal souls turn toward Lord Kṛṣṇa, the vidyā potency acts on them, and when the criminal souls

forget Kṛṣṇa, the avidyā potency acts. Knowledge of Brahman is a specific feature of vidyā. The first phase of vidyā is pious deeds, and the concluding phase is understanding the truth. Avidyā covers the soul and vidyā uncovers him.

Vrajanātha: What does pradhāna do?

Bābājī: In the beginning the Supreme Lord employs time to agitate the material energy. In this way the mahat-tattva is produced. Agitated in this way, Māyā's feature called "pradhāna" creates things. From the mahat-tattva, the false-ego is manifested. When false-ego is transformed by ignorance, the sky is manifested. From the sky, air is manifested. From air, fire is manifested. From fire, water is manifested. From water, earth is manifested. In this way the five material elements, which are called "paṇca-mahā-bhūta", are manifested. Now please hear how the five "tan-mātras" are created. When time agitates avidyā (ignorance), jñāna (knowledge of the impersonal) and karma (fruitive action) are manifested from the mahat-tattva. From the karma thus manifested from the mahat-tattva, the modes of goodness and passion are manifested, and from them come jñāna (knowledge) and kriyā (action). From the mahat-tattva, false-ego is manifested. From false-ego, intelligence is manifested. From intelligence, The quality of sound is perceived in the sky. From sound comes touch. Thus sound and touch are manifested the air. From them come "prāṇa" (the life-force), "ojaḥ" (energy) and "bala" (strength). In fire are manifested form, touch, and sound. Then, by the transformation created by time, water is manifested. In water are taste, form, touch, and sound. A further transformation brings earth, in which are fragrance, taste, form, touch, and sound. The all-knowing puruṣa-avatāra helps these changes become manifested. False-ego has three features: "vaikārika" (goodness), "taijasa" (passion), and "tāmasa" (ignorance). From false-ego in the mode of goodness, material objects are manifested. From false-ego in the mode of passion, the ten material senses are manifested. There are two sets of senses: knowledge-acquiring senses, and working senses. The knowledge-acquiring senses are: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and skin. The working senses are: voice, hands, feet, genitals, and rectum. Even when the gross and subtle elements are assembled together, nothing can happen until the individual soul, the tiny particle of spirit, enters. With a glance, the Supreme Personality of Godhead places the individual soul in the body of gross and subtle elements, and only then does the body begin to move. In this way the senses manifested by the modes of goodness and passion come into contact with the sense-objects the pradhāna has manifested through the mode of ignorance. In this way avidyā and pradhāna act. Māyā is divided into twenty-four categories: the five great elements, namely earth, water, fire, air, and sky, the five tan-mātras, namely fragrance, form, taste, touch, and sound, the previously described ten knowledge-acquiring and working senses, and, in addition to these, mind, heart, intelligence, and false-ego. Altogether these are the twenty-four categories of matter. The conscious individual spirit soul is the twenty-fifth category in the body, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul, in the twenty-sixth.

Vrajanātha: In the human body of seven spans, what part is the subtle body, what part the gross body, and where in the body does the spirit soul reside? Please tell me.

Bābājī: The sthūla-śarīra (gross body) consists of the five gross elements (paṇca-mahā-bhūta), five sense objects (paṇca-tan-mātra), and the ten senses. The liṅga-śarīra (subtle body) consists of the mind, heart, intelligence, and false-ego.

The individual spirit false falsely thinks of this material body in terms of "I" and "mine". In this way he does not understand how his own welfare is best served. The soul, a tiny fragment of spirit, exists in a dimension beyond time, space, and the other features of the material world. Even though it is a tiny particle, the soul is all-pervading within the material body. As a tiny drop of sandal-paste cools the entire body, so the soul, situated in one place within the material body, is aware of the pleasure and pains of the body as a whole.

Vrajanātha: If by his actions (karma) the individual soul creates his own pleasures and sufferings, what does the Supreme Personality of Godhead do?

Bābājī: The individual soul is the immediate cause, but the Supreme Personality of Godhead is the ultimate cause. By his various actions, the individual soul makes himself qualified to receive various results. However, he does not have the power to simply take them. All results must be given to him by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the ultimate cause. The Supreme Personality of Godhead gives the results, and the individual spirit soul receives them.

Vrajanātha: Through what different stages of life do the the souls imprisoned by Māyā pass?

Bābājī: The souls imprisoned by Māyā in a gross material body pass through five stages of existence. They are: “ācchādita-cetana" (covered consciousness), “saṅkucita-cetana" (retracted consciousness), “mukulita-cetana" (budding consciousness), “vikacita-cetana" (blossoming consciousness), and "pūrṇa-vikacita-cetana" (fully blossomed consciousness).

Vrajanātha: Which souls are in the stage of covered consciousness?

Bābājī: The souls who reside in the bodies of trees, grass, and stones are in the stage of covered consciousness. They are close to being unconscious. Forgetting that they are servants of Kṛṣṇa, they have entered deeply into the realm of matter. They have no understanding of spirit. All they know is the six changes of material life. This is the lowest depth to which the soul can fall. Ahalyā, the yamalārjuna trees, and the seven tāla trees are some examples the Purāṇas give of souls in this stage of existence. Great offenses push souls into that state, and Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy delivers them.

Vrajanātha: Which souls are in the stage of retracted consciousness?

Bābājī: Animals, birds, snakes, fish, other water-creatures, worms, and insects are examples of the beings with retracted consciousness. The beings with covered consciousness exist on the verge of being unconscious. The beings with retracted consciousness have their consciousness a little opened. That consciousness is directed toward eating, sleeping, fearing, and bustling to and fro to fulfill a host of desires, arguing with others over property claims, and anger when someone is wronged. However, that consciousness remains unaware of the existence of a world beyond the circle of matter. Monkeys may be mischievous, may give some thought to understanding the way things work, by thinking "This will happen, and that will not happen", may plan for the future, and may show signs of gratefulness and other like feelings. Some animals have knowledge of the different properties of various objects. However, the animals to not search to find God. Therefore their consciousness is said to be retracted. In the scriptures it is said that the great devotee Bharata took birth as a deer and in that condition he was fully aware of the holy names of the Supreme Lord. However, Bharata was a special case. In general, animals do not have spiritual knowledge. Because of offenses, Bharata and Nṛga

became animals, but then by the mercy of the Supreme Lord, they again attained an auspicious condition of life.

Vrajanātha: Which souls are in the stage of budding consciousness?

Bābājī: Conditioned souls in human bodies display three stages of consciousness: budding consciousness, blossoming consciousness, and fully blossomed consciousness. There are five kinds of human beings: immoral people, atheists who follow moral principles, people who believe in God and follow moral principles, people engaged in practical devotional service (sādhana-bhakti), and people engaged in loving devotional service (bhāva-bhakti). Thus the categories are: people who because of ignorance or because of improper knowledge become atheists, the immoral people, the moral atheists, the moral people who have a little faith in God, the people who believe in God, the people who, following the rules of the scriptures, engage in sādhana-bhakti (devotional service in practice), and the people who have attained love for God and thus engage in bhāva-bhakti. The immoral people and the two kinds of atheists are situated in the stage of budding consciousness. The people who believe in God and the people engaged in sādhana-bhakti are situated in the stage of blossoming consciousness, and the people engaged in bhāva-bhakti are situated in the stage of fully blossomed consciousness.

Vrajanātha: For how many days do the souls situated in bhāva-bhakti continue to stay in Māyā's prison?

Bābājī: This question is answered in the seventh verse of the *Daśa-mūla*. Now it is night. You should go home.

Thinking and thinking, Vrajanātha returned home.

Chapter Seventeen
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya Prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Māyā-mukta-jīva-vicāra
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (The Souls Free From Māyā's Prison)

The grandmother had already made arrangements for Vrajanātha's marriage. That night she told Vrajanātha all about it. Not giving any reply, Vrajanātha took his meal and went to bed. Again and again thinking about the pure spirit soul, he fell asleep late at night. The old grandmother kept thinking, “How can I make Vrajanātha agree to the marriage?" At that time Vrajanātha's cousin Vāṇī-Mādhava arrived. The girl in the proposed marriage was Vāṇī-Mādhava's cousin. Vijaya Vidyaratna had sent Vāṇī-Mādhava to complete the arrangements for the marriage. vani-Madhava said, "O great-aunt, why is there a delay? Please quickly make arrangements for Vrajanātha's marriage." Vrajanātha's grandmother lamented, "Brother, you are very expert. You convince Vrajanātha to agree to the marriage. I told him about it, but Vrajanātha will not reply."

Vāṇī-Mādhava was short, with a short neck, dark complexion, and blinking eyes. He started many things, but he did not bring any of them to completion. Hearing the old lady's words, he said, "Nothing can stop me. If you command me, what can I not do? Do you know how expert I am? I can multiply a single coin into a great sum. Well, I will talk to Vrajanātha. Will you not cook me a feast if I succeed? The grandmother replied, “Vrajanātha went to bed right after his meal." Hearing this, Vāṇī-Mādhava said, "Tomorrow I will come and take up the task," and left. The next morning came. Vrajanātha was sitting outside the shrine to Goddess Durgā. Seeing Vāṇī-Madhava, Vrajanātha said, "Brother, why have you come?" Vani-madhava replied, "O noble brother, for many days you studied and taught the nyāya-śāstra. You are the son of Haranātha Cūḍāmaṇi. Your name is famous in every country. However, you are the only male in the family. If there are no descendants, how can the family continue? Brother, that is why we all request you: Please get married." Vrajanātha replied, "Brother, why do you agitate me for no reason? I have taken shelter of Lord Gaurasundara's devotees. Why would I want to marry? When I stay near the Vaiṣṇavas of Śrī Māyāpura, I become filled with happiness. I do not think worldly life is good. I will take sannyāsa. I will take shelter of the Vaiṣṇavas' feet. I tell you this confidentially. Please do not reveal it to anyone." Seeing Vrajanātha's state of mind, Vāṇī-Mādhava thought, "This will not be an easy path to tread. I will have to trick him. Cunningly concealing what was in his heart, Vāṇī-Mādhava said, "I have always helped you. When you were a student, I carried your books. When you take sannyāsa, I will carry your daṇḍa and waterpot."

Cheaters speak with a forked tongue. To one person they say one thing, and to another person they say something different. In this way they make trouble. From what they say it is not at once seen what is really in their hearts. Honey sits on their mouths, and poison in their hearts. Hearing Vāṇī-Mādhava's sweet words, Vrajanātha said, "brother, I know that for many days you have been my true friend. My grandmother is an old lady. She does not understand anything that is very deep. She wants to push me together with this girl and throw me into a hell of household life. If you can stop her, I will be forever indebted to you." Vāṇī-Mādhava said, "Rest easy. No one will do anything against your wishes. Friend, tell me one thing with an open heart, so I will know how to help you. I wish to know: Why do you hate the idea of getting married? Who taught you to become renounced? Vrajanātha told Vāṇī-Mādhava all about how he had become renounced. He also said, "Elderly Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī in Māyāpura is my teacher. Every evening I go to him. He has extinguished the blazing fire of my materialism. He has been very kind to me." Fashioning a sinister plot in his mind, Vāṇī-Mādhava thought, "Now I have found his weak point. Now I will construct an expert stratagem. I will turn his weakness against him." Then he said aloud, "Brother, in secret I will change your grandmother's mind. But for now I will go home." After speaking these words, He first went home and then by a side road he quickly went to the entrance of Śrīvāsa's courtyard in Śrī Māyāpura. Sitting under the bakula tree, he thought, “These Vaiṣṇavas are plundering all the good things in the world for their own enjoyment! What beautiful homes! What a pleasant garden! What a graceful courtyard! What a beautiful place! One by one they sit in their bhajana-kuṭiras. The Vaiṣṇava sit and chant on japa beads. They are like the bulls of religion. They are free of all cares! After bathing in the Ganges, the

respectable ladies of the neighborhood bring them gifts of water, fruit, and various kinds of food. The brāhmaṇas used to get gifts like that for performing karma-kāṇḍa rituals. Nowadays these bābājīs enjoy them. O fortunate age of Kali! `He says he is a devotee of Rāmacandra, but in truth he is a devotee of Kali-yuga.' Now I understand what that old saying means. Alas! I am born in a brāhmaṇa's family in vain! Nowadays no one gives us fruit! No one gives even water! The Vaiṣṇava says the followers of nyāya are fools for talking so much about clay pots and scraps of cloth. I think they are right. At least about Vrajanātha. Now has fallen into the hands of these wicked people wearing only loincloths. I am Vāṇī-Mādhava. I will straighten out my friend. I will straighten out these wicked Vaiṣṇavas too." Thinking in this way, he entered one of the cottages. By chance he had entered the cottage of saintly Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī, who was sitting down and chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. A person's nature is easily seen on his face. When the elderly bābājī looked, he saw that Kali-yuga personified stood before him in the form of a brāhmaṇa's son. Vaiṣṇavas naturally think themselves very lowly and fallen. When enemies torment them, they are patient and tolerant. They wish good khfor all. They don't require that others honor them, although they give honor to everyone else. That is why saintly Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī gave all respect to his guest and politely offered him a place to sit. Vāṇī-Mādhava was very emphatically not a Vaiṣṇava. He did not understand the proper etiquette of how to approach a Vaiṣṇava. Thinking the elderly bābājī a śūdra, he gave a blessing to him. The saintly bābājī asked him, "Baba, what is your name? My boy, why have you come here?" When the elderly bābājī used the words “tumi" (you, the young boy) and "āmi" (I, the respectable gentleman), Vāṇī-Mādhava became angry. Speaking crookedly, Vāṇī-Mādhava said, "Bābājī! Do you think by wearing a loincloth you are now equal to the brāhmaṇas? Ah well, it must be. There is one thing I, a respectable gentleman, would like to ask you, O young boy. Do you know a Vrajanātha Paṇcānana?"

Bābājī: Please forgive my offense. Please do not find fault with an old man's words. Vrajanātha kindly comes here sometimes.

Vāṇī-Mādhava: He is not an honest man. He will be humble and polite for two or four days. That is how he will bring you under his control. Then he will be able to make you do what he likes. Seeing the way you act, the Bhaṭṭācāryas of Belapukura have become your bitter enemies. Consulting among themselves, they have sent Vrajanātha to you. You are an old man. You should take care. From time to time I will come and tell you of their plot. Don't tell anyone about me. If you tell them, it will not be good for you. Now I must go.

After speaking these words, Vāṇī-Mādhava returned to his own home.

After finishing his lunch, Vāṇī-Mādhava went to Vrajanātha and said, "Brother, today I went to Māyāpura on business. There I saw an old Vaiṣṇava. Perhaps he was your Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī. As I talked with him, the topic of you came up. He used a very bad word to describe you, a word one should not use for a brāhmaṇa. At the end he said, `I will make Vrajanātha eat the remnants from the plates of 36 low-caste people. In that way I will destroy all the brāhmaṇas.' Ha! If paṇḍitas like you stay with such people, then no one will ever respect the

brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas." Vrajanātha was very surprised to hear all these words of Vāṇī-Mādhava. There was no knowing why the firm faith he had in the Vaiṣṇavas and the devotion he had for the elderly bābājī suddenly became doubled. Vrajanātha said, "Brother, today I am very busy. Please go home, and in time I will think about what you said." Vāṇī-Mādhava went home.

Vrajanātha knew well that Vāṇī-Mādhava was double-hearted. Vrajanātha had been involved in nyāya logic, but he did not like dishonesty. Now he could see why Vāṇī-Mādhava offered to help him take sannyāsa. He could understand Vāṇī-Mādhava's crooked reason for speaking favorably about sannyāsa. As he thought about it, he concluded that Vāṇī-Mādhava must have something to gain from this marriage, and Vāṇī-Mādhava must have gone to Māyāpura to do something to further his crooked plot. In his thoughts Vrajanātha prayed to the Supreme Lord, "O Supreme Lord, please give me strong faith in my spiritual master and in the Vaiṣṇavas. Let it not diminish because of the misdeeds of cunning men. As he thought about these things, the day came to an end. With an agitated heart, he went to Śrīvāsa's courtyard at dusk.

After Vāṇī-Mādhava had left, the saintly elderly bābājī thought, "That man is a brahma-rākṣasa. The scriptures declare:

rākṣasāḥ kalim āśritya
jāyante brahma-yoniṣu

" `In the Kali-yuga, rākṣasas take birth in the families of brāhmaṇas.'

"That man is seen in those words. He has pride of caste, †pride †even †though he has nothing †really †to †be †proud about. He hates the Vaiṣṇavas. He is a hypocrite, proudly waving the flag of piety while he sins. All these things are written on his face. His short neck, blinking eyes, and devious words all show what is in his heart. Ah, how pleasant and gentle is Vrajanātha, and how much of a demon is this other fellow! O Lord Kṛṣṇa, O Lord Gaurāṅga, please let me not associate with people like him. Today I will warn Vrajanātha about him."

Vrajanātha entered the cottage. The saintly elderly bābājī, his affection for Vrajanātha now doubled, said, "Come in, baba. Come in." and embraced Vrajanātha. Tears flowing from his eyes, Vrajanātha kissed the dust of the bābājī's feet. Embarrassed, he could not speak. The saintly bābājī said, “This morning a dark-complexioned brāhmaṇa came here and spoke some very disturbing words. Do you know him?"

Vrajanātha: O master, you have explained to me that many different kinds of living entities live in this material world. Among all these living entities, some envious beings delight in troubling others. Among these envious beings my cousin (I am embarrassed to call him my cousin) Vāṇī-Mādhava is one of the foremost. If we do not talk about him, that will make me happy. The truth is that to you he speaks bad things about me, and to me he speaks bad things about you. He does this so we will think badly of each other and our friendship will break. When you

heard his words, did you not form an opinion in your mind?

Bābājī: O Kṛṣṇa! O Gaurāṅga! For a long time I have served the Vaiṣṇavas. By their mercy I have a little power to tell who is a Vaiṣṇava and who is not a Vaiṣṇava. I have understood everything. You need not say anything about this.

Vrajanātha: Let us forget all he has said. Please tell me: How is the soul released from Māyā's prison?

Bābājī: When you hear the seventh verse of the *Daśa-mūla*, you will find the answer to your question:

yadā bhrāmaṁ bhrāmaṁ hari-rasa-galad-vaiṣṇava-janaṁ
kadācit sampaśyan tad-anugamane syād rucir iha
tadā kṛṣṇāvṛttyā tyajati śanakair māyika-daśāṁ
svarūpaṁ bibhrāṇo vimala-rasa-bhogaṁ sa kurute

"When a soul wandering from one species to another in the material world sees a Vaiṣṇava filled with the nectar of devotion to Lord Hari, he becomes attracted to follow that Vaiṣṇava. By chanting the holy names of Lord Kṛṣṇa, that soul gradually renounces materialism, and in the end he regains his original spiritual form. In that form he enjoys the pure and sweet nectar of the spiritual mellows of direct service to Lord Kṛṣṇa."

Vrajanātha: I would like to hear one or two quotes from the Vedas as evidence for these truths.

Bābājī: In the Vedas it is said (Muṇḍaka Upansida 3.1.2 and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 4.7):

samāne vṛkṣe puruṣo nimagno
'nīśāya śocati muhyamānaḥ
juṣṭaṁ yadā paśyati anyam īśam
` asya mahimānam iti vīta-śokaḥ

"Although the two birds (the Supersoul and the individual soul) are on the same tree, the eating bird (the individual soul) is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness as the enjoyer of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his friend who is the Lord, and knows His glories, at once the suffering bird becomes free of all anxieties."*

Vrajanātha: It is said that when he sees the worshipable Supreme Lord and understands His glory, the individual soul becomes free from anxiety. Do these words describe “liberation"?

Bābājī: When one is released from Māyā's prison, that is called "liberation". To attain liberation one must associate with saintly devotees of the Lord. When he attains liberation, the soul regains its original spiritual glory. That kind of liberation should be sought. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.10.6) it is said:

muktir hitvānyathā-rūpaṁ
svarūpeṇa vyavasthitiḥ

"Liberation is the permanent situation of the form of the living entity after he gives up the changeable gross and subtle material bodies."*

When the soul is released from Māyā's prison, at the moment he is at once liberated. However, when he is thus situated in his original form, the soul begins to perform an endless series of spiritual activities. The soul's first need is to perform these activities. It may be said that liberation puts and end to a great host of sufferings. However, beyond that, liberation brings with it spiritual bliss. This is described in the following words of Chāndogya Upaniṣad (8.12.3):

evam evaiṣa samprasādo 'smac-charīrāt samutthāya paraṁ jyotir upasampadya svena svarūpeṇābhiniṣpadyate sa uttama-puruṣaḥ sa tatra paryeti jakṣan kṛīḍan ramamāṇaḥ.

"Then the soul leaves the material body and goes to the effulgent Supreme Personality of Godhead. The soul then regains his original spiritual form, and in that form he enjoys many pastimes, eating and playing with the Supreme Personality of Godhead."

Vrajanātha: What are the signs that show one has been released from Māyā's prison?

Bābājī: Eight signs are described in these words of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (8.7.1):

ātmāpahata-pāpmā vijaro vimṛtyur viśoko vijighatso 'pipāsaḥ satya-kāmaḥ satya-saṅkalpaḥ so 'nveṣṭavyaḥ.

"One should seek a soul who is free from sins, old-age, death, lamentation, hunger, and thirst, who desires the truth, and whose thoughts are fixed on the truth."

Vrajanātha: In the verse from the *Daśa-mūla* it was said that when he attains the association of a Vaiṣṇava who relishes the nectar mellows of service to Lord Hari, the soul wandering in the cycle of birth and death can attain auspiciousness. I have a question. By practicing impersonal speculation, aṣṭāṅga-yoga, or other auspicious deeds, does one not at the end attain devotional service to Lord Hari?

Bābājī: With His own transcendental mouth, the Supreme Personality of Godhead declares (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.12.1-2):

na rodhayati māṁ yogo
na saṅkhyaṁ dharma eva ca
na svādhyāyas tapas tyāgo
neṣṭā-pūrtaṁ na dakṣiṇā

vratāni yajñaś chandāṁsi
tīrthāni niyamā yamāḥ
yathāvarundhe sat-saṅgaḥ
sarva-saṅgāpaho hi mām

"Neither through aṣṭāṅga-yoga (the mystic yoga system to control the senses), nor through impersonal monism or an analytical study of the Absolute Truth, nor through study of the Vedas, nor through practice of austerities, nor through charity, nor through acceptance of sannyāsa, nor through yaj{.sy 241}as, nor through Vedic hymns, nor through going on pilgrimages, nor through religious duties and self-control can one attain Me as much as one can by associating with saintly devotees whose good association releases one from all that is inauspicious."

In the Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya (8.51) it is said:

yasya yat-saṅgatiḥ puṁso
maṇi-vat syāt sa tad-guṇaḥ
sva-kularddhyaitato dhīmān
sva-yūthāny eva saṁśrayet

"Association is very important. It acts just like a crystal stone, which will reflect anything which is put before it. Similarly, if we associate with the flowerlike devotees of the Lord, and if our hearts are crystal clear, then certainly the same action will be there."*

Therefore association with saintly devotees brings an auspicious result. When the scriptures say one should live alone, the meaning is that one should associate only with devotees. If if by accident one unknowingly associates with devotees, he attains a great benefit. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.23.55) it is said:

saṅgo yaḥ saṁsṛter hetur
asatsu vihito 'dhiyā
sa eva sadhuṣu kṛto
niḥsaṅgatvāya kalpate

"Association for sense gratification is certainly the path of bondage. But the

same type of association, performed with a saintly person, leads to the path of liberation, even if performed without knowledge."*

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.5.32) it is also said:

naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ
spṛśaty anarthāpagamo yad-arthaḥ
mahīyasāṁ pāda-rajo-'bhiṣekaṁ
niṣkiṇcanānāṁ na vṛṇīta yāvat

"Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava completely freed form material contamination, persons very much inclined toward materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus feet of the Lord, who is glorified for His uncommon activities. Only by becoming Kṛṣṇa conscious and taking shelter at the lotus feet of the Lord in this way can one be freed from material contamination."*

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.48.31) it is also said:

na hy am-mayāni tīrthāni
na devā mṛc-chilā-mayāḥ
te punanty uru-kālena
darśanād eva sādhavaḥ

"One can take advantage of the place of pilgrimage only after going there. By worshiping the particular demigod, it takes a long time for fulfillment of the desire, but saintly persons like you, My dear Akrūra, can immediately fulfill all the desires of the devotees."*

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.51.53) it is also said:

bhavāpavargo bhramato yadā bhavej
janasya tarhy acyuta sat-samāgamaḥ
sat-saṅgamo yarhi tadaiva sad-gatau
parāvareśe tvayi jāyate ratiḥ

"O my Lord! O infallible Supreme Person! When a person wandering throughout the universes becomes eligible for liberation from material existence, he gets an opportunity to associate with devotees. When he associates with devotees, his attraction for You is awakened. You are the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the highest goal of the supreme devotees and the Lord of the universe."*

Vrajanātha: By performing pious deeds one attains the association of saintly devotees. What are these pious deeds? Are they not karma (Vedic rituals) and jñāna (impersonal speculation)?

Bābājī: The scriptures describe pious deeds. Pious deeds are of two kinds: 1. pious deeds that bring devotional service, and 2. pious deeds that bring useless results. Regular and occasional Vedic duties, saṅkhya philosophy, and impersonal speculation all bring useless results. Association with saintly devotees and contact with places, times, and things that bring devotion bring the result of devotional service. As one accumulates these results, they eventually become so powerful that they bring devotion for Lord Kṛṣṇa. The useless results produced by other pious activities do not accumulate in this way. One enjoys their results, and then they are gone. In this material world pious activities like giving charity bring material enjoyment as their result. Impersonal speculation and other like activities bring impersonal liberation as their result. These activities do not have the power to give devotional service. Associating with saintly devotees, observing Ekādaśī, Janmāṣṭamī, Gaura-pūrṇimā, and other holy days that instill devotion in persons observing them, worshiping Tulasī-devī, worshiping the Lord in His temple, honoring mahā-prasādam, visiting holy places, and seeing and touching the devotees all bring the result of devotional service.

Vrajanātha: If a person tormented by the troubles of material life flees from material illusion and intelligently takes shelter of Lord Hari's feet, will he not attain devotional service?

Bābājī: If he intelligently understands that his sufferings are all caused by the illusory potency māyā, and that the entire material world is by nature inauspicious, and that his only shelter is the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord and the association of the Lord's devotees, then he will take shelter of the feet of the devotees who have taken shelter of the feet of the Lord. Taking shelter of their feet is the most effective means to attain devotional service. That is the way one attains the feet of the Supreme Lord. In the beginning renunciation and the intelligence to understand what is auspicious and what is not auspicious are certainly present, but they are of only secondary importance for a person striving for devotional service. Association with saintly devotees is the most important factor in attaining devotional service. Aside from that association, no other means is very important.

Vrajanātha: What is the objection to saying that karma (pious deeds), jñāna (impersonal speculation), vairāgya (renunciation), and viveka (the ability to understand what is auspicious and what is not) are secondary means that also help one attain devotional service?

Bābājī: There is an objection. Generally, these means bring results that are trivial and useless. After giving the soul material pleasures, pious deeds go away. renunciation and the ability to understand what is auspicious and what is not tend to lead the soul to impersonalism. Impersonalism tends to cheat the soul of the opportunity to attain the Lord's feet. One should not trust these means to bring devotional service. Sometimes these means may take one to devotional service, but generally they do not. On the other hand, association with pure devotees does not bring results that are trivial and temporary. Their association inevitably brings one to pure love of God. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.25.25), the Supreme Lord explains:

satāṁ prasaṅgān mama vīrya-samvido
bhavanti hṛt-karṇa-rasāyaṇa-kathāḥ
taj-joṣaṇād āśv apavarga-vartmani
śraddhā ratir bahkti anukramiṣyati

"In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and heart. By cultivating such knowledge one gradually becomes advanced on the path of liberation, and thereafter he is freed, and his attraction becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begin."*

Vrajanātha: Association with saintly devotees is then the way to attain devotional service. First one hears from the devotees' mouths the descriptions of Lord Hari, and then one attains devotional service. Is that the right sequence?

Bābājī: I will tell you the right sequence. Please listen. A soul wandering from birth to birth in the material world may by destiny attain something that leads to devotional service. In the course of his life, by destiny a soul may encounter one of the limbs of devotional service. By chance he may fast on ekādaśī, or see and touch a holy place, receive a pure devotee as a guest, or hear the holy names of Lord Hari, or the descriptions of Him, or songs about Him from the mouths of saintly devotees who have Lord Hari as their only possession. If a person performs these activities with a desire to attain material sense pleasures or impersonal liberation, he will not attain devotional service by performing them. However, if an innocent person by chance performs these activities with any motive to use them to attain sense pleasure or impersonal liberation, then these activities will lead him to devotional service. When these devotion-giving pious deeds accumulate after many births, one finally attains faith in pure devotional service. Faith in pure devotional service service creates the desire to associate with pure devotees. By associating with devotees one gradually becomes engaged in sādhana (devotional service in practice) and bhajana (worship of the Lord). By performing bhajana one gradually casts all unwanted material desires far away. When material desires are cast far away, one attains pure faith. When faith becomes more and more pure, one gradually attains "ruci" (attraction to the Lord). As one becomes more and more attracted to the beauty of the Lord, the attraction becomes transformed into attachment (āsakti) to the Lord. When this attachment becomes fully manifested, one attains ecstatic love (bhāva or rati) for the Lord. This ecstatic love turns into "rasa" (the nectar mellows of a relationship with the Lord), which brings "premotpatti" (pure love for the Lord). This the root of devotional service is seeing and following pure devotees of the Lord. The conclusion, then, is that in the beginning one associates with devotees. Then one develops faith. Then one continues to associate with devotees. The result of associating with devotees is that one attains faith. Faith is also known as surrender (śaraṇāpatti) to the Lord. The first association with the devotees brings attraction to the places, times, things, and persons dear to Lord Hari. The first association with devotees brings with it a faith that becomes manifested as surrender to the Lord. This is seen in the Lord's final teaching in Bhagavad-gītā (18.66):

sarva-dharmān parityajya
māṁ ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."*

Here the word "sarva-dharma" (all varieties of religion) refers to smārta-dharma (the rules of the smṛti-śāstras), aṣṭāṅga-yoga, saṅkhya, jñāna (impersonal speculation), vairāgya (renunciation), and all other like varieties of religion. None of these kinds of religion is able to fulfill the soul's true spiritual needs. Therefore in the Gita it is written that these religions should be abandoned. In pravṛtti-śraddhā (positive faith) one thinks, "I know that Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose form is the perfection of eternity, knowledge, and bliss, and who enjoys pastimes in Vraja, is the spirit souls' only goal. Therefore, completely rejecting material sense gratification, impersonal liberation, and any other non-devotional goal, with unalloyed spiritual love I now surrender unto Him." When this kind of faith arises, one becomes the humble follower of a saintly Vaiṣṇava. In this way one surrenders to a saintly Vaiṣṇava spiritual master.

Vrajanātha: What are the soul's anarthas (unwanted things)?

Bābājī: There are four kinds of anarthas: 1. sva-svarūpa-aprāpti (things that prevent one from reviving one's original spiritual nature), 2. asat-tṛṣṇā (thirst for material things), 3. aparādha (offenses), and 4. hṛdaya-daurbalya (weakness of heart). Forgetting "I am pure, a particle of spirit, a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the the imprisoned soul goes far away from his original nature. That the first anartha: sva-svarūpa-aprāpti. One may think "I am material, and these material objects are my property". In this way one thirsts for happiness in the realm of material things. This is called asat-tṛṣṇā. The three kinds of asat-tṛṣṇā are: 1. desire for good children and descendants, 2. desire for wealth, and 3. desire to reside in Svargaloka. The ten kinds of aparādhas (offenses) I will describe later. From hṛdaya-daurbalya (weakness of heart) come lamentation and a host of other problems. These four anarthas are the natural property of a soul shackled by material ignorance. By associating with devotees and cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the soul gradually throws these anarthas far away. The path of yoga, which consists of the four parts pratyāhāra (withdrawal from sense-objects), yama (self-control), niyama (restraint), and vairāgya (renunciation), is not an easy path to follow. It is filled with problems. It does not easily lead to the final goal. On the other hand, cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness in the association of devotees is an easy path to follow. It easily eclipses anarthas and materialism. When materialism is eclipsed, the original form of the soul is spontaneously manifested.

Vrajanātha: Should persons free of anarthas be called “liberated"?

Bābājī: Please reflect on these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.14.3-5):

rajobhiḥ sama-saṅkhyātāḥ
pārthivair iha jantavaḥ
teṣāṁ ye kecanehante
śreyo vai manujādayaḥ

"In this material world there are as many living entities as atoms. Among these living entities, very few are human beings, and among them, few are interested in following religious principles.*

prāyo mumukṣavas teṣāṁ
kecanaiva dvijottama
mumukṣūṇāṁ sahasreṣu
kaścin mucyeta sidhyati

"O best of brāhmaṇas, Sukadeva Gosvami, out of many persons who follow religious principles, only a few desire liberation from the material world. Among many thousands who desire liberation, one may actually achieve liberation, giving up material attachment to society, friendship, love, country, home, wife, and children. And among many thousands of such liberated persons, one who can understand the true meaning of liberation is very rare.*

.fn 2
muktānām api siddhānāṁ
nārāyaṇa-parāyaṇaḥ
sudurlabhaḥ praśāntātmā
koṭiṣv api mahā-mune

"O great sage, among many millions who are liberated and perfect in knowledge of liberation, one may be a devotee of Lord Nārāyaṇa, or Kṛṣṇa. Such devotees, who are fully peaceful, are extremely rare."*

Only pure devotees are really free of anarthas. Such devotees are very rare. one must search among many millions and millions of liberated souls to find one who is a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore in this material world there is no group more difficult to associate with than the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajanātha: Does the word "Vaiṣṇava" refer only to a Vaiṣṇava who has renounced family life?

Bābājī: The word Vaiṣṇava refers to a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Such a devotee may be either a householder or a sannyasi. He may be a brāhmaṇa or a caṇḍāla (outcaste). He may be wealthy or poverty-stricken. To the extent that he has pure devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, to that extent he is a pure devotee.

Vrajanātha: You have explained that the souls swallowed up by Māyā are of five

kinds. In those five kinds of souls imprisoned by Māyā, you included the sādhana-bhaktas (devotees in the stage of devotional service in practice) and bhāva-bhaktas (devotees in the stage of spiritual love). Which devotees are released from Māyā's prison?

Bābājī: From the moment he begins to live as a devotee of the Lord, the soul may be said to be released from Māyā's prison. However, the final stage of release from Māyā's prison is only attained when one attains the final stage of mature devotion to the Lord. Before that one is situated in the preliminary stage of release from Māyā's prison. When the gross (sthūla-śarīra) and subtle (liṅga-śarīra) material bodies are both finally broken, the soul attains the final stage of release from Māyā's prison. By practicing sādhana-bhakti (the practical activities of devotional service) one gradually attains bhava-bhakti (spiritual love of God). When bhava-bhakti becomes strong and firm, the soul is able, at the time of leaving the gross body, to leave the subtle body also and be situated in his original spiritual form. Because material life lingers during the stage of sādhana-bhakti, and because it is not yet completely removed even in the beginning stages of bhāva-bhakti, the sādhana-bhaktas and bhāva-bhaktas are included among the five kinds of souls swallowed by Māyā. The materialists and the impersonalists are certainly to be counted among the souls swallowed by Māyā. Among the liberated souls, they who have attained liberation by engaging in devotional service to Lord Hari have alone attained the true perfection of liberation. A soul who commits offenses and is therefore imprisoned by Māyā forgets "I am a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa". That forgetfulness is the root from which his offenses grow. Without the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, that soul is not excused from his offense. In the same way, with the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa, that soul will not be released from Māyā's prison. The impersonalist sampradāya's faith that by cultivating impersonal speculation they will attain liberation. That faith is groundless. Without first attaining Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy, no one is released from Māyā's prison. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.32-33) the demigods speak these two verses to explain this truth:

ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy aṣṭa-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nādṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ

"O lotus-eyed one, those who think they are liberated in this life but do not render devotional service to You must be of impure intelligence. Although they accept severe austerities and penances to rise to the spiritual position, to impersonal Brahman realization, they fall down again because they neglect to worship Your lotus feet.*

tathā na te mādhava tāvakāḥ kvacid
bhraśyanti mārgāt tvayi baddha-sauhṛdāḥ
tvayābhiguptā vicaranti nirbhayā
vināyakānīkapa-mūrdhasu prabho

"O Mādhava, Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord of the goddess of fortune, if devotees completely in love with You sometimes fall from the path of devotion, they do not fall like nondevotees, for You still protect them. Thus they fearlessly traverse the heads of their opponents and continue to progress in devotional service."*

Vrajanātha: What are the different kinds of souls free of Māyā's prison?

Bābājī: The souls free from Māyā's prison are of two kinds: 1. nitya-mukta (the souls who were never placed in Māyā's prison), and 2. baddha-mukta (the souls who were at one time imprisoned, but now are free). The nitya-mukta souls may be divided into two groups: 1. aiśvarya-gata (souls who appreciate the Lord's feature of opulence), and 2. mādhurya-gata (souls who appreciate the Lord's feature of sweetness). The aiśvarya-gata nitya-mukta souls are personal associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa, the master of Vaikuṇṭha. They are particles of spiritual effulgence emanated from Lord Mūla-Saṅkarṣaṇa, who resides in Vaikuṇṭha. The mādhurya-gata nitya-mukta souls are personal associates of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of Goloka Vṛndāvana. They are particles of spiritual effulgence manifested from Lord Baladeva, who resides in Goloka Vṛndāvana. The baddha-mukta souls (who were once imprisoned but now are free) are of three kinds: 1. aiśvarya-gata (souls who appreciate the Lord's feature of opulence), 2. mādhurya-gata (souls who appreciate the Lord's feature of sweetness), and 3. brahmajyotir-gata (souls situated within the Lord's spiritual effulgence). Souls who during their period of practicing sādhana-bhakti are attracted to the Lord's opulence become eternal associates of Lord Nārāyaṇa, the master of Vaikuṇṭha. They attain sālokya-mukti (the liberation of residing on the same planet as the Lord). Souls who during their period of practicing sādhana-bhakti are attracted to the Lord's sweetness, after liberation enjoy the sweetness of direct service to Lord Kṛṣṇa in the eternal spiritual abode of Vṛndāvana and other like abodes. Souls who during their period of sādhana are attracted to become one with the Lord, after liberation attain brahma-sāyujya-mukti (the liberation of merging with the Lord). In this way these souls are completely destroyed.

Vrajanātha: What is the final destination of the soul who is a devotee of Lord Gaura-kiśora (Lord Caitanya)?

Bābājī: Kṛṣṇa and Gaura-kiśora are not different. They are both shelters of the feature of sweetness (madhura-rasa). They do have one difference. madhurya-rasa (the Lord's sweetness) has two features: 1. mādhurya (sweetness), and 2. audārya (mercy). When sweetness is prominent, Lord Kṛṣṇa is manifested. When mercy is prominent, Lord Gaurāṅga is manifested. The spiritual world of Vrndavana is divided into two abodes: 1. the abode of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and 2. the abode of Lord Gaura. The eternally perfect and eternally liberated souls who have sweetness first and mercy second reside in Lord Kṛṣṇa's abode. They are Lord Kṛṣṇa's associates. The eternally perfect and eternally liberated souls who have mercy first and sweetness second reside in Lord Gaura's abode. They are Lord Gaura's associates. Some souls manifest two forms and reside in both abodes simultaneously. Other souls manifest only one form and are present in one of the abodes and not in the other. Souls who during the time of sādhana worship only Lord Gaura, at the time

of attaining perfection go to Lord Gaura's abode and serve Him there. Souls who during the time of sādhana worship only Lord Kṛṣṇa, at the time of attaining perfection go to Lord Kṛṣṇa's abode and serve Him there. Souls who during the time of sādhana worship both Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Gaura, at the time of attaining perfection manifest two forms, go to both Lord Kṛṣṇa's abode and Lord Gaura's abode, and in their two forms serve the two Lord's simultaneously in both places. This truth: that Lord Gaura and Lord Kṛṣṇa are simultaneously one and different from each other, is a very confidential secret.

After hearing these teachings about the souls released from Māyā's prison, Vrajanātha, now filled with ecstatic love, fell at the feet of the elderly Vaiṣṇava and stayed there for some minutes. Weeping and sweeping, the saintly bābājī picked up Vrajanātha and firmly embraced him. A good portion of the night had already passed. Taking leave of the bābājī, Vrajanātha returned home. Traveling on the path, he deeply thought about the soul's final destination. When he had returned home and was taking his meal, he said to his grandmother, “Grandmother, if you wish to continue seeing me, you should stop all this talk of marriage and you should not allow Vāṇī-Mādhava to come here. He is my bitter enemy. Tomorrow I will refuse to talk with him. You also should ignore him." Vrajanātha's grandmother was intelligent. Thinking about her conversation during the daytime with Vāṇī-Mādhava and what Vrajanātha had just told her, she decided to stop the marriage. She could see that if too much pressure was placed on him, Vrajanātha would go to Vārāṇasī or Vṛndāvana. That she did not wish. She decided: "What will be, will be."

Chapter Eighteen
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya Prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Bhedābheda-vicāra)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (Simultaneous Oneness and Difference)

Vāṇī-Mādhava was a vicious person. Reproached by Vrajanātha, in his mind he plotted how to harm both Vrajanātha and the bābājīs. He met with some thugs and together they decided that when he returned from Śrīvāsa's courtyard, Vrajanātha would be attacked at a secluded place near Lakṣmaṇa-tila. Hearing of this plot, Vrajanātha decided to visit the saintly elderly bābājī only during the daytime. Also, he would not visit Śrīvāsa's courtyard every day, and when he did it would be only in the daytime and accompanied by a bodyguard. Vrajanātha had some tenants. Among them was an expert fighter name Hariśa Ḍoma. Vrajanātha said to Hariśa, "Today a great calamity has fallen upon me. If you help, I may be protected from it." Hariśa replied, "Sir, I will do whatever you ask. Give the word, and I will kill your enemy." Vrajanātha said, "Vāṇī-Mādhava wants to harm me. I am no longer able to visit the Vaiṣṇavas in Śrīvāsa's courtyard. Vāṇī-Mādhava plans to have me attacked on the road." Hariśa replied, "Sir, how can he attack you when Hariśa is there? Know that this bamboo club will fall on Vāṇī-Mādhava Ṭhākura's head. Sir,

take me with you whenever you go to Śrīvāsa's courtyard. Who can harm you? I can defeat a hundred fighters."

Accompanied by Hariśa Ḍoma, Vrajanātha would visit Śrīvāsa's courtyard only once every two or four days. He could not stay for long. He could not hear discussions of the spiritual truth. In his heart he became sad. Ten or twenty days passed in this way, and then Vāṇī-Mādhava died of snakebite. Hearing the news of Vāṇī-Mādhava's death, the Vaiṣṇava Vrajanātha thought, “Is this fate of a person who hates Vaiṣṇavas?" In his mind he remembered these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.1.38):

adya vābda-śatānte vā
mṛtyur vai prāṇināṁ dhruvaḥ

"One may die today or after hundreds of years, but death is sure for every living entity."*

He thought, "No one lives forever. Everyone must die. What obstacle now stops me from going to Śrīvāsa's courtyard every day?" That evening at sunset Vrajanātha went to Śrīvāsa's courtyard and offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the saintly bābājī. He said, "From today on I will visit your feet every day. The obstacle Vāṇī-Mādhava has left this world." The very merciful bābājī was a first silent and thoughtful, unhappy to hear that a person whose spiritual intelligence was not awakened had died. Then he said, "It is said (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Antya 2.163):

sva-karma-phala-bhuk pumān

" `A person is sure to achieve the results of his fruitive activities.'*

"The soul must go where Lord Kṛṣṇa sends him. Bābā, are you unhappy at heart?"

Vrajanātha: The only unhappiness in my heart is that for some days I have not heard the nectar of your teachings. That has troubled my heart. I wish to hear the remaining teachings of the *Daśa-mūla*.

Bābājī: I am always ready to teach you. Just tell me how far you have heard and what questions have risen in your mind.

Vrajanātha: What is the name of the pure philosophy Śrī Śrī Gaura-kiśora taught to the world? Advaita-vāda, Śuddhādvaita-vāda, Viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda, and Dvaita-vāda are the names of the philosophies taught by the previous ācāryas. Did Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva accept one of these philosophies, or did He teach a different philosophy? In describing the sampradāyas, you said that Śrī Gaurāṅga is in the Brahma-sampradāya. Did He teach the Dvaita-vāda of Śrī Madhvācārya, or did He teach something else?

Bābājī: Bābā, please listen to the eighth verse of the *Daśa-mūla*:

hareḥ śakteḥ sarvaṁ cid-acid-akhilaṁ syāt pariṇatiḥ
vivartaṁ no satyaṁ śrutim iti viruddhaṁ kali-malam
harer bhedābhedau śruti-vihita-tattvaṁ su-vimalaṁ
tataḥ premṇaḥ siddhir bhavati nitaraṁ nitya-viṣaye

"The entire spiritual and material creation is manifested from the potency of Lord Hari. The impersonalist idea is an impurity of the Kali-yuga and it is refuted by the Vedas. The pure truth taught by the Vedas is the philosophy of acintya-bhedābheda (simultaneous oneness and difference). By understanding this truth one eventually attains the perfection of love for the Supreme Eternal."

The conclusions taught in the Upaniṣads are called “Vedānta" (the conclusion of the Vedas). Śrīla Vyāsadeva summarized these conclusions in a book of four chapters, a book called the Brahma-sūtra or Vedānta-sūtra. The truly learned people of this world respectfully accept the authority of this book. The general conclusion is that the Vedānta-sūtra gives a proper exposition of the truths taught in the Vedas. The different ācāryas have each explained Vedānta-sūtra in a way to support their conclusions. Śrī Śaṅkarācārya used the Vedānta-sūtra to support his philosophy of impersonalism (vivarta-vāda). He said that the philosophy of pariṇāma-vāda is not correct, for it must lead to the conclusion that Brahman is not the highest. He taught a philosophy called vivarta-vāda, which is also called māyāvāda. To support this philosophy of vivarta-vāda, he collected quotations from all the Vedas. It seems that the philosophy of pariṇāma-vāda must have been popular before his time. By establishing his vivarta-vāda, Śrī Śaṅkara suppressed the pariṇāma-vāda. Still, the vivarta-vāda is only one of many theories. Displeased with it, Śrī Madhvācārya created the theory of dvaita-vāda. He collected quotes from all the Vedas to support his theory of dvaita-vāda. In the same way Śrīmad Rāmānujācārya established the Viśiṣṭādvaita-vāda and collected quotations from the Vedas to support it. Śrī Nimbārka Acārya established his philosophy of dvaitādvaita-vāda and he also collected many quotes from the Vedas to support it. Śrī Viṣṇu Svāmī preached the philosophy of śuddhādvaita-vāda, which he based on the Vedānta-sutra and the texts of the Vedas. The māyāvāda philosophy preached by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya is opposed to the truths of devotional service. Each with his own philosophy, the four Vaiṣṇava acaryas taught that devotional service is the highest conclusion. Śrīmān Mahāprabhu based His philosophy on all the statements of the Vedas. His philosophy is called “acintya-bhedābheda" (simultaneous oneness and difference). This philosophy accepts the basic framework of Madhvācārya's teachings.

Vrajanātha: What is the pariṇāma-vāda?

Bābājī: There are two kinds of pariṇāma-vāda.: brahma-pariṇāma-vāda and śakti-pariṇāma-vāda. The brahma-pariṇāma-vāda teaches that Brahman becomes transformed into the individual souls and the material world. Thus they say that only Brahman exists, and to support their idea they quote these words of the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (6.2.1):

ekam evādvitīyam

"Brahman is one without a second."

This theory may be called "advaita-vāda" (impersonalism). Look. In this context "vivarta" and pariṇāma" are synonyms. On the other hand, the philosophy of śakti-pariṇāma-vāda declares that Brahman Himself never becomes transformed. Rather it is Brahman's inconceivable potency that becomes transformed. The jīva-śakti becomes transformed into the individual spirit souls and the māyā-śakti becomes transformed into the material world. If this version of pariṇāma-vāda is accepted, Brahman does not become transformed. The act of transformation is defined in these words:

sa-tattvato 'nyathā-budhhir vikāra ity udāhṛtaḥ

"Transformation is when something appears to be what it is not."

What is transformation? transformation is when something appears to be different than what it is. Milk becomes transformed into yogurt. It is still milk in essence. It only appears to be something else. That is transformation. According to the brahma-pariṇāma-vāda, they individual spirit souls and the material world are both transformations of Brahman. This idea is not correct. Of this there is no doubt. The impersonal Brahman has no qualities. Therefore it has nothing that could be transformed into something else. Therefore it cannot be said to be the origin of transformations. Therefore the brahma-pariṇāma-vāda theory is not good. On the other hand, the śakti-pariṇāma-vāda does not have these defects. According to śakti-pariṇāma-vāda, Brahman is not transformed. rather it is Brahman's potency, which can do any impossible thing, that is transformed into the atomic individual souls and into the perverted reflection that is the material world. When Brahman desires, "Let the individual souls come into existence", numberless souls are manifested from His potency. When Brahman desires, "Let the material world come into existence", material universes without limit are manifested from His potency. These things are not transformations of Brahman. If someone says, "If Brahman has a desire, then Brahman is transformed. The desire itself is a transformation of the original desireless Brahman. How is it possible that Brahman can be transformed in this way?" then I reply, "You are assuming that Brahman's desire is like the desires possessed by the individual spirit souls. That is why you say Brahman's desire is evidence that Brahman becomes transformed. The individual spirit soul is very small, and therefore his desire naturally touches Brahman's other potencies. For this reason the soul's desires are actually transformations. However, Brahman's desires are completely independent. They are part of His intrinsic nature and are not subjected to outside influences. They are at once the same as and different from His potencies. Therefore Brahman's desires are part of His original nature. They do not involve any transformations.

Ordered by His desires, His potencies act. His potencies then become transformed. The living entity's small intelligence does not have the power to discover these subtle truths unaided. These truths are known only by hearing the testimony of the Vedas. Now we may consider the nature of the transformation of the potency. The example of milk being transformed into yogurt is not the only example to show the transformation of potency. Although material analogies cannot give one a complete understanding of spiritual realities, they can help one understand certain aspects of it. Even though it is material in nature, a cintāmaṇi jewel is said to produce many other jewels within itself being changed in any way. The spiritual Supreme Personality of Godhead creates in a way like that. The Supreme Personality of Godhead remains completely unchanged after creating, buy His desire and with the aid of His inconceivable potency, the numberless individual souls and numberless material universes consisting of fourteen planetary systems. This explanation that the Supreme is “untransformed" does not mean that the Supreme exists only as the qualityless impersonal Brahman. The word "brahman" means the greatest (bṛhat). Therefore the word "brahman" directly refers to the eternal Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is the master of six opulences. If we only say that He is "untransformed" and do not say anything else about Him, we do not accept His cit-śakti (spiritual potency). The truth is that by the power of His inconceivable potency, He is simultaneously the qualityless Brahman, and the Supreme Person who possesses a host of spiritual qualities. Therefore to say only that He is "untransformed" means to understand only half of His nature, and thus not understand Him in full. The Vedas have used the instrumental (by), ablative (from), and locative (in) cases to describe His relationship with the material world. In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (3.1.1) it is said:

yato vā imāni bhūtāni jāyante. yena jātāni jīvanti. yat praty abhisaṁviśanti. tad vijajñāsva tad brahma.

"Please know that Brahman is He from whom all living beings are born, by whose power they remain alive, and into whom they enter at the end."

When it is said that the living beings are manifested from Brahman, the ablative case is used. When it is said that the living beings live by Brahman's power, the instrumental case is used. When it is said that the living beings enter into Brahman, the locative case is used. In this way it is said that the Supreme has qualities. This shows that He is the Supreme Person, for it is a person that has qualities. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī describes the Supreme Person in these words:

ekam eva paramaṁ tattvaṁ svābhāvikācintya-śaktyā sarvadaiva svarūpa-tad-rūpa-vaibhava-jīva-pradhāna-rūpeṇa cāturdhāvatiṣṭhate. sūryāntara-maṇḍala-sthita teja iva maṇḍala tad-bahir-gata-tad-raśmi-tat-praticchavi-rūpeṇa.

"The Absolute Truth is one. Still, by His inconceivable potency He is manifested in four ways: 1. svarūpa (His original form), 2. tad-rūpa-vaibhava (His incarnations), 3. jīva (the individual spirit souls), and 4. pradhāna (the material energy). These four features are like: 1. the interior of the sun planet, 2. the sun's surface, 3. the sunlight, and 4. the reflection of the sun."

This example, of course, explains only a small part of the Lord's nature. His svarūpa (original form) is His form of eternity, knowledge and bliss. His svarūpa-vaibhava (manifestations of His form) are His spiritual abode, name, associates, and paraphernalia. The jīva-śakti is the abode of the numberless eternally liberated and conditioned individual souls, who are tiny particles of spirit. The pradhāna is the material world of subtle and gross material elements. As these four features are eternal, so the oneness of the Absolute truth is also eternal. Someone may ask: "How is it possible that the Lord is eternally manifest in these four ways, but still is eternally one? Is it not a contradiction that He is both one and many simultaneously?" To this the answer is given: The intelligence of the individual living entities will certainly declare that it is impossible. But why should it not be possible? The intelligence of the individual living entity is very small and limited, and, on the other hand, the powers of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are beyond human conception. Therefore, for the Lord it is not impossible.

Vrajanātha: How do you define "vivarta-vāda"?

Bābājī: In the Vedas there is description of transformation (vivarta), but that description is not at all like what has become known as the "vivarta-vāda". Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has used the words "vivarta" and vivarta-vāda" to mean “maya-vāda" (the philosophy of impersonalism). The true meaning of the word "vivarta" is given in these words:

atattvato 'nyathā buddhir vivarta ity udāhṛtaḥ

"The word `vivarta' means `misunderstanding the true nature of a certain thing'."

The individual is a tiny particle of spirit. But when he is imprisoned in the gross and subtle material body, he becomes bewildered and thinks, "I am this gross and subtle material body." Thus he misunderstands his true identity. “Misunderstanding" is the only definition of "vivarta" given in the Vedas. Someone may think, "I am Raghunātha Bhaṭṭācārya, the son of Sanātana Bhaṭṭācārya", and someone else may think, "I am Sādhu Cāṇḍāla, the son of Viśe Cāṇḍāla". In this way the intelligence becomes bewildered.. Both of those persons are individual souls, tiny particles of spirit. They are not Raghunātha Bhaṭṭācārya and Sādhu Cāṇḍāla. Still, they are bewildered and they think they are identical with the material body. To mistake a rope for a snake or the glistening on a seashell's surface for silver are other examples of misunderstandings (vivartas). By all these examples the Vedas teach that one should throw far away the idea that he is identical with the material body. The māyāvādīs (impersonalists), however, reject

this proper use of the word "vivarta" and teach a funny theory they call "vivarta-vāda". They say that the idea "I am the Supreme" is the true idea, and the misconception, or vivarta, is the idea "I am an individual spirit soul". By accepting this kind of “vivarta-vāda" one will not understand what is the actual truth. The true vivarta-vāda does not at all contradict the śakti-pariṇāma-vāda. On the other hand, the māyāvādīs' (impersonalists') vivarta-vāda is only an object of laughter. The māyāvādīs' vivarta-vāda is of three kinds: 1. the soul is really Brahman but he becomes bewildered into thinking that he is an individual soul, 2. the idea that the individual souls are reflections of Brahman, and 3. the idea that Brahman takes a nap and dreams that He has become the many individual souls. None of these are the true vivarta-vāda. The evidence of the Vedas refutes them all.

Vrajanātha: What is this māyāvāda philosophy? My intelligence does not understand it.

Bābājī: Try to understand it soberly and carefully. The māyā-śakti is a perverted reflection of the svarūpa-śakti (internal potency). The māyā-śakti cannot enter the spiritual world. The māyā-śakti is the controller of the material world. Because he is bewildered by ignorance, the soul enters the material world. Spiritual things are real and do have an independent, separate existence. However, the māyāvāda theory does not accept the reality of spiritual things. The māyāvāda theory declares that the individual soul is actually Brahman, and it is only by the influence of māyā that he thinks he is different from Brahman. The māyāvāda theory declares that as long as he is under māyā's influence, the soul thinks he is an individual soul, but when he becomes free of māyā's influence, the soul learns that he is actually Brahman. The māyāvāda theory declares that when māyā's influence ceases, the individual spirit soul also ceases to exist. In his way liberation is thought to mean nirvāṇa, or the souls merging into the existence of Brahman. In this way the māyāvāda theory does not accept the existence of a pure individual spirit soul, free from māyā's clutches. The māyāvāda theory also declares that when he incarnates in the material world, Brahman must take shelter of māyā and accept a body made of matter. Brahman thus does not have a spiritual form and must accept a form made of matter. Thus Brahman accepts the different material forms of His incarnations, descends to the material world, performs very great deeds, leaves His material form behind, and returns to His own abode. The māyāvādīs' offer one kindness to the Supreme Lord. They say the the individual souls and the incarnations of Brahman have one difference. They say that the individual souls are dependent on their past karma, are pushed into the gross material body against their will, and, carried along by the strong current of their past karma, are forced to suffer old-age, death, and re-birth. On the other hand, the Supreme Lord accepts a material body, material identity, material name, material qualities, and other material things voluntarily, by His own will, and by His own will at a certain time He abandons those material things and becomes again manifest as pure spiritual consciousness. Although He performs activities, the Lord is not forced to accept the karmic results of those actions. All these are the mistaken conclusions of the māyāvādīs.

Vrajanātha: Do the Vedas give any evidence to support the māyāvāda philosophy?

Bābājī: No. In no place do the Vedas teach the māyāvāda philosophy. Actually, the māyāvāda philosophy is identical with Buddhism. In the Padma Purāṇa Lord

Śiva tells Pārvatī:

māyāvādam asac-chāstraṁ
pracchannaṁ baudham ucyate
mayaiva kalpitaṁ devi
kalau brāhmaṇa-rūpiṇā

"The māyāvāda philosophy is impious. It is covered Buddhism. My dear Pārvatī, in the form of a brāhmaṇa in Kali-yuga I teach this imagined māyāvāda philosophy."*

Vrajanātha: O master, why did Lord Śiva, who is the best of the Vaiṣṇavas and the leader of the demigods, do such a wicked deed?

Bābājī: Lord Śiva is a guṇa-avatāra of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. At one time the demons had taken to following the path of devotion in order to fulfill their own sinful lusty desires. Seeing this, the merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead, concerned for the benefit of the true, the sincere devotees.
decided to deter the demons from following the path of devotion. With this in mind, He called for Lord Śiva and told him, "O Śiva, that the demons in the mode of ignorance are now preaching the path of pure devotional service is not good for the world. Please write a book to bewilder the demons. Conceal the truth about Me and preach the māyāvāda, impersonal philosophy. The demons will then leave the path of pure devotional service and take shelter of impersonalism. That will be very pleasing to My genuine pure devotees. Of this there is no doubt. The great Vaiṣṇava Śiva unhappily accepted this order of the Supreme Lord. However, he placed the Lord's order on his head and obediently preached the māyāvāda philosophy. How can there be any fault, then, for Lord Śiva, the spiritual master of the entire world?

Vrajanātha: For the good of all the conditioned souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead turns the wheel of the material world of birth and death. The Sudarśana-cakra He holds in His hand brings only good. His order brings only good. The servant's duty is to carry out his master's order. Therefore the pure Vaiṣṇavas do not blame Lord Śiva for descending as Śaṅkarācārya and preaching the māyāvāda philosophy. Now I will recite the scriptural evidence for all this. Please listen. In the Padma Purāṇa the Supreme Lord tells Śiva:

tvam ārādhya yathā śambho
grahiṣyāmi varaṁ sadā
dvāparādau yuge bhūtvā
kalayā mānuṣādiṣu

svāgamaih kalpitais tvaṁ tu
janān mad-vimukhān kuru
māṁ ca gopaya yena syāt
sṛṣṭir eṣottarottarā

"O Śiva, because you worship Me, I will always give My blessings to you. In Kali-yuga, mislead the people in general by propounding imaginary meanings of the Vedas to bewilder them. In this way conceal Me and make the people turn away from Me."

In the Varāha Purāṇa the Supreme Lord tells Śiva:

eṣa mohaṁ sṛjāmy āśu
yo janān mohayiṣyati
tvaṁ ca rudra mahā-bāho
moha-śāstrāṇi kāraya

"O mighty-armed Śiva, please write books filled with lies, and thus bewilder the people.

atathyāni vitathyāni
darśayasva mahā-bhuja
prakāśaṁ kuru cātmānam
aprakāśaṁ ca māṁ kuru

"O mighty-armed one, please preach a collection of lies. Place yourself in the forefront, and conceal Me."

Bābājī: Do any Vedic passages refute the māyāvāda theory?
Vrajanātha: All the Vedas refute the māyāvāda theory. Searching through all the Vedas, the māyāvādīs have found four statements to buttress their argument, and these they call mahā-vākyas (the great statements of the Vedas). These four statements are (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 3.14.1):

sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma

"Everything is Brahman."

Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4.4.19 and Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.1.11:

neha nānāsti kiṇcana

"Nothing is different from Brahman."

Aitareya Upaniṣad 1.5.3:

prajñānaṁ brahma

"Brahman is consciousness."

Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7:

tat tvam asi śvetaketo

"O Śvetakaetu, you are that."

Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10:

ahaṁ brahmāsmi

"I am Brahman."

What does the first of these mahā-vākyas teach? It teaches that the material world and the individual souls are all Brahman, that there is nothing but Brahman. What is the nature of Brahman? That is explained in another place in the Vedas. In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.8) it is said:

ṇa tasya kāryaṁ karaṇaṁ ca vidyate
na tat-samaś cābhyadhikaś ca vidyate
parāsya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate
svābhāvikī jñāna-bala-kriyā ca

"The Supreme Lord has nothing to do. Nothing is equal to Him or greater than Him. He acts in different phases by manifesting His parts and parcels which are all simultaneously differently situated by His unlimited, variegated potencies. Each potency acts quite naturally in sequences, providing Him full knowledge, power, and pastimes."*

In these words Brahman and Brahman's potency are accepted as one. Here it is said that the potency is the property (svābhāvikī) of Brahman, and it is also said that the potency is manifested in many different ways (vividhā). Because the potency and the master who possesses the potency are not different, it may certainly be said that nothing is different from Brahman. However, when we look

at the material world, we can also see that in another sense Brahman and His potency are certainly different. In the Vedas (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.13 and Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.10) it is said:

nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām
eko bahūnāṁ yo vidadhāti kāmān

"The Supreme Lord is eternal and the living beings are eternal. The Supreme Lord is cognizant and the living beings are cognizant. The difference is that the Supreme Lord is supplying the necessities of life for the many other living entities."*

In these words of the Vedas variety is accepted as an eternal fact. In the other passages of the Vedas (Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad 6.8) the Lord's potency and His knowledge, power, and pastimes are also considered, in one sense, to be different from Him.

Now let us consider these words of Aitareya Upaniṣad (1.5.3):

prajñānaṁ brahma

"Brahman is consciousness."

Here it is said that Brahman is identical with consciousness. The nature of consciousness is described in these words of Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (4.4.21):

tam eva dhīro vijñāya
prajñāṁ kurvīta brāhmaṇaḥ

"A wise man who understands the Supreme falls in love with Him."

Here the word "prajñā" does not mean merely "consciousness". Here it means "love and devotion".

Now let us consider these words of Chāndogya Upaniṣad (6.8.7):

tat tvam asi śvetaketo

"O Śvetakaetu, you are that."

These words supposedly teach that the Supreme Lord and the individual spirit soul are identical. However, the proper explanation of these words is found in this passage from the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (3.8.10):

yo vā etad akṣaraṁ gārgy aviditvāsmāl lokāt praiti sa kṛpaṇaḥ

"He is a miserly man who does not solve the problems of life as a human and who thus quits this world like the cats and dogs, without understanding the science of self-realization."*

The words "tat tvam asi" therefore actually mean "He who has attained devotion to the Lord is a true brāhmaṇa."

Now let us consider these words of Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (1.4.10:

ahaṁ brahmāsmi

"I am Brahman."

Some thinkers say that the knowledge described in these words does not culminate in devotional service as its final attainment. This idea is criticized by these words of Iśa Upaniṣad (mantra 9):

andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti
ye 'vidyām upāsate
tato bhūya iva te tamo
ya u vidyāyāṁ rataḥ

"Those who engage in the culture of nescient activities shall enter into the darkest region of ignorance. Worse still are those engaged in the culture of so-called knowledge."*

These words mean that persons who are ignorant and do not know that they are pure spirit souls enter into terrible blinding darkness. However, they who, even though they become free from that ignorance, foolishly think that the individual soul is Brahman and not a tiny particle of spirit, enter into an even more terrible blinding darkness of ignorance. O baba, the Vedas are like an ocean that has no shore. One should carefully study each mantra of each Upaniṣad, and then one should study the Upaniṣads together as a whole. In that way one will understand the true meaning of the Vedas. However, if one only studies a few passages here and there, the conclusion he gets at the end will be horrible and wrong. Therefore, are carefully studying all the branches of the Vedas, Śrīmān Mahāprabhu taught the final conclusion: that the individual spirit souls and the

material world are simultaneously, inconceivably one and different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Bābājī: Please explain to me more clearly how this philosophy of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference is the true teaching of the Vedas.

Vrajanātha: In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (3.14.1) it is said:

sarvaṁ khalv idam brahma

"Everything is Brahman."

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (7.25.2) it is said:

ātmaivedam sarvam iti

"The Supreme Soul is everything."

In the Chāndogya Upaniṣad (6.2.1) it is said:

sad eva saumyedam agra āsīd ekam evādvitīyam

"In the beginning only the Supreme existed. There was none but Him."

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (5.4) it is said:

evaṁ sa devo bhagavān vareṇyo
yoni-svabhāvān adhitiṣṭhaty ekaḥ

"As the sun shines in all directions: above, below, and across, so the glorious Supreme Personality of Godhead rules all creatures."

These passages describe the oneness part of simultaneous oneness and difference.

In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.1) it is said:

oṁ brahma-vid āpnoti param

"One who understands the Supreme, attains the Supreme."

In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.22 and 2.1.4) it is said:

mahantaṁ vibhum ātmānaṁ matvā dhīro na śocati

"A wise man who meditates on the all-pervading Supreme Soul never laments."

In the Taittirīya Araṇyaka, First Anuvāka, it is said:

satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ brahma. yo veda nihitaṁ guhāyāṁ parame vyoman. so 'śnute sarvān kāmān saha brahmaṇā vipaścitā.

"Brahman is limitless, eternal, and all-knowing. A person who knows that Brahman stays both in the spiritual sky and in the hearts of all creatures attains Brahman. He associates with the all-knowing Brahman. All his desires are fulfilled."

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (3.9) it is said:

yasmāt paraṁ nāparam asti kiṇcit
yasmin nānīyo na jyāyo 'sti kiṇcit. . . .

. . . tenedaṁ pūrṇaṁ puruṣeṇa sarvam

"There is no truth superior to that Supreme Person because He is the supermost. He is smaller than the smallest, and He is greater than the greatest. He is situated as a silent tree, and He illumines the transcendental sky, and as a tree spreads its roots, He spreads His extensive energies."*

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.16) it is said:

pradhāna-kṣetrajña-patir guṇeśaḥ

"The Supreme Person is fully aware of everything. He is the Supersoul, the master of all transcendental qualities."*

In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.23) and the Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad (3.2.3) it is said:

tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām

"The Supreme Lord is attained only by one who He Himself chooses. To such a person He manifests His own form."*

In the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (3.19) it is said:

tam āhur āgryaṁ puruṣaṁ mahantam

"Learned transcendentalists explain that God is the greatest, the original person."*

In the Iśa Upaniṣad (mantra 8) it is said:

yāthātathyato 'rthān vyadadhāt

"The Supreme Personality of Godhead has been fulfilling everyone's desires since time immemorial."*

In the Kena Upaniṣad (3.6 and 3.10) it is said:

naitad aśakaṁ vijñātuṁ yad etad yakṣam iti

"I do not understand who this yakṣa is."

In the Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.7) it is said:

asad vā idam agra āsīt. tato vai sajāyata. tad ātmānaṁ svayam akuruta. tasmāt tat sukṛtam ucyata iti.

"In the beginning only the Supreme existed. From Him everything was born. Then He personally appeared within the world. That is why He is called `sukṛta' (the creator)."

In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (2.13) and the Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad (6.13) it is said:

nityo nityānām

"Of all eternal beings one is the most important."

In the Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad (mantra 2) it is said:

sarvaṁ hy etad brahmāyam ātmā brahma so 'yam ātmā catuṣ-pāt

"The Supreme soul is the greatest. He is everything. He manifests in four forms."

In the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (2.5.14) it is said:

ayam ātmā sarveṣāṁ bhūtānāṁ madhu

"All living beings find that the Supreme Person is sweet like nectar."

In these and countless other passages, the Vedas declare that the individual souls are eternally different from the Supreme. Every part of the Vedas is beautiful and good. No part should be rejected. That the individual souls are eternally different from the Supreme is the truth. That the individual souls are eternally non-different from the Supreme is also the truth. Both are true simultaneously. All the Vedas declare that difference and non-difference are both true. This simultaneous difference and non-difference is inconceivable, beyond the power of human intelligence to understand. Applying material logic to understand it will bring only confusion. What the Vedas speak is always the truth. The Vedas' statements should not be rejected merely because they are beyond the understanding of our tiny human intelligence. In the Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.9) it is said:

naiṣā tarkeṇa matir āpaneyā

"Ordinary material logic cannot be used to disprove the truths taught by the Vedas."

In the Kena Upaniṣad (2.2) it is said:

nāham manye su-vedeti no na vedeti veda ca

"I do not think, `I do not know anything about the Supreme'. Neither do I think, `I know everything about the Supreme'."

In these passages the Vedas declare that the Lord's potency is inconceivable. Therefore material logic is not the proper tool with which to understand the Lord's potency. In the Mahābhārata it is said:

purāṇaṁ mānavo dharmaḥ
sāṅga-vedaṁ cikitsitam
ājnā-siddhāni catvāri
na hantavyāni hetubhiḥ

"The Purāṇas, Manu-saṁhitā, the Vedas with all their limbs, and the science of Vedic medicine are the words of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. They are His commands. Material logic cannot refute them."

Thus simultaneous oneness and difference is the pure truth, the conclusion taught by the Vedas. when one considers the final goal and need of all individual souls, he will see that there is no conclusion but simultaneous oneness and difference. When one understands this truth of simultaneous oneness and difference, he will see that the difference between the soul and the Supreme is eternal. Without understanding this difference, the individual soul cannot attain the true goal of life: love for the Supreme.

Bābājī: What evidence from scripture and logic shows that love for the Supreme is the final goal of life?

Vrajanātha: The Vedas (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 3.1.4) declare:

prāṇo hy eṣa yaḥ sarva-bhūtair vibhāti
vijānan vidvān bhavate nāti-vādī
ātma-krīḍā ātma-ratiḥ kriyāvān
eṣa brahma-vidāṁ variṣṭhaḥ

"The Supreme Person is the life of all that live. One who knows Him is not eager to talk of other things. Such a person loves the Lord, always remembers the Lord's pastimes, and is active in the Lord's service. He is the best of transcendentalists."

In the Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad (2.4.5 and 4.5.6) it is said:

na vā are sarvasya kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavaty ātmanas tu kāmāya sarvaṁ priyaṁ bhavati

"Every living being loves others not to please them, but to please himself."

These words of Bṛhad-āraṇyaka Upaniṣad show that love is the individual soul's primary need and goal. Bābā, love for the Supreme is described in many passages of the Vedas and the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. It is clearly described in these words of the Taittirīya Araṇyaka, Seventh Anuvāka:

ko hy evānyat kaḥ prāṇyāt. yad eṣa ākāśa ānando na syāt. eṣa hy evānandayati.

"Who could live, who could breathe, if he did not find pleasure in his heart? Living in the heart, the Supreme Personality of Godhead gives pleasure to all living beings."

Happiness is a state of being created by love. All spirit souls strive to find pleasure. Persons striving for liberation think liberation will bring them pleasure. That is why they are mad after liberation. Materialists think material sense objects will bring them pleasure. That is why they chase after sense objects. The hope for pleasure pushes the living entity into action. The devotees act so they can find pleasure in service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus all living entities are searching for pleasure and for love. For the sake of pleasure and love they are even willing to give up their bodies. The conclusion is this: everyone sees pleasure and love as their final goal, their true need. No one will deny it. One may be an atheist, one may be a theist, one may be a proponent of fruitive work (karma-vādī), one may be an impersonalist (jñāna-vādī), one may be a hedonist (kāmī), one may be an ascetic (niṣkāmī), all living entities are searching for pleasure and love. All search for pleasure and love, but not everyone finds it. The proponents of fruitive work think they will find pleasure and love in Svargaloka. However, the Bhagavad-gītā (9.21) says of them:

kṣīṇe puṇye martya-lokaṁ viśanti

"When they have thus enjoyed heavenly sense pleasure, they return to this mortal planet again. Thus, through the Vedic principles, they achieve only flickering happiness."*

This means that eventually they must fall down from Svargaloka. In this way their plan to enjoy becomes frustrated. When a person fails to find true pleasure in the wealth, children, fame, power, and other things available in the world of human beings, he begins to desire the pleasures available in Svargaloka. When he must fall from Svargaloka he realizes that the pleasures available there are not very valuable. Then he sees that the pleasures of the human worlds, of Svargaloka, and of the highest material planets, even up to the planet of the demigod Brahmā, are all temporary. Then he begins to search for impersonal liberation. When he finally attains impersonal liberation, he sees that there is not real pleasure in that either. Then he searches for another path to follow. How is it possible to find either

pleasure or love in impersonal liberation? If a person's sense of identity is annihilated, how can he enjoy any pleasure? Or if everything becomes one, how can he enjoy any pleasure? Who will exist to experience the pleasure? If I lose my identity, who will exist to experience Brahman? The statement "Pleasure exists in impersonal liberation" has no meaning, for no one exists to experience the pleasure. In impersonal liberation does pleasure exist, or does it not exist? What is the conclusion? If my personal identity is destroyed, then everything about me is destroyed. What remains of me, that I can experience the attainment of a goal or the fulfillment of a need? In impersonal liberation I do not exist. I do not exist at all. If someone says, "In impersonal liberation I exist as Brahman", then Brahman does not perform any action. Is it not so? If I become Brahman eternally, then there is nothing for me to attain, and therefore I need not perform any action. Therefore in impersonal liberation is not the way to attain pleasure or love. Actually impersonal liberation does not exist. It is only a trick played on the individual soul. It is a flower imagined to float in the sky. Devotional service is the only method by which the individual souls can attain the true goal of their live and fulfill their true needs. The final stage of devotional service is love and pleasure. That love and pleasure are eternal. Pure Kṛṣṇa is eternal, and pure love for Him is also eternal. Therefore, when one accepts the truth of inconceivable oneness and difference, he can attain the eternal perfection of true love. If there is no simultaneous oneness and difference, then the eternal spiritual love that is the soul's true goal and need becomes not-eternal. That non-eternality attacks the love and destroys it. Therefore all Vedic scriptures confirm that simultaneous inconceivable oneness and difference is the true conclusion. All other conclusions are meaningless speculations.

Plunged into an ocean of bliss as again and again he thought about the meaning of spiritual love, Vrajanātha walked home.

Chapter Nineteen
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya Prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Abhidheya-vicāra)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (Abhidheya)

After finishing his meal, Vrajanātha went to bed. Again and again in his heart he thought about simultaneous oneness and difference. He thought, "I used to think that the philosophy of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference was only one of many competing philosophies. As he deeply thought about it he concluded that no passages of scripture refuted it. Indeed, all the scriptures supported it. Śrī Gaura-kiśora is the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. There cannot be any fault with His profound teachings. I cannot leave the shelter

of Lord Gaura-kiśora's feet, which are the abode of spiritual love. Alas! What have I attained thus far? the teaching of inconceivable simultaneous oneness and difference is the truth. That much I know. But by knowing it what have I attained? The saintly bābājī told me that spiritual love is the final goal of life for all souls. The fruitive workers (karmīs) and impersonalists (jñānīs) are all searching for love, but they do not know what is the pure state of love. One must attain the pure state of love. I will ask the saintly bābājī how to attain it. I will hear his conclusion." Again and again thinking in this way, he gradually fell asleep.

It was late at night when Vrajanātha finally fell asleep and it was late in the morning when he finally awakened. He got up from bed. When he had washed and performed his morning duties, his uncle Vijaya-kumāra Bhaṭṭācārya Mahāśaya arrived for a visit. Seeing that he had come after may days in Śrī Modadruma, Vrajanātha at once offered daṇḍavat obeisances to his uncle.

Vijaya-kumāra was especially learned in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. By the mercy of Śrīmatī Nārāyaṇī-devī, he had attained great love for Lord Gaurāṅga. Nowadays he went from place to place reading aloud from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. At the village of Denuda-grāma he personally met Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, who advised him to visit Śrī Māyāpura, the inconceivable spiritual abode of the Lord. Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura told him that soon all the places of Lord Mahāprabhu's pastimes would become hidden, and only after four hundred years would they again be openly manifested. He also said that the places of Lord Caitanya's pastimes are not different from Śrī Vṛndāvana, and that only a person who can see the spiritual nature of Śrī Māyāpura and the other places of Lord Caitanya's pastimes has the power to see Vṛndāvana as it truly is. Hearing these words of Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, who is an incarnation of Śrīla Vyāsadeva, Vijaya-kumāra became very eager to see Śrī Māyāpura. In his mind he decided to visit his sister and nephew in Bilva-puṣkariṇī, and then visit Śrī Māyāpura. In those days Bilva-puṣkariṇī and Brāhmaṇa-puṣkariṇī touched each other. Nowadays they are far apart. In those days the boundary of Bilva-puṣkariṇī was within a mile of holy Śrī Māyāpura. That abandoned village of Bilva-puṣkariṇī now goes by the names "Ṭoṭā" and “Tāraṇabāsa".

Vijaya-kumāra embraced his nephew and said, "Bābā, now I will go to visit Śrī Māyāpura. Please tell your mother that I will return for lunch." Vrajanātha replied, "Uncle, why are you going to visit Śrī Māyāpura?" Vijaya-kumāra was not aware of Vrajanātha's present condition, how he had abandoned the study of nyāya-śāstra and become an ardent student of Vedānta. Therefore he thought it not appropriate to describe his devotional activities to Vrajanātha. He simply said, "I want to visit someone in Māyāpura." Aware that his uncle was a devotee of Lord Gaurāṅga and a scholar of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, and thinking that his uncle must have a spiritual purpose in visiting Śrī Māyāpura, Vrajanātha said, "A very faithful Vaiṣṇava named Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Bābāji Mahāśaya resides in Śrī Māyāpura. Please speak with him when you make your visit." Hearing Vrajanātha's words, Vijaya-kumāra said, "Bābā, now you have faith in the Vaiṣṇavas? I heard that you had abandoned nyāya and turned to Vedānta. Now I can understand that you have entered the path of devotional service. I no longer need to conceal things from you. Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has ordered me to visit the holy abode of Śrī Māyāpura. In my mind I have decided to bathe in the Ganges at Śrī Māyāpura-ghāṭa, see and circumambulate the yoga-pīṭha, and once roll about in the dust from the

Vaiṣṇavas' feet at Śrīvāsa's courtyard." Vrajanātha said, “Uncle, please be kind and take me with you. I will take permission from mother, and we will both go to Śrī Māyāpura. After this conversation, Vrajanātha spoke to his mother, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra both left for Śrī Māyāpura. With great delight they both bathed in the Ganges. As they bathed, Vijaya-kumāra said, "Nephew, today I am fortunate. Up till the age of twenty, Lord Śacīnandana showed His mercy to Śrī Gaṅgā-devī by playing in the waters here. By bathing in these waters, I have become very happy." Melting with happiness to hear these encouraging words, Vrajanātha said, "Today I am fortunate, for today I am able to follow your feet." After bathing, they both went to Jagannātha Miśra's home. There they became decorated with streaming tears of great spiritual love. Vijaya-kumāra said, "They who have taken birth in the land of Lord Gaura but have never touched this most sacred place have taken their birth in vain. That is not just an exaggeration. Look! With material eyes this looks like another ordinary place, a place of cottages made of leaves. By Lord Gaurāṅga's mercy what glory do we see now! We see great jewel palaces, charming gardens, grand archways, and so many other glorious things! Look! How beautiful are the forms of Śrī Gaurāṅga-Viṣṇupriyā in that palace! What beautiful forms!! Again and again speaking in this way, the uncle and nephew were both overwhelmed, stunned with ecstatic love. For a long time they were both overcome in this way. Finally some devotees helped them go to Śrīvāsa's courtyard. When they entered it, streams of tears flowed from their eyes. Rolling on the ground in Śrīvāsa's courtyard, they both called out, "O Śrīvāsa! O Advaita! O Nityānanda! O Gadādhara-Gaurāṅga! Please give Your mercy to us. Please take away our false pride. Please give us shelter of Your feet."

Seeing the two brāhmaṇas in this devotional mood, the Vaiṣṇavas called out, "Glory to the moon of Māyāpura! Glory to invincible Lord Gaurāṅga! Glory to Lord Nityānanda!" and danced. In a moment Vrajanātha offered his body at the feet of his worshipable master, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa. The elderly bābājī picked him up, embraced him, and said, "Bābā, why have you come at this time today? Who is the great soul accompanying you?" Vrajanātha humbly explained everything. The Vaiṣṇavas gave them nice sitting places in the courtyard of the bakula tree. Then Vijaya-kumāra humbly asked saintly Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Bābāji, "O master, what is the real goal and need of all living entities?"

Bābājī: You are both great devotees. You have already attained the goal of life. Still, to show kindness to me, you have asked this question. As far as I know, I will speak. devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, devotional service that is free of any trace of fruitive work or impersonal speculation is both the final goal of life and the means to attain the goal of life. In its beginning stage it is called "sādhana-bhakti" and in its final, perfect stage, it is called "prema-bhakti".

Vijaya-kumāra: O saintly bābājī, what different qualities does devotional service possess?

Bābājī: By Lord Mahāprabhu's order, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote the Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, where the qualities of devotional service are described in these words (1.1.11):

anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyaṁ

jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu-
śīlanaṁ bhaktir uttamā

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

In this verse the direct and indirect qualities of pure d are described. Here the words "bhaktir uttamā" mean “pure devotional service". Pure devotional service is never mixed with karma (fruitive activities) or jñāna (impersonal speculation). When the desire for sense gratification is present, devotional service is mixed with fruitive activities. When the desire for impersonal liberation attained through philosophical speculation is present, devotional service is mixed with impersonal speculation. When the desire for sense gratification and impersonal liberation are completely absent, then devotional service is "uttamā", or pure. Pure devotional service brings pure love of God as its result. What is devotional service? The direct qualities of devotional service are the endeavor to please Kṛṣṇa with the activities of one's body, mind, and words, and also love for Lord Kṛṣṇa within one's heart. The soul has certain powers of his own. However, when one attains the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa and the mercy of a devotee, then Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests His own internal potency (svarūpa-śakti). It is then that the true nature of devotional service becomes manifested. In the present condition, the living entity's body, mind, and words are all material. If he works with the power of his own intelligence, his only attainment will be material knowledge and dry renunciation. He will not attain devotional service. However, if Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal potency (svarūpa-śakti) becomes manifested and is evenly slightly active, then pure devotional service is manifested also. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the original form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead (bhagavān). Activities meant to please Him are called devotional service. Jñāna (impersonal speculation) and karma (fruitive work), which are meant to please Brahman and Paramātmā, are not devotional service. Devotional service should be favorable (ānukūlya), meant to please Lord Kṛṣṇa. If it is not favorable, devotional service cannot reach the perfect stage. The word "ānukūla" means “pleasing to Lord Kṛṣṇa". In the stage of sādhana-bhakti, the activities of devotional service are to a certain extent gross and unrefined. In the stage of perfect devotional service, the activities of devotional service are freed from connection with the material world. In this way they are subtle and refined. In both stages the qualities of devotional service remain the same. Therefore that devotional service should be favorable (ānukūlyena) and directly to Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇānuśīlanam) are the direct qualities of devotional service. Now that the direct qualities have been described, we will describe the indirect qualities of devotional service. Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī has mentioned two indirect qualities of devotional service. The first indirect quality is "anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam (freedom from other desires), and the second indirect quality is "j{.sy 241}āna-karmādy-anāvṛtam" (freedom from impersonal speculation and fruitive work). In the heart any desire for something other than devotional service is antagonistic to devotional service. When jñāna, karma, yoga, renunciation, and other things cover the heart, the

situation is not favorable for devotional service. Therefore devotional service is pure when it is freed from these two obstacles and when it is favorable and directed to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the special quality of devotional service? I mean to say, what are its specific characteristics?

Bābājī: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that pure devotional service has six specific characteristics. They are described in these words (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.13):

kleśa-ghnī śubhadā mokṣa-
laghutā-kṛt su-durlabhā
sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā
śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣaṇī ca sā

"There are six characteristics of pure devotional service, which are as follows: 1. Pure devotional service brings immediate relief from all kinds of material distress, 2. Pure devotional service is the beginning of all auspiciousness, 3. Pure devotional service automatically puts one in transcendental pleasure, 4. Pure devotional service is rarely achieved, 5. Those in pure devotional service deride even the conception of liberation, and 6. Pure devotional service is the only means to attract Kṛṣṇa."*

Vijaya-kumāra: How does pure devotional service bring immediate relief from all kinds of material distress?

Bābājī: Material distress has three causes: 1. pāpa (sins), 2. pāpa-bīja (the seeds of sins), and 3. avidyā (ignorance). The word "pāpa" (sins) refers to the activities that begin with "pātaka" (sins), "mahā-pātaka" (great sins), and ati-pātaka" (the greatest sins). When pure devotional service appears in the heart, sinful activities cannot remain there. The desire to commit sins is called "pāpa-bīja" (the seeds of sins). When the heart is purified by performing devotional service, sinful desires cannot stay there. The individual soul's illusions are called "avidyā". When pure devotional service is performed, the soul thinks "I am a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa." When that happens illusions about the soul's true identity cannot stay. When the effulgence of Bhakti-devī (the goddess of devotional service) enters the heart, sins, the seeds of sins, and the blinding darkness of ignorance all perish. Thus, when devotional service arrives, material distress is no longer seen. Therefore one of the characteristics of devotional service is that it brings immediate relief from all kinds of material distress.

Vijaya-kumāra: How is pure devotional service is the beginning of all auspiciousness?

Bābājī: The word auspiciousness means: 1. love for all living entities, 2. all virtues, and 3. every kind of happiness. When pure devotional service arises in his heart, a person becomes decorated with these four virtues: 1. humility, 2. mercy, 3. pridelessness, and 4. giving honor to all others. The result of this is that the entire world loves him. Every virtue that exists among the living entities is spontaneously manifested within a person who is a devotee of the Lord. Devotional service also

gives every kind of happiness. It gives material sense happiness, the happiness of attaining the qualityless impersonal liberation, all yogic perfections, sense gratification, liberation, and every other kind of happiness. However, the four kinds of devotees do not desire any of these kinds of happiness, for none of them can even approach the eternal bliss attained by engaging in devotional service.

Vijaya-kumāra: Why is it that persons engaged in pure devotional service deride even the conception of impersonal liberation?

Bābājī: When the happiness that comes from pleasing the Lord is even slightly manifested in one's heart, the happinesses obtained from material piety, material sense gratification, and impersonal liberation automatically become very insignificant.

Vijaya-kumāra: Why is pure devotional service rarely achieved?

Bābājī: Please try to understand this carefully. By following thousands and thousands of spiritual paths one will not easily attain devotional service. Lord Hari is not pleased by persons who strive for material sense gratification or impersonal liberation. To them He will not give devotional service. Therefore for the followers of these two paths devotional service is very rarely achieved. By following the path of impersonal speculation one may attain impersonal liberation, and by performing yajñas and other pious deeds one may easily attain material sense gratification, but by these means one will never become expert in the yoga of devotional service. One may follow thousands and thousands of such paths, but one will not attain devotional service to Lord Hari.

Vijaya-kumāra: How does pure devotional service automatically put one in transcendental pleasure?

Bābājī: Devotional service is filled with spiritual pleasure. It is an ocean of bliss. If all the material pleasures available in the troublesome material were added to its opposite, the pleasure of merging into the impersonal Brahman, and then multiplied by a hundred thousand million million, all that accumulated pleasure would not equal a single drop of the happiness of devotional service. Material senses pleasure is very insignificant, and impersonal Brahman pleasure is very dry. These two kinds of pleasure are very different from spiritual pleasure. Dissimilar things cannot be compared. The pleasure of devotional service is a deep ocean of bliss. Compared to it, the happiness of impersonal liberation is like a mud-puddle in a cow's hoofprint. Only persons who have tasted the pleasure of devotional service know what that pleasure is like. They cannot really describe that pleasure to others.

Vijaya-kumāra: How does pure devotional service attract Kṛṣṇa?

Bābājī: When devotional service appears in someone's heart, Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is controlled by love, becomes attracted to enter that heart along with all His associates. By no other way can Lord Kṛṣṇa be brought under control.

Vijaya-kumāra: If devotional service is as you describe, then why do not all scripture scholars carefully engage in it?

Bābājī: The root of the matter is this: human intelligence and material logic are limited. Any human beings who tries with his limited intelligence to understand Lord Kṛṣṇa and His devotional service, which are far beyond the boundary of the material world, will certainly fail. Lord Kṛṣṇa and devotional service will remain far away from him. On the other hand, a person who because of past pious deeds now has a single drop of attraction to Kṛṣṇa can easily understand devotional

service. Aside from being fortunate in this way, no one can understand the truth of devotional service.

Vijaya-kumāra: Why is material logic useless in understand spiritual pleasure?

Bābājī: Material logic has no power to understand spiritual pleasure. In the Vedas (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.9) it is said:

naiṣa tarkeṇa

"The Supreme cannot be understood by material logic."

In the Vedānta-sūtra (2.1.11) it is also said:

tarkāpratiṣṭhānāt

"Transcendental topics cannot be understood by argument or logic."*

In this way it is explained that material logic cannot be used to understand spiritual matters.

Vrajanātha: Is there a stage in between sādhana-bhakti (devotional service in practice) and prema-bhakti (devotional service in pure love of God)?

Bābājī: Yes. There are three stages: sādhana-bhakti, bhāva-bhakti (devotional service in ecstasy), and prema-bhakti.

Vrajanātha: What distinguishes sādhana-bhakti from the others?

Bābājī: The highest stage is prema-bhakti. As long as he remains imprisoned by the material senses, the soul's devotional activities are situated in sādhana-bhakti.

Vrajanātha: You have explained that prema-bhakti is the eternal perfection, the highest stage. How is this highest stage attained?

Bābājī: One cannot attain that eternal perfection by his own efforts. In the beginning the stage called "sādhana" is manifested in the heart. Until the day when the eternal perfection appears of its own accord, one cannot force its presence. The eternal perfection must come of its own.

Vrajanātha: Please explain more clearly.

Bābājī: Because it is manifested from the Lord's own internal potency (svarūpa-śakti), prema-bhakti is eternally perfect. It is not manifested in the hearts of souls still imprisoned by matter. With the body, mind, and words one may endeavor to attain that eternal perfection in his heart, but as long as it is not attained, the devotee is situated in sādhana-bhakti.

Vrajanātha: What are the qualities of sādhana-bhakti?

Bābājī: The nature of sādhana-bhakti is that it is a method of making the mind think of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajanātha: How many stages are present in sādhana-bhakti?

Bābājī: There are two stages: "vaidhī" and “rāgānuga".

Vrajanātha: What is vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti?

Bābājī: Vaidhī is of two kinds. When one follows the rules given in the scriptures, his activities are called “vaidhī-pravṛtti". When by following the rules given in the scriptures a person attains devotional service, his activities are called "vaidhī-bhakti".

Vrajanātha: Later I will ask about rāgānuga-bhakti. Now please tell me: What are the qualities of vaidhi-bhakti?

Bābājī: Activities the scriptures say should be performed are called "vidhī". Activities the scriptures say should not be performed are called "niṣedha". To do what should be done and avoid what is forbidden is called “vaidha-dharma".

Vrajanātha: From your words I have understood that “vaidha" means "following the rules of all the “dharma-śāstras" (scriptures). However, it is very difficult for the living entity to determine from these scriptures exactly what should be done and what is forbidden. Therefore, please briefly summarize the scriptures rules of what should be done and what is forbidden.

Bābājī: In the Padma Purāṇa it is said:

smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur
vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāh syur
etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ

"Kṛṣṇa is the origin of Lord Viṣṇu. He should always be remembered and never forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the śāstras (scriptures) should be the servants of these two principles."*

One should always remember Lord Viṣṇu. That is the root of all rules. The duties of varṇāśrama-dharma are mean to follow that rule of always remembering Lord Viṣṇu. One should never forget Lord Viṣṇu. That is the root of all prohibitions. Avoidance of sin, abandonment of materialism, penance for sins committed in the past, and other like prohibitions are meant to follow this prohibition: that one should never forget Lord Viṣṇu. Therefore the rules and prohibitions described in the scriptures are the servants of the rule to remember Lord Viṣṇu and the prohibition to never forget Him. Therefore the rules of varṇāśrama and other like rules are meant to enable one to always remember Lord Viṣṇu. This is described in the following words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.2-3):

mukha-bāhūru-pādebhyaḥ
puruṣasyāśramaiḥ saha
catvāro jajñire varṇā
guṇair viprādayaḥ pṛthak

"From the mouth of Brahmā, the brahminical order has come into existence. Similarly, from his arms, the kṣatriyas have come, from his waist the vaiśyas have come, and from his legs the śūdras have come. These four orders and their

spiritual counterparts (brahmacārya, gṛhastha, vānaprastha, and sannyāsa) combine to make human society complete.*

ya eṣāṁ puruṣaṁ sākṣād-
ātma-prabhavam īśvaram
na bhajanty avajānanti
sthānād bhraṣṭāḥ patanty adhaḥ

"If one simply maintains an official position in the four varṇas and āśramas but does not worship the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu, he falls down from his puffed-up position into a hellish condition."*

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that among the human beings who follow the rules of scripture, some have faith in devotional service. These are the persons qualified to engage in devotional service. These persons are not attracted to following rules fro their own sake, and neither are they attracted to renunciation for its own sake. Following the rules of ordinary civilized life and at the same time full of faith in devotional service, they engage in sādhana-bhakti. This engagement in sādhana-bhakti is the result of many lifetimes of pious deeds. Faithful persons thus engaged in devotional service are divided into three groups: 1. uttama (advanced), 2. madhyama (intermediate), and 3. kaniṣṭha (neophyte).

Vrajanātha: In Bhagavad-gītā (7.16) it is said that the devotees are of four kinds: 1. ārta (the distressed), 2. jijñāsu (the inquisitive), 3. arthārthī (the desirer of wealth), and 4. jñāni (he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute). How are these persons eligible to engage in devotional service?

Bābājī: When the attain the association of saintly devotees, these four kinds of persons, the ārta, jijñāsu, arthārthi, and jñānī develop faith in unalloyed devotional service. Then they become qualified to engage in devotional service. Gajendra, Śaunaka Ṛṣi, Dhruva, the four Kumāras, and many others may be cited here as examples of this.

Vrajanātha: Why are the devotees not eager for liberation?

Bābājī: Of the five kinds of liberationsālokya (to live on the same planet as the Lord), sārṣṭi (to have the same opulences as the Lord), sāmīpya (to have constant association with the Lord), sārūpya (to obtain the same bodily features as the Lord), and sāyujya (to become one with the Lord)only sāyujya is openly opposed to the principles of devotional service. Therefore the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa never accept sāyujya (impersonal) liberation. The other four kinds of liberationsālokya, sārṣṭi, sāmīpya, and sārūpyaare not openly opposed to the principles of devotional service, but some aspects of them are not helpful for developing devotional service. The devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa do not accept these four kinds of liberation when they are manifested in Vaikuṇṭha, the abode of Lord Nārāyaṇa. In some situations spiritual opulence is prominent in these kinds of liberation, and in other situations loving service is prominent. The devotees reject these kinds of liberation when their final goal is spiritual opulence. In those situations the devotees say, "Talk of liberation should stay far away." The devotees' hearts are attracted only to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The devotees' hearts are not enchanted by the mercy of Lord Nārāyaṇa.

Why not? Even though Lord Nārāyaṇa and Lord Kṛṣṇa are in the end not different from each other, the highest nectar is present only in the form of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajanātha: Are persons born in upper-class families in varṇāśrama the only persons eligible to engage in devotional service?

Bābājī: Simply by being a human being one is eligible to engage in devotional service.

Vrajanātha: Persons who follow varṇāśrama must follow both the rules of varṇāśrama and the rules of devotional service. I see they must follow both sets of rules. On the other hand, persons who do not follow varṇāśrama need only follow the rules of pure devotional service. From what I can see it is must be very difficult for the followers of varṇāśrama to follow both the rules of karma-kāṇḍa and the rules of devotional service. What is the proper understanding of all this?

Bābājī: A person engaged in pure devotional service need only follow the rules of devotional service, even though he may be living within the varṇāśrama social system. By following the rules of devotional service, his duty to follow the rules of karma-kāṇḍa is automatically fulfilled. In the places where they do not oppose devotional service there is no harm in following the rules of karma-kāṇḍa. A person engaged in devotional service naturally has no desire to act badly or commit sins. If by accident he commits a sin, he is not required to perform the penance described in the karma-kāṇḍa. No accidentally committed sin has the power to stay in a heart where devotional service also stays. A sin that tries to stay there will soon perish. Therefore such a devotee does not need to perform penance.

Vrajanātha: How does a person engaged in devotional service repay his debts to the demigods and others like them?

Bābājī: Bābā, please reflect on the message of this verse in the Eleventh Canto (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.5.41):

devarṣi-bhūtāpta-nṛṇāṁ pitṛṇāṁ
na kiṅkaro nāyam ṛṇī ca rājan
sarvātmanā yaḥ śaraṇaṁ śaraṇyaṁ
gato mukundaṁ parihṛtya kartam

"Anyone who has completely surrendered unto Kṛṣṇa, Mukunda, giving up all other duties, is no longer a debtor, nor is he obliged to anyonenot the demigods, nor the sages, nor the people in general, nor kinsmen, nor humanity, nor forefathers."*

Also, at the end of the Bhagavad-gītā (18.66), the Supreme Personality of Godhead declares:

"Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reactions. Do not fear."*

these words of the Gita mean that a person who engages in unalloyed devotional service is no longer required to follow the rules given in the scriptures

describing impersonal liberation (jñāna-śāstras) and fruitive work (karma-śāstras). Simply by engaging in devotional service he will attain all perfection. The Supreme Lord also declares (Bhagavad-gītā 9.31):

na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

"My devotee never perishes."*

This promise of the Lord stands above all other rules in the scriptures.

After hearing these words, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra said with one voice, "In our hearts there is no doubt about devotional service. We know that jñāna and karma are very insignificant and unimportant. Without Bhakti-devī's (the goddess of devotion's) mercy no one can attain auspiciousness. O master, please be kind to us and describe the different features of pure devotional service. Then our lives will become a success."

Bābājī: Vrajanātha, you have heard the *Daśa-mūla* up to the eighth verse. At another time please relate these verses to your saintly uncle. My heart blossoms with happiness when I see him. Please listen now to the ninth verse:

śrutiḥ kṛṣṇākhyānaṁ smaraṇa-nati-pūjā-vidhi-gaṇāḥ
tathā dāsyaṁ sakhyaṁ paricaraṇam apy ātmada-danam
navāṅgāny etānīha vidhi-gata-bhakter anudinaṁ
bhajan śraddhā-yuktaḥ su-vimala-ratiṁ vai sa labhate

"Hearing about Lord Kṛṣṇa, chanting His glories, remembering Him, bowing down before Him, worshiping Him, serving Him, thinking of Him as a friend, serving His lotus feet, and surrendering everything unto Him are the nine limbs of devotional service. A faithful person who every day worships the Lord by performing these devotional activities attains pure love for Him."

When Lord Kṛṣṇa's spiritual holy name, and the descriptions of His form, qualities, and pastimes touch the ear, that activity is called "śravaṇam" (hearing). This hearing is of two kinds: Before one has attained faith in the Lord one in conversation may hear the qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa from the mouth of a saintly devotion. That is one kind of hearing. By hearing in this way one attains faith. When one attains faith, he develops a deep thirst to hear about Lord Kṛṣṇa. Then again and again he hears about Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name and other features. After that, he hears the holy name and qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa from the mouth of a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master. That is the second kind of hearing. Hearing is one limb of pure devotional service. At the time of performing sādhana-bhakti one hears from a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master, and when one finally attains perfection, he continues to hear. Hearing is the first limb of devotional service.

When Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name, and the descriptions of His form, qualities, and pastimes touch the tongue, that activity is called "kīrtanam" (chanting). Discussions of Lord Kṛṣṇa, chanting His holy name, attracting everyone by reading aloud the descriptions of His in the scriptures and singing songs about Him, speaking humble words before Him, proclaiming His glories to others, reciting prayers, and placing humble requests before Him are all counted within the category of chanting. Of all the limbs of devotional service, chanting is said to be the most important. In Kali-yuga especially, chanting can bring auspiciousness to all souls. This is declared in the scriptures again and again. For example, it is said (Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa, 72.25):

dhyāyan kṛte yajan yajñais
tretāyāṁ dvāpare 'rcayan
yad āpnoti tad āpnoti
kalau saṅkīrtya keśavam

"Whatever is achieved by meditation is Satya-yuga, by performance of yajña is Tretā-yuga, or by the worship of Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet in Dvāpara-yuga, is obtained in the age of Kali simply by chanting and glorifying Lord Keśava."*

No other method is as affective in purifying the heart as hari-kīrtana (chanting the glories of Lord Hari). When many devotees chant together, that is called "saṅkīrtana".

Remembering Lord Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, and pastimes is called "smaraṇam" (remembering). Remembering is of five kinds: 1. when one searches fro something, that is called "smaraṇa". 2. When one withdraws the mind from other things and fixes it on one object, that is called "dharaṇā". 3. When one meditates on a particular form, that is called “dhyāna". 4. When meditation is unbroken and becomes like a flood of nectar, that is called "dhruvānusmṛti". 5. When only the object of meditation and nothing else is present in the heart, that is called "samādhi". Śravaṇam (hearing), kīrtanam (chanting), and smaraṇam (remembering) are the three most important limbs of devotional service. All the other limbs are included within these three. Of the three limbs hearing, chanting, and remembering, the most important is chanting, for hearing and remembering are naturally included within it.

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.5.23 it is said that "pāda-sevā" (serving the feet) or "paricaryā (service) is the fourth limb of devotional service. Serving the Lord's feet should be performed along with hearing, chanting, and remembering. When one serves the Lord's feet one should think oneself worthless and unqualified to serve, and one should think of the object of His service is a person who is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss. To think in these ways is essential. When serving the Lord's feet one should think that he is seeing the Lord's handsome face, touching Him, circumambulating Him, following Him, and seeing His temple, the Ganges, Jagannātha Purī, Dvārakā, Mathurā, Navadvīpa, and other holy places. Śrīla Rupa Gosvami has eloquently described sixty-four limbs of devotional service. Serving Tulasī and serving the Lord's devotees are included within this limb, serving the

Lord's feet.

The fifth limb is "arcanam" (worship). Many things could be said about the qualifications of the worshiper and the activities of worship. If, after being engaged in hearing, chanting, and remembering, one becomes attracted to the path of worship, one should take shelter of the lotus feet of a bona-fide spiritual master, accept mantra-dīkṣā initiation from him, and become engaged in the activities of worship.

Vrajanātha: What is the difference between "nāma" (the holy name) and "mantra"?

Bābājī: The holy name of the Supreme Lord is the life and soul of all mantras. By adding the word "namaḥ" (obeisances) and other like words to the Lord's holy names, the sages have given us various mantras glorifying the Lord, mantras that each possess specific powers. The holy name of the Lord has nothing to do with the material world. To withdraw the mind from thoughts of the material body and other material things, mantras containing the Lord's holy names are given. To be able to chant mantras, materialistic persons require to accept initiation (dīkṣā). To chant Kṛṣṇa-mantras there is no need to accept the purificatory processes called "siddha", "sādhya", "susiddha", and "ari". Initiation into the chanting of Kṛṣṇa-mantras is very beneficial for the living entity. Kṛṣṇa-mantras are the most powerful mantras in the entire world. When he accepts a Kṛṣṇa-mantra from a bona-fide spiritual master, a qualified person gets strength from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. The spiritual master then describes the path of arcana (worship) to the inquisitive disciple. I need not describe all of that now. In brief it may be said that the observance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa-janmāṣṭamī, Kārttika-vrata, Ekādaśī-vrata, Māgha-snāna, and other vows are included in this path of worship. One thing especially should be noted about the path of worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa: One must worship Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotees along with Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Vandanā (offering obeisances) is the sixth limb of devotional service. Although it is included within pāda-sevā, kīrtana, and the other limbs of devotional service, vandanā is also considered a separate limb. Vandanā means "offering obeisances". There are two ways to offer obeisances: 1. ekāṅga-namaskāra (offering obeisances with one limb), and 2. aṣṭāṅga-namaskāra (offering obeisances with eight limbs). To offer obeisances with one hand, with the body completely covered with cloth, directly before, on the left side, or behind the Lord, or very close to the Lord, are all considered offenses.

Dāsya (service) is the seventh limb of devotional service. "Dāsya" means to think "I am a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa". The best kind of worship is performed when the worshiper thinks that he is a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Offering obeisances, reciting prayers, offering all of ones actions, serving, offering honor, remembering, hearing about the Lord, and other like activities are included within dāsya.

Sakhya (friendship) is the eighth limb of devotional service. "Sakhya" means to act as a friend to Lord Kṛṣṇa. There are two kinds of such friendship: 1. vaidhāṅga (friendship in vaidhī-bhakti), and 2. rāgāṅga (friendship in rāgānuga-bhakti). Here we will only describe vaidhāṅga friendship. This kind of friendship is possible when the devotee engages in Deity worship. That is called "vaidha-sakhya".

Atma-nivedana (surrendering everything) is the ninth limb of devotional service. To offer the pure soul, the material body, and everything else to Lord

Kṛṣṇa is called "Atma-nivedana". To act only for Lord Kṛṣṇa's benefit and not for one's own benefit is the special feature of ātma-nivedana. As a cow that is sold to someone does not do anything to protect or maintain herself, so the surrendered soul acts only according to Lord Kṛṣṇa's desires. Such a soul desires whatever Lord Kṛṣṇa desires. The activities of ātma-nivedana are described in these words (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 9.4.18-20):

sa vai manaḥ kṛṣṇa-padāravindayor
vacāṁsi vaikuṇṭha-guṇānuvarṇane
karau harer mandira-mārjanādiṣu
śrutiṁ cakārācyuta-sat-kathodaye

mukunda-liṅgālaya-darśane dṛśau
tad-bhṛtya-gātra-sparśe 'ṅga-saṅgamam
ghrāṇam ca tat-pāda-saroja-saurabhe
śrīmat-tulasyā rasanaṁ tad-arpite

pādau hareḥ kṣetra-padānusarpaṇe
śiro hṛṣīkeśa-padābhivandane
kāmam ca dāsye na tu kāma-kāmyayā
yathottama-śloka-janāśrayā ratiḥ

"Mahāraja Ambarīṣa always engaged his mind in meditating upon the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa, His words in describing the glories of the Lord, his hands in cleansing the Lord's temple, and his ears in hearing the words spoken by Kṛṣṇa or about Kṛṣṇa. He engaged his eyes in seeing the Deity of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa's temples, and Kṛṣṇa's places like Mathurā and Vṛndāvana, he engaged his sense of touch in touching the bodies of the Lord's devotees, he engaged his sense of smell in smelling the fragrance of tulasī offered to the Lord, and he engaged his tongue in tasting the Lord's prasāda. He engaged his legs in walking to the holy places and temple of the Lord, his head in bowing down before the Lord, and all his desires in serving the Lord, twenty-four hours an day. Indeed, Mahāraja Ambarīṣa never desired anything for his own sense gratification. He engaged all his senses in devotional service, in various engagements related to the Lord. This is the way to increase attachment for the Lord and be completely free from all material desires."*

Filled with bliss to hear all this, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra offered dandavat obeisances to the saintly bābājī and said, "O master, you are a personal associate of the Supreme Lord Himself. We are both very fortunate to drink the nectar of your teachings. For so many days we were uselessly proud of our caste and learning. It is only because of many many pious deeds in many past births that now we have attained the shelter of your feet." Vijaya-kumāra said, "O best of the Lord's devotees, Śrī Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura instructed me to see the Yoga-pīṭha in Śrī Māyāpura. It is by his mercy that today I have see both the Lord's transcendental abode and the Lord's personal associate. Please be merciful and allow that

tomorrow evening we may again come to see you."

Hearing the name of Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, the elderly bābājī at once offered dandavat obeisances. He said, “Again and again I offer my respectful obeisances to Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura, who is Vyāsadeva himself, and who has come to this world to record Lord Caitanya's pastimes."

It was late. Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra returned to Vrajanātha's home.

Chapter Twenty
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Abhidheya-vicāra Vaidha-sādhana-bhakti)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (Abhidheya: Vaidha-sādhana-bhakti)

Almost six hours had passed when Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra returned home. Vrajanātha's mother carefully served a delicious lunch to her brother. After lunch, the uncle and nephew conversed very affectionately. To his uncle, Vrajanātha repeated one by one all the teachings he had heard from the saintly bābājī. Hearing them, Vijaya-kumāra became plunged in an ocean of bliss. He said to his nephew, "You have become very fortunate! from a great saint you have heard all these descriptions of the spiritual truth. It is always auspicious to hear descriptions of Lord Hari and devotional service, but when these descriptions come from the mouth of a saint, when they enter the ear they very quickly bring the desired result. Bābā, you are learned in all the scriptures. In the nyāya-śastras you have no peer. You were born in a family of vaidika brāhmaṇas. You are not poverty-stricken. You are wealthy. These advantages are all ornaments decorating you now that you have taken shelter of a Vaiṣṇava's feet and you relish hearing His descriptions of Lord Kṛṣṇa."

Sitting in the house's shrine to Goddess Cāṇḍī, the uncle and nephew conversed about spiritual life. In a side room Vrajanātha's mother privately said to Vijaya-kumāra, “Brother, after many days you have come for a visit. Please try to turn your nephew into a householder. I am afraid to see how Vrajanātha acts. Vrajanātha may never get married. Many matchmakers have offered many matches, but Vrajanātha is stubborn. He refuses to marry. My mother-in-law tried, but she could not convince him. Hearing all that his sister had to say, Vijaya-kumāra replied, "I will stay for ten or fifteen days. I will think about it and I will tell you what to do. For now please go to your own part of the house." When Vrajanātha's mother returned to her rooms, Vijaya-kumāra returned to his spiritual discussions with Vrajanātha. They spent the day in those discussions. The next day, after their meal, Vijaya-kumāra said to Vrajanātha, "This evening we will go to Śrīvāsa's courtyard. From the mouth of the saintly bābājī we will hear Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's description of the sixty-four limbs of devotional service. Vrajanātha, I wish that birth after birth I could associate with saintly devotees like you. If had not associated with you, I would never have heard such nectarean teachings. Look, the saintly bābājī said that that path of sādhana-bhakti has two

parts: 1. vaidha-mārga (devotional service by following the rules and regulations), and 2. rāga-mārga (spontaneous devotional service). You and I are qualified to follow the path of vaidha-mārga. Later we will hear about the rāga-mārga, but first we should hear about the vaidha-mārga. Then we will be able to begin sādhana-bhakti. After hearing the saintly bābājī's description of the nine processes of devotional service, I do not understand how to begin. Today I will ask him about that." The two of them spent the day discussing many things. Then, garlanded with rays of light, the sun approached the western horizon. Again and again exclaiming "Haribol! Haribol!" our two saintly devotees entered Śrīvāsa's courtyard, offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the circle of Vaiṣṇavas, and entered the elderly bābājī's cottage. Seeing the two devotees eager to ask questions, the saintly bābājī happily embraced them, and offered them sitting places made of banana leaves. The two devotees offered daṇḍavat obeisances, sat down, and after a some conversation revealed their questions.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, we give you so much trouble. Still, because you are merciful to the devotees you kindly accept the inconveniences we bring. Today we would like to hear from your mouth Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's description of the sixty-four limbs of devotional service. If you are inclined to be merciful to us, then please kindly describe how we may easily attain pure devotional service.

Smiling, the saintly bābājī said, "I will describe to you the sixty-four limbs of devotional service. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī mentions in his book. Here are the first ten of these sixty-four: 1. accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master, 2. becoming initiated by the spiritual master and learning how to discharge devotional service from him, 3. obeying the orders of the spiritual master with faith and devotion, 4. following in the footsteps of the great ācāryas (teachers) under the direction of the spiritual master, 5. inquiring from the spiritual master how to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, 6. being prepared to give up anything material for the satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa (this means that when we are engaged in the devotional service of Kṛṣṇa, we must be prepared to give up something which we may not like to give up, and also we may have to accept something which we may not like to accept), 7. residing in a sacred place of pilgrimage like Dvārakā or Vṛndāvana, 8. accepting only what is necessary, or dealing with the material world only as far as necessary, 9. observing the fasting day on ekādaśī, and 10. worshiping sacred trees like the banyan tree.*

The next ten limbs of devotional service are prohibitions that should be carefully followed. They are:

11. One should rigidly give up the company of non-devotees. 12. One should not instruct a person who is not desirous of accepting devotional service. 13. one should not be very enthusiastic about constructing costly temples or monasteries. 14. One should not try to read too many books, nor should one develop the idea of earning his livelihood by lecturing on or professionally reciting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam or Bhagavad-gītā. 15. One should not be neglectful in ordinary dealings. 16. One should not be under the spell of lamentation in loss or jubilation in gain. 17. One should not disrespect the demigods. 18. One should not give unnecessary trouble to any living entity. 19. One should carefully avoid the various offenses in chanting the holy name of the Lord or in worshiping the Deity in the temple. 10. One should be very intolerant toward the blasphemy of the

Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, or His devotees.*

These twenty limbs are the gateway to devotional service. Among them the first three, beginning with accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master, are the most important. The next limbs are:

21. One should decorate the body with tilaka, which is the sign of the Vaiṣṇavas. 22. In marking such tilaka sometimes one may write Hare Kṛṣṇa on the body. 23. One should accept flowers and garlands that have been offered to the Deity and the spiritual master and put them on one's body. 24. One should learn to dance before the Deity. 25. One should learn to bow down immediately upon seeing the Deity or the spiritual master. 26. As soon as one visits a temple of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one must stand up. 27. When the Deity is being borne for a stroll in the street, a devotee should immediately follow the procession. 28. A devotee must visit a Viṣṇu temple at least once or twice every day, morning and evening. 29. One must circumambulate the temple building at least three times. 30. One must worship the Deity in the temple according to the regulative principles. 31. One must render personal service to the Deities. 32. One must sing. 33. One must perform saṅkīrtana. 34. One must chant. 35. One must offer prayers. 36. One must recite notable prayers. 37. One must taste mahā-prasāda (food from the very plate offered before the Deities). 38. One must drink caraṇāmṛta (water from the bathing of the Deities, which is offered to guests). 39. One must smell the incense and flowers offered to the Deity. 40. One must touch the lotus feet of the Deity. 41. One must see the Deity with great devotion. 42. One must offer ārati at different times. 43. One must hear about the Lord and His pastimes from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, Bhagavad-gītā, and similar books. 44. One must pray to the Deity for His mercy. 45. One should remember the Deity. 46. One should meditate upon the Deity. 47. One should render some voluntary service. 48. One should think of the Lord as one's friend. 49. One should offer everything to the Lord. 50. One should offer a favorite article (such as food or a garment). 51. One should take all kinds of risks and perform all endeavors for Kṛṣṇa's benefit. 52. In every condition, one should be a surrendered soul. 53. One should pour water on the tulasī tree. 54. One should regularly hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and similar literature. 55. One should live in a sacred place like Mathurā, Vṛndāvana, or Dvārakā. 56. One should offer service to Vaiṣṇavas. 57. One should arrange for one's devotional service according to one's means. 58. In the month of Kārttika (October and November), one should make arrangements for special services. 59. During Janmāṣṭamī (the time of Kṛṣṇa's appearance in this world) one should observe a special service. 60. One should do whatever is done with great care and devotion for the Deity. 61. One should relish the pleasure of Bhāgavatam reading among devotees and not among outsiders. 62. One should associate with devotees who are considered more advanced. 63. One should chant the holy name of the Lord. 64. One should live in the jurisdiction of Mathurā.*

Although they had already been mentioned in the list, the last five items are repeated because they are very important. Please know that all these limbs describe how to worship Lord Kṛṣṇa with one's body, senses, and mind. Items 21 though 49 in the second part describe initiation into the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, please explain to us the first item. What does "1. accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master" mean?

Bābājī: The disciple should be qualified to engage in pure devotional service. To learn the science of Kṛṣṇa, the disciple should take shelter of the spiritual master's feet. Any person who has faith is qualified to engage in devotional service. When, after many births of pious deeds, one hears the descriptions of Lord Hari from a saintly devotee's mouth, and from that hearing develops strong faith in Lord Hari, that strong faith is called "śraddhā". From that śraddhā (faith) comes śaraṇāpatti (surrender). Faith and surrender are almost the same thing. Devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa is the most valuable thing in the world. One should think, "I will do whatever is favorable for devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. I will avoid whatever is not favorable for devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is my only protector. I am confident that Lord Kṛṣṇa will always protect me. I am very poor and worthless. It is not good that I desire to be independent. I should do whatever Lord Kṛṣṇa desires." A person who thinks in this way has firm faith. He is qualified to engage in unalloyed devotional service. When a person becomes qualified in this way, he becomes very eager to learn the science of devotional service. To learn it, he accepts the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide spiritual master. The Vedas (Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.2.12) declare:

tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet
samit-pāṇiḥ śrotriyaṁ brahma-niṣṭham

"To learn transcendental subject matter, one must approach the spiritual master. In doing so, he should carry fuel to burn in sacrifice. The symptom of such a spiritual master is that he is expert in understanding the Vedic conclusion, and therefore he constantly engages in the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead."*

It is also said (Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.14.2):

ācāryavān puruṣo veda

"One who approaches a bona fide spiritual master can understand everything about spiritual realization."*

The qualifications of a bona fide spiritual master and a bona fide disciple are elaborately described in Śrī Hari-bhakti-vilāsa. The gist of that description is this: A person who has faith and a pure character is qualified to be a disciple. A person who is engaged in pure devotional service, who knows the science of devotional service, whose character is saintly, who is honest, straightforward, and sincere, who is not greedy, who is not an impersonalist, and who is expert in performing his spiritual duties is qualified to be a bona fide spiritual master. A brāhmaṇa who has these qualities and who is honored by all others may become a spiritual master of the other castes. In the absence of such a brāhmaṇa, a person may become a spiritual master if he is superior to his disciple. The root meaning of these rules is

that, regardless of his status in the varṇāśrama social system, any person who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa can become a spiritual master. Brahmanas who are proud of their high status in the material world may like to accept a spiritual master who is a brāhmaṇa, but the truth is that any person who is a pure devotee of the Lord is qualified to be a bona fide spiritual master. The scriptures describe a time of testing, when the spiritual master and disciple examine each other. That test is to enable the spiritual master to know whether the prospective disciple is truly qualified, and also to enable the prospective disciple to know whether the spiritual master is truly a pure devotee of the Lord. When the disciple has faith that the spiritual master is qualified, the bona fide spiritual master bestows his mercy on the disciple.

There are two kinds of spiritual master: 1. dīkṣā-guru (initiating spiritual master), and 2. śikṣā-guru (instructing spiritual master). The dīkṣā-guru gives initiation and teaches how to worship the Lord. One may accept only one dīkṣā-guru, but one may accept many śikṣā-gurus. The dīkṣā-guru may also perform the duties of a śikṣā-guru.

Vijaya-kumāra: The disciple is not allowed to reject his dīkṣā-guru. But if the dīkṣā-guru is not qualified to teach, how can he instruct the disciple?

Bābājī: At the time of choosing the spiritual master, the prospective disciple should test to see whether the spiritual master has traveled to the farther shore of the Vedic scriptures and the science of the Supreme Lord. The spiritual master must be qualified to teach all aspects of the spiritual science. The disciple is not allowed to reject his dīkṣā-guru. However, there are two circumstances where the disciple must reject his dīkṣā-guru. If at the time of choosing a spiritual master the disciple did not test to see whether the spiritual master was a Vaiṣṇava and learned in the spiritual science, the disciple may reject the spiritual master. Or, if it is seen that in the course of his activities the spiritual master does what he should not do, then the disciple may also reject the spiritual master. Again and again the scriptures give testimony to prove these points. In the Nārada-pañcarātra (quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 1.101) it is said:

yo vākti nyāya-rahitam
anyāyena śṛṇoti yaḥ
tāv ubhau narakaṁ ghoraṁ
vrajataḥ kālam akṣayam

"A spiritual master who speaks wrongly, without logic, and a disciple who hears wrongly, without logic, both go to a terrible hell for a long time that seems not to end."

It is also said (Mahābhārata, Udyoga-parva, Asvopakhyāna 179.25):

guror apy avaliptasya
kāryākāryam ajānataḥ

utpatha-pratipannasya
parityāgo vidhīyate

"A spiritual master who is materialistic, who does not know what should and should not be done, and who follows the wrong path should be rejected."

It is also said (quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 4.144):

avaiṣṇavopadiṣṭena
mantreṇa nirayaṁ vrajet
punaś ca vidhinā samyag
grāhayed vaiṣṇavād guroḥ

"A person who accepts mantra initiation from a non-Vaiṣṇava goes to hell. A person initiated in this way should accept initiation again, this time from a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master."

A second reason for rejecting the spiritual master is this: If at the time of choosing the spiritual master, the spiritual master was a Vaiṣṇava and learned in the spiritual science, but by bad association the spiritual master became an impersonalist and a hater of Vaiṣṇavas, then that spiritual master should be rejected. If one accepts a spiritual master who is neither an impersonalist, nor a hater of Vaiṣṇavas, nor sinful, but is not very learned, then that spiritual master should not be rejected. One should honor that spiritual master. However, with the spiritual master's permission, one should approach another Vaiṣṇava, serve him, and learn from him the spiritual science.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "2. becoming initiated (kṛṣṇa-dīkṣā) by the spiritual master and learning (kṛṣṇa-śikṣā how to discharge devotional service from him" mean?

Bābājī: From the spiritual master one should learn the path of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa and the science of understanding Lord Kṛṣṇa. Applying that knowledge, one should sincerely serve Lord Kṛṣṇa and cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness in one's heart. In this way one should learn the different limbs of worshiping the Lord. At the spiritual master's feet one should learn sambandha (the soul's relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa), abhidheya (devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa), and prayojana (love for Lord Kṛṣṇa).

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "3. obeying the orders of the spiritual master with faith and devotion" mean?

Bābājī: Don't think your spiritual master is an ordinary human being. Know that he is the embodiment of all the demigods. Never disrespect him. Know that he is a resident of the spiritual world.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "4. following the footsteps of great ācāryas (teachers) under the direction of the spiritual master" mean?

Bābājī: Anything at all that makes the mind think of Lord Kṛṣṇa may be

considered sādhana-bhakti. However, one should follow the path traversed by the great devotees. That path will always be free from sufferings, the cause of all auspiciousness, and free from obstacles. In the Skanda Purāṇa it is said:

sa mṛgyaḥ śreyasāṁ hetuḥ
panthāḥ santāpa-varjitaḥ
anavāpta-śramaṁ pūrve
yena santaḥ pratasthire

"One should follow the path of the great devotees, for that path is free of sufferings and obstacles."

One person by himself cannot determine what is the best path. Therefore one should follow the devotional path that was walked by the great devotees. In the Brahma-yamala it is said:

śruti-smṛti-purāṇādi-
paṇcarātra-vidhiṁ vinā
aikāntikī harer bhaktir
utpātāyaiva kalpate

"Devotional service to the Lord that ignores the authorized Vedic literatures like the Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Nārada-pañcarātra, etc., is simply an unnecessary disturbance in society."*

Vijaya-kumāra: How is it that unalloyed devotional service can become an unnecessary disturbance in society? Please explain clearly.

Bābājī: Unalloyed devotional service can by attained only by following the path walked by the previous great devotees. If one creates a new path he expect to follow it to unalloyed devotional service. Dattātreya, Buddha, and other recent thinkers were not able to understand the truth of pure devotional service. Some taught a philosophy mixed with impersonalism and others a philosophy mixed with atheism. They taught horrible and ugly philosophies they imagined would lead to unalloyed devotional service to Lord Hari, but in truth did not at all lead to devotional service. Their philosophies became a disturbance to society. On the other hand, The path of rāga-mārga (spontaneous love) does not depend on the rules presented in the authorized Vedic literatures like the Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Nārada-pañcarātra, etc. Rather, it follows the path walked by the people of Vraja. However, the devotees qualified only to follow the path of vidhi-mārga (performing devotional service according to the rules and regulations) must follow the devotional path walked by Dhruva, Prahlāda, Nārada, Vyāsa, Śukadeva, and other great souls. For the devotees on the path of vidhi-bhakti there is no alternative but to follow the path of the great devotees.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "5. inquiring from the spiritual master how to

advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness" mean?

Bābājī: Persons who are very eager to understand the spiritual truth quickly attain all they desire. "Very eager" here means that they ask saintly devotees to explain the truth of spiritual life.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "6. being prepared to give up anything material for the satisfaction of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa" mean?

Bābājī: The pleasures attained by eating palatable foods, the pleasures of marriage, and other like pleasures are called "material sense pleasures". These pleasures are all obstacles on the path of devotional service. One who renounces them for the sake of worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa makes easy progress in devotional service. A person attached to material sense pleasures becomes addicted to them in the same way an alcoholic becomes addicted to liquor. Overcome by powerful material desires, he cannot attain pure devotional service. Therefore one should eat only prasādam offered to the Supreme Lord, and then only enough to keep the body fit to engage in devotional service, and one should also fast on ekādaśī. In this way one can completely renounce material sense pleasures.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "7. Residing at a sacred place of pilgrimage like Dvārakā or Vṛndāvana" mean?

Bābājī: When one lives at the holy places where the Supreme Lord was born or enjoyed pastimes, or at places by the Ganges or other sacred rivers, one naturally attains faith in devotional service.

Vijaya-kumāra: Is living at Śrī Navadvīpa purifying only because it is by the Ganges, or is there another reason?

Bābājī: Ah! Living within the thirty-two mile area of Śrī Navadvīpa is exactly like living in Śrī Vṛndāvana. This is especially true for Śrī Māyāpura. Seven holy cities are famous for granting liberation. They are: Ayodhyā, Mathurā, Māyāpura, Vārāṇasī, Kāñci, Avantīpura, and Dvārakā. Of them, Māyāpura is the most important. Śrī Mahāprabhu brought the spiritual world of Śvetādvīpa to Māyāpura. Four hundred years after Lord Mahāprabhu's appearance, this land of Māyāpura-Śvetadvīpa will be the most important of all holy places. A person who lives in this places throws all offenses far away and easily attains pure devotional service. Śrī Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī said that this abode of Navadvīpa is not different from Śrī Vṛndāvana. Indeed, he said it was more glorious than Vṛndāvana.

Vijaya-kumāra: what does "8. Accepting only what is necessary, or dealing with the material world only as far as necessary" mean?

Bābājī: In the Nārada Purāṇa it is written:

yāvatā syāt sva-nirvāhaḥ
svī-kuryāt tāvad artha-vid
ādhikye nyūnatāyāṁ ca
cyavate paramārthataḥ

"One should earn and spend money only as far as he truly needs. If one does it too much or too little, he will fall from the spiritual goal."

A person eligible to perform vaidhi-bhakti should earn his livelihood by honest

means according to varṇāśrama. In that way he will attain auspiciousness. If he becomes greedy for more than he needs, his devotional life will become stunted. If he accepts less than he truly needs, he will gradually become unable to perform his devotional activities, and in that way he will also be at fault. As long as one is not able to completely renounce everything, he should collect only as much money as he truly needs for his spiritual life. In this way he will be able to properly cultivate his Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "9. observing the fasting day on ekādaśī" mean?

Bābājī: Pure ekādaśī is called "Hari-vāsara". One should not observe ekādaśī when it is interrupted (viddha) by another tithi. When there is a mahā-dvādaśī, that should be observed and not the ekādaśī. On the day before ekādaśī one should observe celibacy, on the day of ekādaśī one should fast completely, avoiding even water, and one should also worship Lord Hari during an all-night vigil. On the day after ekādaśī one should continue his observance of celibacy and one should also break his fast at the appropriate time. In this way one should observe ekādaśī. During ekādaśī one should also fast from mahā-prasādam, for otherwise fasting from even water has no meaning. For persons unable to fast completely, certain specific foods may be taken during ekādaśī. This is described in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa in the passage beginning with verse 12.97.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "10. worshiping sacred trees like the banyan tree" mean?

Bābājī: In the Skanda Purāṇa it is written:

aśvattha-tulasī-dhātrī-
go-bhūmi-sura-vaiṣṇavāḥ
pūjitāḥ praṇatā dhyātāḥ
kṣapayanti nṛṇām agham

"When they are worshiped, meditated on, or bowed down before, the banyan tree, the tulasī tree, the dhātrī tree, the cows, the earth, the demigods, and the Vaiṣṇavas destroy the sins of the people."

A householder eligible to perform vaidhi-bhakti should in the course of his life worship, meditate on, and bow down before
the aśvattha and other shade-giving trees, the dhātrī and other fruit-giving trees, tulasī and other sacred trees, the cows and other animals that do good to the people of the world, the brāhmaṇas, who are the teachers of religion and the protectors of true civilization, and the Vaiṣṇava devotees of the Lord. In this way they should live in this world.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "11. One should rigidly give up the company of nondevotees" mean?

Bābājī: When spiritual love rises in the heart, one's devotion to the Lord becomes intense. As long as love does not arise in that way, one must avoid the association of persons opposed to devotional service. Here the word "association"

means "attachment". When in the course of ordinary activities one causally comes into contact with other people that is not "association" as meant here. When by contact with others one develops a desire to associate with them, that is “association". Therefore association with persons averse to the Supreme Lord should be carefully avoided. When love for the Lord rises within the heart, it is not possible that one will desire to associate with persons averse to the Lord. Therefore persons who are situated in the stage of vaidhi-bhakti should carefully avoid association with persons averse to the Lord. As a very hot summer breeze can wilt vines growing on trees, so association with persons averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa can wilt the vine of devotional service.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the nondevotees?

Bābājī: Four kinds of people are averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa. They are: 1. persons who have no devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, 2. persons addicted to material sense gratification and association with women, 3. persons whose hearts are polluted by atheism and impersonalism, and 4. persons dulled by working for material gain. One should stay far away from the company of these four kinds of persons.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "12. One should not instruct a person who is not desirous of accepting devotional service" mean?

Bābājī: If, greedy to accumulate money, a spiritual master accepts many disciples, he is greatly at fault. If a spiritual master accepts many disciples, then some of them will likely be unqualified persons who do not have faith in devotional service. To accept such persons as disciples is an offense. Only a person who has faith is fit to be a disciple.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "13. One should not be very enthusiastic about constructing costly temples or monasteries" mean?

Bābājī: Live simply and engage in devotional service to the Lord. Don't be attached to great pomp or activities that require unnecessary endeavor. They will net push the heart to worship the Lord.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "14. One should not try to read too many books, not should one develop the idea of earning his livelihood by lecturing on or professionally reciting Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam or Bhagavad-gītā" mean?

Bābājī: The scriptures are like an ocean. If one wants to learn a particular subject, he should carefully study, from beginning to end, the books describing that subject. If one merely reads a little from one book and a little from another, he will not learn the subject properly. Thus if one does not study them carefully and completely one will not properly understand the scriptures describing devotional service. One should accept the straightforward, obvious interpretations of the scriptures. One should not struggle to construe obscure, contradictory, opposite meanings from them.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "15. One should not be neglectful in ordinary dealings" mean?

Bābājī: To maintain the material body one requires food and clothing. If one cannot get these things he is troubled, and if he loses them he is also troubled. If he is troubled in these ways, a devotee of the Lord should not become agitated at heart. Rather, he should continue to fix his thoughts on Lord Hari.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "16. One should not be under the spell of lamentation in loss or jubilation in gain" mean?

Bābājī: How is it possible that Lord Kṛṣṇa's spiritual form could appear in a

heart overpowered by lamentation, fear, anger, greed, envy, and other vices. A person engaged in sādhana-bhakti may feel lamentation, bewilderment, or other inauspicious sentiments because of being separated from relatives, thwarted in desires, or other problems. However, it is not good to be overpowered by lamentation, bewilderment, and other like inauspicious things. Separation from one's children and other unhappy events inevitably lead to lamentation. However, one should fix his thoughts on Lord Hari and in this way quickly throw these inauspicious emotions far away. In this way one should fix his mind on the lotus feet of Lord Hari.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "17. One should not disrespect the demigods" mean? Does this mean it is right to worship the demigods?

Bābājī: One should have unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. One should not worship the demigods thinking them independent of Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, when you see other people worshiping the demigods, you should not be disrespectful to the demigods. You should honor the demigods, but always remember that all the demigods worship Lord Kṛṣṇa. As long as the heart remains in the grip of the three material modes, one cannot attain unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Only persons overpowered by goodness, passion, and ignorance worship the demigods with the idea that the demigods are equal to Lord Kṛṣṇa. These persons are qualified only to have faith in the demigods. Therefore one should not disrespect their method of worship. By the mercy of the demigods, these persons will gradually become elevated. Eventually their hearts will become free of the three material modes.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "18. One should not give unnecessary trouble to any living entity" mean?

Bābājī: Lord Kṛṣṇa is quickly pleased by merciful persons who refrain from bringing suffering to others. Mercy is one of the most important virtues of a Vaiṣṇava.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "19. One should carefully avoid the various offenses in chanting the holy name of the Lord or in worshiping the Deity in the temple" mean?

Bābājī: One should avoid offenses in worshiping the Lord and one should especially avoid offenses to the holy name. beginning with riding a palanquin into the Lord's temple and wearing shoes in the Lord's temple, there are thirty-two offenses in worshiping the Lord. beginning with blaspheming the devotees who have dedicated their lives to preaching the glories of the Lord, there are ten offenses to the holy name. All these offenses should be avoided.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "20. One should be very intolerant toward the blasphemy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, or His devotees" mean? Does this teaching mean that one should at once verbally attack the blasphemer?

Bābājī: A person who blasphemes Lord Kṛṣṇa or a Vaiṣṇava must be averse to Lord Kṛṣṇa. One should not tolerate their blasphemies. One should react by casting the willingness to associate with them far away.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the relationship between these first twenty limbs of devotional service with the other limbs?

Bābājī: The next forty-four limbs are actually included in these first twenty limbs. They are described separately in order to give a more detailed explanation. Thirty limbs, beginning with "One should decorate the body with tilaka which is the sign of the Vaiṣṇavas" and culminating in "One should offer a favorite article

(such as food or a garment)" are included within the path of Deity worship (arcana-mārga). These limbs are: 21. One should wear three strands of tulasī beads around his neck and decorate his body with twelve tilaka markings. These is called "the sign of the Vaiṣṇavas". 22. To write "Hare Kṛṣṇa", other names of Lord Kṛṣṇa, or the names of the Pañca-tattva on the upper part of the body with sandalwood paste is called "marking the holy name on the body". 23. That one should accept flowers and garlands that have been offered to the Deity and the spiritual master and put them on one's body is described in these words of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.6.31), where Uddhava tells Lord Kṛṣṇa:

tvayopabhukta-srag-gandha-
vāso 'laṅkāra-carcitāḥ
ucchiṣṭa-bhojino dāsāḥ
tava māyāṁ jayema hi

"My dear Lord, the garlands, scented substances, garments, ornaments, and other such things that have been offered to You may later be used by Your servants. By partaking of these things and eating the remnants of food You have left, we will be able to conquer the illusory energy."*

The next limbs of devotional service are: 24. One should learn to dance before the Deity. 25. One should learn to bow down immediately upon seeing the Deity or the spiritual master. 26. As soon as one visits a temple of Lord Kṛṣṇa one must stand up. 27. When the Deity is being borne for a stroll in the street a devotee should immediately follow the procession. 28. A devotee must visit a Viṣṇu temple at least once or twice every day morning and evening. 29. One must circumambulate the temple building at least three times. 30. One must worship the Deity in the temple according to the regulative principles. For these items no separate explanation is needed. 31. One must render personal service to the Deities is explained in this verse (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.61):

paricaryā tu sevopa-
karaṇādi-parikriyā
tathā prakīrṇa-kacchatra-
vāditrādyair upāsanā

"One should serve the Deity with a parasol, cāmara, instrumental music, and many other offerings. This is called `worship'."

The next items are: 32. One must sing. 33. One must perform saṅkīrtana. 34. One must chant. 35. One must offer prayers. 36. One must recite notable prayers. 37. One must taste mahā-prasāda (food from the very plate offered before the Deities). 38. One must drink caraṇāmṛta (water from the bathing of the Deities which is offered to guests). 39. One must smell the incense and flowers offered to

the Deity. 40. One must touch the lotus feet of the Deity. 41. One must see the Deity with great devotion. 42. One must offer ārati at different times. 43. One must hear about the Lord and His pastimes from Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam Bhagavad-gītā and similar books. 44. One must pray to the Deity for His mercy. 45. One should remember the Deity. 46. One should meditate upon the Deity. 47. One should render some voluntary service. 48. One should think of the Lord as one's friend. 49. One should offer everything to the Lord (ātma-nivedana). Here "ātma" means the idea of “I" in relation to the material body and the idea of “mine" in relation to the material body. These two things one should surrender (nivedana) to Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please clearly explain these two things: the idea of {168}I" in relation to the material body and the idea of "mine" in relation to the material body.

Bābājī: Residing in the material body, the conditioned soul tends to think "I am this material body" or "This material body is mine". Both these ideas should be surrendered, offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus renouncing the ideas "I am this material body" and "This material body is mine", one should think "I am a servant of Lord Kṛṣṇa" and “I am dependent on Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy", and "this material body is a machine that I shall use in Lord Kṛṣṇa's service". To spend one's time within this material body in this way is called "ātma-nivedana" (offering everything to the Lord).

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "50. One should offer a favorite article (such as food or a garment)" mean?.

Bābājī: In this material world many things become dear to a person. To accept the relation that all these things have to Lord Kṛṣṇa is called "offering a favorite article".

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "51. One should take all kinds of risks and perform all endeavors for Kṛṣṇa's benefit" mean?

Bābājī: Whatever Vedic or ordinary duties there are in the material world should be performed in such a way that they advance devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. That is "performing all endeavors for Kṛṣṇa's benefit".

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "52. In every condition one should be a surrendered soul" mean?

Bābājī: To think, "O Lord, I am Yours" and “O Lord, I surrender unto You" is called "being a surrendered soul".

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "53. One should pour water on the tulasī tree" mean?

Bābājī: there are nine kinds of service to tulasī. They are: 1. seeing tulasī, 2. touching tulasī, 3. meditating on tulasī, 4. glorifying tulasī, 5. offering obeisances to tulasī, 6. hearing the glories of tulasī, 7. planting tulasī, 8. serving tulasī, and 9. regularly worshiping tulasī. In these nine ways tulasī is glorious in the context of service to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "54. One should regularly hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and similar literature" mean?

Bābājī: Books that explain the science of devotional service offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa are called "śāstras" (scriptures). Among all scriptures, Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the best, for it is the essence of the Vedas and Vedānta. A person who relishes the

nectar of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is no longer attracted to other scriptures.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "55. One should live in a sacred place like Mathurā Vṛndāvana or Dvārakā" mean?

Bābājī: One should hear about, remember, glorify, visit, touch, reside in, and serve Mathurā. In this way one will attain his spiritual desires. Know that the same applies to Śrī Māyāpura.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "56. One should offer service to Vaiṣṇavas" mean?

Bābājī: The Vaiṣṇavas are very dear to the Supreme Lord. By serving the Vaiṣṇavas one renders devotional service to the Lord. In the scriptures it is said:

"Although the Vedas mention worship of demigods, the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is topmost and is ultimately recommended. However, above the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is the rendering of service to Vaiṣṇavas, who are related to Lord Viṣṇu."*

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "57. One should arrange for one's devotional service according to one's means" mean?

Bābājī: As far as one is able, one should collect various things, offer them to the Deity of the Lord in the temple, and then offer them again to the Vaiṣṇavas. This is called “mahotsava" (a great festival). In the entire world no festival is better than this.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "58. In the month of Kārttika (October and November) one should make arrangements for special services" mean?

Bābājī: The month of Kārttika is also called “Urjā". To render devotional service to Lord Dāmodara by hearing and chanting His glories and in other ways also is called "urjādāra" (worship in the month of Kārttika).

Vijaya-kumāra: What does"59. During Janmāṣṭamī (the time of Kṛṣṇa's appearance in this world) one should observe a special service" mean?

Bābājī: To celebrate a great festival on Lord Kṛṣṇa's appearance day on the eighth day of the dark fortnight in the month of Bhādra and again on the full-moon day of the month of Phālguna is called "Śrī Janma-yātra" (the birth festivals). The surrendered souls should observe these festivals.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "60. One should do whatever is done with great care and devotion for the Deity" mean?

Bābājī: With a heart filled with love and enthusiasm one should always carefully serve the Deity of the Lord. To a devotee thus engaged the Lord does not give the pathetic and worthless gift of impersonal liberation. Rather, the Lord gives the great gift of devotional service.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "61. One should relish the pleasure of Bhāgavatam reading among devotees and not among outsiders" mean?

Bābājī: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the mature fruit of the desire tree of Vedic literatures. One should not taste the sweetness of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the company of persons who are not qualified to taste the nectar of transcendental rasas. Offenses will result. Therefore one should read the verses of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and taste their nectar only with pure devotees, who thirst to taste the nectar of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, and who have the power to know the sweetness that is in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Reciting and hearing Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam in the company of nondevotees does not lead to pure devotional service.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "62. One should associate with devotees who are

considered more advanced" mean?

Bābājī: One should associate with devotees. If one associates with nondevotees, he will not make progress in devotional service. Devotees yearn to directly serve Lord Kṛṣṇa in His transcendental pastimes. Persons who have that desire are called "bhaktas" (devotees). If we associate with more advanced devotees, then we make progress in devotional service. If we do not our progress stops. We become like our associates. In the scriptures (Hari-bhakti-sudhodaya 8.51) it is written:

yasya yat-saṅgatiḥ puṁso
maṇivat syāt sa tad-guṇaḥ
sva-kulardhyai tato dhīmān
sva-yūthāny eva saṁśrayet

"Association is very important. It acts just like a crystal stone, which will reflect anything which is put before it."*

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "63. One should chant the holy name of the Lord" mean?

Bābājī: The holy name of the Lord is not material. Rather, it is spiritual, conscious, and full of nectar. It has not the slightest scent of matter. When a living entity desires to serve the Lord, and when he becomes purified by engaging in devotional service, the holy name of the Lord personally appears on his tongue. The holy name of the Lord cannot be understood by the material senses. Therefore one should always, either alone or in the company of others, chant the holy name of the Lord.

Vijaya-kumāra: By your kindness I have understood the meaning of "64. One should live in the jurisdiction of Mathurā". Now please explain the essence of all these limbs of devotional service.

Bābājī: The last five limbs are the best. By remaining free of offenses and performing these last five items even slightly, one make wonderful progress in devotional service and attains ecstatic love for the Lord.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe whatever else I should know about sādhana-bhakti.

Bābājī: Sometimes the scriptures describe many non-devotional benefits to be attained by practicing the different activities of devotional service. These benefits are given to attract materialistic people who otherwise would have no interest in devotional service. Still, the most important result attained by performing any of the different activities of devotional service is the attainment of attraction and love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Wise persons who know the truth about devotional service value the different limbs of devotional service and reject materialistic, fruitive activities. Jñāna (knowledge) and vairāgya (renunciation) may give a little help in making a persona qualified to enter the temple of devotional service. But still they are not counted among the limbs of devotional service. They make the heart hard, whereas devotional service makes the hard soft and gentle. Therefore knowledge and renunciation should be accepted only when they come from devotional service. Knowledge and renunciation do not bring devotional service. Devotional service

easily gives blessings that knowledge and renunciation can never give. By engaging in sādhana-bhakti and worshiping Lord Hari, one attains attraction and love for Lord Hari. At that time one's attraction for material sense objects disappears. The aspiring devotee must accept appropriate renunciation (yukta-vairāgya), and he also must reject false renunciation (phalgu-vairāgya). To accept, when it is appropriate and without becoming attached, material things when they have a relationship with Lord Kṛṣṇa, is called "yukta-vairāgya" (proper renunciation). To reject, in the hope of attaining impersonal liberation, material things when they have a relationship with Kṛṣṇa is called "phalgu-vairāgya" (false renunciation). One should reject impersonal speculation and false renunciation. To make a show of devotional service in order to attain wealth, disciples, and other material things is very far from genuine, pure devotional service. Such an artificial show of devotional service is not counted among the limbs of true devotional service. Material intelligence and other material good qualities are not the distinguishing features of a person qualified to engage in devotional service. Therefore these material good qualities are not among the limbs of devotional service. Control of the mind, control of the senses, purity, good conduct, and other virtues spontaneously appear in a person who is attached to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Still, these virtues are not counted among the limbs of devotional service. Purity of heart, external cleanliness, austerity, peacefulness, and all other virtues voluntarily take shelter in a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The devotee does not need to strive to attain them. I have now described all the limbs of devotional service. By faithfully practicing one or many of these limbs, a person will attain perfection. Thus I have briefly described vaidhi-sādhana-bhakti. Think about them in your heart, try to understand them, and try to follow them.

After hearing these instructions, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the lotus feet of their spiritual master. They said, "O master, please be merciful to us. Please deliver us. For a long time we have been drowning in the abyss of false pride." The bābājī said, “Lord Kṛṣṇa will be merciful to you." It was late. The uncle and nephew left for home.

Chapter Twenty-one
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Abhidheya-vicāra Rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (Abhidheya: Rāgānugā-sādhana-bhakti)

The same wonderful thought rose in the hearts of Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha. With one mind they decided that they must accept initiation (dīkṣā) from the saintly bābājī. When he was a child, Vijaya-kumāra was initiated by his family guru. Vrajanātha has received gāyatrī initiation but not initiation into any

other mantras. From the saintly bābājī they had learned that by chanting a mantra given by an impersonalist guru one goes to hell. Therefore they decided to be properly re-initiated by a Vaiṣṇava spiritual master. If he is initiated by a perfect pure devotee, the disciple very quickly attains perfection by chanting the sacred mantras. Therefore they both decided, “Tomorrow morning we will first bathe in the Ganges and then accept initiation from the worshipable and saintly bābājī." Their hearts fixed in that decision, the next morning they bathed in the Ganges, decorated their bodies with twelve tilaka markings as previously described, and then offered daṇḍavat obeisances to the feet of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa bābājī. The saintly bābājī was a perfect devotee. Aware of what they were thinking, he asked them, "Why have you come this morning?" The two of them replied, "O master, we are fallen and worthless. Please be merciful to us." The saintly bābājī took them separately to his cottage and gave them the eighteen-syllable mantra. Again and again chanting the mantra, the two disciples became maddened with spiritual love. Calling out "Jaya Gaurāṅga!", they danced. Seeing the tulasī beads on their necks, their splendid sacred threads, their twelve tilaka marks, their bright faces, some beginning symptoms of sāttvika-bhāva ecstasy on their bodies, and streams of tears flowing from their eyes, the saintly bābājī embraced them and said, "Today you have purified me." Again and again the two disciples took the dust of the saintly bābājī's feet and placed it on their heads. Vrajanātha had arranged that many excellent foods would be offered to Lord Mahāprabhu. By his arrangement, two servants from his house brought a great abundance of palatable foods. Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha said to the Śrī Vaiṣṇavas, "We have brought these foods. Please offer them to Lord Mahāprabhu." The leader of the devotees at Śrīvāsa's courtyard had the pūjārī cook the foods and offer them to the Pañca-tattva Deities.

The conchshell sounded. Playing karatālas and mṛdaṅgas, the Vaiṣṇavas sang as the bhoga-ārati was offered to Lord Mahāprabhu. Gradually many Vaiṣṇavas came. They were all filled with happiness. The ārati ended gloriously. A place was arranged before the temple for the Vaiṣṇavas to honor the prasādam. Loudly chanting the holy names of Lord Hari, each Vaiṣṇava brought his bowl. At the time of honoring prasādam, poetry was read. The Vaiṣṇavas sat down to honor the prasādam. Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra would not sit down and place the prasādam in their mouths. The leaders of the bābājīs forced them to sit. The bābājīs said, You are householders who have become Vaiṣṇavas. Therefore, by offering daṇḍavat obeisances to your feet, we become fortunate." Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha said, “You are great sannyāsī Vaiṣṇavas. Therefore, by accepting the nectar remnants of the prasādam that has touched your lips, we become most fortunate. If we associate with you as equals, it will be an offense on our part." The Vaiṣṇava bābājīs said, “Vaiṣṇava who are householders or sannyāsīs are not different. It is devotion to the Lord that makes one a great Vaiṣṇava." Conversing in this way, all the Vaiṣṇavas honored the prasādam. Hoping to get the remnants of the prasādam eaten by their spiritual master, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha hesitated to honor the prasādam. Seeing that they were reluctant to honor the prasādam, the Vaiṣṇavas said to Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī, "O best of the Vaiṣṇavas, please be merciful to your disciples. They will not honor the prasādam." Hearing this, the elderly bābājī placed the remnants of his prasādam in his disciples' hands. They accepted them as very valuable things. They said, "We offer obeisances to our spiritual master", and then they began to honor the

prasādam. As the prasādam was honored many descriptions of the glories of prasādam were spoken, as also was the advice, "O devotees, please be careful". Ah! The area before Śrīvāsa's courtyard was so beautiful then. Then suddenly the devotees saw Lord Mahāprabhu and His personal associates honoring the prasādam with them, and Śrī Śacī, Sītā, and Malinī-devī were themselves distributing the prasādam. The devotees remembered these lines of Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita's Prema-vivarta:

māyāpure nitya-līlā kare gaura-rāy
sukṛtir bale bhakta dekhibāre pāy

"Lord Gaura enjoys pastimes in Māyāpura eternally. The power of their transcendental pious deeds enables the Lord's devotees to see these pastimes directly."

As long as these pastimes were present before their eyes the Vaiṣṇavas were stunned and motionless, like a row of columns. No one was honoring the prasādam. After a short while these pastimes again became invisible. The devotees looked at each other and burst into tears. No one could describe the the unprecedented wonderful delicious taste the prasādam now had. Everyone said, "These two young brāhmaṇas have attained the mercy of Lord Mahāprabhu. Lord Gaura again revealed His pastimes at their festival. Weeping and weeping, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra said, "We are poor and worthless. One think we know: It is because of the mercy of our spiritual master and the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas that we have seen these things."

After honoring prasādam and taking permission from the Vaiṣṇavas, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha returned home. From that day forward, every day they would bathe in the Ganges, offer obeisances to the feet of their spiritual master, see the Deity form of the Lord, circumambulate Tulasī, and perform many other devotional activities. This they did every day. A day did not pass where they did not learn something new. On the fourth or fifth evening, after concluding their evening duties at Śrīvāsa's courtyard, seeing the ārati and chanting the holy names in saṅkīrtana, the two of them went to the saintly elderly bābājī in his cottage and asked him, "O master, by your mercy we have been able to understand sādhana-bhakti. Now we request you, please be merciful and explain rāgānuga-bhakti to these two lowest of persons." The saintly bābājī happily replied, "Lord Gaurāṅga has accepted you two as His devotees. Therefore I cannot withhold anything from you. Please listen carefully, and I will explain rāgānuga-bhakti to you. Again and again I offer my respectful obeisances to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, whom the Supreme Personality of Godhead rescued from the clutches of the yavanas, and whom, at Prayāga-kṣetra, the Lord taught the science of transcendental mellows. I surrender to the feet of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, whom the merciful Supreme Personality of Godhead rescued from the abyss of material life, placed in the hand of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, and gave the gift of all spiritual perfections.

"However, before I describe rāgānuga-bhakti, I shall first describe the nature of rāgātmika-bhakti.

Vrajanātha: Please tell what the word "rāga" means. I wish to understand that first.

Bābājī: Materialists fall in love with the objects of the material senses. This love may be called "rāga". In this way the eyes become excited when they see beauty and other attractive qualities. In this way one is attracted to the material sense objects and the mind develops "rāga", or love for them. When that love (rāga) is placed in the Lord Kṛṣṇa as its only object, that is called "rāga-bhakti". Śrīla Rupa Gosvami explains that when love is focused on a single object of desire, that is called "rāga". When this kind of love exists in devotional service, then the devotional service is called "rāgātmika-bhakti". In brief, when there is a love-filled thirst to attain Lord Kṛṣṇa, that is called rāgātmika-bhakti. As long as this rāga has not manifested itself, one is enjoined to follow vidhi-bhakti, following the rules and regulations of scripture. Awe, fear, and faith are the three aspects of vaidhi-bhakti. An intense desire to meet Lord Kṛṣṇa and associate with Him in His pastimes is the main feature of rāgātmika-bhakti.

Vrajanātha: Who is qualified to perform rāga-bhakti?

Bābājī: A person whose faith rests in the rules of the scriptures is qualified to engage in vaidhi-bhakti. A person whose faith rests in an intense desire to attain Lord Kṛṣṇa is qualified to engage in rāgātmika-bhakti. Manifested according to their different rasas (relationships with Lord Kṛṣṇa), Lord Kṛṣṇa's personal associates in the spiritual world of Vraja with strong faith engage in rāgātmika-bhakti. A person who has a strong desire to love Lord Kṛṣṇa as the residents of Vraja in the spiritual world do, is qualified to engage in rāgānuga-bhakti.

Vrajanātha: What are the qualities of this strong desire?

Bābājī: One quality is that when one hears about the sweetness of the love and other emotions manifested by the residents of Vraja in the spiritual world, one yearns to go there. When a person qualified to engage in vaidhi-bhakti hears the descriptions of Lord Kṛṣṇa, he calmly thinks about these descriptions, using his intelligence, logic, and the evidence of scripture. However, when a person following the path of rāgānuga-bhakti hears these descriptions, he does not carefully consider them in terms of intelligence, logic, and scripture. Instead, he is overcome with the desire to love Kṛṣṇa as the residents of Vraja do.

Vrajanātha: What are the activities of rāgānuga-bhakti?

Bābājī: The devotee engaged in rāgānuga-bhakti yearns to become one of the residents of Vraja in the spiritual world and there serve Lord Kṛṣṇa directly. He always thinks of that desire. He likes to talk with other devotees about the pastimes of his beloved Kṛṣṇa. He resides in Vraja, either with his external body, or within his thoughts. Yearning to attain the spiritual love that they possess, he becomes a follower of the people of Vraja. He always serves the Lord in two ways. Externally he performs sādhana-bhakti. Internally he thinks of his original spiritual form and in that form he serves the Lord.

Vrajanātha: What is the connection between rāgānuga-bhakti and the different limbs of vaidhi-bhakti?

Bābājī: A person engaged in rāgānuga-bhakti also performs the different activities of sādhana-bhakti, such as hearing and chanting the glories of the Lord. However, within his heart he is a follower of the people of Vraja. In this way he tastes the nectar of always serving the Lord. At the same time he serves in this way

within his heart, he engages in the activities of sādhana-bhakti with his external body.

Vrajanātha: How is rāgānuga-bhakti glorious?

Bābājī: By engaging in rāgānuga-bhakti one quickly attains what takes a long time to attain by performing sadhana-bhakti. vaidhi-bhakti is weak, but rāgānuga-bhakti is both independent and very powerful. By following in the footsteps of the people of Vraja, one attains rāga. That rāga naturally pushes one to engage in the devotional activities of hearing, chanting, and remembering the Lord's glories, serving His lotus feet, bowing down before Him, and surrendering everything to Him. When the heart is free of the three material modes, one naturally desires to follow in the footsteps of the people of Vraja. Therefore the attraction to rāgānuga-bhakti, or the intense desire to attain rāgānuga-bhakti is the inspiration that pushes one to true spiritual life. As there are many different kinds of rāgātmika-bhakti, so there are also many different kinds of rāgānuga-bhakti.

Vrajanātha: What are the different kinds of rāgātmika-bhakti?

Bābājī: Rāgātmika-bhakti is of two kinds: 1. kāma-rūpa (devotion born from desire), and 2. sambandha-rūpa (devotion born of a relationship).

Vrajanātha: Please explain the difference between kāma-rūpa and sambandha-rūpa.

Bābājī: In the Seventh Canto (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 7.1.30-31) it is written:

kāmād dveṣād bhayāt snehād
yathā bhaktyeśvare manaḥ
āveśya tad-aghaṁ hitvā
bahavas tad-gatiṁ gatāḥ

"many, many persons have attained liberation simply by thinking of Kṛṣṇa with great attention and giving up sinful activities. This great attention may be due to lusty desires, inimical feelings, fear, affection, or devotional service. I shall now explain how one receives Kṛṣṇa's mercy simply by concentrating one's mind upon Him.*

gopyaḥ kāmād bhayāt kaṁso
dveṣyāc caidyādayo nṛpāḥ
sambandhād vṛṣṇayaḥ snehād
yūyaṁ bhaktyā vayaṁ vibho

"My dear King Yudhiṣṭhira, the gopīs, by their lusty desires, Kaṁsa by his fear, Śiśupāla and other kings by envy, the Yadus by their familial relationship with Kṛṣṇa, you Pāṇḍavas by your great affection for Kṛṣṇa, and we, the general devotees, by our devotional service, have obtained the mercy of Kṛṣṇa."*

Here six items are mentioned: lusty desires, inimical feelings, fear, familial relationships, affection, and devotional service. Among these, inimical feelings and

fear are are not appropriate sentiments for devotees of the Lord. When it becomes the idea that the Lord is a friend, affection is appropriate in vaidhi-bhakti. However, when affection becomes pure love (prema) it is no longer within the realm of sādhana-bhakti. That kind of love belongs in the path of rāga. It has no place in sādhana-bhakti. The word "bhaktyā" in Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.2.135 refers to vaidhi-bhakti. In some situations the word “bhakti" refers to the vaidhi-bhakti performed by the great sages, and in other situations the word "bhakti" refers to "jñāna-miśra-bhakti" (devotional service mixed with impersonal speculation). Here the words "many attained Him" mean that because Lord Kṛṣṇa is identical with the impersonal Brahman in the same way the rays of sunlight are identical with the sun planet, when the impersonalists merge into Brahman, or when Kṛṣṇa's enemies merge into Brahman, they certainly attain Kṛṣṇa. In this way they become plunged into the happiness of Brahman liberation, which is a perverted reflection of sārūpya liberation. In the Brahmāṇda Purāṇa it is said that they attain Siddhaloka, which is on the farther shore of the ocean of māyā. Two different kinds of beings reside in Siddhaloka. They are the impersonalists, who are plunged into Brahman happiness and the demons killed by Kṛṣṇa. Among those liberated impersonalists, some attain a faints scent of love for Kṛṣṇa (rāga). By worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, these impersonalists eventually become dear devotees of the Lord. In this way they attain love (prema) for Lord Kṛṣṇa. As the sun is not different from the rays of sunlight, so Lord Kṛṣṇa is not different from His Brahman effulgence. Therefore the word “tad-gati" (that attainment) here means "Kṛṣṇa-gati" (the attainment of Lord Kṛṣṇa). Therefore the impersonalists and demons who attain sāyujya (impersonal) liberation attain Lord Kṛṣṇa's Brahman effulgence. On the other hand, the devotees, who love the Lord, attain direct service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is like the sun-planet from whom the sunlight that is the impersonal Brahman has come. I this way we have described four of these emotions: inimical feelings, fear, affection, and devotional service. Only lusty desires and familial relationships remain to be described. In the path of rāga-bhakti lusty desires and familial relationships are both very important. Thus rāga-bhakti is of two kinds: 1. lusty desires (kāma) and 2. familial relationships (sambandha).

Vrajanātha: What is the nature of devotional service with lusty desires?

Bābājī: The word "lust" means "the thirst to enjoy". When it is manifested in rāgātmika-bhakti, that thirst to enjoy becomes causeless love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus it becomes the thirst to enjoy the association of Lord Kṛṣṇa. In this situation the devotee acts only to please Lord Kṛṣṇa. The devotee does not act for his own happiness. The devotee accepts his own happiness only if it leads to Kṛṣṇa's happiness. This very wonderful unprecedented love is perfectly manifested in the gopīs of Vraja. Because it possesses the qualities of wonderful sweetness and playfulness, paṇḍitas use the word "lusty desires" (kāma) to describe the gopīs' love (prema). However, the truth is that the gopīs' "lusty desires" are spiritual and free from the slightest scent of any fault. On the other hand, the lusty desires felt by the souls in Māyā's prison are wretched, lowly, and filled with faults. When they saw it, Uddhava and other dear devotees of the Lord yearned to attain the "lusty desires" felt by the gopīs of Vraja. The gopīs' lusty desire cannot be compared to anything else. It can be compared only to itself. These "lusty desires" in rāgātmika-bhakti exist only in Vraja and not in any other place. The "lusty

desires" that Kubjā manifested in Mathurā are called "kāma-prāya" (resembling lusty desires). Although they bear some resemblance to the gopīs' lusty desires, they are different.

Vrajanātha: What is the nature of rāga-bhakti with familial relationships?

Bābājī: Rāga-bhakti in the rasa of familial relationships is manifested when one identifies himself as Kṛṣṇa's parent or other relative. When one thinks, "I am Kṛṣṇa's father", or "I am Kṛṣṇa's mother", or when one thinks of oneself as another kind of relative of Kṛṣṇa, that is called devotional service in the mood of familial relationships. In the Vṛṣṇi dynasty there are also devotees who identify as Kṛṣṇa's father and mother. Still, devotional service in familial relationships is first manifested in Vraja: in Nanda, in Yaśodā, and in others also. Pure love for Kṛṣṇa is manifested in these kinds of “lusty desires" and "familial relationships". That is why the eternally liberated souls take shelter of them. In rāgānuga-bhakti these two sentiments are mentioned only briefly. In the practice of devotional service, these two sentiments take two forms: 1. kāmānuga (following lusty desires), and 2. sambandhānuga (following familial relationships).

Vrajanātha: What are the qualities of kāmānuga-bhakti in the practice of rāgānuga-bhakti?

Bābājī: When a devotee thirsts to follow the path of kāma devotional service, that is called "kāmānuga". Kamānuga-bhakti is of two kinds: 1. sambhogecchamayī (yearning to enjoy), and 2. tat-tad-bhāvecchamayī (yearning to love).

Vrajanātha: What is the nature of sambhogecchamayī?

Bābājī: Sambhogecchamayī means "the desire to participate in Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes (keli) with the gopīs".

Vrajanātha: What is the nature of tat-tad-bhāvecchamayī?

Bābājī: Tat-tad-bhāvecchamayī means "the desire to attain the sweetness of love that the Vraja-gopīs felt for Lord Kṛṣṇa".

Vrajanātha: How are these two sentiments manifested in the practice of rāgānuga-bhakti?

Bābājī: By seeing the sweetness of Lord Kṛṣṇa's Deity form and by hearing the descriptions of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, one develops a desire to fall in love with Kṛṣṇa. Devotees who have that desire practice rāgānuga-bhakti that is either kāmānuga or sambandhānuga.

Vrajanātha: Lord Kṛṣṇa is male, and the Vraja-gopīs are all female. Therefore I can see that only women are qualified to practice this kind of rāgānuga-bhakti. How can men can be qualified to attain it?

Bābājī: Each individual soul residing in the material world has an original spiritual form that manifests one of the five rasas (relationships with Lord Kṛṣṇa). Four of these rasas, namely dāsya (servitorship), sakhya (friendship), vātsalya (parental love), and madhura (conjugal love), are present among the people of Vraja. In Vraja, males participate in the rasas of dāsya (servitorship), sakhya (friendship) and the fatherhood portion of vātsalya (parental love). In these three rasas males engage in direct service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, it is only females who serve the Lord in madhura (conjugal love) and in the motherhood portion of vātsalya. Among both liberated souls and beginners engaged in sādhana-bhakti, many souls with external male material bodies have original spiritual forms that are female.

Vrajanātha: How do souls with male external material bodies follow in the footsteps of the Vraja-gopīs?

Bābājī: In different ways, as they are qualified, they become attracted to the rasa of conjugal love (śṛṅgāra-rasa). Even though their external material form is male, their original spiritual form, which is female, is always present. According to one's inclination and one's original spiritual form, one is qualified to become the follower of a particular Vraja-gopī. By following that gopī, one's original spiritual form is again openly manifested and in that original form one serves Lord Kṛṣṇa directly. In the Padma Purāṇa an example is given of souls who, although their external material bodies were male, eventually became gopīs. There it is said that when they saw the handsomeness of Lord Rāmacandra, the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya forest yearned to attain Him as their husband. When Lord Kṛṣṇa manifested His Gokula pastimes, these same sages were born as women. In those forms they served Lord Kṛṣṇa in the rasa of conjugal love.

Vrajanātha: I have heard that the women of Gokula are eternally liberated souls in the spiritual world who descended to the material world to help Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Why, then, does the Padma Purāṇa say that these sages were born as gopīs ion Gokula?

Bābājī: Many eternally liberated souls came to this world to participate in Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. In addition to them, many souls from the material world, who by engaging in devotional service became qualified to do so, also participated in Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Worshiping Lord Kṛṣṇa in kāmānuga-bhakti, they took birth in Gokula. These gopīs are described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.29.8-11, where it is said that by serving Lord Kṛṣṇa in meditation they abandoned their external material bodies and regained their original spiritual forms. Many of these gopīs had previously been the sages of Daṇḍakāraṇya.

Vrajanātha: Which gopīs were eternally liberated and which became liberated by engaging in devotional service?

Bābājī: Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Lord Kṛṣṇa's internal potency (svarūpa-śakti). She expands into the forms of Her eight close friends (aṣṭa-sakhī), and they expand into the forms of other gopīs (sakhīs). These gopīs are all eternally liberated (nitya-siddha). These gopīs are not manifested by the jīva-śakti. Rather, they are manifested by the Lord's internal potency (svarūpa-śakti). In addition to these gopīs, there are other gopīs (also sakhīs), who attained liberation by engaging in devotional service (sādhana-siddha), and were thus allowed to join Śrīmatī Rādhikā's entourage. These gopīs are individual souls (jīva) who attained liberation by engaging in devotional service (sādhana-siddha). By the power of the Lord's hlādinī-śakti they attained sālokya liberation are were allowed to associate with Śrī Rādhā, the queen of Vraja. Devotees who follow the path of rāgānuga-bhakti and aspire for śṛṅgāra-rasa eventually attain liberation as a result of their devotional service. Thus they are able to join the company of gopīs (sakhīs). Devotees who follow the path of vidhi-bhakti and desire to enjoy (riraṁsā) Kṛṣṇa, which means they desire that Lord Kṛṣṇa will become their husband, become the Lord's queens at Dvārakā. Devotees who follow the path of vidhi-bhakti do not become followers of Śrī Rādhā, the goddess of Vraja. Only devotees who follow the path of vidhi-bhakti externally and the path of rāgānuga-bhakti internally attain devotional service in the land of Vraja.

Vrajanātha: How does one become purified of the desire to enjoy (riraṁsā)

Kṛṣṇa, which means the desire that Lord Kṛṣṇa will become one's husband?

Bābājī: These devotees who have accepted the role of Lord Kṛṣṇa's queens should renounce all pride and humbly serve Lord Kṛṣṇa as a wife serves her husband. However, even if they do this, these devotees may not attain the desire to become one of the gopīs of Vraja.

Vrajanātha: Please explain more clearly.

Bābājī: Devotees who aspire to attain Lord Kṛṣṇa as their husband (svakīya) become the Lord's queens (mahiṣī-bhāva). These devotees cannot taste the rasa where Kṛṣṇa is one's paramour (parakīya), a rasa relished by the Vraja-gopīs. For this reason these devotees cannot follow in the footsteps of the gopīs. Only by following the path of rāgānuga-bhakti and cherishing the idea that Lord Kṛṣṇa is one's paramour (parakīya) can one attain the rasa of a gopī in Vraja.

Vrajanātha: By your mercy, I have understood all this. Now please kindly explain one thing: What is the difference between "lust" (kāma) and "love" (prema)? If there is no difference, why did you use the word "prema-rūpa" (the nature of love)? When I hear it, the word "lust" (kāma) brings pain to my ears.

Bābājī: There is a difference between lust and love. When we say "love" we mean an emotion like what is felt in rāga-bhakti when the devotee considers Kṛṣṇa a relative in his family (sambandha). In that devotional service as a family member, there is no idea of trying to exploit Kṛṣṇa for one's own enjoyment. In devotional service where one relates to Lord Kṛṣṇa as a family member, there is no scope for an amorous relationship. Still, that relationship is undoubtedly based on love (prema). However, when this love for Kṛṣṇa is gracefully mixed with the desire to enjoy Kṛṣṇa, the result is devotional service (bhakti) performed in the spirit of lust (kāma). In the other rasas lust and devotional service are not mixed together in this way. This combination is present only in the rasa of conjugal love. Aside from the Vraja-gopīs, no one practices this kind of devotional service mixed with lust. In this material world the word “lust" means to desire material sense pleasures. However, the "lust" felt by the gopīs is very different from material lust. The lust felt by the gopīs is completely pure and faultless. Material lust is a perverted reflection of the gopīs' lust. Thought it was directed to Lord Kṛṣṇa, the lust felt by Kubjā cannot be said to be like the gopīs' lust (sākṣāt-kāma). Lust to enjoy with the material senses is an emotion that is worthless, wretched, and degraded. On the other hand, lust that is a feature of pure love for Kṛṣṇa is exalted and full of bliss. Because material lust is wretched and degraded, what shall stop you from using the word "spiritual lust" (aprākṛta-kāma) to describe the emotion felt by the gopīs?

Vrajanātha: Now please explain the aspect of rāgānuga-bhakti where one thinks of Kṛṣṇa as one's family member?

Bābājī: Devotional service where one has a family or other kind of relationship with Kṛṣṇa is called "sambandhānuga-bhakti". This kind of relationship is present in three rasas: dāsya (servitorship), sakhya (friendship), and vatsalya (parenthood). In this relationship one thinks, "I am a servant. Kṛṣṇa is my master", or one thinks, "I am Kṛṣṇa's friend", or one thinks, "I am Kṛṣṇa's father", or one thinks, "I am Kṛṣṇa's mother". These are the thoughts of one in sambandha. This sambandhānuga-bhakti is manifested in its pure form among the residents of Vraja.

Vrajanātha: How is rāgānuga-bhakti cultivated in the dāsya, sakhya, and

vātsalya rasas?

Bābājī: A devotee attracted to dāsya-rasa (servitorship) should follow in the footsteps of Raktaka, Patraka, and other eternally liberated servitors of the Lord. By emulating the sweetness of their love for the Lord, he will eventually serve Lord Kṛṣṇa directly. A devotee attracted to sakhya-rasa (friendship) should follow in the footsteps of Subala and the other friends of the Lord. In this way he will eventually serve Lord Kṛṣṇa directly. A devotee attracted to vātsalya-rasa (parenthood) should follow in the footsteps of Nanda and Yaśodā. In this way he will eventually serve Lord Kṛṣṇa directly.

Vrajanātha: How does one follow in their footsteps?

Bābājī: The soul's eternal nature gives rise to certain actions. These actions are called "mudrā". For example, Nanda Maharaja has a certain eternal nature, and because of that nature he deals with Kṛṣṇa in a specific way. One should following the footsteps of those activities. However, one should not think, "I am Nanda", "I am Subala", or “I am Raktaka". One should only follow in the footsteps of their activities. In that way one will not commit an offense.

Vrajanātha: What rasa should I cultivate in rāgānuga-bhakti?

Bābājī: Bābā, look at your own nature. Because of that nature you have a certain inclination. According to that inclination you naturally accept a particular rasa. You should follow the footsteps of an eternally liberated soul who serves the Lord in that rasa. You should closely examine your own inclination. If you are inclined to the path of rāga-bhakti, the you should follow your inclination. If you are not inclined to the path of rāga-bhakti, then you should follow the path of vaidhi-bhakti.

Vijaya-kumāra: master, I have studied Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam for many days. Whenever I hear or read of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, in my heart I yearn to serve the divine couple as Śrīmatī Lalitā does.

Bābājī: Don't say anything more. You are a mañjarī follower of Śrī Lalitā-devī. What service do you think is appropriate for you?

Vijaya-kumāra: In my heart I think Śrī Lalitā has ordered me to string garlands of flowers. I gather many beautiful flowers, make them into garlands, and place them in her beautiful hand. She gives me a smile of mercy, and then she places them around the necks of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Bābājī: May you attain that service. I give you my blessings.

At that moment Vijaya-kumāra fell, weeping, at his spiritual master's lotus feet. Seeing his emotional state, the saintly bābājī said to him, "Bābā, within your heart you should always practice rāgānuga-bhakti, and externally you should engage in vaidhi-bhakti." Seeing Vijaya-kumāra's good fortune, Vrajanātha placed these words before his spiritual master's feet: "O master, when I think of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes I desire to become a follower of Subala."

Bābājī: To what kind of activities do you feel attracted?

Vrajanātha: Subala and I will fetch the calves that have strayed far away. As Kṛṣṇa sits down and plays the flute, by Subala's mercy I will let the calves drink water, and after I will bring them again to our brother Kṛṣṇa. That is my desire.

Bābājī: I give you my blessings. May you become a follower of Subala and in that way serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. You are qualified for sakhya-rasa.

This was all a great wonder. From that day on, in his heart Vijaya-kumāra began to think of himself as a maidservant of Śrīmati Lalitā. Then he began to see the elderly bābājī as an incarnation of Śrī Lalitā. Vijaya-kumāra said, "O master, what more need by done by your mercy?" The saintly bābājī replied, "Nothing more need be done. Only you should know the name, form, and garments of your spiritual body. Come to me in private and I will tell you of them." Saying, "As you order", Vijaya-kumāra offered daṇḍavat obeisances.

From that day one Vrajanātha saw the elderly bābājī as an incarnation of Subala. The bābājī said to him, "Come to me all alone and I will tell you the name, form, and garments of your spiritual body." Saying, "As you order", Vrajanātha offered daṇḍavat obeisances.

Thinking that their lives had not become perfect, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra happily followed the path of rāgānuga-bhakti. Externally everything was as before. Externally Vijaya-kumāra was a male, but within his heart he had become a gopī. Meanwhile within his heart, Vrajanātha had become a cowherd boy.

A good part of the night had already passed. Chanting on japa beads the mantra:

Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare
Hare Rāma Hare Rāma
Rāma Rāma Hare Hare

that their spiritual master had given them, the two of them walked toward Bilva-puṣkariṇī. Almost half the night had passed. The moon rose. The season placed a pleasant situation in every direction. When they came to Lakṣmaṇa-ṭīlā, the two men sat under an āmalika tree. Vijaya-kumāra asked Vrajanātha, "O Vrajanātha, the desires in our hearts are now fulfilled. Because we have attained the mercy of a great Vaiṣṇava, we will now attain the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Now we should consider what will happen in the future. Vrajanātha, with an honest heart please tell me: What will you do? Will you marry, or will you take parivrājaka sannyāsa? This request does not come from me. I only ask so I can tell your grandmother."

Vrajanātha: Uncle, I am devoted to you. You are a paṇḍita and a Vaiṣṇava. In the absence of my father, you are my guardian. The path that you order, I will follow. I do not wish to become attached to material things, and thus forget the spiritual goal of life. Therefore I do not wish to marry. What do you think?

Vijaya-kumāra: I will not force you. You decide yourself and tell me.

Vrajanātha: I will ask our spiritual master. I will do whatever he says.

Vijaya-kumāra: Good. Tomorrow we will go and hear what Prabhupāda says about this.

Vrajanātha: Saintly uncle, what do you think? Should I become a householder? Should I not become a parivrājaka sannyāsī?

Vijaya-kumāra: Bābā, my conclusion is the same as yours. We are of one mind. Accept parivrājaka sannyāsa and extinguish the fire of household life. If you accept household life your heart will dry up. You will be cheated of the nectar of

devotional service. My wish is that you follow whatever Śrī Prabhupāda says about this.

A large part of the night had passed. It was right that they return home. Again and again singing the glories of Lord Hari, the uncle and nephew returned home, honored prasādam, and went to sleep.

Chapter Twenty-two
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Prayojana-vicārārambha)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (The Discussion of Prayojana Begins)

Today is ekādaśī. Under the bakula-tree in Śrīvāsa's courtyard the Vaiṣṇavas are chanting the holy names of the Lord. Some call out, "O Gaurāṅga! O Nityānanda!" and sigh. Our saintly elderly bābājī was motionless, plunged in ecstatic love. Who knows what he was thinking? After a few moments he said, "Alas!" and began to weep. "Ah! Where is Rūpa? Where is Sanātana! Where is Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī! Where is my life's brother, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja? I cannot be with them. Today I am all alone. I cannot be happy. The memory of Rādhā-kuṇḍa brings me pain. O my life, now you are leaving me. I pray that Rūpa and Raghunātha show themselves to me and save my life. Even though I am separated from you, still I remain alive. How pathetic is my life." Again and again speaking in this way, he began to roll about in the dust under the bakula tree in Śrīvāsa's courtyard. The assembled Vaiṣṇavas said to him, “Bābājī, be peaceful. Rūpa and Raghunātha are in your heart. Lord Caitanya and Lord Nityānanda are dancing before you. Saying, "Where? Where?" the bābājī jumped up. As he gazed at the Pañca-tattva Deities before him, his grief went far away. He said, "O glorious Māyāpura! Only Māyāpura makes the sadness of Vraja go far away." Saying these words, he danced for some moments and then sat down in his cottage. At that moment Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha came and offered daṇḍavat obeisances. When he saw them, the bābājī's heart blossomed with happiness. He said, "How is your devotional service progressing?" Folding their hands, the two disciples humbly said, "O master, your mercy is the be-all-and-end-all of our lives. In the past we must have performed many, many pious deeds that we so easily have attained your fearless lotus feet. Today is ekādaśī. By your order we are fasting even from water. We have come to see your sacred feet." The bābājī replied, "You are fortunate. Very soon you will attain bhāva." Vijaya-kumāra asked, "O master, what is bhāva?" Is there something called `bhāva' that you have not yet taught us?"

Bābājī: Up till now I have taught you about sādhana-bhakti. By practicing sādhana-bhakti again and again, one eventually comes to the stage of spiritual perfection. The stage that immediately precedes the perfect stage is called “bhāva" (ecstatic love). The perfect stage is described in these words of the *Daśa-mūla*:

svarūpāvasthāne madhura-rasa-bhāvodaya iha
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-svajana-jana-bhāvaṁ hṛdi vahan
parānande prītiṁ jagad-atula-sampat-sukham aho
vilāsākhye tattve parama-paricaryāṁ sa labhate

"When his sādhana-bhakti reaches maturity, the living entity becomes aware of his original spiritual form. Then, by the power of the Lord's hlādinī-śakti, the ecstatic love (bhāva) of madhura-rasa becomes manifested. Then the living entity bears in his heart ecstatic love (bhāva) for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Then he attains ecstatic love (prīti) and bliss. Gradually he attains a happiness and good fortune that have no equal anywhere in this world. He enters the Lord's pastimes. There he attains direct service to the Lord. There is nothing higher than that."

In this verse the final goal of life (prayojana), which is pure love for the Lord, is described. The beginning stage of that pure love is described in the final verse of the *Daśa-mūla*:

prabhuḥ kaḥ ko jīvaḥ katham idam acid viśvam iti vā
vicāryaitān arthān hari-bhajana-kṛc chrāstra-caturaḥ
abhedāśāṁ dharmān sakalam aparādhaṁ pariharan
harer nāmānandaṁ pibati hari-dāso hari-janaiḥ

" `Who is the Supreme Lord? Who is the individual spirit soul? What is the material world?' Considering these questions, a devotee becomes learned in the scriptures. He shuns all offenses, sins, material pious deeds, and aspirations to become one with the Lord, and, thinking himself a servant of Lord Hari, in the company of other devotees he drinks the blissful nectar of Lord Hari's holy name."

What a wonderful poem is the *Daśa-mūla*! In it the individual souls find the essence of the teachings that have come from Lord Mahāprabhu's sacred mouth.

Vijaya-kumāra: I would like to hear a summary of the *Daśa-mūla*'s glories?
Bābājī: Then listen:

samsevya daśa-mūlaṁ vai
hitvāvidyām ayam janaḥ
bhāva-puṣṭiṁ tathā tuṣṭiṁ
labhate sādhu-saṅgataḥ

"A person who carefully studies this Daśa-mūla becomes free ignorance. By associating with devotees, he attains spiritual love and bliss."

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, this wonderful *Daśa-mūla* will become the necklace we all wear. Every day we will recite this *Daśa-mūla* and offer daṇḍavat obeisances to Lord Mahāprabhu. Now please be merciful and explain the clear meaning of these truths.

Bābājī: Pure love of God (prema) is like a sun. The pure rays of that prema-sun are the spiritual state of “śuddha-sattva". The internal nature of śuddha-sattva" is called "bhāva". The śuddha-sattva manifestation called “bhāva" is also called by the names "rati" and “premāṅkura" (the sprouting of love). When the all-enlightening svarūpa-śakti (internal potency) is manifested in the activities called "samvid" (knowledge), those activities are called "śuddha-sattva" (spiritual existence). These are not activities of māyā (material illusion). When the activities of the samvit-śakti join with the activities of the hlādinī-śakti, the result is the manifestation of bhāva. The activities of samvit-sakti bring knowledge. The activities of hlādinī-śakti bring pleasure. In this way the activities of the Lord's svarūpa-śakti bring knowledge of the Absolute Truth, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The small knowledge potency (samvit-śakti) of the individual souls (jiva-śakti) cannot bring understanding of the Absolute Truth. By the mercy of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself, or by the mercy of the Lord's devotee, the Lord's svarūpa-śakti (internal potency) will appear in a living entity's heart. Then the svarupa-śakti's activities of knowledge (samvit) can act in the living entity's heart. Then knowledge of the spiritual world becomes manifested there. The real form (svarūpa) of the spiritual world is the state of spiritual existence (śuddha-sattva). The real form of the material world of māyā is gross matter, which is a mixture of the three modes of material goodness, passion, and ignorance. When knowledge of the spiritual world combines with the essence (sāra) of the hlādinī-śakti, the result is that one is able to relish (āsvāda) the pleasures of the spiritual world. When the relishing of the pleasures of the spiritual world reaches its perfection and fullness (pūrṇa-svarūpa), the result is called "prema" (pure love of God). Prema is like a sun, and bhāva is the rays of that sun. That is the nature of bhāva. The specific nature of bhāva is this: Ruci (attraction to Kṛṣṇa) makes the living entity's heart melt and become soft (masṛṇa). Here the word "ruci" means "the desire to attain Kṛṣṇa, the desire to please Kṛṣṇa, and the desire to have a friendly relation with Kṛṣṇa". Bhāva is said to be the4 first manifestation of the splendor of prema. The word “masṛṇa" means "the melting of the heart". In the Tantras it is said that bhāva is the first manifestation of prema. When bhāva appears, the sattvika-bhāva ecstatic symptoms, such as the standing erect of the body's hairs, become slightly manifested. In eternally liberated souls these ecstatic symptoms appear spontaneously. In souls imprisoned in the material world these ecstatic symptoms appears as activities of the mind, and only gradually to they manifest their original, spiritual nature. Although these ecstatic symptoms come of their own accord, they seem to be induced by something external. The activities of sattvika-bhāva ecstasy reveal the true nature of Lord Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental pastimes. Manifested among the imprisoned souls as what seems to be an activity of the mind, it seems to bring knowledge of other, non-spiritual truths. The truth is that it enables one to relish spiritual pleasures. In this way it enables the souls imprisoned in the material world to relish the spiritual pleasures of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes.

Vijaya-kumāra: Does bhāva manifest any variety?

Bābājī: Yes. Bhāva is of two kinds, according to its place of origin. Bhava may come from the practice of sādhana-bhakti, or it may come from the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa or the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotee. Generally it comes from the practice of sādhana-bhakti. It only rarely comes from mercy.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of bhāva produced by the practice of sādhana-bhakti?

Bābājī: There are two kinds of bhāva created by the practice of sādhana-bhakti. One is created by the practice of vaidhi-bhakti and the other by the practice of rāgānuga-bhakti. In the first of these two kinds of bhāva created by sadhana-bhakti, at the beginning there is ruci (attraction to Kṛṣṇa). From that comes āsakti (attachment to Kṛṣṇa). At the end comes rati (love for Kṛṣṇa). In the Purāṇas and the Naṭya-śāstras it is said that "rati" and "bhāva" are synonyms. I also say that they are synonyms. Vaidhi-bhakti first creates faith, and from faith attraction to Kṛṣṇa (ruci) follows. However, when one practices raganuga-bhakti, ruci appears at once (without any intervening stages).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of bhāva created by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotee?

Bābājī: When bhāva suddenly appears without its recipient having practiced either vaidhi-bhakti or raganuga-bhakti, then bhāva it is created by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa or Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotee.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of bhāva created by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa?

Bābājī: Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy is manifested in three ways: 1. vācika (by His words), 2. āloka-dāna (by a glance), and 3. hārda (by the mercy in His heart). Lord Kṛṣṇa may give His mercy to someone by saying, "O king of the brāhmaṇas, may devotion to Me, devotion that brings all transcendental bliss and is the crest jewel of all auspicious things, appear within you." Simply by the Lord's speaking these words, bhāva suddenly appears in that brāhmaṇa. The aborigines residing in the jungle had never seen Kṛṣṇa before. However, simply by seeing them they at once attained bhāva because of the compassion in Lord Kṛṣṇa's heart. This is called "āloka-dānaja-bhāva (bhāva created from a glance). When feelings of compassion arise in Lord Kṛṣṇa's heart, they produce the bhāva called "hārda". This bhāva is seen in Śukadeva Gosvāmī and other devotees. When He descended to this world, Lord Mahāprabhu granted these three kinds of bhāva from mercy on many occasions. Simply by seeing the Lord, many people attained bhāva. Jagāi, Mādhāi, and many others attained bhāva because of the Lord's words. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī attained bhāva because of the mercy in Lord Kṛṣṇa's heart..

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of bhāva created by the mercy of a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa? Bābājī: Because of the mercy of Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī, auspicious desires appeared in the hearts of Dhruva and Prahlāda. By the mercy of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and their associates, the desire to perform devotional service appeared in the hearts of numberless persons.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the symptoms of bhāva's appearance?

Bābājī: When the seed of ecstatic emotion (bhāva) for Kṛṣṇa fructifies, the following nine symptoms are manifest in one's behavior: forgiveness, concern that time should not be wasted, detachment, absence of false prestige, hope, eagerness, a taste for chanting the holy name of the Lord, attachment to descriptions of the transcendental qualities of the Lord, and affection for those places where the Lord

resides that is a temple or holy place like Vṛndāvana. These are all called “anubhāva", subordinate signs of ecstatic emotion. They are visible in a person in whose heart the seed of love of God has begun to fructify.*

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "forgiveness"?

Bābājī: Forgiveness is when, even though there is ample reason to become agitated and angry, one is not agitated and angry. This is called "forgiveness". "Tolerance" is a synonym for forgiveness.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "concern that time should not be wasted"?

Bābājī: It means not to spent time in useless activities. To always be engaged in devotional service to Lord Hari is called "concern that time should not be wasted".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "detachment"?

Bābājī: To find that one sees no pleasure in so-called material sense pleasures is called "detachment".

Vijaya-kumāra: When a person accepts sannyāsa can he claim to have attained "detachment"?

Bābājī: Sannyāsa is a material convention in the material world. When the heart finds its pleasure in the spiritual world, and when the heart finds its pleasure in the material grow less and less until finally it disappears almost completely, that is called "detachment".A person who is detached from the material world and then accepts sannyāsa to remove the obstacles that prevent him from attaining bhāva can claim to be a “detached Vaiṣṇava". However, a person who accepts sannyāsa prematurely, before he has any understanding of the happiness of spiritual life (bhāva) is not properly initiated as a sannyāsī. He is not a true sannyāsī. The Lord's punishment of Choṭa Haridāsa taught this to the entire world.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "absence of false prestige"?

Bābājī: Birth, varṇa, āśrama, wealth, power, beauty, a high status in society, and many other things make a person proud. To renounce the pride that comes from all these things is called "absence of false prestige". In the Padma Purāṇa is written the story of a great king who attained devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Renouncing the pride that comes from royal opulence, this king passed his life as a beggar performing mādhukarī in the capitol city of the king that had been his rival and enemy. He always offered respectful obeisances to everyone, not caring whether they were brāhmaṇas or caṇḍālas.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "hope"?

Bābājī: To engage in devotional service with firm conviction, thinking, "Lord Kṛṣṇa will certainly be merciful to me", is called "hope".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "eagerness"?

Bābājī: Intense greed to attain what one desires is called "eagerness".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "a taste for chanting the holy name of the Lord"?

Bābājī: Of all the different activates of devotional service, chanting the holy name of the Lord is the best. To always chant the holy name of the Lord with faith is called “a taste for chanting the holy name of the Lord". A taste for chanting the holy name of the Lord fulfills all spiritual desires. You will learn more about the holy name separately, at another time.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "attachment to descriptions of the transcendental qualities of the Lord"?

Bābājī: In Śrī Kṛṣṇa-karṇāmṛta (verse 65) it is written:

mādhuryād api madhuraṁ
manmathatā tasya kim api kaiśoram
cāpalyād api capalaṁ
ceto bata harati hanta kim kurmaḥ

"He is sweeter than sweetness personified. His youthfulness is Kāmadeva himself. He is more restless and playful than restlessness and playfulness personified. Alas, He has stolen my heart. What will I do now?"

One may hear again and again of Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities, but one's desire to hear them will never be satiated. Rather, one's attachment to hear of them will grow stronger and stronger.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "affection for those places where the Lord resides"?

Bābājī: When he circumambulates the holy Navadvīpa, a devotee will ask, "O residents of the Lord's sacred place, where did the Lord take birth? Walking down what pathway did the Lord perform saṅkīrtana? Please tell me: where did the Lord enjoy pastimes with the gopas in the morning?" The residents of the holy abode may reply, "In Māyāpura, in a raised tulasī-forest, the Lord took birth. In Gaṅgānagara, Simuliyā, Gādigāchā, Mājidā, and many other villages He performed saṅkīrtana. By drinking with the cup of his ears these nectar words from the mouth of a resident of the land of Gauḍa, a devotee will manifest ecstatic symptoms, such as shedding tears and the hairs of his body standing erect, as he circumambulates the holy place. This is called "affection for those places where the Lord resides".

Vijaya-kumāra: When this kind of emotion is present can we say without doubt that "Kṛṣṇa-rati" (pure love for Kṛṣṇa) is definitely present?

Bābājī: No. When the heart is pure, then "rati" arises within it. The symptoms I have described may appear when other kinds of devotional emotions are manifested. They are not manifested only when there is rati.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please be kind and give one or two examples so I may understand.

Bābājī: A person thirsty for impersonal liberation may again and again chant a dim reflection of Lord Hari's holy name (nāmābhāsa). Hearing that the holy name has the power to give liberation, he may weep again and again and may fall down almost unconscious. Still, one should not say that he has attained kṛṣṇa-rati (love for Kṛṣṇa) in the state of bhāva (ecstasy). Such a person does not have sincere love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Rather, he makes a show of ecstatic symptoms (bhāvābhāsa) only because he is greedy to attain his own petty desire. A person desiring material sense pleasures may worship Goddess Durgā, and after the worship may pray for many things, saying, "Please grant me boons. Please give me wealth." Thinking of how the goddess has the power to fulfill his desires, he may weep and roll on the ground. Still, one cannot say that he has attained bhāva. Perhaps one can say he has attained a glimpse of bhāva (bhāvābhāsa) or a mocking imitation of bhāva (bhāva-daurātmya). Bhāva does not appear in a person who is not a pure devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. When a person who desires material sense gratification or

impersonal liberation manifests a glimpse of bhāva (bhāvābhāsa), that is not true bhāva. Rather it is only a mocking imitation (bhāva-daurātmya) of true bhāva. As he stands before the Deity of Lord Kṛṣṇa, such a person may faint and remain unconscious for twenty-one hours. Even then, he does not display true bhāva. Ah, the eternally liberated souls and the souls free from all material desires diligently search for bhāva. Still, bhāva remains hidden from them. Even after a person performs many devotional activities, Lord Kṛṣṇa does not very quickly or easily give him the gift of bhāva. How can pure love (rati) for Lord Kṛṣṇa rise in a heart that does not have pure devotion to the Lord, or in a heart crushed by desires for material sense gratification or impersonal liberation?

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, many times it is seen that, when they participate in the chanting of Lord Hari's holy names (hari-nāma-saṅkīrtana), persons who thirst for material sense gratification or impersonal liberation may manifest the previously described symptoms of bhāva. What shall we call that display?

Bābājī: Only fools think that display is wonderful. Persons who know the truth of bhāva avoid these persons and say that outward display is only a glimpse of bhāva (bhāvābhāsa).

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different kinds of this glimpse of bhāva (bhāvābhāsa)?

Bābājī: It is of two kinds: 1. pratibimba-raty-ābhāsa (the reflection of ecstatic love), and 2. chāyā-raty-ābhāsa (the dim shadow of ecstatic love).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is pratibimba-raty-ābhāsa?

Bābājī: A person who desires impersonal liberation may think he can easily attain that liberation by attaining bhāva for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus desiring the happiness of impersonal liberation, he puts on a false show of the symptoms of bhāva. This is called pratibimba-raty-ābhāsa. An impersonalist may think, “Attaining knowledge of impersonal Brahman is the only way to attain impersonal liberation. There is no other way. However, the process by which one attains that impersonal knowledge is very difficult and troublesome. If by chanting the holy names of Lord Hari one can easily attain liberation, that must mean that by chanting the holy names one may easily attain knowledge of impersonal Brahman." Hoping to easily get impersonal liberation, such a person may then make an outward display of ecstatic symptoms, such a shedding tears and standing erect of the bodily hairs. All this is only a glimpse (ābhāsa) of true bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: Why is it called pratibimba (a reflection)?

Bābājī: When they engage in chanting the Lord's holy names or in other devotional activities, persons who thirst after material sense gratification or impersonal liberation may by destiny attain the association of true devotees. When the moon of true bhāva arises in the hearts of these true devotees, that moon becomes reflected in the hearts of the hedonist or impersonalist pretenders. That is why their bhāva is called pratibimba (a reflection). Pure bhāva does not appear as long as one thirsts after material sense gratification or impersonal liberation. However, when a person sees pure devotees (śuddha-bhakta) of the Lord, the devotees' bhāva becomes reflected on him. That is called pratibimba-bhāvābhāsa (a reflection of true bhāva). Pratibimba-bhāvābhāsa does not bring eternal auspiciousness to the soul. As soon as the pretender attains his goal of sense gratification or liberation, his devotional activities stop. Therefore this pratibimba-bhāvābhāsa is said to be one of the offenses against the holy name. It is not

praiseworthy.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is chāyā-bhāvābhāsa (the dim shadow of ecstatic love).

Bābājī: An honest neophyte devotee not very learned in the science of spiritual life may come into contact with activities, times, places, or persons that are dear to Lord Hari, and by this contact they may attain a small, pleasant, suffering-removing, flickering shadow of true love (rati) for the Lord. That is called "chāyā-raty-ābhāsa". When a person has a small quantity of pure devotion to the Lord, but that devotion is not very strong, then this kind of shadow devotion (raty-ābhāsa) is manifested. This shadow of devotion may appear in a person because in the past he performed many pious deeds. This shadow of devotion may gradually bring more and more auspiciousness to the person who obtains it. By the mercy of a pure devotee of Lord Hari, this shadow love can be transformed into genuine pure love for the Lord (śuddha-bhāva). However, if one commits offenses to pure Vaiṣṇavas, this shadow love may gradually diminish, like the waning of the moon in the dark fortnight. This is not said only of the shadow of love. Even pure love (śuddha-bhāva) for Lord Kṛṣṇa can be destroyed (abhāva) if one commits offenses to Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotees. Or that pure love may gradually become changed into shadow love, or it may be reduced to a lower level of love. If one closely associates with impersonalists, then his love for Kṛṣṇa may also become changed into shadow love, or else one may become an impersonalist himself, and become convinced that he himself is the worshipable Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is because of this bad association that new devotees (navya-bhakta) sometimes have impersonalist ideas and think they have become God as they dance in kṛṣṇa-kīrtana or perform other devotional activities. This is sometimes seen. Unaware of the consequences, new devotees may sometimes associate with impersonalists. That bad association brings many troubles. Therefore new devotees should carefully avoid the association of impersonalists. Sometimes bhāva may suddenly appear in a person who has not performed any devotional activities (sādhana). This means that the person involved performed many very good devotional activities in his pervious births. Because of certain obstacles, the results of those activities were not immediately manifested. Now that the obstacles are removed, the results are suddenly manifested. If the highest kind of love (bhāva), which is all-powerful and wonderful to everyone, suddenly becomes manifested, it should be said that it was produced by the mercy of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Even if you see some faults in his activities, you should not become the enemy of a person who has natural love (bhāva) for the Lord. Why not? A person who has attained love for the Lord has made his life a complete success. A devotee will never commit a sin. However, if it is seen that somehow or a other a devotee has committed a sin, then one should think of this in two ways: 1. By accident a great soul has somehow committed a sin, but that sin will not stay. 2. This sin is only the reflection of a previous misdeed (pūrva-pāpābhāsa). This devotee's spiritual love (bhāva) will quickly destroy that sin. Very quickly it will be destroyed. In this way in one's heart one should no see the faults of the devotees. To see that devotees have faults is one of the offenses against the holy name. In the Nṛsiṁha Purāṇa it is written:

bhagavati ca harāv ananya-cetā
bhṛśa-malino 'pi virājate manuṣyaḥ

na hi śaśaka-luṣa-cchaviḥ kadācit
timira-parā bhāvatām upaiti candraḥ

"If a person has completely engaged his mind, body, and activities in the service of the Supreme Godhead, but externally he is found to be engaged in some abominable activities, those abominable activities will surely be very quickly vanquished by the influence of his staunch devotional service. On the full moon there are some spots, which may appear to be pockmarks. Still, the illumination spread by the full moon cannot be checked."*

One should not think that this instruction means that the devotees of the Lord are always committing sins. The truth is that when a person has faith in devotional service, he no longer desires to commit sins. However, as long as the material body is present, there may be some accidental slip into a sinful action. Devotional service, however, which is like a blazing fire, at once burns all these sins into ashes, and after that the devotee is cautious not to sin again. When unalloyed devotional service appears in someone, the ignorance that is the root of sin is flung far away. Therefore sinful actions remain far away from such a devotee. If it is seen that a person commits sins again and again, one should not be under the misunderstanding that he possesses unalloyed devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Why not? To commit sins with the hope that his devotional activities will nullify his sins is an offense. Devotees do not commit that offense.

Love (rati) for Kṛṣṇa makes one desire to please Kṛṣṇa more and more. It is filled with warmth and power. It is sweet like millions of moons.

Hearing these explanations of ecstatic love (bhāva), Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra became stunned. Their hearts were filled with love. Even after the bābājī had finished speaking, they both remained for a while stunned and silent. Finally they said, "O master, the nectar of your teachings have brought a flood of love to our burnt-out hearts. Ah, what will we do? Where will we go? We are not able to be steady and calm. We are filled with pride because we were born in brāhmaṇa families. In our hearts is not the slightest bit of humbleness. The hope of one day attaining ecstatic love (bhāva) for the Lord is very far from us. Our only hope is that you, a personal associate of the Lord, a devotee filled with pure spiritual love (prema), may place a single drop of spiritual love (prema) in our hearts. Then our lives will become a great success. Because of our relationship with you, the bird of hope now lives in our hearts. We are very poor and lowly and worthless. You are a great king among the true devotees of the Lord. You are very merciful. Please be merciful to us and explain to us what our duties should be. In my heart I yearn to renounce the material world and household life and become a servant of your feet." Then Vijaya-kumāra took this opportunity to say, "O master, Vrajanātha is still a boy. His mother wishes that he become a householder. However, in his heart he does not see the same way she does. Please be merciful and say what is to be done."

Bābājī: Lord Kṛṣṇa has given His mercy to you. Your household life will be Lord Kṛṣṇa's household life, for you will render service to Lord Kṛṣṇa there. Our Lord

Mahāprabhu taught the entire world, and the world should follow His teaching. In this material world there are two kinds of situations: 1. household life, and 2. sannyāsa. As long as one is not qualified to become a sannyāsī, he should remain as a householder and serve Lord Kṛṣṇa in that āśrama. In the first twenty-four years of His pastimes, the Lord set the example of ideal Vaiṣṇava household life, and in the second twenty-four years of His pastimes, the Lord set the example of ideal Vaiṣṇava sannyāsa life. Householders should follow the Lord's example. It is my opinion that for the present you should act as He did. In your heart do not think that in the householder āśrama you cannot attain the highest stage of pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-prema). The devotees who received the greatest mercy from Lord Mahāprabhu were all householders. The Vaiṣṇava sannyāsīs offer prayers to these householders and respectfully touch the dust from their feet.

It was late at night. In the company of the Vaiṣṇavas, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha sang songs glorifying Hari again and again. In that way they passed the night in Śrīvāsa's courtyard. The next morning they washed, bathed, performed various duties, sang the holy names with the Vaiṣṇavas, and accepted a mahā-prasādam breakfast. In the afternoon they slowly walked to Bilva-puskariṇī. As they thought about it, both uncle and nephew decided that they should serve Lord Kṛṣṇa within the householder āśrama. That would be best. Vijaya-kumāra said to his sister, "Vrajanātha has decided to marry. You make all the arrangements. I will go to Modadruma for a few days. When I hear news that Vrajanātha's wedding day is coming, I will come with all the relatives to celebrate the happy day. Tomorrow I will sent Kaniṣṭha Harinātha to help with the arrangements." Vrajanātha's mother and grandmother were flooded with bliss. They gave garments and other gifts to Vijaya-kumāra and bade him farewell.

Chapter Twenty-three
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Nāma-tattva-vicārārambha)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (The Discussion of the Holy Name Begins)

The village of Bilva-puṣkariṇī is very beautiful. The river Ganges flows on its northern and western sides. There, on the shore of the Puṣkariṇī, in a grove of bilva trees, is a temple of Lord Śiva. Not far from there is the place called Bhava-tāraṇa. On one side is Bilva-puṣkariṇī, and on the other side is Brāhmaṇa-puṣkariṇī. Between them lies the village called Simuliyā, which on one side borders the town of Navadvīpa. In the middle of Bilva-puṣkariṇī and north of the royal road lies Vrajanātha's house. After traveling a short distance, Vijaya-kumāra returned to his sister. In his mind he had decided, "I won't leave until I have learned the truth about the holy name." Returning to Bilva-puṣkariṇī, he saw his

sister and nephew and told them, "I will stay another day or two and then I will go." That afternoon two Vaiṣṇavas in the Rāmānuja-sampradāya wearing Śrī-tilaka came to the cāṇḍī-maṇḍapa at Vrajanātha's house. Sitting in the shade of the panasa tree before Vrajanātha's house, the two Vaiṣṇavas made a fire with some dried twigs and began to smoke gañjā. Vrajanātha's mother was very happy to get the opportunity to show hospitality to some guests. Seeing that they were not eating anything, she brought them different kinds of food. Pleased, they began to cook some cāpātīs. Seeing that the Vaiṣṇavas were peaceful and bright-faced, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra gradually felt attracted to them. Seeing that Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra wore tulasī beads on their necks and twelve tilaka marks on their limbs, the two Vaiṣṇavas respectfully greeted them and spread a cloth for them to sit. As Vrajanātha questioned them, one of the sannyāsīs said, "O mahārāja, we have seen Ayodhyā and now we are going to see Navadvīpa. In our hearts we have decided to see the places of Caitanya Prabhu's pastimes." Vrajanātha replied, "You are in Śrī Navadvīpa now. Please rest here today and tomorrow see the birthplace of Lord Mahāprabhu and the courtyard of Śrīvāsa. The two sannyāsīs then happily recited these words of Lord Kṛṣṇa in the Bhagavad-gītā (15.6):

yad gatvā na nivartante
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama

"They who reach My supreme abode never return to this material world."*

The two sannyāsīs said, "Today we are very fortunate, for we will see holy Śrī Māyāpura, the best of the seven holy cities."

As they sat under the panasa tree, the two sannyāsīs discussed the "artha-pañcaka" (five topics) of the Rāmānuja-sampradāya. The five topics are: 1. sva-svarūpa (the nature of one's own self), 2. para-svarūpa (the natures of others), 3. upāya-svarūpa (the means for spiritual advancement), 4. puruṣārtha-savrūpa (the true goal of life), and 5. virodhi-svarūpa (obstacles that prevent one from attaining the true goal of life). With great attention Vijaya-kumāra heard and considered the sannyāsīs' explanations of these topics and the tattva-traya (three truths) of the Śrī-sampradāya, After discussing these points for a long time, Vijaya-kumāra asked, "What is your sampradāya's explanation of the holy name?" When they heard the two Vaiṣṇavas' explanations, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra did not become very happy. Vrajanātha said, "Uncle, after considering all these points, I have come to the conclusion that only taking shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇas' holy name, and nothing else, brings auspiciousness to the living entities. It was to preach the pure holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa to the world that Śrī Gaurāṅga, the master of our lives, descended to this world and came to the holy city of Māyāpura. When he was teaching us yesterday, Śrī Gurudeva explained that chanting the holy name is the best of all devotional practices. He also asked us to give special attention to understanding the truth of the holy name. Uncle, let us go to him this evening and learn about this." They spent that afternoon showing hospitality to their guests

and talking about many things.

When the evening arati ended, the Vaiṣṇavas assembled under the bakula tree in Śrīvāsa's courtyard. Chanting the holy names on his tulasī beads, saintly elderly Raghunātha dasa Babaji sat among them. Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra came and offered daṇḍavat obeisances to him. The saintly bābājī embraced them and said, "Are you happy in your devotional service?" Vijaya-kumāra replied, "O master, by your mercy everything is auspicious for us. Please be merciful and teach us this evening about the holy name of the Lord. His face blossoming with happiness, the saintly bābājī said, "The Supreme Personality of Godhead has two kinds of names: 1. mukhya (primary) and 2. gauṇa (secondary). Names that show His relation to the material creation and the material modes of nature are all secondary names. "Sṛṣṭi-kartā (the creator of the material world), "jagat-pātā" (the maintainer of the material world), "viśva-niyantā" (the controller of the material world), "viśva-pālaka" (the protector of the material world), and "paramātmā" (the Supersoul present everywhere in the material world) are examples of some of these many secondary names. Some other names, although beyond the touch of the material modes of nature, are also counted among these secondary names. "Brahma" (Brahman) is an example of these names. When they are chanted, these secondary names bring many different kinds of benefits, but they do not directly or quickly bring the highest spiritual benefit. The names that describe the Lord as He is manifested in the spiritual world, which is beyond material time and space, and where time is manifested as an eternal present (nitya-vartamāna) are names that are all spiritual and primary. "Nārāyaṇa", “Vāsudeva", "Janārdana", "Hṛṣīkeśa", “Hari", "Acyuta", "Govinda", "Gopāla", and "Rāma" are examples of these primary names. All these primary names are identical with the form of the Supreme Lord Himself, and therefore they exist in the eternal present in the spiritual world. Attracted by devotional service, these holy names dance on the tongues of certain very fortunate souls in the material world. These names have no connection at all with the material world. When it descends to the material world, the holy name of the Lord, which has all the Lord's powers, destroys the illusions of māyā. The individual souls in the material world have the holy name of Lord Hari as their only friend. They have no other true friend. In the Bṛhan-nāradīya Purāṇa it is said:

hare nāmaiva nāmaiva
nāmaiva mama jīvanam
kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva
nāsty eva gatir anyathā

"The holy name, the holy name, the holy name of Lord Hari is my very life. In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the holy names of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way."

The holy name has limitless power. The holy name uproots all the sins of the conditioned souls burning in a great forest-fire of sins. In the Garuḍa Purāṇa it is

said:

avaśenāpi yan-nāmni
kīrtite sarva-pātakaiḥ
pumān vimucyate sadyaḥ
siṁha-trastair mṛgair iva

"If one chants the holy name of the Lord, even in a helpless condition or without desiring to do so, all the reactions of his sinful life depart, just as when a lion roars, all the small animals flee in fear."*

A person who takes shelter of the holy name becomes free of all sufferings. The holy name has the power to destroy all sufferings. In the Skanda Purāṇa it is said:

ādhayo vyādhayo yasya
smaraṇān nāma-kīrtanāt
tadaiva vilayaṁ yānti
tam anantaṁ namāmy aham

"I offer my respectful obeisances to the limitless Supreme Personality of Godhead. When a person remembers Him or chants His holy names, that person's diseases of the mind or body all run to their extinction."

A person who chants the holy name of Lord Hari purifies his family, friends, and all others. In the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa it is said:

mahā-pātaka-yukto 'pi
kīrtayann aniśam harim
śuddhāntaḥkaraṇo bhūtvā
jāyate paṅkti-pāvanaḥ

"Even if he has committed many great sins, a person who chants the holy name of the Lord day and night become pure at heart. He purifies all his relatives."

A person who is devoted to the holy name becomes free of all sufferings. In the Bḥad-Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is said:

sarva-rogopaśamaṁ
sarvopadrava-nāśanam
śāntidaṁ sarvāriṣṭānāṁ
harer nāmānukīrtanam

"The chanting of Lord Hari's holy name cures all diseases, removes all obstacles, and rescues one from all calamities."

The age of Kali cannot make trouble for a person who loudly chants the holy name of Lord Hari. In the Bṛhan-Nāradīya Purāṇa it is said:

hare keśava govinda
vāsudeva jagan-maya
itīrayanti ye nityaṁ
na hi tan bādhate kaliḥ

"The age of Kali cannot make trouble for a person who always chants, `Hare! Keśava! Govinda! Vāsudeva! Jaganmaya!"

Simply by hearing the holy name of Lord Hari, the residents of hell become delivered. In the Nārasiṁha Purāṇa it is said:

yathā yathā harer nāma
kīrtayanti sma nārakāḥ
tathā tathā harau bhaktim
udvahanto divaṁ yayuḥ

"When they began to chant the holy name of Lord Hari, the residents of hell began to develop devotion to Lord Hari. Thus they were carried to the heavenly worlds."

By loudly chanting the holy name, a person destroys his prārabdha karmic reactions. In the Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.44) it is said:

yan-nāmadheyaṁ mriyamāṇa āturaḥ
patan skhalan vā vivaśo gṛṇan pumān
vimukta-karmārgala uttamāṁ gatiṁ
prāpnoti yakṣyanti na taṁ kalau janāḥ

"Terrified, about to die, a man collapses on his bed. Although his voice is faltering and he is hardly conscious of what he is saying, if he utters the holy name of the Supreme Lord he can be freed from the reactions of his fruitive work and achieve the supreme destination. But still people in the age of Kali will not worship the Supreme Lord."*

The holy name of Lord Hari is more glorious than all the Vedas. In the Skanda Purāṇa it is said:

mā ṛco mā yajus tāta
mā sāma paṭha kiñcana
govindeti harer nāma
geyaṁ gāyasva nityaśaḥ

"My son, don't study the Ṛg Veda. Don't study the Yajur Veda. Don't study the Sāma Veda at all. Simply chant `O Govinda!' Always chant the holy names of Lord Hari."

The holy name of Lord Hari is more glorious than all holy places. In the Vāmana Purāṇa it is said:

tīrtha-koṭi-sahasrāṇi
tīrtha-koṭi-śatāni ca
tāni sarvāṇy avāpnoti
viṣṇor nāmāni kirtanāt

"By chanting the holy names of Lord Viṣṇu, a person attains the benefit of visiting hundreds of thousands of millions of sacred pilgrimage places."

Even a glimpse (nāmābhāsa) of the holy name is infinitely better than all material pious deeds. In the Skanda Purāṇa it is said:

go-koṭi-dānaṁ grahaṇe khagasya
prayāga-gaṅgodaka-kalpa-vāsaḥ
yajñāyutaṁ meru-suvarṇa-dānaṁ
govinda-kīrter na samaṁ śatāṁśaiḥ

"Neither giving millions of cows in charity, nor residing at Prayāga by the Ganges for a kalpa, nor performing millions of yajñas, nor giving a Mount Meru of gold in charity brings a benefit equal to one-hundredth part of the benefit obtained by chanting the holy names of Lord Govinda."

The holy name of Lord Hari gives all benefits. In the Skanda Purāṇa it is said:

etat ṣaḍ-varga-haraṇaṁ
ripu-nigrahaṇaṁ param
adhyātma-mūlam etad dhi

viṣṇor nāmānukīrtanam

"Chanting the holy names of Lord Viṣṇu removes the six troubles of material life, defeats enemies, and is the root of spiritual knowledge."

The holy name of Lord Hari has all powers. In the Skanda Purāṇa it is said:

dāna-vrata-tapas-tīrtha-
kṣetrādīnāṁ ca yāḥ sthitāḥ
śaktayo deva-mahatāṁ
sarva-pāpa-harāḥ śubhāḥ

rājasūyāśvamedhānāṁ
jñāna-sādhyātma-vastunaḥ
ākṛṣya hariṇā sarvāḥ
sthāpitā sveṣu nāmasu

"Lord Hari has gathered from charity, vows, austerities, pilgrimages, the demigods, the great saints, the rājasūya and aśvamedha yajñas, and the study of transcendental knowledge all their powers to bring auspiciousness and remove sins, and placed these powers in His holy names."

The holy name of Lord Hari brings bliss to the entire world. In the Bhagavad-gītā (11.36) it is said:

sthāne hṛṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā
jagat prahṛṣyaty anurajyate ca

"O Hṛṣīkeśa, the world becomes joyful upon hearing Your name, and thus everyone becomes attached to You."*

The entire world bows down before a person who loudly chants the holy name. In the Bṛhan-Nāradīya Purāṇa it is said:

nārāyaṇa jagannātha
vāsudeva janārdana
itīrayanti ye nityaṁ
te vai sarvatra vanditāḥ

"In every direction the people bow down to offer respect to the devotees who always chant, `Nārāyaṇa! Jagannātha! Vāsudeva! Janārdana!'."

The holy name is the only shelter of the shelterless. In the Padma Purāṇa it is said:

ananya-gatayo martyā
bhogino 'pi parantapāḥ
jñāna-vairāgya-rahitā
brahmacaryādi-varjitāḥ

sarva-dharmojjhitāḥ viṣṇor
nāma-mātraika-jalpakāḥ
sukhena yāṁ gatiṁ yānti
na tāṁ sarve 'pi dharmikāḥ

"Even though they may be materialistic, distraught, completely impious, or bereft of knowledge, renunciation, celibacy, and a host of virtues, persons who completely surrender of Lord Viṣṇu and even only once chant His holy name easily attain the supreme spiritual destination that all the pious saints cannot enter."

One should chant the holy name of Lord Hari always and everywhere. In the Viṣṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa it is said:

na deśa-niyamas tasmin
na kāla-niyamas tathā
nocchiṣṭādau niṣedho 'sti
śrī-harer nāmni lubdhakaḥ

"A person who is greedy to chant the holy name of Lord Hari does not consider whether the time or place is right for such chanting. He does not accept any restrictions on chanting the holy name."

The holy name easily gives impersonal liberation to they who want it. In the Varāha Purāṇa teh Supreme Personality of Godhead declares:

nārāyaṇācyutānanta-
vāsudeveti yo naraḥ
satataṁ kīrtayed bhuvi
yāti mal-layatāṁ sa hi

"A person who always chants, `Nārāyaṇa! Acyuta! Ananta! Vāsudeva!' may, if he wishes, merge into My existence."

In the Garuḍa Purāṇa it is said:

kim kariṣyati sāṅkhyena
kiṁ yogair nara-nāyaka
muktim icchasi rājendra
kuru govinda-kīrtanam

"What is the use of saṅkhya? What is the use of yoga? O king of kings, if wish to attain impersonal liberation, then you should chant the holy name of Lord Govinda."

The holy name of Lord Hari sends the individual souls to the spiritual world of Vaikuṇṭha. In the Nandī Purāṇa it is said:

sarvatra sarva-kāleṣu
ye 'pi kurvanti pātakam
nāma-saṅkīrtanam kṛtvā
yānti viṣṇoḥ paraṁ padam

"Persons who in the past have committed every possible sin in every possible situation, but who now chant the holy name of the Lord, go to the supreme abode of Lord Viṣṇu."

By chanting the holy name one pleases the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the Bṛhan-Nāradīya Purāṇa it is said:

nāma-saṅkīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ
kṣut-tṛṭ-prapīḍitādiṣu
karoti satataṁ viprās
tasya prīto hy adhokṣajaḥ

"O brāhmaṇas, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is beyond the touch of the material senses, becomes very pleased with a person who, in spite of hunger, thirst, and many troubles, continues to always chant His holy name."

By chanting the holy name of Lord Hari one can being the Supreme Personality of Godhead under one's control. In the Mahābhārata, Lord Kṛṣṇa declares:

ṛṇam etat pravṛddhaṁ me
hṛdayān nopasarpati

yad govindeti cukrośa
kṛṣṇā māṁ dūra-vāsinam

"When I was away from Draupadī she cried with the words, `He Govinda!' This call has put Me in her debt, and that indebtedness is gradually increasing in My heart."*

The holy name of Lord Hari gives the final goal of life to the people. In the Skanda and Padma Purāṇas it is said:

idam eva hi māṅgalyam
idam eva dhanārjanam
jīvitasya phalaṁ caitad
yad dāmodara-kīrtanam

"Chanting the holy name of Lord Dāmodara brings the greatest auspiciousness, the greatest wealth, the greatest benefit."

Chanting the holy name of Lord Hari is the best of all devotional activities. In the Vaiṣṇava-cintāmaṇi it is said:

agha-cchit smaraṇaṁ viṣṇor
bahv-āyāsena sādhyate
oṣṭha-spandana-mātreṇa
kīrtanaṁ tu tato varam

"By working very hard to always remember Lord Viṣṇu, one can destroy all sins. However, one can attain an even greater benefit simply by moving the lips to chant the Lord's holy name."

In the Viṣṇu-rahasya it is said:

yad abhyarcā harim bhaktyā
kṛte kratu-śatair api
phalaṁ prāpnoty avikalaṁ
kalau govinda-kīrtanam

"the same result that was obtained in the Satya-yuga by worshiping Lord Hari and in the Tretā-yuga by performing hundreds of sacrifices is obtained in the Kali-yuga simply by chanting the holy name of Lord Govinda."

In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (12.3.52) it is said:

kṛte yad dhyāyato viṣṇuṁ
tretāyāṁ yajato makhaiḥ
dvāpare paricaryāyāṁ
kalau tad dhari-kīrtanāt

"Whatever result was obtained in Satya-yuga by meditating on Viṣṇu, in Tretā-yuga by performing sacrifices, and in Dvāpara-yuga by serving the Lord's lotus feet, can also be obtained in Kali-yuga simply by chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra."*

O Vijaya-kumāra, think about it and you will see that even the shadow of the holy name of Lord Hari is better than all material pious deeds. And why not? Pious deeds are only the means to attain an end. Once the end is attained, the means are thrown away. Pious deeds are all material. However, the holy name of Lord Hari is spiritual. The holy name may be the means to attain an end, but when one attains the end he finds that the holy name itself is also the end itself. Think about it and you will see that all the different limbs of devotional service take shelter of the holy name of Lord Hari.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, the holy name of Lord Hari is spiritual. I have faith in that truth. However, so that my faith may be free from doubts I need to understand how it is that the holy name, which is a series of syllables, is spiritual. Please be merciful and explain.

Bābājī: The scriptures (Padma Purāṇa) declare:

nāma cintāmaṇiḥ kṛṣṇaś
caitanya-rasa-vigrahaḥ
pūrṇaḥ śuddho nitya-mukto
'bhinnatvān nāma-nāminoḥ

"The holy name of Kṛṣṇa is transcendentally blissful. It bestows all spiritual benedictions, for it is Kṛṣṇa Himself, the reservoir of all pleasure. Kṛṣṇa's name is complete, and it is the form of all transcendental mellows. It is not a material name under any condition, and it is no less powerful than Kṛṣṇa Himself. Since Kṛṣṇa's name is not contaminated by the material qualities, there is no question of its being involved with maya. Kṛṣṇa's name is always liberated and spiritual. It is never conditioned by the laws of material nature. This is because the name of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa Himself are identical."*

Vijaya-kumāra: How can a name, which is after all a series of syllables, be different from other sounds in this material world?

Bābājī: The holy name of Lord Hari does not take its birth in the material

world. Only when he is situated in his original spiritual body is the individual soul, who is a tiny particle of spirit, eligible to pronounce the pure holy name of Lord Hari. The material senses of a soul imprisoned in Māyā's world have no power to pronounce the pure holy name of Lord Hari. However, by the mercy of the Lord's hlādinī-śakti, such a soul can be situated in his original form. Then the holy name will appear before him. By the mercy of the pure holy name, the holy name enters the devotee's thinking process, and then descends to the tongue if the tongue is purified by devotional service. On that tongue the holy name dances. The holy name is not a series of material syllables. It only seems to be material syllables when it dances on a tongue made of matter. That is the secret of the holy name.

Vijaya-kumāra: Of the primary names of the Lord, which name is the most sweet?

Bābājī: In the Śata-nāma-stotra it is said:

viṣṇor ekaikaṁ nāmāpi
sarva-vedādhikaṁ matam
tādṛṅ nāma-sahasreṇa
rāma-nāma-samaṁ smṛtam

"One utterance of the name Viṣṇu is better than all the Vedas. One utterance of the name Rāma is equal to a thousand utterances of the name Viṣṇu."

Then, in the Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa it is said:

sahasra-nāmnāṁ puṇyānāṁ
trir āvṛttya tu yat pahalm
ekāvṛttya tu kṛṣṇasya
nāmaikam tat prayacchati

"The pious results derived from chanting the thousand holy names of Viṣṇu three times can be attained by one repetition of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa."*

Therefore the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is the best. That is why our Lord, Śrī Gaurāṅga, taught the mantra that begins “Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa". You should always chant that mantra.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the path of chanting the holy name?

Bābājī: Using tulasī beads, or, in the absence of beads, counting on your fingers, and carefully avoiding offenses, you should always chant the holy name of Lord Hari. By chanting the holy name purely one attains prema (pure love of God). The purpose of counting is to know whether or not the number of names chanted is gradually increasing. Tulasī is very dear top Lord Hari, therefore touching tulasī beads as one chants the holy name brings a better result. When one chants one

should be conscious that the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is not different from Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, there are nine processes of devotional service and sixty-four categories of devotional activities. If one constantly chants the holy name, which is only one of the activities of devotional service, how will one find time to perform any other devotional activity?

Bābājī: What is the difficulty? The sixty-four devotional activities are actually included within the nine devotional processes. One may worship the Deity of the Lord, or one may chant the holy name in a solitary place. One chant practice the nine processes of devotional service in any situation. In the presence of the Deity one can pure hear, chant, remember, and in other ways serve the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. All these activities may be counted together as devotion to the holy name. If one has no opportunity to see the Deity, one may remember the Deity and in this way in the presence of the Deity one may practice the nine devotional activities beginning with hearing and chanting the holy name. If in the past one has performed many pious deeds, then he will naturally yearn to chant the holy name. By constantly chanting the holy name one automatically performs all the activities of different limbs of devotional service. Of the nine processes of devotional service beginning with hearing and chanting, chanting the holy name is the most powerful. If one can taste bliss by chanting the holy names, that is enough. It is not that one must perform every devotional activity.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "to always chant the holy name" mean?

Bābājī: Aside for the time when one sleeps, one can chant the holy name throughout the day as one performs various activities. That is called constant chanting of the holy name. One can chant the holy name in any place, at any time, or in any situation. There are no restrictions.

Vijaya-kumāra: Aha! Unless you first give us your mercy, we will never have the power to always chant the holy name in this way. Without your mercy we do not see any hope that we will ever become true Vaiṣṇavas.

Bābājī: First I will tell you of the different kinds of Vaiṣṇavas. Lord Gaurāṅga, the master of our hearts, told Satyarāja that any person who has once uttered the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa should be considered a Vaiṣṇava. Then again, a person who always chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is a better Vaiṣṇava. A person the sight of whom makes the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa appear on others' mouths is the best Vaiṣṇava. By chanting the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa with faith you will become true Vaiṣṇavas.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe to us the pure holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa and all other things we should know.

Bābājī: When the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa appears in a person who has full faith and who practices unalloyed devotional service, that is said to be the "true holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa". When the holy name appears in any other situation the name is either "nāmābhāsa" (a glimpse of the holy name) or "nāmāparādha" (the holy name chanted with offenses).

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, should we call the holy name the goal (sādhya) or the means (sādhana) to attain the goal?

Bābājī: When a devotee practices sādhana-bhakti, his chanting of the holy name may be said to be the means for attaining the goal (sādhana). However, when one practices bhāva-bhakti or prema-bhakti, his chanting of the holy name is said to be

the goal (sādhya) itself. In this way the holy name contracts or expands according to the devotees' stage of spiritual advancement.

Vijaya-kumāra: Is Lord Kṛṣṇa really not different from His name? Or is this not really true?

Bābājī: There is not the slightest difference. However, there is one secret difference: The holy name is more merciful than Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. If one commits an offense to Him, Lord Kṛṣṇa will not forgive. But if one commits an offense to Lord Kṛṣṇa or His holy name, then the holy name will be merciful and forgive. You should carefully understand the offenses to the holy name. Carefully avoiding these offenses, one should chant the holy name. Why should one avoid them? A person who is not free from offenses cannot chant the holy name purely. Tomorrow you will learn about these offenses.

After thus learning about the true nature and glories of the holy name, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra respectfully touched the dust of their spiritual masters feet, and then they both returned to Bilva-puṣkariṇī.

Chapter Twenty-four
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Nāmāparādha-vicāra)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (Offenses to the Holy Name)

That evening Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra purely chanted 50,000 holy names (29 rounds) on their tulasī beads. Late at night the finally fell asleep. As they purely chanted the holy name, they both felt the presence of Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. The next morning they told each other all they had felt. They were blissful. They bathed in the Ganges, worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa, chanted the holy name of Lord Hari, recited the *Daśa-mūla*, studied Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, served the Vaiṣṇavas, honored the Lord's prasādam, and performed other devotional activities. In this way they passed the day. At dusk they visited the cottage of the elderly saintly bābājī at Śrīvasa's courtyard. After offering daṇḍavat obeisances, they sat down, Thinking of what had been proposed during the previous evening's talks, Vijaya-kumāra asked about the offenses to the holy name. With the cheerfulness that was a part of his nature, the saintly bābājī said, "As chanting the holy name is the best of all spiritual activities, so offenses to the holy name are the gravest of sins. When a person takes shelter of the holy name, all his sins flee far away. But the offenses to the holy name do not flee away so easily. In the Padma Purāṇa it is said:

nāmāparādha-yuktānāṁ
nāmāny eva haranty agham
aviśrānti prayuktāni
tāny evārtha-karāṇi ca

"The chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is recommended for persons who commit offenses, because if they continue chanting they will gradually chant offenselessly. Even if in the beginning one chants with offenses, one will become free from such offenses by chanting again and again."*

Bābā, look. How difficult it is to become free form offenses to the holy name! An intelligent person will strive to chant the holy name without offense. A person who takes great care to avoid offenses is quickly able to chant the pure holy name. A person may display ecstatic symptoms, may shed tears, and the hairs of his body may stand up, but he may still be committing offenses and he may still not chant purely. If they do not take special care, the aspiring devotees will not be able to chant the holy name purely.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what is pure chanting of the holy name?

Bābājī: When one does not commit the tens offenses to the holy name, then he chants purely. Chanting purely here does not mean chanting with accurate pronunciation. In the Padma Purāṇa it is said:

nāmaikaṁ yasya vāci smaraṇa-patha-gataṁ śrotra-mūlaṁ gataṁ vā
śuddhaṁ vāśuddha-varṇaṁ vyavahita-rahitaṁ tārayaty eva satyam
tac ced deha-draviṇa-janatā-lobha-pāṣaṇḍa-madhye
nikṣiptaṁ syān na phala-janakaṁ śīghram evātra vipra

"If a devotee once utters the holy name of the Lord, or if it penetrates his mind or enters his ear, which is the channel of aural reception, that holy name will certainly deliver him from material bondage, whether vibrated properly or improperly, with correct or incorrect grammar, and properly joined or vibrated in separate parts. O brāhmaṇa, the potency of the holy name is therefore certainly great. However, if one uses the vibration of the holy name for the benefit of the material body, for material wealth and followers, or under the influence of greed or atheismin other words, if one utters the name with offensessuch chanting will not produce the desired result very soon. Therefore one should diligently avoid offenses in chanting the holy name of the Lord."*

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I can see that the aspiring devotee has no alternative but to be aware of the offenses in chanting the holy name. Please be kind and describe those offenses.

Bābājī: There are ten offenses to the holy name. They are described in these words of the Padma Purāṇa (Brahma-khaṇḍa 25.15-18):

satāṁ nindā nāmnaḥ paramam aparādhaṁ vitanute
yataḥ khyātiṁ yātaṁ katham u sahate tad vigarihām
śivasya śrī-viṣṇor ya iha guṇa-nāmādi sakalaṁ
dhiyā bhinnaṁ paśyet sa khalu hari-nāmāhita-karaḥ

"1. Blasphemy of the great saintly persons who are engaged in preaching the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, is the worst offense at the lotus feet of the holy name. The nāma-prabhu, who is identical with Kṛṣṇa, will never tolerate such blasphemous activities, even from one who passes as a great devotee. 2. In this material world, the holy name of Viṣṇu is all-auspicious. Viṣṇu's name, form, qualities, and pastimes are all transcendental, absolute knowledge. Therefore, if one tries to separate the Absolute Personality of Godhead from His holy name or His transcendental form, qualities, and pastimes, thinking them to be material, that is offensive. Similarly, to think the names of demigods such as Lord Śiva to be as good as the name of Lord Viṣṇu is also blasphemous.*

guror avajñā śruti-śāstra-nindanaṁ
tathārtha-vādo hari-nāmni kalpanam
nāmno balād yasya hi pāpa-buddhir
na vidyate tasya yamair hi śuddhiḥ

"3. To consider the spiritual master to be material, and therefore to envy his exalted position. 4. Blasphemy of Vedic literature, such as the four Vedas and the Purāṇas. 5. To give some interpretation on the holy name of the Lord. 6. To consider the glories of the holy name to be imaginary. 7. To think that since the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra can counteract all sinful reactions one may therefore go on with his sinful activities and then at the same time chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to neutralize them is the greatest offense at the lotus feet of Hari-nāma. One who thinks in this way cannot be purified by any means, such as by austerities or by the various punishments of Yamarāja.*

dharma-vrata-tyāga-hutādi-sarva-
śubha-kriyā-sāmyam api pramādaḥ
aśraddadhāne vimukhe 'py aśṛṇvati
yas copadeśaḥ śiva-nāmāparādhaḥ

"8. It is a great offense to consider the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to be equal to the performance of religious ceremonies, following austere vows, practicing renunciation, and fire sacrifices, which are all materialistic auspicious activities. 9. It is an offense to preach the glories of the holy name to those who will not hear, to those who are atheistic and those who have no faith in the chanting of the holy name.*

śrutvāpi nāma-māhātmyaṁ
yah prīti-rahito 'dhamaḥ
aham-mamādi-paramo

nāmni so 'py aparādha-kṛt

"10. That lowest among men, who, even after hearing the glories of the transcendental holy name of the Lord, continues in a materialistic concept of life, thinking, `I am this body, and everything belonging to this body is mine (ahaṁ mameti)', and does not show respect and love for the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra is an offender to the holy name."*

Vijaya-kumāra: Please kindly explain each verse separately, so I may understand the offenses.

Bābājī: Two offenses are described in the first verse. The first offense is blasphemy of the great saintly persons who have renounced karma, dharma, jñāna, and yoga, and have completely taken shelter of the holy name. That is a very great offense. And why should it not be a great offense? The holy name of Lord Hari will not excuse the blasphemy of great souls who properly preach the glories of the holy name to the world. The holy name is quickly merciful to persons who chanting the holy name in the company of the most saintly devotees and who avoid blaspheming devotees attached to the holy name.

Vijaya-kumāra: I can understand the first offense very easily. O master, please explain the second offense.

Bābājī: In the second half of the verse we are discussing, the second offense is described. This offense may be explained in two ways. The first explanation is this: Lord Viṣṇu and Lord Sadāśiva are the leaders of the demigods. To see that Their qualities, names, and other features show that They are both independent of each other is an offense to the holy name. The idea that Lord Viṣṇu may be a supreme controller, but Lord Śiva is also a supreme controller, and he is independent of Lord Viṣṇu, is an idea that leads to bahv-īśvara-vāda, the idea that there are many independent gods. That idea is a great obstruction blocking the path of unalloyed devotional service. The truth is that Lord Śiva and the other demigods have no power independent of Lord Viṣṇu. If one understands in this way, then he does not commit this offense to the holy name. The second interpretation is this: To think that the name, form, qualities, and pastimes of the all-auspicious (śiva) Supreme Personality of Godhead are different from the transcendental and eternally perfect spiritual body of the Lord is an offense to the holy name. The truth is that Kṛṣṇa's form, Kṛṣṇa's name, Kṛṣṇa's qualities, and Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are all spiritual. They are not different from each other. A person who understands this theoretically (j{.sy 241}āna) and practically (vijñāna) when he chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa does not commit this offense to the holy name. It is with this knowledge that one should chant the holy name of the Lord.

Vijaya-kumāra: I understand the first and second offenses. By your mercy I have understood that Lord Kṛṣṇa's form is spiritual and not material, that He is not different from His qualities, names, parts-and-parcels, and all else in relation to Him. A person who takes shelter of the holy name is obliged to learn the truth of matter and spirit by approaching the feet of a bona-fide spiritual master. Now please explain the third offense.

Bābājī: One should have unwavering devotion to the spiritual master who gives one the holy name, for the holy name is the highest of all spiritual activities. A

person who disrespects the spiritual master who gives the holy name, a person who thinks that although his spiritual master may be learned in the scriptures describing the holy name, he is not learned in Vedānta and other philosophies, a person who then thinks he knows more about philosophy than his spiritual master, commits an offense to the holy name. No teacher is superior to the spiritual master who knows the truth of the holy name. Therefore to think lightly of him is an offense to the holy name.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, if we are purely devoted to you, then our lives will be auspicious. Now please be merciful and explain the fourth offense.

Bābājī: In the Śruti-śāstras it is said that chanting the holy name is the best of all spiritual activities. There is it said (the Vedas, quoted in Hari-bhakti-vilāsa 11.510-512):

oṁ āsya jānanto nāma cid-vivktana mahas te viṣṇo su-matiṁ bhajāmahe

"O Lord Viṣṇu, now that we understand the truth, we worship the glory of Your holy name.*

oṁ tat sat oṁ padaṁ devasya namasā vyantaḥ
śravasy aśravā āpanna-mṛktam
nāmāni cid dadhire yajñīyāni
bhadrāyante raṇayantaḥ sandṛṣṭau

"Oṁ Tat Sat Oṁ. I offer my respectful obeisances to the feet of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. To attain liberation, the pure devotees chant and hear His transcendental holy names.*

oṁ tam u stotāraḥ pūrvaṁ yathā-vidā
ṛtasya garbhaṁ januṣā pipartanā
asya jānanto nāma cid-viviktan
mahas te viṣṇo su-matiṁ bhajāmahe

"As far as they can understand You, the sages in ancient times chanted the glories of You, who are perfect and complete, and who are the father of the Vedas. O Lord Viṣṇu, now that we understand the truth, we worship the glory of Your holy name."*

In this way it is seen that all the Vedas and all the Upaniṣads chant the glories of the holy name. To blaspheme all these scriptures is an offense to the holy name. If one honors the scriptures but blasphemes the parts of the scriptures that teach the glories of the holy name, one commits an offense to the holy name. Because of this offense one will not feel attracted to the holy name. Fully aware that the holy

name is the crest jewel of all the Vedas, one should respectfully chant the holy name.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, your mouth is showering nectar on us! Now we thirst to learn about the fifth offense.

Bābājī: The fifth offense to the holy name of Lord Hari is to give some interpretation on the holy name of the Lord. In the Jamini-saṁhitā it is said:

śruti-smṛti-purāṇeṣu
nāma-māhātmya-vāciṣu
ye 'rtha-vāda iti brūyur
na teṣāṁ niraya-kṣayaḥ

"Persons who give the interpretation that the glories of the holy name as described in the Śruti, Smṛti, and Purāṇas are exaggerations, live always in hell."

In the Brahma-saṁhitā, the Supreme Personality of Godhead explains to Bodhāyana:

yan-nāma-kīrtana-phalaṁ vividhaṁ niśamya
na śraddadhāti manute yad utārtha-vādam
yo mānuṣas tam iha duḥkha-caye kṣipāmi
saṁsāra-ghora-vividhārti-nipīḍitāṅgam

"Any person who, after hearing the descriptions of the various benefits obtained by chanting the holy name thinks these benefits are exaggerated, I throw into a host of sufferings and torture in many horrible ways."

The scriptures explain that the holy name has all the powers of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Himself. The holy name is perfectly spiritual. Therefore it has the power to deliver one from the cycle of birth and death. In the Viṣṇu-dharma Purāṇa it is said:

kṛṣṇeti maṅgalaṁ nāma
yasya vāci pravartate
bhasmī-bhavanti rājendra
mahā-pātaka-koṭayaḥ

"My dear king, this word Kṛṣṇa is so auspicious that anyone who chants this holy name immediately gets rid of the resultant actions of sinful activities from many, many births."*

In the Bṛhan-Nāradīya Purāṇa it is said:

nānyat paśyāmi jantūnāṁ
vihāya hari-kīrtanam
sarva-pāpa-praśamanaṁ
prāyaścittaṁ dvijottamāḥ

"O best of the brāhmaṇas, chanting Lord Hari's holy names is the only way the people can become free of all sins. I do not see any other way."

In the Bṛhad-Viṣṇu Purāṇa it is said:

nāmno 'sya yāvatī śaktiḥ
pāpa-nirharaṇe hareḥ
tāvat kartuṁ na śaknoti
pātakaṁ pātakī janaḥ

"A person who chants the holy name of Kṛṣṇa can at once counteract the resultant actions of more sinful activities than he is able to perform."*

These descriptions of the holy name's glories are all completely true. However, when they hear these descriptions, persons who earn their livelihood by performing the rituals of karma or teaching the impersonal speculations of jñāna, in order to protect their livelihood, say these descriptions are all exaggerations. Their interpretation is this: "The scriptures' descriptions of the glories of the holy names are not really true. Exaggerated descriptions of the benefits brought by chanting are given so that the mind may be attracted to the holy name." Persons who commit this offense do not attain attraction to the holy name. Therefore, with full faith in the words of scripture, you should chant the holy name of Lord Hari. But you should avoid the company of people who give the interpretation that the glories of the holy name are exaggerated. If somehow you see such a person, you should at once bathe while still wearing all your clothing. That teaching Lord Gaurāṅga has given.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, it is not easy for householders to chant the holy name purely. And why not? They are always surrounded by nondevotees who are all offenders to the holy name. Brāhmaṇa paṇḍitas like myself find it very hard to have the company of pious devotees. O master, please be merciful and give me the spiritual strength to avoid the company of nondevotees. As I hear the words from your mouth, my faith grows more and more strong. Now please explain the sixth offense.

Bābājī: The sixth offense is to consider the glories of the holy name to be imaginary. The impersonalists and fruitive workers think that the Supreme is formless and nameless. They think the sages invented the names Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and the other names of the Lord to help the people attain perfection. Persons who

accept this conclusion are offenders to the holy name. The truth is that the holy name is spiritual and eternal. The holy name appears only on spiritual senses engaged in devotional service. Taking lessons from the bona fide spiritual master and the holy scriptures, you should understand that the holy name is real, spiritual, and eternal. The holy name will not be merciful to you if you think he is imaginary.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, before we had taken shelter of your feet, which bring freedom from fear, we stayed in the company of fruitive workers and nyāya logicians, and we thought as they did. Now, by your mercy, we have thrown those ideas far away. Please be merciful and now explain the seventh offense.

Bābājī: To think that since the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra can counteract all sinful reactions one may therefore go on with his sinful activities and then at the same time chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to neutralize them is an offense at the lotus feet of Hari-nāma. A person who commits sins expecting that the holy name will purify him does not become purified even by practicing austerities. And why not? His action is counted among the offenses to the holy name. Its only atonement is the atonement that removes offenses to the holy name. That is the only way it is removed.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, in this world no sin exists that is not destroyed by chanting the holy name. Why, then, does the holy name not destroy this sin? Why is it counted among the offenses to the holy name?

Bābājī: Bābā, on the day when a living entity purely takes shelter of the holy name, from that day forward all his sinful reactions, either prārabdha (that have already begun to bring suffering) or aprārabdha (that will bring suffering in the future), are at once destroyed. Eventually the holy name gives him prema (pure love of God). A person who purely takes shelter of the holy name throws sinful desires far away. He does not even desire the benefits attained by performing material pious deeds. He throws talk of material piety and sin far away. Neither is he attracted to impersonal liberation. Thus a person who purely chants the holy name does not commit sins. However, if a person commits offenses while he chants the holy name, his chanting is nāmābhāsa (a reflection of the holy name). It is not pure chanting of the holy name. In the stage of nāmābhāsa, the chanter's past sins are all destroyed and at present he is not attracted to sinning. However, some remnant of past sinful habits remains and only gradually is destroyed. If because of past habits the chanter accidentally commits some sin, the nāmābhāsa (reflection of the holy name) throws that sin far away. However, if a person who takes shelter of the holy name thinks, “The chanting of the holy name destroys all sins. If I commit a sin, then the holy name will then destroy that sin." and if he then commits sins expecting to be forgiven, his sinful action is an offense to the holy name.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now please explain the eighth offense and thus make us happy.

Bābājī: It is a great offense to consider the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to be equal to following varṇāśrama-dharma, giving charity, performing religious ceremonies, following austere vows, practicing renunciation, and performing fire sacrifices, aṣṭāṅga-yoga, and other like deeds, which are all materialistic auspicious activities. These and the other pious deeds described in the scriptures are4 all material activities. However, the holy name of the Lord is beyond the world of matter. The pious activities described here are all means to attain certain goals.

The final goal is spiritual in nature. All these pious deeds are means. They are not goals. However, the holy name of Hari is a means during the period of sādhana-bhakti, and a final goal when the devotee reaps the fruit of his spiritual activities. Therefore ordinary material pious activities are not equal to chanting the holy name of Lord Hari. A person who thinks ordinary material pious activities are equal to chanting the holy name of Lord Hari commits an offense to the holy name. Material pious deeds bring only very small and pathetic benefits. A person who prays that the holy name grant him these pathetic material benefits commits an offense to the holy name. And why not? Such a person thinks material pious deeds are equal to chanting the holy name. A person who knows that material pious deeds bring only small and pathetic results and who understands that the holy name of Lord Hari is perfectly spiritual has the knowledge called "abhidheya-j {.sy 241}āna (knowledge of how one makes spiritual advancement by engaging in devotional service).

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, now I understand that nothing is equal to the holy name of Lord Hari. Now please explain the ninth offense. My heart thirsts to hear of it.

Bābājī: The Vedas teach that the chanting of Lord Hari's holy name is the best of all spiritual activities. A person who has faith in unalloyed devotional service is naturally qualified to chant the holy name of Lord Hari. Persons who have no such faith are naturally averse to spiritual activities. When they hear the holy name they are not attracted to it. To teach such persons about the holy name is an offense. Chanting the holy name of Lord Hari is the best of all spiritual activities. The holy name brings auspiciousness to everyone. Therefore the teaching is that it is best to chant the holy name and allow such persons to hear the chanting. However, without first seeing that the recipient is properly qualified, one should not give initiation into the chanting of the holy name. When you become a parama-bhāgavata (great devotee of the Lord), then you will have transcendental potency. By the Lord's mercy you will have the power to give people faith in the holy name. To such persons you may teach the truth about the holy name of Lord Hari. As long as you remain a madhyama-vaiṣṇava (intermediate devotee of the Lord) you should avoid the faithless, the nondevotees, and the persons who hate the Lord.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, pushed by greed for fame and money, many spiritual masters initiate qualified persons in the chanting of Lord Hari's holy name. What is the status of these spiritual masters?

Bābājī: They are offenders to the holy name.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please be merciful and explain the tenth offense.

Bābājī: A resident of the material world who is intoxicated with the idea, "I am wealthy and glorious. I have many servants and followers", and who on some rare occasions thinks favorably about renunciation or has a glimpse of spiritual understanding, or hears the glories of the holy name from paṇḍitas, but does not earnestly love the holy name name as he should, commits an offense to the holy name. To teach these persons, the Lord says in Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka (verse 2):

nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi

durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ

"O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of name like Kṛṣṇa and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all You transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by chanting Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them."*

Bābā, avoid these ten offenses and chant Lord Hari's holy name always. Then the holy name will quickly be merciful to you, give you prema (pure love of God), and turn you into a parama-bhāgavata (a great devotee of the Lord).

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, now I see that the impersonalists, fruitive workers, and yogīs are all offenders to the holy name. When many people gather together to chant the holy name (saṅkīrtana) is it right for a pure Vaiṣṇava to join them?

Bābājī: If offenders to the holy name are prominent among the chanters, then it is not right for a true Vaiṣṇava to join them in chanting. However, if the chanters are mostly pure Vaiṣṇavas or Vaiṣṇavas whose chanting is on the level of nāmābhāsa (the reflection of the holy name), then there is no harm. In truth it is good. That chanting brings spiritual happiness. Now it is late at night. Tomorrow you will hear more about nāmābhāsa.

Their voices choked with love for the holy name, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha offered prayers to the saintly bābājī, touched the dust from his feet, and, singing the song “Hari haraye namaḥ", began walking to Bilva-puṣkariṇī.

Chapter Twenty-five
Nitya-dharma O Sambandhābhidheya-prayojana (Prameyāntar-gata Nāmāparādha-vicāra)
Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya, and Prayojana (Offenses to the Holy Name)

The next evening, at dusk, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha approach the saintly bābājī and offered dandavat obeisances to him. When it was appropriate, Vijaya-kumāra said, "O master, please be merciful and fully explain nāmābhāsa (the reflection of the holy name). We thirst to hear about the holy name." The saintly bābājī replied, "You are very fortunate. To understand the holy name you should first understand three things: 1. nāma (the pure chanting of the holy name), 2. nāmābḥasa (the reflection of the holy name), and 3. nāmāparādha (offenses to the holy name). Now I will explain about nāmābhāsa. The reflection of the holy name

is called “nāmābhāsa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What kind of reflection is it, and how many kinds of reflection are there?

Bābājī: The word "ābhāsa" has three definitions: 1. kānti (light), 2. chāyā (shadow), and 3. pratibimba (reflection). An effulgent object manifests light and also creates shadows. In this way the sun of the holy name manifests as nāma-chāyā (the shadow of the holy name) and nāma-pratibimba (the reflection of the holy name). The wise speak of "bhakty-ābhāsa" (the partial presence of devotional service), "bhāvābhāsa" (the partial presence of ecstatic love of God), "nāmābhāsa" (the partial presence of the holy name), and "vaiṣṇavābhāsa" (being a Vaiṣṇava in part). Each of these "ābhāsas" is divided into two aspects: "pratibimba" (reflection) and "chāyā" (shadow).

Vijaya-kumāra: How are bhakty-ābhāsa, bhāvābhāsa, nāmābhāsa, and vaiṣṇavābhāsa related to each other?

Bābājī: A Vaiṣṇava chants the holy name of Lord Hari. If he chants the holy name with bhakty-ābhāsa, then the holy name manifests before him as nāmābhāsa, and he himself is a Vaiṣṇavābhāsa. The words bhāva and bhakti refer to the same thing. They are called by different names because one is contracted and the other expanded. Vijaya-kumāra: In what condition of life is one a Vaiṣṇavābhāsa?

Bābājī: In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.47) it is said:

arcāyām eva haraye
pūjāṁ ya śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

"A prākṛta, or materialistic devotee does not purposefully study the śāstra and try to understand the actual standard of pure devotional service. Consequently he does not shoe proper respect to advanced devotees. He may, however, follow the regulative principles learned from his spiritual master or from his family who worships the Deity. He is to be considered on the material platform, although he is trying to advance in devotional service. Such a person is a bhakta-prāya (neophyte devotee), or bhaktābhāsa, for he is a little enlightened by Vaiṣṇava philosophy."

The word "śraddhā" (faith) in this verse means "śraddhābhāsa" (the partial presence of faith). And why not? When faith is directed to the Lord alone and not to the Lord's devotees, such faith is called chāyā (shadow) or pratibimba (reflection). That is the faith of ordinary materialistic people. It is not the spiritual faith of pure devotional service. Because a bhaktābhāsa (a person who is partially a devotee) has faith and worship that are material (prakrta) in nature, a bhaktābhāsa devotee is also called a “prakrta-bhakta" or a "Vaiṣṇavābhāsa". Lord Mahāprabhu said that Hiraṇya-Govardhana was a “Vaiṣṇava-prāya". The word "Vaiṣṇava-prāya" means "a person who, wearing beads, tilaka markings and other things, looks like a true Vaiṣṇava, although his chanting of the holy name is only nāmābhāsa". Such a person is not a true Vaiṣṇava or a "śuddha-Vaiṣṇava" (pure

Vaiṣṇava).

Vijaya-kumāra: If an impersonalist accepts the various outward markings of a Vaiṣṇava and chants the holy name, is he then a Vaiṣṇavābhāsa?

Bābājī: No. They cannot be called "Vaiṣṇavābhāsa". They are offenders. They should be called “Vaiṣṇavāparādhī" (offenders to the Vaiṣṇavas). They who take shelter of pratibimba-nāmābhāsa (the reflection of the holy name) and pratibimba-nāmābhāsa (the reflection of ecstatic love for the Lord) may be called Vaiṣṇavābhāsa. But it is not right to call the great offenders by the name "Vaiṣṇava". They should be called something else.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, please explain more clearly the nature of the pure chanting of the holy name, so we may understand it better.

Bābājī: When a person who chants the holy name is “anyābhilāṣitā-śūnya" (free of all material desires), "jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛta" (free of impersonalism and fruitive work), and "ānukūlya-bhāva" (favorable to Lord Kṛṣṇa), then his chanting is pure chanting of the holy name. here the word "anyābhilāṣa" does not refer to the desire to taste the transcendental bliss that comes when the spiritual holy name is openly manifested. "Anyābhilāṣa" here refers to the desire to attain impersonal liberation or freedom from sins as the result of one's chanting of the holy name. If these desires are present, then one's chanting of the holy name will not be pure. If one is not free from the desire to enjoy the so-called benefits obtained by jñāna (impersonal speculation) and karma (fruitive work), then his chanting of the holy name will not be pure either. If one throws far away all feelings of enmity toward the Lord, and maintains only favorable emotions directed to the Lord, then one's chanting of the holy name will be pure. In this way you can see that when one's chanting is free of nāmāparādha (offenses to the holy name) and nāmābhāsa (the partial manifestation of the holy name), then his chanting is śuddha-nāma (the pure chanting of the holy name). Lord Gauracandra, the purifier of the Kali-yuga, has described this pure chanting in the following words:

tṛṇād api su-nīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ

"One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street. One should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly."*

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, how are nāmābhāsa and nāmāparādha different?

Bābājī: Nāmābhāsa is not śuddha-nāma (the pure chanting of the holy name). In one circumstance the chanting of the holy name is called "nāmābhāsa" and in another circumstance it is called "nāmāparādha". When out of bewilderment and

foolishness one does not chant the holy name purely, his chanting is called "nāmābhāsa". On the other hand, when a rascal impersonalist who yearns to attain impersonal liberation chants the holy name, or when a hedonist who yearns after material sense pleasures chants the holy name, their impure chanting is called "nāmāparādha" (offense to the holy name). I have already described to you the ten offenses. If a sincere person out of ignorance commits these offenses, his chanting is nāmābhāsa. This should be understood: As long as one's chanting is nāmābhāsa and does not have the nature of nāmāparādha, then one may hope that one day he will rise above nāmābhāsa and attain śuddha-nāma (the pure chanting of the holy name). As long as one is in the stage of namaparadha it will not be easy for him to chant the holy name purely. I have already explained how one becomes free from nāmāparādha (offenses to the holy name). Aside from that, there is no other method by which one can attain auspiciousness.

Vijaya-kumāra: What should a person whose chanting is nāmābhāsa do to turn his nāmābhāsa chanting into śuddha-nāma (the pure chanting of the holy name)?

Bābājī: By associating with pure devotees one quickly becomes attracted to pure devotional service. When the holy name dances on the tongue of such a person, that chanting is śuddha-nāma (pure chanting of the holy name). However, such a person must scrupulously avoid the association of persons whose chanting is nāmāparādha. And why not? If he associates with them, he will not be able to chant the holy name purely. Association with saintly devotees is the only way for the individual soul to attain auspiciousness. For this reason Lord Gauracandra, who is the master of our lives, taught Sanātana Gosvāmī that association with saintly devotees is the root from which devotional service grows. When one associates with saintly devotees and avoids the association of nondevotees and women, he will be able to chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa properly.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, does this mean that if a man does not renounce the association of his wife he will not be able to chant the holy name purely?

Bābājī: One should renounce association with women. When a householder Vaiṣṇava associates with his wife and he lives Vaiṣṇava household life in an unattached way, that is not what is meant here by "association with women". When am man has a material attachment to a woman or a woman has a material attachment to a man, that is what is meant here by “association with women". A householder may remain in family life, and if he is free from material attachment he can chant Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name purely and he can attain the final goal of life.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what are the different kinds of nāmābhāsa?

Bābājī: In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.2.14) it is said:

saṅketyaṁ parihāsyaṁ vā
stobhaṁ helanam eva vā
vaikuṇṭha-nāma-grahaṇam
aśeṣāgha-haraṁ viduḥ

"One who chants the holy name of the Lord is immediately freed from the reactions of unlimited sins, even if he chants indirectly (to indicate something else), jokingly, for musical entertainment, or even neglectfully. This is accepted by

all the learned scholars of the scriptures."*

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what does it mean to "chant indirectly" (saṅketya)?

Bābājī: At the moment of his death Ajāmila called for his son, who was named Nārāyaṇa. By thus speaking the word “Nārāyaṇa", which is a name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, Ajāmila attained the benefit brought by chanting the Lord's name indirectly. The mlecchas use the words "Hārāma! Hārāma!", which mean "Pig!", to show their horror and contempt. However, these words mean "Hā Rāma!" (O Lord Rāma!). By chanting the Lord's holy name in this indirect way, the mlecchas become free from Yamarāja's grip. Nāmābhāsa (the glimpse of the holy name) brings liberation. That is the conclusion of all the scriptures. The holy names of Lord Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa) are not different from the Lord Himself. Therefore a person who says the word "Mukunda" touches Lord Mukunda directly. In this way he easily attains liberation. By following the path of impersonal speculation one attains liberation only after much difficulty. But by nāmābhāsa (the glimpse of the holy name) everyone attains liberation very easily.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, many arrogant impersonalist scholars, mlecchas completely ignorant of the truth, and demons who stand opposed to all spiritual goals attained liberation by jokingly (parihāsya) chanting the holy name. This I have read in many places in the scriptures. Please describe this joking chanting of the holy name.

Bābājī: When a person disrespectfully chants the holy name that is called "stobha". As a Vaiṣṇava chants the holy name aloud, a blasphemer may approach and say, “Hey, your `Hari Keṣṭa' will bring everything to you!" By thus chanting the holy name, even disrespectfully, the blasphemer will eventually attain liberation. That is the power of the holy name.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is chanting the holy name neglectfully (helana)?

Bābājī: That is chanting the holy name without honoring it. In the Prabhāsa-khaṇḍa it is said:

madhura-madhuram etan maṅgalaṁ maṅgalānāṁ
sakala-nigama-vallī-sat-phalaṁ cit-svarūpam
sakṛd api parigītaṁ śraddhayā helayā vā
bhṛgu-vara nara-mātraṁ tārayet kṛṣṇa-nāma

"Kṛṣṇa's name is the sweetest of sweet things, the most auspicious of auspicious things, the transcendental fruit of the vine of all Vedic literature. O best of the Bhṛgus, chanted even once, either with faith or contempt, it delivers the chanter."

In this verse the word "śraddhayā" means “with respect" and "helayā" means "without respect". The words "nara-mātraṁ tārayet" mean that the holy name delivers even the yavanas.

Vijaya-kumāra: Is it not an offense to chant the holy name without showing respect?

Bābājī: If it is done because of a demonic nature it is an offense. But if it is done

only because of ignorance, it is nāmābhāsa (a glimpse of the holy name).

Vijaya-kumāra: Please explain what benefit nāmābhāsa brings and what benefit it does not bring?

Bābājī: Sense pleasures (bhukti), liberation (mukti), and the eighteen yogic perfections are included among the benefits nāmābhāsa brings. However, pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-prema), which is the highest goal of life, is not granted by nāmābhāsa. If a person whose chanting is on the level of nāmābhāsa associates with a pure devotee (śuddha-bhakta), then the chanter can come to the level of a madhyama-Vaiṣṇava (intermediate devotee). From that status he can become further elevated, attain pure devotion, chant the holy name purely, and finally attain pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-prema).

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, in this world there are many devotees who are on the platform of Vaiṣṇavābhāsa. They have the outward marks of a Vaiṣṇava and they diligently chant the holy name although their chanting on the level of nāmābhāsa. Even though they chant, after many days they still do not attain pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-prema). Why is that>

Bābājī: The reason is confidential. It is this: Persons on the level of bhakty-ābhāsa (a glimpse of devotional service) are certainly eligible eventually to attain pure devotional service. However, if such persons mistakenly think impure persons, persons who do not have unalloyed devotion to the Lord, to be great saints, and if by this bad association they eventually associate with impersonalists and other offenders, by that bad association they also become offenders to the pure Vaiṣṇavas. In this way their path of gradual spiritual advancement becomes checked. Thus by bad association they come to accept the doctrines of the impersonalists or other offenders. In this way they wander far away from pure devotional service and eventually they become offenders. However, if, because of past pious deeds they are able to shun bad association and remain in the association of good devotees, then they eventually will become pure Vaiṣṇavas.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what result is obtained by nāmāparādha (offenses to the holy name)?

Bābājī: Even if they were multiplied millions of times, the five sins would not equal an offense to the holy name. You can very easily see the result reaped by offending the holy name.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, a person who offends the holy name certainly reaps an inauspicious result. Still, does he not also obtain a good result because he has spoken the syllables of the holy name?

Bābājī: The holy name fulfills the chanter's desires, whatever they are. However, to the offensive chanter the holy name will not give pure love for Lord Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-prema). Eventually the offensive chanter must taste the result of his offenses. However, a person who, although he commits offenses to the holy name, regularly chants the holy name will attain the result of his chanting. After some time his chanting will become a great transcendental pious deed. As that transcendental pious deed grows greater and greater, he will attain the association of saintly devotees who devotedly chant the holy name in a pure way. Thus by always chanting the holy name, the offender eventually becomes free of his offenses to the holy name. By following this path even impersonalists gradually become sincere devotees of Lord Hari.

Vijaya-kumāra: By chanting the holy name only once a person is freed from all

sins. Why, then, should one chant the holy name always?

Bābājī: Offenders to the holy name have hearts and activities that are always impure. They are naturally averse to the Lord. They are never attracted to saintly persons, holy objects, or holy times. They are naturally attracted to evil persons, evil theories, and evil deeds. However, constant chanting of the holy name turns them away from evil persons and evil deeds. Free from bad association, they come to chant the holy name purely. The holy name then gives them the strength to proceed on the spiritual path.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, from your saintly mouth flows a nectar stream of the descriptions of the holy name, a stream that flows through the cave of our ears and into our hearts. Drinking from this stream makes us intoxicated with the nectar of love for the holy name. Now we understand the difference between nāma (the pure chanting of the holy name), nāmābhāsa (a glimpse of the holy name), and nāmāparādha (offensive chanting of the holy name). Now our lives are a success. Please tell us the conclusion of all this. We yearn to hear it.

Bābājī: In Jagadānanda Paṇḍita's *Prema-vivarta* the conclusion is eloquently taught. Please listen to it.

asādhu-saṅge bhāi kṛṣṇa-nāma nāhi hoy
nāmākṣara bahirāya baṭe tabu nāma kabhu noy

"O brother, the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa does not come from a person who associates with nondevotees. The syllables of the holy name may come from him, but the true holy name does not.

kabhu nāmābhāsa hoy sadā nāma-aparādh
e saba jānibe bhāi kṛṣṇa-bhaktir bādh

"Sometimes a glimpse of the holy name (nāmābhāsa_ comes from him. Always offenses to the holy name (nāmāparādha) come from him. O my brother, please know that these are all obstacles to the path of devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

jadi karibe kṛṣṇa-nāma sādhu-saṅga kor
bhukti-mukti-siddhi-bānchā dūre parihor

"If you wish truly to chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, then stay in the association of devotees and keep far away from the desire for sense gratification, impersonal liberation, and yoga-siddhis.

daśa aparādha tyaja māna-apamān
anāsaktye biṣaya bhuñja āra laha kṛṣṇa-nām

"Avoid the ten offenses, remain aloof from praise and blame, perform your duties, and chant the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

kṛṣṇa-bhaktir anukūla saba karaha swīkār
kṛṣṇa-bhaktir pratikūla saba koro parihār

"Always accept what is favorable to Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotional service, and always reject what is not favorable to Lord Kṛṣṇa's devotional service.

jñāna-joga-ceṣṭā chāḍa āra karma-saṅg
markaṭa-bairāgya tyaja jāte deha-raṅg

"Avoid impersonal speculation, yoga, and fruitive work. Avoid the pretended renunciation practiced by persons who are like monkeys. That so-called renunciation is only a funny comedy played on the stage of the material body.

kṛṣṇa āmār pāle rakṣe jāna sarba-kāl
ātma-nibedana-dainye ghucāo janjāl

"Always think, `Kṛṣṇa is my protector'. By humbly surrendering to Him you will be free of troubles.

sādhu pāoya kaṣṭa baḍa jībera jāniyā
sādhu-bhakta-rūpe kṛṣṇa āila nadīyā

"It is very difficult for a conditioned soul to meet a great saint. That is why Lord Kṛṣṇa came, in the form of a great devotee, to the land of Nadīyā.

gorā-pada āśraya karaha buddhimān
gorā bai sādhu-guru kebā āche ān

"If you are wise, you will take shelter of Lord Gaura's feet. Where is there a saintly guru like Lord Gaura?

bairāgī bhāi grāmya-kathā na śunibe kāṇe

grāmya-bārttā na kahibe jabe milibe āne

"O sannyāsī brother, don't talk or hear gossip when you meet with others.

swapane o nā koro bhāi strī sambhāṣaṇ
grhe strī chāḍiyā bhāi aśiyācha ban

"O my sannyāsī brother, even dreams do not talk to women. O my brother, please remember that he have left your wife at home, and now you live in the forest.

jadi cāha praṇaya rakhite gaurāṅgera sane
choṭa haridāsera kathā thake jena mane

"If you wish to keep Lord Gaurāṅga's love, then please keep in your mind the story of Choṭa Haridāsa.

bhāla na khāibe āra bhāla na paribe
hṛdayete rādhā-kṛṣṇa sarbada sebibe

"Don't eat opulent food. Don't wear opulent clothing. In your heart always worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

baḍa haridāser nyāya kṛṣṇa-nāma bolibe badane
aṣṭa-kāla rādhā-kṛṣṇa sebibe kuñja-bane

"Like Haridāsa Ṭhākura, always chant the name of Lord Kṛṣṇa. At every moment of the eight parts of the day worship Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the groves of Vṛndāvana forest.

gṛhastha vairāgī duṅhe bole gorā-rāy
dekha bhāi nāma binā jena dina nāhi jāy

"To both householder and sannyāsī, Lord Gaura Rāya says, `My brother, do not pass your days without chanting the holy name.'

bahu-aṅga sādhane bhāi nāhi prayojan
kṛṣṇa-nāmāśraye śuddha karaha jīban

"O my brother, there is no need to perform a great variety of many different devotional activities. You need only purely take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name. Pass your life in that way.

baddha-jībe kṛpā kori kṛṣṇa haila nām
kali-jībe dayā kori' kṛṣṇa haila gaura-dhām

"Merciful to the conditioned souls, Lord Kṛṣṇa has descended as His holy name. Merciful to the people in Kali-yuga, Lord Kṛṣṇa has descended as fair-complexioned Lord Gaura.

ekānta sarala-bhābe bhaja gaura-jan
tabe ta' pāibe bhāi śrī-kṛṣṇa-caraṇ

"Sincerely worship Lord Gaura's devotees. O my brother, that is the way to attain Lord Kṛṣṇa's feet.

gaura-jana saṅga koro gaurāṅga boliyā
hare-kṛṣṇa nāma bolo nāciyā nāciyā

"In the company of Lord Gaura's devotees, chant the names of Lord Gaura, chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, and dance again and again.

acire pāibe bhāi nāma-prema-dhan
jaha bilāite prabhur nade' e āgaman

"O my brother, in this way you will quickly attain the wealth of love for the holy name, a wealth that our Lord personally came to Nadīyā to deliver."

Hearing Śrī Jagadānanda Paṇḍita's Prema-vivarta from the mouth of the elderly saintly bābājī, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha were overcome with spiritual love. For some moments the saintly bābājī fell unconscious. Then, placing his arms around Vijaya-kumāra's and Vrajanātha's necks, he began to sing:

kṛṣṇa-nāma dhare kata bal

"How powerful is the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa!

biṣaya-bāsanānale mora citta sadā jwale
rabi-tapta maru-bhūmi-sam
karṇa-randhra patha diyā hṛdi majjhe prabeśiyā
bariśaya sudhā anupam

"Ablaze with material desires, my heart has become like a desert scorched by the sun. But now something walks on the pathway of my ears. Now it enters my heart. It is like a peerless shower of nectar.

hṛdaya haite bole jihwāra agrete cale
śabda-rūpe nāce anukṣaṇ
kaṇṭhe mora bhaṅge swara aṅga kāmpe khara-khara
sthira haite na pāre caraṇ

"That shower of nectar has now left my heart. Now it walks on my tongue. Assuming the form of a sound, it dances again and again. My voice is choked. My limbs tremble. My feet cannot stay still.

cakṣe dhārā dehe gharma pulakita saba carma
bibarṇa haila kalebar
mūrchita haila man pralayer āgaman
bhābe sarba dehe jara-jar

"A torrential stream flows from my eyes. My body is covered with perspiration. The hairs of my body stand erect. I fall unconscious. I think the end of the world has come. My entire body is filled with ecstatic love.

kari' eta upadrab citte barṣe sudhā-drab
more ḍāre premera sāgare
kichu na bujhite dil more ta' bātula kail
more citta-vitta saba hare

"It greatly troubles me. It showers my heart with nectar. It plunges me into an ocean of love. Now I do not understand anything. It has made me a madman. It has robbed all the wealth I keep in my heart.

lainu āśroy jā'ra hena byabahāra tā'ra
barṇite na pāri e sakal
kṛṣṇa-nāma icchāmoy jāhe jāhe sukhī hoy
sei mora sukhera sambal

"I take shelter of Him, and this is the way He acts. I cannot tell it all. The holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is independent. He acts as He likes. If He wishes, He makes me happy. He is the wealth of my happiness.

premera kalikā nām adbhuta rasera dhām
hena bala karaye prakāś
īṣat bikaśi' pun dekhāya nija-rūpa-guṇ
citta hari' laya kṛṣṇa-pāś

"The holy name is the budding flower of love. It is the resting place of wonderful nectar. It shows so much power. The budding flower begins to open. It shows a little of its beauty and virtue. Binding me with the ropes of Kṛṣṇa, it steals my heart.

pūrṇa bikaśita hañā braje more jaya lañā
dekhāya more swarūpa-bilās
more siddha-deha diyā kṛṣṇa-pāśe rākhe giyā
e dehera kare sarba-nāś

"When it opens fully, that flower carries me to Vraja. It shows me its own form and pastimes. It gives me a perfect spiritual body. It places me by Kṛṣṇa's side. It completely destroys my material body.

kṛṣṇa-nāma cintāmaṇi akhila rasera khani
nitya-mukta śuddha-rasa-moy
nāmera bālāi jata saba la'ye iha hata

tabe mora sukhera udoy

"The holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa is a cintāmaṇi jewel. It is the spring from which all nectar flows. It is eternally liberated. It is pure and sweet. If I can die plagued by the troubles brought by the holy name, then I will be happy."

Again and again he sang the glories of the holy name. In this way half the night passed. Then he stopped. Taking permission from their spiritual master, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha, now plunged in the nectar of the holy name, returned to their own place.

Chapter Twenty-six
Rasa-vicāra Arambha
The Discussion of Rasa Begins

Vijaya-kumāra did not come for almost a month. Knowing the desire of Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra, Vrajanātha's grandmother arranged, with the help of a matchmaker, for a suitable bride. Hearing this news, Vijaya-kumāra sent his brother to Bilva-puṣkariṇī to perform his nephew's auspicious wedding ceremony. the auspicious day of the auspicious ceremony came. Hearing all about the wedding, one day Vijaya-kumāra came there. His heart was restless for spiritual advancement. He would not talk of material things. Vrajanātha said to him, "Uncle, why is your heart not peaceful today? tell me confidentially. By your order I now wear the shackles of household life. Please tell me what you are thinking about your own self." Vijaya-kumāra replied, "Bābā, I have decided that at least once I should see Jagannātha Purī. In a few days I will leave with a group of pilgrims for Jagannātha Purī. Come, let us go to our spiritual master and I will ask his permission. After lunch, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra went to Śrī Māyāpura, told everything to saintly Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī, and asked his permission to go on pilgrimage to Jagannātha Purī. With great happiness the saintly bābājī said that nowadays in Jagannātha Purī, at Jagannātha Miśra's home, where Lord Mahāprabhu stayed, resides Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita's disciple Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī, whose saintly feet Vijaya-kumāra should see, and whose teachings he should devotedly hear, and around whose neck now rest the teachings of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī. When Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra returned, Vrajanātha declared that he also wished to go to Jagannātha Puri. Vijaya-kumāra was very glad to hear this. When they both explained all this, it was finally decided that Vrajanātha's grandmother would accompany them.

The month of Jyaiṣṭha (May-June) had not yet come when the pilgrims left their homes and entered the path to Jagannātha Purī. Walking and walking, after some days they came to Dāntana and then Jaleśvara. Eventually they saw the Deity

Śrī Kṣīracora Gopinātha. Then they came to Śrī Virajā-kṣetra, After performing the nābhigayā-kriyā ritual, they bathed in the Vaitaraṇī River, and then went to Cuttack, where they saw the Deity of Śrī Gopāla. Then they saw a Deity of Lord Śiva in a mango grove. Finally they came to Jagannātha Purī. There the paṇḍitas arranged lodgings for each of the pilgrims. Vijaya-kumāra, Vrajanātha, and Vrajanātha's grandmother all stayed at the home of Haracaṇḍī-sāhi. They circumambulated the holy place, bathed in the sea, saw the five famous holy places, and honored the prasādam foods offered to the Lord. Three or four days passed in this way. Then, in the temple Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha saw a picture of Lord Mahāprabhu as well as His footprints and fingerprints. Overcome with love, that very day they went to the home of Kāśī Miśra. In Kaśī Miśra's home they saw the stone Gambhīra room and they also saw Lord Mahāprabhu's sandals and other things. On one side was the temple of Śrī Rādhā-kānta, and on the other side was the room of Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī. Their voices choked with the happiness of spiritual love, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha feel, before Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī's feet. Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī mercifully glanced at them, embraced them, and asked, "Who are you?" When Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha told about themselves, tears flowed from the eyes of Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī. When he heard the word “Śrī Navadvīpa", he said, "I am fortunate, for today I have seen two residents of the holy abode. Please tell me: How are Raghunātha dasa and Gauracanda dasa and the other Vaiṣṇavas in Śrī Māyāpura these days? Ah! Whenever i think of Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī I also remember my śikṣā-guru, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī. Then Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī called for his disciple Śrī Dhyānacandra and said to him, "These two great souls should be given prasādam." Going to Dhyānacandra's room, Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra honored maha-prasadam. After honoring mahā-prasādam, the three devotees talked about many things. Learning that Vijaya-kumāra was a scholar of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam and Vrajanātha was a scholar of many scriptures, Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī became very happy. He approached Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī and told him all about it. Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī mercifully said, "These two persons are the great treasure of my heart. Please bring them to see me every day that they stay in Jagannātha Purī. At that time Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha said, "O master, Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī Mahāśaya of Śrī Māyāpura has been very merciful to us. He ordered us to take instruction at your feet." Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī said, “Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī is very learned. You should carefully follow whatever advice he gives. If you wish to study something he has not yet taught you, then you may come tomorrow at midday, honor the Lord's lunch prasādam, and then ask questions. After accepting Gopāla-guru's invitation, the two devotees returned to Haracaṇḍī-sāhi's home.

The next day, at the appointed time, the two devotees went to the temple of Śrī Rādhā-kānta, honored prasādam, and then placed some questions before Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī's feet. They said, "O master, we wish to understand the transcendental rasas (relationships with Lord Kṛṣṇa). By hearing the description of the rasas of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa from your holy mouth our lives will become successful. You are the foremost spiritual master of Lord Nimāi Paṇḍita's sampradāya. You stay in Lord Mahāprabhu's home, and you have accepted the seat given by Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī. You are the spiritual master of the entire world. When we hear from your mouth about the transcendental rasas, whatever

little we have learned about the transcendental science will finally bear its proper fruit. Taking these two disciples to a secluded place, he happily said, “May Nimāi Paṇḍita, who is the son of Śrī Śacī-devī, and who, descending to this world in the land of Śrī Māyāpura, mercifully delivered the people of Bengal and Orissa, grant transcendental bliss to us. may Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, who pleased Lord Mahāprabhu by describing to Him the sweet mellows of madhura-rasa, appear in our hearts. May Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, whose dancing made Nimāi Paṇḍita into his submissive servant, and who purified Devānanda Paṇḍita, grant auspiciousness to you.

"The rasas cannot be compared to anything else. When the moon of the Supreme Lord's transcendental pastimes directly rises, then the activities of pure devotional service become “bhakti-rasa" (the mellows of devotional service).

Vrajanātha: What pious deeds must one have performed in the past in order that one may attain rasa?

Gosvāmī: I cannot answer this question with only a brief explanation. I will explain elaborately. Then you will understand. From your spiritual master you have heard about "kṛṣṇa-rati" (attachment to Kṛṣṇa), which is also called "sthayī-bhāva" (steady ecstasy). When that ecstatic love increases, it becomes kṛṣṇa-bhakti-rasa (the mellows of devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa).

Vrajanātha: Please describe "sthāyī-bhāva" (steady ecstasy) and "sāmagrī" (the ingredients of rasa). In have already heard my spiritual master explain what is “bhāva". I did not hear from him how these things combine to become "rasa".

Gosvāmī: Generally, bhāva-bhakti (ecstatic devotional service) and kṛṣṇa-rati (attraction to Lord Kṛṣṇa) appear because of transcendental pious deeds performed in this life or a previous life. In this way one attains a condition of life that is filled with bliss. There are four kinds of sāmagrīs (ingredients of rasa). They are: 1. vibhāva (special symptoms or causes of ecstasy), 2. anubhāva (subsequent ecstasy), 3. sāttvika-bhāva (constitutional or existential ecstasy), and 4. vyabhicāri-bhāva (aggressive ecstasy) or sañcāri-bhāva (continuously existing ecstatic symptoms). Let me begin by explaining these different sāmagrīs (ingredients of rasa). Vibhāva, which causes one to taste the sweetness of attraction to Kṛṣṇa, is of two kinds: 1. ālambana (basic), and 2. uddīpana (impelling). Alambana is itself of two kinds: 1. viṣaya (the object of love), and 2. āśraya (the reservoir of love). The object of love is the viṣaya-ālambana, and the person who possesses the love is the āśraya-ālambana. Thus the person who is the object of attachment or love is the rati-viṣaya, and the person who is attached or who loves is the rati-āśraya. Thus a devotee who in his heart loves Lord Kṛṣṇa is the rati-āśraya, and Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the object of His devotee's love, is the rati-viṣaya.

Vrajanātha: I have understood that vibhāva is divided into ālambana and uddīpana. Further, ālambana is of two kinds: viṣaya and āśraya. Lord Kṛṣṇa is the viṣaya and the devotee is the āśraya. This I desire to know: Is there any situation where Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself is the rati-āśraya (a person who loves someone).

Gosvāmī: Yes. When Lord Kṛṣṇa loves His devotee, then Kṛṣṇa is the rati-āśraya and the devotee is the rati-viṣaya.

Vrajanātha: From my spiritual master I have heard the description of Lord Kṛṣṇa's sixty-four qualities. Please tell me what more may be said about Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Gosvāmī: Lord Kṛṣṇa is perfect and complete. he has all transcendental qualities and virtues. When He is in Dvaraka He is perfect. When He is in Mathurā He is more perfect. When He is in Gokula He is most perfect. His transcendental qualities are manifested in this way in different degrees. In His different pastimes Lord Kṛṣṇa appears as "dhīrodātta", “dhīra-lalita", "dhīra-praśānta", and “dhīroddhata". In these four ways Lord Kṛṣṇa is a hero.

Vrajanātha: What is "dhīrodātta"?

Gosvāmī: As a dhīrodātta hero Lord Kṛṣṇa is very grave, gentle, forgiving, merciful, humble, and virtuous in many ways.

Vrajanātha: What is "dhīra-lalita"?

Gosvāmī: As a dhīra-lalita hero Lord Kṛṣṇa is naturally very finny, always in full youthfulness, expert in joking, free from all anxieties, and domesticated and very submissive to His lovers.

Vrajanātha: What is "dhīra-praśānta"?

Gosvāmī: As a dhīra-praśānta hero Lord Kṛṣṇa is very peaceful, forbearing, considerate, and obliging.

Vrajanātha: What is "dhīroddhata"?

Gosvāmī: As a dhīroddhata hero Lord Kṛṣṇa is very envious, proud, easily angered, restless, and complacent.

Vrajanātha: Many of these qualities you have described contradict each other. How is that possible?

Gosvāmī: Lord Kṛṣṇa possesses all powers and opulences without any limit. therefore, by His inconceivable potencies, it is entirely possible that He possess many mutually contradictory qualities. This is described in the following words of the Kūrma Purāṇa:

asthūlaś cānaṇuś caiva
sthūlo 'ṇuś caiva sarvataḥ
avarṇaḥ sarvataḥ proktaṁ
śyāmo raktānta-locanaḥ

"He is not great and He is not small. He is the greatest and He is the smallest. He has no color. His color is dark and the corners of His eyes are red.

aiśvarya-yogād bhagavān
viruddhārtho 'bhidhīyate
tathāpi doṣā parame
naivāhāryāḥ kathañcana
guṇāviruddhā apy ete
samāhāryāḥ samantataḥ

"Because He has all powers and opulences, the Supreme Personality of Godhead possesses contradictory qualities. Even so, there is no fault in this. His contradictory qualities are glorious."

In the Mahā-Varāha Purāṇa it is said:

sarve nityāḥ śāśvatāś ca
dehās tasya paramātmanaḥ
hānopadāna-rahitāḥ
naiva prakṛti-jāḥ kvacit

"All the forms of the Supreme Personality of Godhead are eternal and everlasting. Nothing can be given to improve them, for they are perfect. Nothing can be taken from them. They are not material.

paramānanda-sandohā
jñāna-mātrāś ca sarvataḥ
sarve sarva-guṇaiḥ pūrṇāḥ
sarva-doṣa-vivarjitāḥ

"They are full of transcendental bliss and knowledge. They are filled with all virtues and free from all faults."

In the Vaiṣṇava Tantra it is said:

aṣṭādaśa-mahā-doṣaiḥ
rahitā bhagavat-tanuḥ
sarvaiśvaryamayī satya-
vijñānānanda-rūpiṇī

"The form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is eternal, full of knowledge, bliss, power, and opulence, and free of the eighteen faults."

The eighteen great faults are described in these words of the Vaiṣṇava-yamala:

mohas tandrā bhramo rukṣa-
rasatā kāma ulbaṇaḥ
lolatā mada-mātsarye
hiṁsā kheda-pariśramau

asatyaṁ krodha ākaṅkṣā
āśaṅkā viśva-vibhramaḥ
viṣamatvam parāpekṣā
doṣā aṣṭādaśāditā

"The eighteen faults are: illusion, fatigue, errors, roughness, material lust, restlessness, pride, envy, violence, disgrace, exhaustion, untruth, anger, hankering, dependence, desire to lord over the universe, seeing duality, and cheating."*

The forms of the Lord's incarnations are all perfect. The form of Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the source of all incarnations is supremely perfect. Aside from what has already been said, Lord Kṛṣṇa possesses the eight qualities of a great personality: 1. decorated, 2. enjoying, 3. pleasing, 4. dependable, 5.steady, 6. predominating, 7. a meticulous dresser, and 8. a magnanimous personality. It is said that a person is great if he is decorated with the qualities of being very merciful toward the unfortunate, very powerful, superior, chivalrous, enthusiastic, expert, and truthful. When a person is always happy and is accustomed to speak smilingly, he is considered to be in the mode of enjoyment. When one's characteristics are very sweet and desirable, his personality is called pleasing. Any person who is reliable in all circumstances is called dependable. A person who is not disturbed even in a situation of reverses is called steady. A person who can affect the mind of everyone is called predominating. A person who is fond of dressing himself is called lalita, or a meticulous dresser. Persons who can give themselves to anyone are called magnanimous. Although Kṛṣṇa is independent of everyone, out of His causeless mercy He is dependent upon Garga Ṛṣi for religious instruction, for learning the military art He is dependent upon Sātyaki, and for good counsel He is dependent upon His friend Uddhava.*

Vrajanātha: Now I have learned how Lord Kṛṣṇa is the hero of rasas. Now please describe the devotees who are qualified fro the rasas and who have attained vibhāva.

Gosvāmī: A person who in his heart has ecstatic love (bhāva) for Lord Kṛṣṇa is considered a devotee situated in the rasas. The 26 qualities of Lord Kṛṣṇa that begin with truthfulness and end with shyness are all present in the devotees of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajanātha: What are the different kinds of devotees qualified to participate in the rasas?

Gosvāmī: The devotees of Kṛṣṇa can be classified into two groups: 1. sādhaka (those who are cultivating devotional service in order to enter into the transcendental kingdom), and 2. siddha (those who are already in the perfectional stage of devotional service).

Vrajanātha: Who are the sādhakas?

Gosvāmī: A person who has attained the stage of attraction for Kṛṣṇa and who is not freed from the material impasse, but who has qualified himself to enter into the kingdom of God is called sādhaka. Sādhaka means one who is cultivating devotion in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The description of such a devotee is found in the Eleventh Canto, Second Chapter, verse 46, of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.*

Vrajanātha: O master, are not the devotees described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.2.47 also qualified for the rasas?

Gosvāmī: If one has not obtained the mercy of a pure devotee and become a pure devotee himself, then he cannot be considered a sādhaka. An example of a

sādhaka cultivating devotional service is Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura.

Vrajanātha: Who are the siddha devotees?

Gosvāmī: When a devotee is never tired of executing devotional service and is always engaged in Kṛṣṇa conscious activities, constantly relishing the transcendental mellows in relationship with Kṛṣṇa, he is called perfect (siddha). There are two kinds of perfect devotees: 1. they who attained perfection (asmprāpta-siddha), and 2. they who were always perfect (nitya-siddha).

Vrajanātha: Who are the samprāpta-siddha devotees?

Gosvāmī: The perfectional stage can be achieved (samprāpta-siddha) in two ways: one may achieve this stage of perfection by gradual progress in devotional service (sādhana-siddha), or one may become perfect by the causeless mercy of Kṛṣṇa, even though he has not executed all the details of devotional service (kṛpā-siddha).*

Vrajanātha: Who are the nitya-siddha devotees?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī writes (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.290):

ātma-koṭi-guṇaṁ kṛṣṇe
pramāṇaṁ paramaṁ gatāḥ
nityānanda-guṇāḥ sarve
nitya-siddhā mukunda-vat

"Persons who have achieved eternal, blissful life exactly on the level of Śrī Kṛṣṇa and who are able to attract Lord Kṛṣṇa by their transcendental loving service, and who love Lord Kṛṣṇa millions of times more than they love themselves, are called eternally perfect (nitya-siddha)."

In the Padma Purāṇa, Uttara-khaṇḍa it is said:

yathā saumitra-bharatau
yathā saṅkarṣaṇādayaḥ
tathā tenaiva jāyante
nija-lokād yadṛcchayā

punas tenaiva gacchanti
tat padaṁ śāśvataṁ param
na karma-bandhanaṁ janma
vaiṣṇavānāṁ ca vidyate

"Just as Lord Rāmacandra descends along with Lakṣmaṇa (and incarnation of Saṅkarṣaṇa) and Bharata (an expansion of Pradyumna), so the members of the Yadu dynasty and the cowherd men of Vṛndāvana also descend with Lord Kṛṣṇa in order to join in the transcendental pastimes of the Lord. When the Supreme Lord returns to His eternal abode, His associates return with Him to their respective places. As such, these ever-liberated Vaiṣṇavas are not bound by the material laws

of birth and death."*

Vrajanātha: O master, now I can understand the ālambana part of vibhāva. Please explain the uddīpana part.

Gosvāmī: Some things that give impetus (uddīpana) or stimulation to ecstatic love of Kṛṣṇa are His transcendental qualities, His uncommon activities, His smiling features, Hi apparel and garlands, His flute, His buffalo-horn, His leg-bells, His conchshell, His footprints, His places of pastimes (such as Vrndavana), His favorite plant (tulasī), His devotee, and the periodical occasions for remembering Him. One such occasion for remembrance is ekādaśī.*

Vrajanātha: As far as Kṛṣṇa's transcendental qualities are concerned, they can be divided into three groups: qualities pertaining to His transcendental body, qualities pertaining to His transcendental speech, and qualities pertaining to His transcendental mind. Kṛṣṇa's age is considered in three periods: kaumāra, pauganḍa, and kaiśora. These are described in the following words (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.1.309):

kaumāraṁ pañcamābdāntaṁ
pauganḍaṁ daśamāvadhi
āṣoḍaśāc ca kaiśoraṁ
yauvanaṁ syāt tathā param

"Kṛṣṇa's age is considered in three periods: from His appearance day to the end of His fifth year is called kaumāra, from the beginning of the sixth year up to the end of the tenth year is called pauganḍa, and from the eleventh to the end of the fifteenth year is called kaiśora. After the beginning of the sixteenth year, Kṛṣṇa is called yauvana, or a youth, and this continues with no change."*

Kṛṣṇa's kaiśora age may be divided in three parts. Among His many transcendental qualities manifested in this age, His handsomeness is very prominent. Lord Kṛṣṇa's limbs are graceful and appropriately shaped. This feature is called is called "saundarya" (handsomeness). Lord Kṛṣṇa's is dressed in exquisite garments, and decorated with ornaments, and His hair is also decorated. All this is called “prasādhana" (decoration).

There are three kinds of flutes used by Kṛṣṇa. One is called veṇu, one is called muralī, and the third is called vaṁśī. Veṇu is very small, not more than six inches long, with six holes for whistling. Muralī is about eighteen inches long with a hole at the end and four holes on the body of the flute. This kind of flute produces a very enchanting sound. The vaṁśī flute is about fifteen inches long, with nine holes on its body.* The right-turning conchshell Kṛṣṇa holds in His hand is called “Pañcajanya". All these uddīpana's increases the devotees attraction and love for Kṛṣṇa and fill the devotee with bliss. The result is that rati (attraction) and sthāyi-bhāva (continuous ecstasy) turn into rasa (the transcendental mellows of a personal relationship with Kṛṣṇa). Come again tomorrow and I will describe anubhāva and other things.

The two devotees then took their leave of the Gosvāmī's feet. Again and again thinking about the rasas, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha happily saw the siddha-bakula tree and other holy places in Lord Jagannātha's temple. Finally they returned to their lodgings.

Chapter Twenty-seven
Rasa-vicāra
The Rasas

After the next day's noon-ārati, the two devotees thirsting to understand about rasa honored prasādam and then went to the Śrī Rādhā-kānta temple. Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī honored mahā-prasādam and waited for the two inquisitive devotees. Nearby Śrī Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī was writing a book about the path of devotional service. The features of Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī were very wonderful. He was dressed as a sannyāsī. He wore Vaiṣṇava tilaka. The holy name of Lord Hari was written on the various limbs of His body. On his neck were four strands of tulasī beads. His hands were always on His japa beads. he was rapt in meditation, his two eyes half closed. From time to time he was decorated with a stream of tears. From time to time he would call out, “O Gaurāṅga! O Nityānanda!" His body was a little large. His complexion was dark and splendid. He sat on a banana-bark seat. At a little distance were wooden sandals and a coconut-shell pitcher of water. Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha were both learned in many scriptures, were sincere Vaiṣṇavas and were residents of Śrī Navadvīpa. For these three reasons everyone at the temple carefully honored them. Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha offered dandavat obeisances to Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī, and he respectfully embraced them. In the course of time Vrajanātha humbly introduced the topic of rasas. The Gosvāmī carefully said, "Today I will teach you about anubhāva and other topics related to the rasas. The four sāmagrīs (ingredients of rasa) are vibhāva (special symptoms or causes of ecstasy), anubhāva (subsequent ecstasy), sāttvika-bhāva (constitutional or existential ecstasy), and vyabhicāri-bhāva (aggressive ecstasy). Yesterday I explained about vibhāva. Today I will begin the explanation of anubhāva. Please listen. When one is attracted (rati) to Kṛṣṇa, that is called vibhāva. When, as a result of that attraction, ecstatic love (bhāva) appears in the heart, the result is called “udbhāsvara". The bodily symptoms manifested by a devotee in expressing that ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa are called anubhāva. Practical examples of anubhāva are as follows: dancing, rolling on the ground, singing very loudly, stretching the body, crying loudly, yawning, breathing very heavily, neglecting the presence of others, drooling, laughing like a madman, wheeling the head, and belching.

Vrajanātha: How is it possible that these unusual external symptoms can increase the sweet taste of the rasas of sthāyī-bhāva? When the devotee relishes the rasas in his heart, that taste is manifested externally as these anubhāvas. Why,

then, should these anubhāvas be considered a samāgrī separate and distinct from the taste of rasas in the heart?

Gosvāmī: Bābā, you have learned the nyāya-śāstra very well. Till this day I have not seen anyone raise such a subtle point of logic. When I studied the rasas I also asked this question of Śrīla Paṇḍita Gosvāmī. By my spiritual master's mercy my doubt was thrown far away. The secret is this: When the heart is agitated by the ecstatic feelings of vibhāva, many extraordinary and wonderful feels (vaicitrya) are manifested. These feelings blossom in many different ways in the heart. When these feelings blossom in the heart, they eventually bear fruits of ecstatic symptoms that are manifested in the external body. These fruits are called "udbhāsvara". The fruits of ecstatic symptoms are manifested as dancing and in many other ways also. Thus, when the heart dances,then the body dances also. When the heart sings, then the tongue sings also. In this way you should understand it. Thus the ecstatic symptoms called udbhāsvara" are the root from which all this comes. However, the anubhāvas do increase the vibhāvas within the heart. In this way the udbhāsvaras are manifest in the body. Thus the sthāyī-bhāva and vibhāva in the heart manifests the anubhāvas, and the anubhāvas in turn also have an effect upon the heart. Because the anubhāvas have this effect they are considered separate samagris (ingredients of rasa). When there are singing, yawning, and other like activities, the symptoms are called "śīta", and when there is dancing and other like activities they are called “kṣepaṇa". there are other ecstatic symptoms, such as blossoming of the body, the flowing of blood, and expansion and contraction of the body's joints. However, because these symptoms are very rare, I will not describe them further. However, when he assumed the form of a tortoise and manifested other unusual activities, these symptoms were present on the body of our master, Lord Nimāi Paṇḍita. Still, these symptoms are not seen on the body of a sādhaka devotee.

After hearing these confidential explanations from Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī, the two inquiring devotees were silent for a long time. then, touching the dust of his feet, they asked, "O master, what are the "sāttvika-bhāvas"?

Gosvāmī: When a devotee is always intensely affected by love for Kṛṣṇa in a direct relationship with Himor even a little apart from Himhis status is called sāttvika-bhāva" (existential ecstatic love). The symptoms originating from such existential ecstatic love are divided into three headingsnamely moist (snigdha), burnt (digdha), and dried-up (rukṣa).

Vrajanātha: What is moist sāttvika-bhāva?

Gosvāmī: Moist sāttvika-bhāva is divided into two: direct and indirect. When the heart is directly attracted to Lord Kṛṣṇa, that is called "mukhya-snigdha-sāttvika-bhāva" (direct moistened existential ecstatic love). Being stunned and perspiring are some of the symptoms of mukhya-sāttvika-bhāva. When the heart is attracted to Lord Kṛṣṇa indirectly, that is called “gauṇa-snigdha-sāttvika-bhāva" (indirect moistened existential ecstatic love). Changing of bodily colors and faltering of the voice are the two symptoms of gauṇa-snigdha-sāttvika-bhāva. Aside from direct and indirect moistened existential ecstatic love, digdha-sāttvika-bhāva (burnt existential ecstatic love) may also enter the heart. Trembling of the body is the symptom of digdha-sāttvika-bhāva. When a non-devotee is filled with wonder and bliss by hearing the description of the great wonder that is Lord Kṛṣṇa's

sweetness, the ecstatic symptoms are called "rukṣa" (dried up). Standing of the hairs on the body is the symptom of rukṣa-sāttvika-bhāva.

Vrajanātha: How is sāttvika-bhāva created?

Gosvāmī: When the sādhaka devotee's vital force of life is in contact with the various external elements, agitation and transformation result. From this agitation the various ecstatic symptoms, such as becoming stunned, are manifested.

Vrajanātha: What are the different ecstatic symptoms manifested?

Gosvāmī: There are eight symptoms of sāttvika-bhāva (existential ecstatic love): becoming stunned, perspiring, standing of the hairs on the body, faltering of the voice, trembling of the body, changing of bodily colors, shedding of tears, and devastation. When the vital forces is in contact with the five material elements, different kinds of ecstatic symptoms are manifested. When the vital force of life is in contact with the earth one is stunned. When the same force comes into contact with water, there is shedding of tears. When the same force comes into contact with fire, there is perspiration. When the force comes into contact with sky, there is complete devastation. And when the that force comes into contact with air, there is trembling, failing of the voice, and standing of the hairs on the body. In this way the different ecstatic symptoms are manifested. These symptoms are sometimes manifested internally and sometimes externally. Sometimes they are called "bhāvas" and sometimes they are called "anubhāvas". All the anubhāvas are manifested externally only. This is not said of the sāttvika-bhāvas. For example, in dancing or other like activities, the bhāva (ecstatic love) is not manifested directly. The bhāva is rather manifested by the intelligence or the heart. Therefore the various external symptoms of ecstasy, such as becoming stunned, are considered anubhāvas, and are not sāttvika-bhāvas. Therefore the anubhāvas and sāttvika-bhāvas are different from each other.

Vrajanātha: I desire to understand why the ecstatic symptoms, such as becoming stunned, are manifested.

Gosvāmī: Joy, fear, wonder, lamentation, and hatred create an emptiness in the heart that manifests the ecstatic symptom of becoming stunned. Joy, fear, anger, and other emotions combine to moisten the body and thus manifest the ecstatic symptom of perspiration. Wonder, joy, eagerness, fear, and other emotions combine to manifest the ecstatic symptom of the body's hairs standing up. Lamentation, wonder, anger, joy, fear, and other emotions bring the ecstatic symptom of faltering of the voice. Fear, anger, joy, and other emotions bring the ecstatic symptom of trembling of the body. Lamentation, anger, fear, and other emotions bring the ecstatic symptom of changing of bodily colors. Joy, anger, lamentation, and other emotions bring the ecstatic symptom of shedding tears. When they are produced from joy, the tears are cold, and when the are produced from anger and other like emotions, the tears are hot. Happiness and unhappiness combine to make one fall unconscious and attain other like conditions of life, conditions that are the ecstatic symptom called devastation. These transcendental ecstatic symptoms gradually develop, and in the course of such development they are sometimes called smoky, sometimes called blazing, sometimes called shining. and sometimes called intensely shining. These are the four kinds. In dried-up sāttvika-bhāva the symptoms are smoky. In moistened sāttvika-bhāva the ecstatic love rises higher and higher. Real love (rati) for Lord Kṛṣṇa produces all bliss and wonder. When there is only the semblance of love (raty-ābhāsa), the symptoms are

dried-up. Then there is no wonder.

Vrajanātha: O master, the ecstatic love of sāttvika-bhāva brings all good fortune. However, to attain material benefits many people may make a show of these ecstatic emotions, as if they were acting in a drama. What is the position of these people?

Gosvāmī: Genuine sāttvika-bhāva is manifested from genuine pure devotional service. The ecstatic love (bhāva) felt by true Vaiṣṇavas is genuine. Aside from this genuine bhāva, the other so-called bhāvas are divided into four groups: raty-ābhāsa, sattvābhāsa, niḥsattva, and pratīpa.

Vrajanātha: What is raty-ābhāsa?

Gosvāmī: When the hear the descriptions of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the impersonalism, or the sannyāsī followers of Śaṅkarācārya, manifest raty-ābhāsa.

Vrajanātha: What is sattvābhāsa?

Gosvāmī: When they hear about Lord Kṛṣṇa, persons who are naturally soft-hearted may manifest the semblance of joy, wonder, and other ecstatic emotions. The mīmāṁsaka philosophers and ordinary women many manifest this when they hear about Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajanātha: What is niḥsattva-bhāvābhāsa?

Gosvāmī: Some wicked-hearted persons exhibit artificial ecstatic symptoms as a sort of dramatic show. In this way they shed tears and perform other actions. These actions are called nihsattva. In this way some hard-hearted persons put on an artificial show of crying in ecstatic love. These persons are wicked at heart.

Vrajanātha: What is pratīpa?

Gosvāmī: One who acts as Kṛṣṇa's enemy manifests the semblance of the ecstatic emotions like anger and fear. This is called pratīpa-bhāvābhāsa.

Vrajanātha: O master, now I have understood vibhāva, anubhāva, and sāttvika-bhāva, and I have also understood the difference between sāttvika-bhāva and anubhāva. Now please explain vyabhicāri-bhāva.

Gosvāmī: There are 33 vyabhicārīs. These 33 bhāvas work to increase the sthāyī-bhāvas. That is why they are called "vyabhicārī". They are manifested in the words, limbs, and thoughts. They are also called "sañcāri-bhāva". They are like waves in the nectar ocean of sthāyī-bhāva, waves that rise from, and then again disappear into the ocean of sthāyī-bhāva. The 33 vyabhicārī-bhāvas are: disappointment, lamentation, humility, guilt, fatigue, intoxication, pride, doubt, apprehension, intense emotion, madness, forgetfulness, disease, confusion, death, laziness, inertness, bashfulness, concealment, remembrance, argumentativeness, anxiety, thoughtfulness, endurance, happiness, eagerness, violence, haughtiness, envy, impudence, dizziness, sleepiness, and alertness. Some of the sa{.sy 242}cāri-bhāvas are independent (sva-tantra) and others are dependent on something else (para-tantra). The para-tantra sañcāri-bhāvas are of two kinds: superior and inferior. The superior sañcāri-bhāvas are themselves of two kinds: direct and indirect. The sva-tantra sañcāri-bhāvas are of three kinds: rati-śūnya (without attachment to Kṛṣṇa), raty-āsparśa (with a touch of attachment to Kṛṣṇa), and rati-gandha (with the scent of attachment to Kṛṣṇa). If these bhāvas are directed to the wrong object they are of two kinds: prātikūlya (unfavorable) and anaucitya (improper). All these bhāvas are manifested in four different conditions: 1. utpatti (growth), 2. sandhi (union), 3. śāvalya (variety), and 3. śānti (peace).

Vrajanātha: Bhava-utpatti is easy to understand. What is bhāva-sandhi?

Gosvāmī: When two like or unlike emotions meet, that is called "sandhi". Desirable laziness and undesirable laziness may both appear simultaneously. This is an example of the meeting of like emotions. Joy and fear may also appear simultaneously. That is an example of the meeting of unlike emotions.

Vrajanātha: What is bhāva-śāvalya?

Gosvāmī: When two emotions clash, that is called “bhāva-śāvalya". When he heard about Kṛṣṇa, Kaṁsa became simultaneously angry and fearful. That is an example of bhāva-śāvalya.

Vrajanātha: What is bhāva-śānti?

Gosvāmī: When an intense emotion suddenly disappears, that is called "śānti". When they could not see Kṛṣṇa, the boys of Vraja became anxious, but when they heard the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute from afar, their anxiety was at once pacified. This is an example of the pacification of happiness.

Vrajanātha: If anything else remains to be known about this topic, then please explain it.

Gosvāmī: To these 33 vyabhicārī-bhāvas may be added the one primary (mukhya) sthāyī-bhāva and the seven secondary (gauṇa) sthāyī-bhāvas. In this way there are 41 bhāvas that produce ecstatic symptoms on the body and the senses. The activities of the mind are the origin of these bhāvas.

Vrajanātha: What are the various bhāvas produced in this way?

Gosvāmī: They produce the eight sāttvika-bhāvas, the vibhāvas, and the anubhāvas.

Vrajanātha: Are all these part of the original nature?

Gosvāmī: No. Some are part of the original nature and others come from outside the original nature. The sthāyī-bhāva is part of the devotee's original nature, but the vyabhicārī-bhāvas mostly come from outside the original nature.

Vrajanātha: Do all devotees possess the same bhāvas?

Gosvāmī: No. The devotees have different natures. That is because the nature of the mind and heart is different in each devotee. According to the condition of the heart, the bhāva is more or less exalted. The heart may be exalted, lowly, or in an intermediate state. The bhāvas are manifested according to the condition of the heart. However, nectar is always liquid, and therefore a devotee's heart is naturally soft and liquid, for it is like nectar. Today we will end here. Tomorrow I will describe sthāyī-bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha offered daṇḍavat obeisances and took their leave.

Chapter Twenty-eight

Rasa-vicāra

The Rasas

Vrajanātha: O master, I see that vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika-bhāva, and vyabhicārī-bhāva are all bhāvas. What is sthāyī-bhāva?

Gosvāmī: The one bhāva that controls all the other bhāvas, both obstructed and unobstructed, and that is the monarch even of Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, is called "sthāyī-bhāva". When “Kṛṣṇa-rati" (attraction to Kṛṣṇa) takes shelter of a devotee's heart, that attraction is called "sthāyī-bhāva". Look, among the sāmagrīs is vibhāva, and included within vibhāva is ālambana. However, there is another bhāva, a bhāva independent of all these others, a bhāva that is the origin and the helper of the rasas, a bhāva that becomes both the enjoyer (āsvādana) and the object of enjoyment (āsvādya). Please think deeply about this and try to understand how sthāyī-bhāva is different from the other bhāvas. Sthayi-bhāva is divided in two: primary (mukhya-rati) and secondary (gauṇa-rati).

Vrajanātha: What is primary sthāyī-bhāva?

Gosvāmī: In the description of bhāva-bhakti you have already heard about śuddha-sattva-rati. That is the same as mukhya-rati.

Vrajanātha: When I read the alaṅkāra-śāstras (books of rhetoric) the love that I understood there was all material. It was very different The spiritual love that is now described is very different from that material love. Now I understand that only when a person is pure in heart will he attain the nectar (rasa) of love for the Supreme Lord. The so--called love written about by the authors of the alaṅkāra-śāstras is only the love that appears in the material bodies and material minds of souls imprisoned in the material world. Now I can understand the other kind of love, the love you have described in your explanation of the rasas. This pure spiritual love is the be-all-and-end-all of the pure liberated souls. By the mercy of the hlādinī-śakti, this pure love is sometimes experienced even by the conditioned souls imprisoned in the material world. Now I wish to understand the different kinds of pure spiritual love (śuddha-rati).

Seeing Vrajanātha's clear grasp of the spiritual truth, Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī, shedding tears of happiness, embraced him and said, "I am very fortunate to have a disciple like you. Please listen. Mukhya-rati is of two kinds: svārtha (for the sake of one's own self) and parārtha (for the sake of the beloved).

Vrajanātha: What is the nature of svārtha-mukhya-rati?

Gosvāmī: When no obstacles stop the bhāva (aviruddha-bhāva), then svārtha-mukhya-rati increases. However, when obstacles do stop the bhāva (viruddha-bhāva), then svārtha-mukhya-rati diminishes.

Vrajanātha: What is the nature of parārtha-mukhya-rati?

Gosvāmī: Whether obstacles are present or not, parārtha-mukhya-rati contracts of its own accord. Aside from these two, there is also another kind of mukhya-rati.

Vrajanātha: What is it like? Please tell.

Gosvāmī: This is śuddha-mukhya-rati (pure love). It is divided into five rasas: śānta (neutrality), dāsya (servitude), sakhya (friendship), vātsalya (parenthood), and madhura (conjugal love). As sunlight is divided into different colors when it passes through a prism or other like object, so sthāyī-bhāva assumes different features according to the different kinds of persons who contain it.

Vrajanātha: Please describe this śuddha-rati (pure love).

Gosvāmī: Śuddha-rati is of three kinds: sāmānya (ordinary), svaccha (clear),

and śānta (peaceful). Sāmānya-rati is the love the people in general feel for Lord Kṛṣṇa. When mukhya-rati is manifested in different ways in the different kinds of devotees, as light assumes different colors as it passes through colored glass, that kind of mukhya-rati is called “svaccha" (clear). In this way some devotees offer prayers to Kṛṣṇa and call Him "master", others joke with Kṛṣṇa and call HIm "friend", still other protect Kṛṣṇa and call him "son", still others, overcome with bliss, call Kṛṣṇa their "beloved", and still others meditate on Kṛṣṇa and call Him "the Supersoul". A devotee in śānta-rati (neutrality) meditates with a peaceful mind on the unchanging Supreme. Śuddha-rati is of two kinds: "kevalā" (unmixed) and "saṅkulā" (mixed). Among the residents of Vraja, Rasāla and Śrīdāma are examples of devotees whose love for Kṛṣṇa is of one kind only, unmixed with even the slightest scent of any other kind of rasa. Their pure love (śuddha-rati) is called "kevalā" (unmixed). Other devotees, such as Uddhava and Bhīma have love that is a mixture of different rasas. Their pure love (śuddha-rati) is called “saṅkulā" (mixed).

Vrajanātha: Formerly I thought their was not śānta-rati in Vraja. Now I see it is slightly present there also. When they consider the different kinds of rati (love), books of material rhetoric (jaḍa-alaṅkāra) do not accept śānta-rati as a genuine kind of love. Here it is seen that śānta-rati must me accepted as one kind of love for the Supreme. Now please describe dāsya-rati (love in the rasa of servitorship).

Gosvāmī: When the devotee thinks, "Kṛṣṇa is the master, and I am His servant", he loves Kṛṣṇa in the dāsya-rasa. When he is attached to Kṛṣṇa in this way, a devotee is not attracted to or pleased by anything outside this rasa of servitorship.

Vrajanātha: What are the qualities of sakhya-rati (love in friendship)?

Gosvāmī: When a devotee is firmly convinced that Kṛṣṇa is his equal, his love for Kṛṣṇa is called sakhya-rati. In sakhya-rati there are joking, laughing, and other like activities.

Vrajanātha: Please describe the nature of vātsalya-rati (parental love).

Gosvāmī: the kindly love that His elders give to Kṛṣṇa is called vātsalya-rati. Embracing and fondling Kṛṣṇa, performing auspicious rituals for His benefit, pronouncing blessings upon Him, and affectionately touching His chin are some of the activities of vātsalya-rati.

Vrajanātha: Now kindly describe the qualities of madhura-rati (conjugal love for Kṛṣṇa).

Gosvāmī: The eight kinds of pleasing activities, beginning with remembering Kṛṣṇa and gazing at Kṛṣṇa, that are performed in the deer-eyed gopīs' love for Kṛṣṇa are called the activities of "priyatā" (love) or "madhura-rati" (sweet love). Included in these activities are sidelong glances, moving the eyebrows, speaking sweet words, and speaking joking words. Beginning with śānta and extending up to madhura-rati, the devotees' love, relish, and bliss increase more and more. Thus I have briefly described the five kinds of mukhya-rati (primary rasas).

Vrajanātha: Now please describe the secondary (gauṇa) spiritual rasas.

Gosvāmī: The secondary rasas (gauṇa-bhāva), which are part of ālambana, are: laughter, astonishment, chivalry, lamentation, anger, dread, and ghastliness. In the first six of these rasas the devotee always meditates on Kṛṣṇa. When the devotee attains pure love (śuddha-rati), then he finds the material body and material activities to be very distasteful. He is horrified by them. That is the seventh rasa,

ghastliness. Although these seven rasas are different from pure love (śuddha-rati), because they are in contact with parārtha-mukhya-rati (the primary rasas), therefore these seven secondary emotions are included among the rasas, and the word "rati" (love) is used to describe them. For some devotees one or more of these secondary rasas remain a permanent part of their relationship with Kṛṣṇa. But these is not true for every devotee by any means. For most devotees these secondary rasas are manifested only temporarily. In some situations one or more of these secondary rasas become so strong that they eclipse the natural primary rasas.

Vrajanātha: In material rhetoric (alaṅkāra) eight rasas, beginning with conjugal love, laughter, and compassion, are described. I can understand how these material rasas look beautiful only from the point of view of pathetic material heroes and heroines. These material rasas have no bearing on the spiritual rasas of Vraja, which are the activities of the pure spirit soul, and thus have nothing to do with the activities of the material mind. The great devotees have divided sthāyī-bhāva rati into five primary and seven secondary rasas. This is proper. Now please kindly describe hāsya-rati (the rasa of laughter).

Gosvāmī: Certain unusual words, appearances, or activities cause laughter to appear in the heart. In laughter the eyes may open wide, and the nostrils, lips, and cheeks may tremble. This laughter is produced by saṅkoca-bhāva-rati directed toward Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajanātha: What is the rasa of astonishment (vismaya-rati)?

Gosvāmī: When one sees something extraordinary, astonishment is manifested in his heart. Some of the symptoms of astonishment are: opening the eyes wide, speaking words of praise, and standing up of the body's hairs.

Vrajanātha: What is the rasa of chivalry (utsāha-rati)?

Gosvāmī: When the heart is determined to perform the noble deeds that are glorified by great saints, that is called chivalry. Promptness, impatience, and enthusiasm are among the symptoms of chivalry.

Vrajanātha: What is the rasa of anger (krodha-rati)?

Gosvāmī: When actions of an enemy make the heart burst into flames, that is called anger. Harshness, knitting the eyebrows, and redness in the eyes are among the symptoms of anger.

Vrajanātha: What is the rasa of dread?

Gosvāmī: When the sight of horrible things makes the heart wish to flee, that is called dread. Hiding oneself, dryness of the heart, and fleeing away are among the symptoms of dread.

Vrajanātha: What is the rasa of ghastliness?

Gosvāmī: When one is averse to abominable things, that is called ghastliness. Spitting, curling the lips, and speaking harsh criticisms are among the symptoms of ghastliness. When this emotion is in relation to Lord Kṛṣṇa, then it is considered on the the spiritual rasas. Otherwise it is merely another material emotion.

Vrajanātha: How many bhāvas (emotions) are present in bhakti-rasa (the mellows of devotional service)?

Gosvāmī: Sthāyī-bhāva has eight bhāvas, sañcāri-bhāva has 33 bhāvas, and sāttvika-bhāva has eight bhāvas. Combined together there are 49 bhāvas. When these bhāvas are manifested from the three modes of nature and are thus material, they are causes of material happiness and material suffering. When these bhavas

help one attain Kṛṣṇa, they are spiritual, beyond the material modes, and filled with bliss, and what seems to be sorrow in them is actually spiritual happiness. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that Lord Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's dear devotees are the two ālambanas, or resting places, and therefore the causes of the rasas of spiritual love (rati). The ecstatic symptoms that begin with being stunned are counted among the effects of rati, and the ecstatic symptoms that begin with lamentation help the progress of rati. When the rasas are awakened, these ecstatic symptoms are no longer called cause, effect, and helper. Then they are called vibhāva. Because these activities then have an especially sweet taste, the paṇḍitas call them “vibhāva". When dancing and other activities increase the sweetness of vibhāva, the vibhāva is called "anubhāva". Spiritual (sāttvika) activities bring spiritual results. Thus these actions are called "sāttvika-bhāva". When these vibhāvas bring renunciation and other like emotions, the bhāva is called "sañcāri-bhāva". Readers attracted to poems, plays, and other books describing Lord Kṛṣṇa know that the vibhāvas are causes of devotional service. In truth these activities of rati (pure love) are inconceivable. They are very great pastimes of devotional service. In Mahābhārata and other scriptures it is said that these activities of devotional service are very exalted. They are beyond the touch of ordinary, material logic. In the Mahābhārata it is written that these bhāvas are beyond the understanding of the material mind, and therefore material logic cannot be employed to understand them. Whatever is beyond the world of matter cannot be understood by the material mind. One who attains sweet love for Lord Kṛṣṇa's form and other features attains vibhāva. This vibhāva does not remain static. It spontaneously increases, growing greater and greater. Rati (love for Kṛṣṇa) enables one to directly perceive Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is the resting place of transcendental sweetness and other virtues. On the other hand, when he directly sees Lord Kṛṣṇa's form and other features, the devotee loves Lord Kṛṣṇa more and more. In this way vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika-bhāva, and vyabhicāri-bhāva all increase rati, and rati increases them.

Vrajanātha: What is the difference between love for Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-rati) and material love (viṣaya-rati)? Please kindly explain.

Gosvāmī: Material love is part of the material world. Love for Kṛṣṇa is beyond the material world, and it is also the origin of many wonderful things. Material love is pleasant when the beloved is present and unpleasant when the beloved is absent. When a person loves Kṛṣṇa, and Kṛṣṇa is present, then the lover experiences the taste of a certain kind of rasa, the rasa of sambhoga-sukha (the happiness of enjoying with Kṛṣṇa). However, when Kṛṣṇa is absent, the lover experiences the rasa of vipralambha (separation), which itself produces a specific kind of wonderful transcendental bliss. In answer to one of Lord Mahaprabhu's questions, Rāmānanda Rāya described (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya 8.194) the wonderful bliss the devotee feels in separation from Kṛṣṇa, a bliss he called "vivarta". Therefore what seems here to be suffering is in truth the highest spiritual bliss.

Vrajanātha: Material logicians say that the rasas are unimportant. They are only a small portion of what exists. What is the answer to that claim?

Gosvāmī: It is true that the material rasas are unimportant. And why not? In the material rasas material ingredients (sāmagrī) may nourish the material sthāyī-bhāva (permanent emotions). However, these are only material rasas. They are not spiritual. In the state of spiritual perfection, the spiritual rasas are eternal,

complete, and self-manifest. However, to an inexperienced devotee the spiritual rasas may seem to be material. When the lover is separated from the beloved, the material rasas of love do not remain indefinitely. The spiritual rasa of love in separation is much more beautiful and glorious than its material counterpart. The great potency hlādinī-śakti brings transcendental bliss to the rasa of spiritual love in separation. That is why the rasa of spiritual love in separation is blissful and why it is beyond the power of material logic to understand. Therefore it is said to be inconceivable.

Vrajanātha: How many kinds of spiritual rasas are there?

Gosvāmī: Even though the primary rasas are five, they are still considered as one. Therefore, adding the seven secondary rasas, there are eight rasas all together.

Vrajanātha: Please recite the names of these eight rasas. The result of my hearing your words is that my desire to hear grows stronger and stronger.

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.5.115-116):

mukhyas tu pañcadhā śāntaḥ
prītaḥ preyaś ca vatsalaḥ
madhuraś cety amī jñeyā
yathā-pūrvam anuttamāḥ

"The five primary rasas, each more exalted than the preceding one, are: neutrality, servitorship, friendship, parenthood, and conjugal love.

hāsyo 'dbhūtas tathā vīraḥ
karuṇo raudra ity api
bhayānakaḥ sa-bībhatsa
iti gauṇāś ca saptadhā

"The seven secondary rasas are: laughter, astonishment, chivalry, lamentation, anger, dread, and ghastliness."

Vrajanātha: In the context of the spiritual rasas, what is the proper definition of the word "bhāva"?

Gosvāmī: Considering the truth in their spiritually purified hearts, great paṇḍitas have written many books about rasa (rasa-śāstras), and in these books they have defined the word "bhāva". I have already explained that rasa is of two kinds: 1. cintya-bhāva (bhāva that can be understood by the material mind) and 2. acintya-bhāva (bhāva that is inconceivable, beyond the understanding of the material mind). Material logic can be used to understand cintya-bhāva. And why not? The emotions that arise in the heart of a conditioned soul imprisoned in the material world are all material in nature. The conditioned souls material ideas and emotions about the Supreme Lord are also understandable by the material mind. However, true ideas and emotions directed to the Supreme Lord are inconceivable, beyond the power of the material mind to understand. And why not? The Supreme

Lord is far beyond the touch of matter. Because the Supreme Lord is inconceivable, it is not good to think there can be no bhāvas (emotions) in relation to Him. All emotions are possible in relation to the Supreme Lord. But they are inconceivable, beyond the material mind's understanding. In your heart remain rapt in meditation on one of the inconceivable rasas in relation to the Lord. Meditate on the appropriate sthāyī-bhāva and sāmagrīs. Then the eternal and perfect spiritual rasa will be manifest to you.

Vrajanātha: O master, what does "being rapt in meditation" mean?

Gosvāmī: Bābā, contaminated by matter, you have wandered in the circle of karma for many births. Meditation is of two kinds: previous meditation (prāktanī) and present meditation (ādhunikā). By staying in the material world your originally pure heart and pure thoughts have both become contaminated. However, by associating with saintly devotees and by performing spiritual pious activities, one can throw far away the contaminated material thoughts and regain his original, natural, spiritual meditation. When this spiritual meditation becomes strong, the inconceivable truth appears in his heart. That is the meaning of "being rapt in meditation".

Vrajanātha: Who is qualified to understand the spiritual rasas? That I would like to know.

Gosvāmī: A person who, by constant meditation in this way, finds that the inconceivable spiritual truth is manifested in his heart, is alone qualified to understand the spiritual rasas. No one else is qualified. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.5.132):

vyatītya bhāvanā-vartma
yaś camatkṛti-bhāra-bhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bāḍhaṁ
svadate sa raso mataḥ

"When one transcends the status of ecstatic love and thus becomes situated on the highest platform of pure goodness, one is understood to have cleansed the heart of all material contamination. In that pure stage of life, one can taste this nectar, and this tasting capacity is technically called rasa, or transcendental mood."*

Vrajanātha: Who is not qualified to thus taste the nectar of the transcendental rasa? As it is an offense to give the holy name to an unqualified person, so it must also be an offense to explain the rasas to an unqualified person. O master, please be merciful and explain this point to poor and fallen people like myself.

Gosvāmī: Renunciation that has nothing to do with pure devotional service is called phalgu-vairāgya (false renunciation). Persons who are in the fire of false renunciation, the dry speculative habit, and who neglect devotional service are in a lamentable situation. Persons who are attached to the ritualistic ceremonies recommended in the Vedas and to the impersonal Brahman cannot relish the transcendental pleasure of devotional service. Therefore, devotees who have already tasted the nectar of devotion should be very careful to protect devotional

service from such dry speculators, formal ritual elevationists, and impersonal salvationists. Devotees should protect their valuable jewel of spiritual love from the clutches of thieves and burglars. In other words, a pure devotee should not describe devotional service and its different analytical aspects to speculators and false renouncers.*

Vrajanātha: I have become very fortunate. I will always honor the order that comes from your saintly mouth.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I maintain my family by reading and lecturing on Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a book describing the rasas of devotional service. If man reads and explains Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to the people in general in order to earn money, does he commit an offense?

Gosvāmī: Ah! Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the crest jewel of all scriptures. It is the mature ripened fruit of the tree of Vedic knowledge. In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.3) it is said:

muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ

"O expert and thoughtful men, relish Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam."*

The meaning of these words is that only the expert and thoughtful, who know how to relish the transcendental rasas are qualified to taste the nectar of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. No one else is qualified. Bābā, give up this profession. You are a person who likes to drink the nectar of the transcendental rasas. Don't commit an offense to the rasas. In the Vedas (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.7) it is said:

raso vai saḥ

"The Supreme Lord is rasa."

This means that the rasas are Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. There are many other books you could teach to maintain your material body. Teach some other book for that purpose. You should not read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to the people in general in order to earn money. If you find a person qualified to taste the spiritual rasas, then with great bliss you may read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam to him, but do not accept any salary or any dakṣiṇā (donation).

Vrajanātha: O master, today you have saved me from a great offense. What will come from the offense I have already committed?

Gosvāmī: That offense will not stay. With an honest heart surrender to the rasas and take shelter of them. They will certainly forgive you. You need not worry.

Vrajanātha: O master, if need be I will accept a very lowly profession. But I will not describe the rasas to an unqualified person, and I will not accept money for teaching about the rasas.

Gosvāmī: Bābā, you are very fortunate. Lord Kṛṣṇa has accepted you as His own devotee. If this were not so, then how could you be so sincere and dedicated to devotional service? Lord Gaura has given all His potencies to you.

Chapter Twenty-nine
Rasa-vicāra
The Rasas

Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra decided to stay in Jagannātha-purī for cāturmāsya. After hearing about the rasas from the mouth of Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvami, they both decided to follow the path of worshiping the Lord according to the rasas. Hearing from him the glories of observing cāturmāsya, Vrajanātha's grandmother accepted his suggestion to stay in Jagannātha-purī. Every morning and evening they would all see Lord Jagannātha. They bathed in Narendra-sarovara, and they saw all there was to see in Jagannātha-purī. With devotion they saw Lord Jagannātha as He was being served. When he learned of their decision, Śrī Gopāla-guru was very happy. He said, "O Vrajanātha, O Vijaya-kumāra, I love you as a father loves his sons. I am not happy to be separated from you. If you stay here for many days, then I will be happy. It is easy to find a sincere spiritual master, but it is not so easy to find a sincere disciple."

Vrajanātha humbly asked, "O master, please explain the features of the different rasas. We will consider ourselves fortunate to hear about them from you.

Gosvāmī: Your proposal is excellent. Please hear the words Lord Gauracandra will place in my mouth. First is śānta-rasa (neutrality). In this rasa the sthāyī-bhāva is śānta-rati. The happiness the yogīs find in the impersonal Brahman is very slight. The happiness attained in a relationship with the Supreme Person is much greater than that impersonal happiness. The cause of that personal happiness is the direct perception of the Supreme Personality of Godhead's spiritual form. The ālambana (object of worship) in śānta-rasa is the four-armed form of Lord Nārāyaṇa. This form of the Lord manifests qualities like supreme power and opulence. In this way the viṣaya and anubhāva are manifested in ālambana. Peaceful persons situated in śānta-rasa are the āśraya of śānta-rati. Atmārāmas and persons who have faith in the Supreme Personality of Godhead are qualified for śānta-rasa. The four sages headed by Sanaka and Sanandana are prominent among the ātmārāmas. These four sages are boy sannyāsīs. At first they were attached to the impersonal Brahman. Later they became attracted to the sweetness of the form of the Supreme Person. Then they began to worship the Lord's spiritual form. Persons who are austere and renounced, but who have not yet thrown far away the desire for impersonal liberation, are eligible for śānta-rasa. Hearing the important Upaniṣads, living in a secluded place, meditating, searching for the truth, study, seeing the universal form, associating with persons engaged in devotional service mixed with impersonal speculation (jñaṇa-miśra-bhakti), and studying the Upaniṣads with others of equal scholarship are the uddīpanas that inspire this rasa. The fragrance of tulasī offered to the Supreme Lord's lotus feet, the sound of the conchshell, sacred mountains, sacred forests, sacred places, the Ganges, being free

of material desires, and the awareness that time will eventual destroy everything material, are also uddīpanas that inspire śānta-rasa.

Vrajanātha: What are the anubhāvas of this rasa?

Gosvāmī: Staring at the tip of the nose, acting like an avadhūta, looking for a distance of four hands as one walks, assuming the jñāna-mudrā (joining the forefinger and thumb), not hating the enemies of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, being slightly inclined to the devotees dear to the Lord, being attracted to the soul's librartionliberation and the end of his residence in the material world, being neutral and aloof, being free of false ego, material possessiveness, and material pride, and feeling a sort of cool-tempered love for the Supreme are included among the anubhāvas of śānta-rasa. Yawning, swelling of the limbs, teaching about devotional service, bowing down before Lord Hari, and offering prayers to Lord Hari are also included among these anubhāvas.

Vrajanātha: What are the sāttvika ecstatic symptoms in śānta-rasa?

Gosvāmī: Devastation (except the aspect of falling to the ground) and being stunned are included among the many ecstatic symptoms in this rasa. There are no passionate (dīpta) ecstatic symptoms in this rasa.

Vrajanātha: What are the saṇcāri-bhāvas in this rasa?

Gosvāmī: Lamentation, patience, joy, thoughtfulness, remembrance, melancholy, eagnerness, anxiety, and argumentativeness are seen among the saṇcāri-bhāvas of śānta-rasa.

Vrajanātha: How many are the different kinds of śānta-rati?

Gosvāmī: Sthāyi-bhāva śānta-rati is of two kinds: 1. samā (equipoised) and 2. sāndrā (intense). In samā śānta-rati is manifested asmprajñāta-samādhi, where the activities of the body are filled with awareness of the Supreme Lord's presence. In sāndrā śānta-rati is manifested nirvikalpa-samādhi, where all ignorance is destroyed and the direct manifestation of the Supreme Lord's form brings intense bliss. On the basis of these two kinds of śānta-rati, there may also be divisions of parikṣya (indirect) and sākṣāt-kāra-rūpa (direct) śānta-rati.Śukadeva Gosvāmī and Bilvamaṅgala Ṭ.akura are examples of two persons who renounced śānta-rasa and became expert in tasting the bliss of the rasas of direct devotional service. The great scholar Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya is also an example of that.

Vrajanātha: The books of material rhetoric (alaṅkāra) do not accept śānta-rasa. Why is that?

Gosvāmī: Peacefulness is far away from all materialistic activities. When spiritual activities are performed, then the peacefulness of śānta-rasa gradually become manifested. In this way the spiritual rasas become manifested. The Supreme Lord Himself declared, "Faith in Me brings peacefulness." Look, how can one attain faith in the Lord without first being situated in śānta-rati? Therefore, at the beginning of spiritual life one must first accept śānta-rasa.

Vrajanātha: Now I understand śānta-bhakti-rasa. Now please explain, one by one, the vibhāvas and other aspects of dāsya-rasa (servitorship). Dāsya-rasa is also called prīta-bhakti-rasa by the paṇḍitas. Dāsya-rasa is of thwo kinds: 1. anugrahya-patra-dāsya (the object of mercy) and 2. lālya-pātra-dāsya (the object of affection). Prīta-rasa is also divided int these two kinds: 1. sambhrama-prīta (with pride) and 2. gaurava-prīta (with submission).

Gosvāmī: What is sambhrama-prīta?

Vrajanātha: Persons who are proud to be servants of Kṛṣṇa have sambhrama-

prīta for Kṛṣṇa, the son of Nanda. When this rasa develops it is called sambhrama-prīta. In this rasa Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa's servants are both the ālambanas.

Gosvāmī: What form does Kṛṣṇa manifest in this rasa?

Vrajanātha: In Gokula sambhrama-prīta, Kṛṣṇa has two arms. In the other parts of this rasa He sometimes has two arms and sometimes four arms. In Gokula Kṛṣṇa is a cowherd boy, has two arms, holds the flute, and is decorated with a peacock-feather and other ornaments. When He is manifested outside of Gokula, Kṛṣṇa is decorated with jewels and His feature is that of aiśvarya (power and opulence). Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 3.2.11-15) explains:

brahmāṇḍa-koṭi-dhāmaika-
roma-kūpa-kṛpāmbudhiḥ
avicintya-mahā-śaktiḥ
sarva-siddhi-niṣevitaḥ

avatārāvalī-bījaṁ
sad-ātmārāma-hṛd-guṇaḥ
īśvaraḥ paramārādhyaḥ
sarvajñaḥ su-dṛḍha-vrataḥ

samṛddhimān kṣamā-śīlaḥ
śaraṇāgata-pālakaḥ
dakṣiṇaḥ satya-vacano
dakṣaḥ sarva-śubhaṅkaraḥ

pratāpī dharmikaḥ śāstra-
cakṣur bhakta-suhṛttamaḥ
vadānyas tejasāyuktaḥ
kṛtajñaḥ kīrti-saṁśrayaḥ

varīyān balavān prema-
vaśya ity ādibhir guṇaiḥ
yutaś catur-vidheṣv eṣa
dāseṣv ālambano hariḥ

"Kṛṣṇa posseses the following qualities: 1. Many millions of universes come the pores of His body, 2. He is an ocean of mercy, 3. He has inconceivable potencies, 4. He is served by all mystic powers. 5. He is the seed from which all incarnations have come. 6. His transcendental qualities attract the hearts of the liberated souls. 7. He is the supreme controller. 8. He is the supreme object of worship. 9. He knows everything. 10. He is determined. 11. He has all wealth. 12. He is tolerant and forgiving. 13. He protects the surrendered souls. 14. He is happy. 15. He is truthful. 16. He is expert. 17. He brings all auspiciousness. 18. He is powerful. 19. He is religious. 20. He sees through the eyes of the scriptures. 21. He is the best friend of the devotee. 22. He is generous. 23. He is glorious. 24. He is grateful. 25. He is the resting place of fame. 26. He is the best. 27. He is powerful. 28. He is

controlled by love. In this way Lord Hari is the ālambana (the object of love) for His four kinds of servants."

Vrajanātha: What are these four kinds of servants?

Gosvāmī: The devotees who have taken shelter of dāsya-rasa are of four kinds: 1. praśrita (who humbly look down when they stand before their master), 2. ajñānuvartī (who humbly carry out their master's orders), 3. viśvasta (who have full faith in their master), and 4. prabhu jñāne namra-buddhi (who are humble and very conscious of their master's superiority). These four are also called: 1. adhikṛta (they who are qualified), 2. āśrita (they who have taken shelter), 3. pāriṣada (associates), and 4. anugata (followers).

Vrajanātha: Who are the adhikṛta servants?

Gosvāmī: Brahmā, Śiva, Indra, and the other demigods and demigoddesses are adhikṛta servants and maidservants. By fulfilling various duties in the material world, they eventually become qualified (adhikṛta) to serve the Supreme Lord directly.

Vrajanātha: Who are the āśrita servants?

Gosvāmī: The three kinds of āśrita servants are: 1. śaraṇāgata (surrendered souls), 2. jñānī (wise philosophers), and 3. sevā-niṣṭha (intent on serving). Kāliya and the kings imprisoned by Jarāsandha are counted among the śaraṇaāgata servants. Śaunaka and the other sages who have rejected the desire for impersonal liberation and taken shelter of Lord Hari are counted among the jñānī servants. Because they were attached to worshiping the Lord from the very beginning of their lives, Candradhvaja, Harihara, Bahulāśva, Ikṣvaku, and Puṇḍarīka are counted among both the sevā-niṣṭha and śaraṇaāgata servants.

Vrajanātha: O master, who are the pāriṣada servants?

Gosvāmī: Uddhava, Dāruka, Sātyaki, Śrutadeva, Śatrajit, Nanda (this is another Nanda, not Lord Kṛṣṇa's father), Upananda, and Bhadra are counted among the pāriṣada servants. Although these persons give advice to Lord Kṛṣṇa, at the appropriate times they also serve Him. Among the Kauravas, Bhīṣma, Parīkṣit, Vidura, and others are counted among the pāriṣada servants. Among them all, Uddhava, who is filled with pure love (prema) is the best.

Vrajanātha: Who are the anuga devotees?

Gosvāmī: The anugata devotees, whose hearts are always eager to serve the Lord, are of two kinds: 1. the servants who stay in Dvārakā, and 2. the devotees who stay in Vraja. Sucabdra, Maṇḍala, Stambha, and Sutamba are included among the anuga devotees in Dvārakā. Raktaka, Patraka, Patrī, Madhukaṇṭha, Madhuvrata, Rasāla, Suvilāsa, Premakandha, Makarandaka, Ananda, Candrahāsa, Pāyoda, Bakula, Rasada, and Śārada are included among the anuga servants in Vraja. Raktaka is the best of the anuga servants in Vraja. The pāriṣada servants are of three kinds: 1. dhūrya (leaders), 2. dhīra (philosophers), and 3. vīra (heroes). The āśrita servants are also of three kinds: 1. nitya-siddha (eternally perfect), 2. siddha (perfect), and 3. sādhaka (aspiring for perfection).

Vrajanātha: What are the uddīpanas of dāsya-rasa?

Gosvāmī: The sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute, the sound of His buffalo-horn bugle, His smiling glance, hearing the narration of His glories, His lotus footprints, His bodily limbs splendid like a new monsoon cloud, and the fragrance of His transcendental body.

Vrajanātha: What are the anubhāvas of this rasa?

Gosvāmī: To perform one's duties in every situation, to follow orders, to be free of envy, to make friendship with devotees sincerely surrendered to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and to have faith in Lord Kṛṣṇa are included among the extraordinary anubhāvas of this rasa. Dancing, all the udbhāsvaras, respect for Lord Kṛṣṇa's personal friends, and renunciation of everything outside the realm of Kṛṣṇa consciousness are also included among these anubhāvas.

Vrajanātha: What are the sāttvika-vikāras (ecstatic symptoms) of these three aspects of of prīta-rasa (dāsya-rasa)?

Gosvāmī: In this rasa are many sāttvika-bhāvas, among which being stunned is the most prominent.

Vrajanātha: What are the vyabhicārīs in this rasa?

Gosvāmī: Joy, pride, determination, remorse, melancholy, humility, anxiety, remembrance, misgivings, thoughtfulness, eagerness, fickleness, argumentativeness, passion, shyness, being stunned, illusion, madness, concealment, awakening, dream, exhaustion, disease, and death are the vyabhicārīs of this rasa. Arrogance, fatigue, fear, forgetfulness, ferocity, anger, envy, and sleep are not present among the vyabhicārīs in this rasa. When he meets the Lord, the devotee manifests joy, pride, and peacefulness. When he is separated from the Lord, the devotee manifests withering away, disease, and death. The eighteen bhāvas that begin with remorse are seen in all circumstances, whether the devotee meets the Lord or is separated from Him.

Vrajanātha: I wish to know what are the sthāyī-bhāvas of prīta-rasa.

Gosvāmī: The sthāyī-bhāva of this rasa is the love (prīti) that appears in the heart when the heart is filled with awe and trembles at the thought of master. In śānta-rasa, attraction to the Supreme is the only sthāyī-bhāva. In dāsya-rasa, affection combined with the possessive idea that "the Lord is *mine* " is the sthāyī-bhāva. This respectful affection gradually grows stronger and stronger until it becomes pure affection (prema), love (sneha) and intense love (rāga). When it is free from fear and awe, and when it is deep-rooted, this respectful affection (sambhrama-prīti) becomes pure affection (prema). When that pure affection becomes intense, the heart melts and the pure affection (prema) is called love (sneha). In this condition of sneha, the devotee cannot bear even a moment's separation from the Lord. When this love (sneha) increases to the point where the devotee finds that even his sorrows bring happiness, the love becomes intense love (rāga). At this point the devotee wishes to do whatever pleases Kṛṣṇa, even if the devotee loses his own life in the process. Adhikrta and asrita servants experience love up to the stage of prema. The parisada servants experience love up to the stage of sneha. Pariksit, Dāruka, Uddhava, and the anuga servants in Vraja experience love up to the stage of rāga. When rāga is manifested, then a small portion of sakhya-rasa (friendship) inevitably comes with it. Paṇḍitas say that in this rasa meeting with Kṛṣṇa is called "yoga" and separation from Kṛṣṇa is called “ayoga". Ayoga is of two kinds: 1. utkaṇṭhita (filled with longings), and 2. viyoga (tragic). Yoga is of three kinds: 1. siddhi (perfection), 2. tuṣṭi (happiness), and 3. sthiti (residence). Siddhi is to see Kṛṣṇa after longing to meet Him. Tuṣṭi is to see Kṛṣṇa after a long separation. Sthiti is to live in the same place with Kṛṣṇa.

Vrajanātha: I understand sambhrama-prīti (respectful affection). Now please explain gaurava-prīti (love mixed with pride).

Gosvāmī: When he is proud to be able to embrace Kṛṣṇa, the devotee's affection is called gaurava-prīti. When the affection present in this rasa is increased by the vibhāvas and other bhāvas, it becomes gaurava-prīti. Lord Hari and the servants Lord Hari loves are the ālambanas of this love. In gaurava-prīti the devotee thinks that Kṛṣṇa is more important, more famous, more intelligent, and more strong than than the devotee. The devotee thinks Kṛṣṇa is his protector and affectionate parent. In this way Kṛṣṇa becomes the object (viṣaya) of the devotee's love. The affectionate devotees are of two kinds: 1. the devotees proud to be younger associates of Kṛṣṇa, and 2. the devotees proud to be Kṛṣṇa's sons. Sāraṇa, Gada, and Subhadra are among the devotees proud to be younger associates of Kṛṣṇa. Pradyumna, Cārudeṣṇa, and Sāmba are among the devotees proud to be Kṛṣṇa's sons. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's parental affection, gentle smiles, and other activities are the uddīpanas of this love. These affectionate devotees sit on a seat below that of Kṛṣṇa. The respectfully follow behind Kṛṣṇa. They renoucne their own wishes and fulfill Kṛṣṇa's wishes. These are the anubhāvas of this relationship. The saṇcārīs and vyabhicārīs of this relationship are like those already explained.

Vrajanātha: What does the word "gaurava" mean?

Gosvāmī: The word "gaurava", means "the situation where the devotee is proud to have Kṛṣṇa as his father or superior (guru)." Love that is mixed with pride to have such a relationship with Kṛṣṇa is called "gaurava-prīti". That is the sthāyī-bhāva of this rasa.

Vrajanātha: O master, now I understand the prīta-rasa (dāsya-rasa). Now please explain the rasa that is called “preya-bhakta-rasa" or "sakhya-rasa".

Gosvāmī: In this rasa Kṛṣṇa and His friends are the ālambanas. Kṛṣṇa, who is the prince of Vraja, and who holds the flute in His two hands, is the viṣaya. Kṛṣṇa's friends are the āśraya.

Vrajanātha: I wish to understand the different kinds of friends Kṛṣṇa's has and their qualities and features.

Gosvāmī: Their forms, qualities, and garments are like those of Kṛṣṇa's servants. However, Kṛṣṇa's friends are confident to approach Kṛṣṇa as equals. They are not filled with awe and veneration like Kṛṣṇa's servants. These friends are of two kind: 1. friends in Dvārakā, and 2. friends in Vraja. Arjuna, Bhīmasena, Draupadī, and Śrīdāmā Vipra are among the friends in Dvārakā and the other cities. Among them, Arjuna is the best. The friends in Vraja are always eager to see Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is their very life. They are the best of Kṛṣṇa's friends. In Vraja, Kṛṣṇa has four kinds of friends: 1. suhṛt (well-wishers), 2. sakhā (friends), 3. priya-sakhā (confidential friends), and 4. priya-narma-vayasya (intimate friends). Kṛṣṇa's well-wisher friends are a little bit older than Kṛṣṇa, and they have some parental affection for Him. Because of their being older than Kṛṣṇa, they always try to protect Him from any harm. As such, they sometimes bear weapons so that they can chastise any mischievous persons who want to do harm to Kṛṣṇa. Counted among the well-wisher friends are Subhadra, Maṇḍalībhadra, Bhadravardhana, Gobhaṭa, Yakṣa, Indrabhaṭa, Bhadrāṅga, Vīrabhadra, Mahāguṇa, Vijaya, and Balabhadra.* Among these friends Balabhadra and Maṇḍalībhadra are the best. Friends who are younger than Kṛṣṇa, who are always attached to Him, and who give Him all kinds of service are called ordinary friends, or simply friends. Such ordinary friends are called sakhās, and the names of some sakhās are Viśāla, Vṛṣabha, Ojasvī, Devaprastha, Varūthapa, Maranda, Kusumāpīḍa, Maṇibandha,

and Karandhama.* Among them Devaprastha is the best. The more confidential friends are called priya-sakhās and are almost Kṛṣṇa's age. Because of their very confidential friendship, their behavior is only on the basis of pure friendship. Some confidential friends are as follows: Śrīdāmā, Sudāmā, Dāmā, Vāsudāmā, Kiṅkinī, Stoka-kṛṣṇa, Aṁśu, Bhadrasena, Vilāsī, Puṇḍarīka, Viṭaṅka, and Kalaviṅka. There are other friends who are more confidential than the suhṛt, sakhā, and priya-sakhā friends. They are called priya-narmā, or intimate friends. Counted among the priya-narmā friends are Subala, Arjuna, Gandharva, Vasanta, and Ujjvala.* Among them, Ujjvala, who is always eager to speak joking words, is the best. Among these friends some are nitya-siddha (eternally perfect), others are suracara (demigods who eventually attained this rasa), and others are sādhaka (human beings who by performing devotional service eventually attained this rasa). The friends serve Kṛṣṇa in many different ways. Thus they perform a wonderful variety of different activities.

Vrajanātha: What are the uddīpanas of this rasa?

Gosvāmī: Kṛṣṇa's age, His beauty, His bugle, His flute, His conchshell, His pleasing attitude, His exceptional joking abilities, His great power, and His playful activities all provoke (uddīpana) love in friendship for Him. When Kṛṣṇa is spending His days as a cowherd boy, he is in the kaumāra and pauganḍa ages. In the kaiśora age, when Kṛṣṇa appeared in Gokula, He acted as a cowherd boy, and then, when He was sixteen, He went to Mathurā.

Vrajanātha: I request that you explain to me the anubhāvas of Kṛṣṇa's friends.

Gosvāmī: Kṛṣṇa played with His intimate friends sometimes by fighting or wrestling with their arms, sometimes by playing ball, and sometimes by playing chess. Sometimes they carried one another on their shoulders, and sometimes they exhibited their expertness at whirling logs. And the cowherd friends used to please Kṛṣṇa by sitting together with Him on couches or on swings, by lying together on their beds, by joking together, and by swimming in the pool,* by playing with the monkeys and other animals, and by dancing, singing, and other activities. All these activities are called anubhāva. The suhṛt friends used to sit together and advise one another what to do, sometimes inducing one another to be engaged in welfare work. The sakhā friends would offer betelnuts to one another, decorate one another's faces with tilaka, or smear pulp of candana on one another's bodies. The priya-sakhā friends wanted to defeat Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes they used to snatch His clothing or snatch away the flowers from His hands. Sometimes they would try to induce one another to decorate His body for Him, and failing this, they were always ready to fight, challenging one another to combat in wrestling. The priya-narma-sakhā friends would make arrangements for Kṛṣṇa's madhura-līlā. Like the servants, these friends also decorated Kṛṣṇa with forest flowers and fanned Him.

Vrajanātha: What are the sāttvika-bhāvas and saṇcāri-bhāvas of this rasa?

Gosvāmī: They are like those for dāsya-rasa, only a little more.

Vrajanātha: What is the sthāyī-bhāva for this rasa?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 3.3.105):

vimukta-sambhramā yā syād
viśrambhātmā ratir dvayoḥ

prāyaḥ samānayor atra
sā sakhyaṁ sthāyi-śabda-bhāk

"When there are dealings between Kṛṣṇa and His friends, which are completely devoid of any feelings of respect and they all treat one another on an equal level, such ecstatic love in friendship is called sthāyī."*

Vrajanātha: What does the word "viśrambha" mean here?
Gosvāmī: It is said (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 3.3.106):

viśrambho gāḍha-viśvāsa-
viśeṣo yantraṇojjhitaḥ

" `Viśrambha' means firm confidence that one is equal to his friend."

Vrajanātha: How does this kind of friendship develop?
Gosvāmī: The stages of sakhya-rasa are: prema, sneha, rāga, and praṇaya.
Vrajanātha: What are the qualities of praṇaya?
Gosvāmī: In this kind of love awe and veneration are completely absent, even in situations where they might be appropriate. Sakhya-rasa is very wonderful and unprecedented. Sakhya-rasa is very different from either dāsya-rasa or vātsalya-rasa. Among all the rasas, sakhya-rasa is especially dear to Kṛṣṇa. And why not? Kṛṣṇa and His friends have a very close relationship. In some ways the spiritual ecstasy of sakhya-rasa is almost similar to the ecstasy of mādhurya-rasa.

Chapter Thirty
Rasa-vicāra
The Rasas

Today, after honoring kichari prasādam, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha saw the samādhi of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Then they saw the temple of Śrī Ṭoṭa-Gopīnātha, and then they went to the temple of Śrī Rādhā-kānta. There they offered daṇḍavat obiesances to Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī and then sat down. They discussed many things with Śrī Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī. Meanwhile, Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī honored prasādam and then also sat down on his seat. Vrajanātha humbly asked him about vatsala-bhakti-rasa. Śrī Goplāla-guru Gosvāmī said, “In vātsalya-rasa, Kṛṣṇa is the viṣaya, and His elder relatives and superiors are the āśraya. Kṛṣṇa's body is dark and handsome. He has all virtues. He is gentle, a pleasing speaker, honest, sincere, shy, humble, respectful, and generous. The king and queen of

Vraja, Rohiṇī, the elder gopīs, Debakī, Kuntī, Vasudeva, and Sāndīpani Muni are included among the devotees in Vātsalya-rasa. Nanda and Yaśodā are the best among them. The uddīpanas include Kṛṣṇa's kaumāra age and other ages and His form, garments, childhood, restlessness, talking, joking, and pastimes.

Vrajanātha: What are the anubhāvas in this rasa?

Gosvāmī: The anubhāvas include smelling Kṛṣṇa's head, massaging His limbs, offering blessings to Him, giving orders to Him, caressing Him, protecting Him, and giving good advice to Him. Kissing Kṛṣṇa, hugging Him, and calling His name are also included among these activities.

Vrajanātha: What are the sāttvika ecstatic symptoms in this rasa?

Gosvāmī: The sāttvika ecstatic symptoms in this rasa include milk flowing from the breasts and the eight ecstatic symptoms that begin with becoming stunned.

Vrajanātha: What are the vyabhicāri-hbāvas in this rasa?

Gosvāmī: The vyabhicārīs in vātsalya-rasa are like those in prīta-rasa (dāsya-rasa).

Vrajanātha: What are the sthāyī-bhāvas in this rasa?

Gosvāmī: The sthāyī-bhāvas are mercy and love that is free from awe and veneration. The parental love felt by Yaśodā and other great devotees is naturally very strong. The sthāyī-bhāva in this rasa proceeds from prema, to sneha, to rāga. Lord Balarāma's rasa is a mixture of dāsya-rasa and vātsalya-rasa. King Yudhiṣṭhira's rasa is a mixture of vātsalya, dāsya, and sakhya. King Ugrasena's rasa is a mixture of vātsalya and sakhya. The rasa of Nakula, Sahadeva, Nārada Muni, and many others is a mixture of sakhya and dāsya. The rasa of Śiva, Garuḍa, Uddhava, and many others is a mixture of dāsya and sakhya.

Vrajanātha: O master, now we have heard your description of vātsalya-rasa. Please be merciful now and describe madhura-rasa, the most exalted of the rasas. By hearing your description we will become fortunate.

Gosvāmī: Madhura-rasa is said to be the most important of the bhakti-rasas. A living entity who has taken shelter of the material rasas may become devoted to the Supreme Lord and may thus gradually turn from the things of the material world and thus attain renunciation. A person who is not renounced in this way is not qualified to understand the spiritual rasas. Therefore the people in general are not qualified to understand the madhura-rasa. Madhura-rasa is very difficult to understand. It is not easy to find a person qualified to understand it. This rasa is very confidential. Therefore it is appropriate to keep it hidden from general view. Therefore, even though many things could be said about madhura-rasa, I will describe it only briefly.

Vrajanātha: O master, I am a follower of the cowherd boy Śrī Subala. Please consider what I am qualified to hear, and tell me only that much.

Gosvāmī: The priya-narma-sakhā friends of Kṛṣṇa are to a certain extent aware of the activities of madhura-rasa. Taking this into consideration, I will tell you what is right for you to hear, and I will not tell you what is not appropriate for you to hear.

Vrajanātha: What are the ālambanas of this rasa?

Gosvāmī: In this rasa the viṣaya is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the hero whose handsomeness has no equal. The transcendental āśraya is the devotees who relish pastimes with Him. Therefore the vraja-gopīs are the āśraya in this rasa. Of all the dear gopīs, Śrī Rādhā

is the best. Of the many uddīpanas in this rasa, the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute is the first. The anubhāvas of this rasa include sidelong glances and smiles. All the sāttvika-bhāvas are gloriously present in this rasa. All the vyabhicārīs, except for laziness and ferociousness, are also present in this rasa.

Vrajanātha: What are the sthāyī-bhāvas of this rasa?

Gosvāmī: the appropriate vibhāvas act to increase the love present in madhura-rasa. No vijātīya or svajātīya bhāvas can ever break the love that Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Mādhava feel for each other.

Vrajanātha: How many are the different varieties of madhura-rasa?

Gosvāmī: Madhura-rasa is of two kinds: 1. vipralambha (separation), and sambhoga (meeting).

Vrajanātha: What is vipralambha?

Gosvāmī: Vipralambha is of many kinds, including pūrva-rāga (the beginning of love), māna (jealous anger), and pravāsa (the beloved goes far away).

Vrajanātha: What is pūrva-rāga?

Gosvāmī: Pūrva-rāga is said to be the situation before the lover's have met.

Vrajanātha: What are māna and pravāsa?

Gosvāmī: Māna is well known. Pravāsa is when the lover loses the association of the beloved.

Vrajanātha: What is sambhoga?

Gosvāmī: When the two lovers meet and enjoy (bhoga) together, that is called sambhoga. I will not say anything more about madhura-rasa. Persons qualified to understand madhura-rasa should study the confidential description of it in the book Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi.

Vrajanātha: Now please briefly describe the gauṇa-bhakti-rasa (the secondary rasas of devotional service).

Gosvāmī: The seven gauṇa-rasas are: laughter, astonishment, chivalry, lamentation, anger, dread, and ghastliness. When one of these secondary rasas becomes very powerful, it occupies the place of the primary (mukhya) rasas. In this situation it seems to be independent of the primary rasas. Seemingly independent in this way, the secondary rasa then becomes nourished by its own sthāyī-bhāvas, vibhāvas, and other bhāvas. However, the truth is that the five rasas beginning with śānta-rasa are the only primary rasas. The seven secondary rasas, which begin with hāsya (laughter), are considered vyabhicārīs in relation to the five true primary rasas.

Vrajanātha: From my study of rhetoric (alaṅkāra), I have learned all these things about the rasas. I know all this about the secondary rasas, which begin with hāsya (laughter). I wish to know how these secondary rasas are related to the primary rasas of devotional service. Please be merciful and explain this.

Gosvāmī: It is said that among the five rasas some are friends (compatible) and some are enemies (incompatible). The friends of śānta-rasa are dāsya, ghastliness, dharma-vīra (chivalry in performing pious deeds), and astonishment. The friends of astonishment are dāsya, sakhya, vātsalya, and madhura-rasa. The enemies of śānta-rasa are madhura-rasa, yuddha-vīra (chivalry in battle), anger, and dread. The friends of dāsya-rasa are ghastliness, śānta-rasa, dharma-vīra (chivalry in performing pious deeds), and dāna-vīra (chivalry in giving charity). The enemies of dāsya-rasa are madhura-rasa, yuddha-vīra (chivalry in battle), and anger. The friends of sakhya-rasa are madhura-rasa, laughter, and yuddha-vīra (chivalry in

battle). The enemies of sakhya-rasa are vātsalya-rasa, ghastliness, anger, and dread. The friends of vātsalya-rasa are laughter, compassion, and dread. The enemies of vātsalya-rasa are madhura-rasa, yuddha-vīra (chivalry in battle), dāsya-rasa, and anger. The friends of madhura-rasa are laughter and sakhya-rasa. The enemies of madhura-rasa are vātsalya-rasa, ghastliness, śānta-rasa, anger, and dread. The friends of hāsya-rasa (laughter) are ghastliness, madhura-rasa, and vātsalya-rasa. The enemies of hāsya-rasa are compassion and dread. The friends of adbhuta-rasa (astonishment) are chivalry, śānta-rasa, dāsya-rasa, sakhya-rasa, vātsalya-rasa, and madhura-rasa. The enemies of adbhuta-rasa are anger and ghastliness. The friends of vīra-rasa (chivalry) are astonishment, laughter, sakhya-rasa, and dāsya-rasa. The enemy of vīra-rasa is dread. Some think that śānta-rasa is also an enemy of vīra-rasa. The friends of karuṇa-rasa (compassion) are anger and vātsalya-rasa. The enemies of karuṇa-rasa are chivalry, laughter, astonishment, and the sambhoga (meeting) part of madhura-rasa. The friends of raudra-rasa (anger) are compassion and chivalry. The enemies of raudra-rasa are laughter, madhura-rasa, and dread. The friends of bhayānaka-rasa (dread) are ghastliness and compassion. The enemies of bhayānaka-rasa are chivalry, madhura-rasa, laughter, and anger. The friends of bībhatsa-rasa (ghastliness) are śānta-rasa, laughter, and dāsya-rasa. The enemies of bībhatsa-rasa are madhura-rasa and sakhya-rasa. All the other rasas are closely related.

Vrajanātha: Please explain the result of these rasas meeting with each other.

Gosvāmī: When the friendly rasas meet, the result is very palatable. It is good when and aṅga-rasa (part) meets with an aṅgī-rasa (whole). The rasas may be primary or secondary, an aṅgī-rasa should meet with a friendly aṅga-rasa.

Vrajanātha: Please explain the difference been aṅgī (whole) and aṅga (part).

Gosvāmī: Whether it is a primary rasa or a secondary rasa, when one rasa dominates another, the dominating rasa is called aṅgī. The aṅga-rasa (dominated rasa) then becomes a saṇcāri-bhāva that nourishes the aṅgī-rasa. In the Viṣṇu-dharmottara Purāṇa is said:

rasānāṁ samavetānāṁ
yasya rūpaṁ bhaved bahu
sa mantavyo rasaḥ sthāyī
śeṣāḥ saṇcāriṇo matāḥ

"When rasas meet, the dominating rasa becomes the sthāyī-bhāva and the others become the saṇcāri-bhāvas."

Vrajanātha: How is it possible for one of the secondary (gauṇa) rasas to become an aṅgī-rasa (a dominating rasa)?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 4.8.45):

prodyan vibhāvanotkarṣāt
puṣṭiṁ mukhyena lambhitaḥ
kuṇcatā nija-nāthena

gauṇo 'py aṅgitvam aśnute

mukhyas tv aṅgatvam āsādya
puṣṇann indram upendravat
gauṇam evāṅginaṁ kṛtvā
nigūḍha-nija-vaibhavaḥ

anādi-vāsanodbhāsa-
vāsite bhakta-cetasi
bhāty eva na tu līnaḥ syād
esa saṇcāri-gauṇavat

aṅgī mukhyaḥ sva-mātrāṅgair
bhāvais tair abhivardhayan
svajātīyair vijātīyaiḥ
svatantraḥ san virājate

yasya mukhyasya yo bhakto
bhaven nitya-nijāśrayaḥ
aṅgī sa eva tatra syān
mukhyo 'py anyo 'ṅgatāṁ vrajet

"Lord Vāmanadeva is actually teh Supreme Personality of Godhead, but He appeared to have been `born' as one of the brothers of Indra. Although Vāmanadeva is sometimes taken as a less important demigod, He is actyually the maintainer of Indra, the king of the demigods. Thus, although sometimes Vāmanadeva is considered to be a subordinate demigod, His actual position is that of the supreme whole, the source of the entire demigod system. In the same way, a rasa which is actually prominent may sometimes appear to be manifested in a subordinate way, although its actual position is as the main or prominent loving feeling of a devotee."*

Vrajanātha: What happens when two enimical rasas meet?

Gosvāmī: It becomes like sweet nectar when something salty or sour is mixed in. This mixing of incompatible rasas is called "rasābhāsa".

Vrajanātha: Is the mixing of incompatible rasas never good in any situation?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 4.8.63-64):

dvayor ekatarasyeha
bādhyatvenāpavarṇane
smaryamāṇatarāpy uktau
sāmyena vacane 'pi ca

rasāntarena vyavadhau
taṭasthena priyeṇa vā
viṣayāśraya-bhede ca

gauṇena dviṣatāsaha
ity ādiṣu na vairasyaṁ
vairiṇo janayed yutiḥ

"When an opposing argument is to be refuted, or when remembering something, or when speaking impartially, or in a favorable way one stands between two rasas, or when there is a difference of the lover (āśraya) and beloved (viṣaya), then the meeting of incompatible rasas does not produced an unpalatable result."

In this way it is seen that even though dāsya-rasa and vātsalya rasa are enemies, when they are present, at different times, in the relationship of King Yudhiṣṭhira with Lord Kṛṣṇa, there is no incompatibility. Although these two rasas are enemies, they are not present simultaneously. Sometimes, when the ecstasy of bhāva is very intense, there is no incompatibility when incompatible rasas meet. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 4.8.83):

kvāpy acintya-mahā-śaktau
mahā-puruṣa-śekhare
rasāvali-samāveśaḥ
svādāyaivopajāyate

"Sometimes, when they are present in very exalted and powerful personalities, many different incompatible rasas join to become compatible."

Vrajanātha: I heard from the Vaiṣṇavas that Lord Mahāprabhu was not very happy to hear words contaminated with rasābhāsa, and he would not agree to hear songs contaminated with that defect. Now I understand the fault of rasābhāsa. Now please kindly explain the different kinds of rasābhāsa.

Gosvāmī: Rasābhāsa, or incompatible mixtures of mellows, may be classified as uparasa (false expression), anurasa (imitation), and aparasa (perverted or misrepresented mellows). In this way there is great, intermediate, or lesser expression of rasābhāsa.

Vrajanātha: What is uparasa?

Gosvāmī: Pushed by sthāyī-bhāva, vibhāva, anubhāva, and the other bhāvas, the twelve rasas may become uparasas. When sthāyī-bhāva, vibhāva, or anubhāva are manifested in a distorted way, then uparasa is manifested.

Vrajanātha: What is anurasa?

Gosvāmī: When the twelve secondary rasas are manifested, but they have no relation to Kṛṣṇa, then they are anurasa. When chivalry and other like rasas only approach the borderline of having a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, they are also considered anurasa.

Vrajanātha: If these sentiments have no relationship with Kṛṣṇa, then they are not rasas at all. They are only material. What is the distinguishing feature of anurasas that makes them different from material feelings?

Gosvāmī: Anurasas do not have a direct relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Some

examples of anurasas are the gopīs' laughing (hāsya-rasa) when they saw a monkey dance, and Nārada's astonishement (adbhuta-rasa) when he heard two parrots debating Vedānta in Bhaṇḍīravana. In these examples one can see a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, but it is distant. One cannot see a direct relationship with Kṛṣṇa. In such a situation there is anurasa.

Vrajanātha: What is aparasa?

Gosvāmī: If Kṛṣṇa becomes the object of His enemy's laughter or other unfavorable sentiment, that is called aparasa. When he saw Kṛṣṇa flee from the battlefield, Jarāsandha laughed again and again. That is an example of aparasa. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu):

bhāvāḥ sarve tad-ābhāsāḥ
rasābhāsāś ca kecana
amī proktā rasābhijñaiḥ
sarve 'pi rasanād rasāḥ

"Some call these incompatible mellows `tad-ābhāsa' and other call them `rasābhāsa'. But persons who know the truth about the rasas use the word `rasa' to refer to the compatible, pleasing rasas only."

After hearing these words, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha, tears in their eyes and their words choked up, at once fell before the lotus feet of their spiritual master and said:

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

"I offer my respectful obeisances
unto my spiritual master, who with the torchlight of knowledge has opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance."*

Filled with the bliss of spiritual love, Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī embraced the two disciples. With a sincere heart he blessed them, "May the truth of the rasas be manifest before you."

Every day Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha discussed the spiritual truth with Śrī Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī. They would alos accept the caraṇāmṛta from Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī's feet and the nectar remnants of the prasādam foods that had touched his lips. Some days they stayed in their own bhajana-kuṭira. Other days they would visit Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura's samādhi. Other days they would visit the temple of Śrī Gopīnātha. Other days they would see the many pure Vaiṣṇavas performing devotional service under the siddha bakula tree. In these ways the two

devotees became plunged in the nectar ocean of devotional service. Sometimes they would see the places where Lord Mahāprabhu was overcome with ecstatic love, places described in Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Stava-mālā and Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Stavāvalī. Sometimes they would join the pure Vaiṣṇavas in chanting the holy names of Lord Hari. In this way Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha gradually became advanced in devotional service. Vijaya-kumāra thought, "Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī briefly described madhura-rasa to us. I should hear a more detailed explanation of it from his mouth. Let Vrajanātha remain plunged in his mellows of sakhya-rasa. I will go alone and learn all the truths of madhura-rasa." By the kind help of Dhyānacandra Gosvami, Vijaya-kumāra got a copy of Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi. He studied that book. When any doubts arose, he placed his questions before Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī.

One afternoon Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha were sitting by the seashore, looking at the waves, and observing how the wave-filled ocean was like life. Vijaya-kumāra said, "No one could say what would happen next in life. We should learn about the patha of rāga-mārga (rāgānuga-bhakti) from Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī." Vrajanātha said, "Śrī Dhyanacandra Gosvami has written a book about rāga-mārga. I have seen it. If our spiritual master teaches us that book we will gain a great result. Good. I will make a copy of that book." After coming to this conclusion, he approached Śrī Dhyānacandra and requested a copy of the book. Śrī Dhyānacandra replied, "I cannot give you a copy. You must first get permission from Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī.

Then the two of them approached Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī and placed their request before him. He said, "Good. Get a copy and then return." With these words as their permission, Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha got a copy of the book. They thought that at appropriate times they would approach Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī and learn the book under his guidance.

Śrī Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī was learned in all the scriptures. Especially in the scriptures that describe devotional service to Lord Hari, he had no equal. He was the foremost of Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī's disciples. Thinking them good candidates for devotional service, he taught Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha everything about the path of devotional service. Again and again they approached Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī's holy feet, and again and again Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha had all their doubts answered. They learned about Lord Mahāprabhu's daily activities and Lord Kṛṣṇa's daily pastimes. Following these pastimes, they worshiped the Lord during the eight portions of the day.

Chapter Thirty-one
Madhura-Rasa-vicāra
Madhura-rasa

Autumn came. After five hours of night, the moon rose. Vijaya-kumāra

thought, "I should see Śraddhāvali and Sundarācala. Vijaya-kumāra had studied the method of worshiping the Lord in pure madhura-rasa. He liked only Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja and nothing else. He was always rapt in thinking of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes with the gopīs in Vraja. He had heard that Lord Mahāprabhu saw Sundarācala as the land of Vraja. Vijaya-kumāra set out for Sundarācala. He crossed the Balagaṇḍi and began to proceed toward Śraddhāvali. As he walked he saw gardens on both sides. Finally Vṛndāvana appeared before him. Plunged in an ocean of spiritual love, Vijaya-kumāra said, "Ah! How fortunate I have become today! Today I can see Vraja-purī, which even Brahmā and the demigods cannot easily attain. Here is a forest garden. Here, in a bower of mālatī and mādhavī vines, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the master of my life, is joking with the gopīs." Pushing aside all feelings of awe and veneration, agitated Vijaya-kumāra ran to that place. As he was running, Vijaya-kumāra fainted and fell unconscious to the ground. A gentle breeze blew of Vijaya-kumāra. After a short time Vijaya-kumāra became conscious again. He looked in one direction and then another. Not seeing the Lord's pastimes, he became unhappy at heart. Eventually Vijaya-kumāra returned home. He went to bed. He did not tell anyone what he had seen. The sight of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja made Vijaya-kumāra's heart blossom with joy. In his heart Vijaya-kumāra thought, “Today I have seen something very confidential. Tomorrow I will tell my spiritual master." After a few moments he remembered that a person who sees the Lord's confidential pastimes should not reveal that fact to anyone. Thinking about this again and again, he gradually fell asleep. When he rose in the morning he could think of nothing else. He honored prasādam, went ot the home of Kāśī-miśra, and offered daṇḍavat obeisances to his spiritual master. His spiritual master respectfully embraced him and asked about his welfare. Vijaya-kumāra kept his eyes on his spiritual master's lotus feet. With a steady heart he asked about the madhura-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra said, "O master, you have been merciful to me without limit. I would like to ask a question about the confidential truths of the splendid madhura-rasa. I have been reading Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi, and some parts of it I do not understand." Hearing this, the spiritual master replied, "Bābā, you are a very dear disciple of mine. You may place your questions before me. I will answer as far as I am able.

Vijaya-kumāra said, "O master, it is said that among the five primary rasas, the madhura-rasa is the most confidential. And why not? Madhura-rasa eternally possesses all the virtues present in śānta, dāsya, sakhya, and vātsalya rasas. madhura-rasa is the most wonderful and beautiful of all rasas. How can there be any doubt? Persons who follow the path of dry renunciation are completely unqualified to understand the truth of madhura-rasa. On the other hand, the path followed by the materialists is not a good path to follow. The Vraja madhura-rasa is completely different from material sexual activities. The madhura-rasa cannot be understood very easily. If the madhura-rasa is so wonderful, why is it so much like the affairs of ordinary men and women in the material world?

Gosvāmī: Bābā Vijaya-kumāra, you know very well that the wonderful variety present in the material world is only a perverted reflection of the wonderful variety present in the spiritual world. The confidential truth here is that in a reflection everything is the reverse of the original. Thus what is highest in the original is

lowest in the reflection, and what is lowest in the original is highest in the reflection. When we look in a mirror, we see our limbs reflected in reverse. That is easy to understand. In the same way, when the shadow of the Supreme Lord's inconceivable potency is reflected in the material world, that reflected image is in reverse. Thus when the spiritual rasas are reflected in the material world, that reflected image is in reverse. The Absolute truth has a great variety of unprecedented and wonderful happinesses. The highest stage of those happinesses is the rasas. The conditioned souls think of these rasas only in terms of their material reflections. Some thinkers claim that the spiritual truth has no variety. These persons try to become one with the Supreme. They think variety exists only in the material world and in the world of spirit there is no variety. These persons cannot understand the truth about the spiritual world. However, a person who takes shelter of logic and simple common sense can easily understand the truth. The reality is that the Supreme is the resting place of all rasas. Therefore wonderful variety exists in Him. The great variety of material rasas are all reflected from Him. Therefore, by looking at the material rasas we can understand something of the original spiritual rasas, which cannot be perceived by the material senses. A great variety of rasas exist within the Supreme. That much may be understood. The lowest rasa in the spiritual world is the peaceful rasa called śānta-rasa. Above that is dāsya-rasa. Above dāsya-rasa is sakhya-rasa. Above sakhya-rasa is vātsalya-rasa. Then, above them all, is madhura-rasa. However, when these rasas are reflected in the material world, their positions are all inverted. Thus, in the material world the madhura-rasa is in the lowest position. Above that is vātsalya-rasa. Above vātsalya-rasa is sakhya-rasa. Above sakhya-rasa is dāsya-rasa. Then, above them all, is śānta-rasa. They who analyze the different rasas in the material world come to the conclusion that madhura-rasa is the lowest of all. That is why the activities of madhura-rasa in the material world are very unimportant and are a source of embarrassment. However, in the spiritual world the madhura-rasa is the most pure of all rasas. It is filled with purity, splendor, and wonderful sweetness. In the spiritual world when Kṛṣṇa, the supreme male, meets with His potencies, who are all female, Their activities are supremely pure. Their activities are the root of spiritual reality. However, the perverted reflection of those activities in the material world is degraded and a source of embarrassment. The truth is that Kṛṣṇa is the only male, and His potencies are all female. Therefore, in this rasa in the spiritual world there is nothing that is impious or goes against the teachings of religion. In the material world one individual soul is the enjoyer and another individual soul is the enjoyed. In this way the material madhura-rasa contradicts the original spiritual reality. That is why the material madhura-rasa is the resting place of revulsion and embarrassment. The truth is that it is not possible for one individual soul to be the enjoyer of another individual soul. All individual souls are meant to be enjoyed, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is the only enjoyer. It is because it is so much in opposition to the true nature of the individual soul that the material madhura-rasa is so abominable, repulsive, and embarrassing. How can there be any doubt? Look, consider the nature of a reflection in a mirror. There must be some similarity between the reflected material couples in the material world and their origin in Lord k's supreme pure transcendental pastimes. However, the difference between them is that one is the most abominable and the other is the most exalted.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, now my life is a success. I fully accept your very

pleasing conclusion. Now my doubt is destroyed. Now I am able to understand the madhura-rasa present in the spiritual world. Ah, the very word "madhura-rasa" is sweet. It is spiritual and free from the touch of matter. It is the source of supreme transcendental bliss. Who is so unfortunate that he will prefer the happiness of śānta-rasa to the sweet happiness of madhura-rasa? O master, I am very eager to understand the madhura-rasa. Please be merciful to me.

Gosvāmī: Bābā, please listen carefully, and I will speak. In madhura-rasa Kṛṣṇa is the viṣaya and His beloveds are the āśraya. Their meeting is the ālambana.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the features of Kṛṣṇa when He is the viṣaya in madhura-rasa?

Gosvāmī: Ah! That is a very pleasing question. Kṛṣṇa's complexion is the color of a new raincloud. He is charming. All His features are sweet and charming. He is the strongest. His youthfulness is always new and fresh. He speaks eloquently and sweetly. He is intelligent. glorious, sober, wise, clever, cheerful, grateful, expert, controlled by love, profound, the best, famous, charming to all women, always new and fresh, the enjoyer of incomparable transcendental pastimes, handsome, the most dear, and expert at playing the flute. The supreme male Kṛṣṇa has many transcendental qualities like these. The glory of all the Kāmadevas is at once eclipsed by a mere glimpse of the glory of Kṛṣṇa's feet. Lord Kṛṣṇa's sidelong glance enchants the hearts of all. Kṛṣṇa is the great treasure of transcendental pastimes. He is the good fortune attained by the gopīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: Kṛṣṇa has a great host of wonderful spiritual qualities. Kṛṣṇa is the only hero of the wonderful and spiritual madhura-rasa. Now I can fully understand all this. Previously I studied many scriptures. I had praise only for material logic. Even though I would sometimes meditate on Lord Kṛṣṇa, I did not have firm faith in Him. But now, by your mercy, a little bit of devotion, devotion that is the root of attraction to Kṛṣṇa, has risen in my heart. Now that my heart has become purified by devotion, I have attained the direct perception of Lord Kṛṣṇa. I turned away from Kṛṣṇa. But still Kṛṣṇa never left my heart. Ah, how merciful He is! Now I can understand these words (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 2.5.131-132):

sarvathaiva durūho 'yam
abhaktair bhagavad-rasaḥ
tat pādāmbuja-sarvasvair
bhaktair evānurasyate

"Nondevotees cannot understand the transcendental mellows experienced between the devotee and the Lord. In all respects, this is very difficult, but one who has dedicated everything to the lotus feet of Kṛṣṇa can taste the transcendental mellows.*

vyatītya bhāvanā-vartma
yaś camatkāra-bhāra-bhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bāḍhaṁ
svadate sa raso mataḥ

"When one transcends the status of ecstatic love and thus becomes situated on the highest platform of pure goodness, one is understood to have clensed the heart of all material contamination. In that pure stage of life, one taste this nectar, and this tasting capacity is called `rasa', or transcendental mood."*

O master, now I can directly understand that the true rasas are the splendid spiritual rasas in the heart. The so-called rasas in the material world are not the true rasas. The true rasas are in the spiritual world. Each living being is a tiny particle of spirit, a soul. When the soul becomes rapt in the meditation of devotional service (bhakti-samādhi), then the spiritual rasas are manifested in him. By the mercy of the spiritual master one is able to understand both the soul's pure original, spiritual identity, and the soul's conditioned existence in the material world. One who understands this has no doubts.

Gosvāmī: Bābā Vijaya-kumāra, all you say is true. To further remove any doubts you may still have, I will explain more about the spiritual truth. Tell me: What is the relationship of pure truth and mixed truth?

Vijaya-kumāra: (offering daṇḍavat obeisances to his spiritual master's feet) O master, only by your mercy I will be able to speak properly. If my explanations are faulty, then please be merciful and correct me. That which truly exists is called “existence" (sattā). Thus it is said that there is “true existence of a particular place" (sthiti-sattā), “true existence of a form" (rūpa-sattā), "true existence of certain qualities" (guṇa-sattā), and "true existence of certain activities" (kriyā-sattā). True existence (sattā) has neither beginning nor end. True existence is manifested in an eternal present, uncontaminated by past or future. It is filled with many great wonders and it is perfectly pure in nature. That is pure existence (śuddha-sattva). Pure existence is manifested by the Lord's pure spiritual potency (śuddha-cit-śakti). The material world of māyā, where past and future are manifested, is only a shadow of the original spiritual potency (cit-śakti). When something is seen to begin its existence in the world of māyā, that beginning comes from the material mode of passion. When something is seen to come to an end in the world of māyā, that ending comes form the material mode of ignorance. These kinds of existence are all mixed. The pure spirit soul, however, is unmixed, pure existence (śuddha-sattva). The form, qualities, and activities of the pure soul are all pure existence (śuddha-sattva). However, when the individual spirit soul is imprisoned by māyā, the the soul's qualities are seen to be mixed with the material modes of passion and ignorance.

Gosvāmī: Bābā, your analysis is very subtle. Now please tell me: How does the living entity's heart become enlightened with pure existence?

Vijaya-kumāra: As long as he remains imprisoned in the material world, the soul does not manifest its original, pure existence. Only the is the soul's original, pure form manifested. The soul's original form is not manifested as a result of impersonal speculation (jñāna-ceṣṭā) or fruitive work (karma-ceṣṭā). How can one become clean if he washes himself with dirt? Spiritual knowledge is like fire. With the fire of knowledge one should burn away the contamination of materialism. How does one attain the spiritual happiness that comes from washing away the

contamination of matter? By the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas one attains devotional service. By engaging in devotional service one regains his original spiritual identity. When that original identity is regained, the heart becomes effulgent with pure spiritual existence.

Gosvāmī: Bābā, I am very happy to teach a qualified student like you. What other questions do you have?

Vijaya-kumāra: Previously you said that there are four kinds of heroes: dhīrodātta, dhīra-lalita, dhīra-praśānta, and dhīrodhatta. Which kind of hero is Kṛṣṇa?

Gosvāmī: Kṛṣṇa si all four of these heroes. If one asks how a personality can be beheld in four quite opposing ways, the answer is that the Lord is the reservoir of all transcendental qualities and activities. Therefore, His different aspects can be analyzed according to the exhibition of His limitless variety of pastimes, and as such there is no contradiction.*

Vijaya-kumāra: If you are merciful, then please kindly explain all this. (speaking these words, Vijaya-kumāra fell, with tears in his eyes, at the feet of his spiritual master. The saintly Gosvāmī lifted him up, embraced him, and, tears flowing from his own eyes, began to speak.

Gosvāmī: In madhura-rasa Kṛṣṇa assumes two roles: that of husband and that of paramour.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, Kṛṣṇa is our eternal husband. How can He be a paramour?

Gosvāmī: This is very confidential. In the realm of spiritual activities, madhura-rasa is a secretly hidden jewel. Among the many jewels of madhura-rasa, the jewel where Kṛṣṇa assumes the role of paramour (pārakīya) is the best, the Kaustubha jewel.

Vijaya-kumāra: The devotees who have taken shelter of madhura-rasa worship Kṛṣṇa as their husband. What is this secret, that Kṛṣṇa can be a paramour?

Gosvāmī: If the Supreme is impersonal and without qualities, then there is no possibility of a rasa with Him. If He is impersonal, the Veda's declaration, "raso vai saḥ" (The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the reservoir of transcendental rasas) has no meaning. If the Supreme has neither qualities nor happiness, then He cannot have any contact with rasa. Only if He has qualities may He have contact with rasa. The rasas are manifested in the heart. The rasas cannot be manifested in relation to an impersonal qualityless Supreme. They are manifest only in relation to the Supreme Person. In santa-rasa the Lord's supreme power and opulence are prominent. The dāsya-rasa, where the Lord's position as the supreme master is prominent, is above śānta-rasa. The sakhya-rasa, where the idea that one is the Lord's equal is prominent, is above dāsya-rasa. The vātsalya-rasa, where the idea that one is the Lord's superior is prominent, is above sakhya-rasa. The madhura-rasa is above the vātsalya-rasa. It is above all the other rasas. In madhura-rasa, pārakīya is above svakīya. These two are based on “ātmā" (myself) and "para" (another person). The one means that one is Kṛṣṇa's, and the other means that one belongs to another. These two opposites are both manifested in relation to the Supreme Person. In one part of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, svakīya love is manifested, and in another part of His pastimes parakīya love is manifested. When the hero and heroine passionately meet, that is the wonderful parakīya-rasa. Parakiya-rasa is much greater than svakīya-rasa. The svakīya-rasa is dry in comparison, and the

parakīya-rasa is blossoming with happiness. When Kṛṣṇa is the hero, parakīya-rasa is not at all abominable. If an individual soul is the hero, then one can consider whether his actions follow the path of religion or oppose it. If an individual soul is the hero in parakīya love, then that is very abominable. Therefore philosophers affirm that an individual soul who becomes a paramour is very reprehensible. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī explains that in books of ordinary material rhetoric (alaṅkāra-śāstra) it is accepted that a paramour is in an inferior position. This is true for a material paramour, but it is not true for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the spiritual Supreme Personality of Godhead, the origin of all incarnations.

Vijaya-kumāra: Lord Kṛṣṇa then appears as both husband and paramour. Please first explain His role as husband.

Gosvāmī: When He accepts a girl's hand in marriage, then He is the husband.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of His role as paramour and His parakīya-rasa?

Gosvāmī: When love becomes everything for Him, and when, When, passionately desiring another's wife, He jumps over the rules of religion, then He is a paramour.When He ignores the religious rules that govern this life and the next, and when He has only contempt for the institution of marraige, and when He thus offers Himself to a girl, then Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys the parakīya-rasa. In parakīya-rasa there are two kinds of heroines: 1. an unmarried girl, and 2. the wife of another.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of svakīya-rasa?

Gosvāmī: When He accepts a girl's hand in marriage, becomes her husband, and protects her, and when she is always faithful to Him, that is svakīya-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: When does Śrī Kṛṣṇa accept the svakīya and parakīya rasas?

Gosvāmī: When He marries the queens in Dvārakā, He accepts svakīya-rasa, and when He becoems the lover of the girls of Vraja, He accepts the parakīya-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the position of these two kinds of beloveds in Lord Kṛṣṇa's unmanifested pastimes?

Gosvāmī: That is very confidential. You know that Lord Kṛṣṇa's opulences are four quarters. Three quarters are the spiritual world, and one quarter is the material world. Within that one quarter of the Lord's opulences exist the material universes that have fourteen planetary systems. On the boundary that divides the material and spiritual world flows the Virajā River. On the farther shore of the Virajā is the spiritual world. The spiritual world is enclosed by a wall of light called the Brahmajyoti. Beyond that wall may be seen the spiritual sky of Vaikuṇṭha. In Vaikuṇṭha the Lord's opulence is prominent. There Lord Nārāyaṇacandra, the king of kings, is served by numberless spiritual opulences. In Vaikuṇṭha the Lord accepts only the svakīya-rasa. There Śrī, Bhū, Nīlā, and the other wives serve their husband, Lord Nārāyaṇa. Above Vaikuṇṭha is Goloka. In Vaikuṇṭha the Dvaraka queens serve Kṛṣṇa according to svakīya-rasa. In Goloka the girls of Vraja serve Kṛṣṇa according to their own rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: If Goloka is Lord Kṛṣṇa's highest abode, why is Vraja glorified as the most wonderful place?

Gosvāmī: Vraja, Gokula, Vṛndāvana, and many other places are all situated within Māthura-maṇḍala. Goloka is the highest abode. When it is manifested within the material world, Goloka is called Māthura-maṇḍala. They are both the highest abode.

Vijaya-kumāra: How is that possible? I don't understand.

Gosvāmī: It is possible by the power of Lord Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable potency. Lord Kṛṣṇa's inconceivable potency cannot be understood by material thought processes or material logic. When Lord Kṛṣṇa manifests His transcendental pastimes in the material world, the spiritual realm called Goloka comes to the material world and is then called Māthura-maṇḍala. In the Lord's unmanifested pastimes (aprakaṭa-līlā), that same world is called Goloka. Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pastimes are eternal. When one is qualified to see pure spirit, then he can see the world of Goloka. Then he sees that the Gokula present in the material world is the same as Goloka in the spiritual world. However, when a person's intelligence is tortured by material ideas, he cannot see that Goloka is the same as Gokula. He sees that they are different. He sees that Gokula is part of the material world.

Vijaya-kumāra: How does one become qualified to see Goloka?

Gosvāmī: Śrī Śukadeva Gosvāmī explains (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.28.14-15):

iti saṇcintya bhagavān
mahā-kāruṇiko vibhuḥ
darśayām āsa svaṁ lokaṁ
gopānāṁ tamasaḥ param

satyaṁ jñānam anantaṁ yad
brahma-jyotiḥ sanātanam
yad dhi paśyanti munayo
guṇāpāye samāhitāḥ

"Kṛṣṇa immediately thought that His devotees in Vrndavana should be informed of the spiritual sky and the Vaikuntha planets therein. Thus Kṛṣṇa showed them the eternal, ever-existing spiritual sky, which is unlimited and full of knowledge. Information of the spiritual sky can be had only from great sages and saintly persons who have already surpassed the influence of the three material modes of nature."*

Bābā, with Kṛṣṇa's mercy, no one can see Goloka. It was by His mercy that the people of Vraja were able to see Goloka. Goloka is the supreme spiritual abode, far beyond the material world. It contains all wonders. It is eternal and spiritual. It is the home limitless spiritual pastimes. The spiritual effulgence called Brahmajoyti is the eternal effulgence emanating from Goloka. The devotees who have completely renounced the material world are able to see Goloka as it is.

Vijaya-kumāra: Are all liberated souls able to see Goloka?

Gosvāmī: Among millions and millions of liberated souls it is hard to find a single devotee of the Supreme Lord. Persons who follow the path of astanga-yoga or the path of impersonal speculation may attain liberation, but in that kind of liberation their forget their original spiritual identity in the spiritual world of Vraja. Devotees who are attracted by the Supreme Lord's opulences also cannot see the world of Goloka. Following their hearts, they go to Vaikuṇṭha and there they

serve the Supreme Lord in His form of opulence and majesty. Among the devotees who worship Kṛṣṇa according to the rasas of Vraja, only they who by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy are released from Māyā's prison are able to see Goloka.

Vijaya-kumāra: Well, if only these few liberated souls can see Goloka, then why is Goloka described in Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā, Hari-vaṁśa, Padma Purāṇa, and other scriptures? Simply by worshiping Him in Vraja one can easily attain Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Why, then, do all these scriptures describe Goloka?

Gosvāmī: A rasika devotee who worships Kṛṣṇa according to the rasas of Vraja Lord Kṛṣṇa lifts from the material world and places in Goloka. Such a person can see Goloka in full.Among the pure devotees who worship Kṛṣṇa in Vraja some very few are also able to see Goloka. There are two kinds of devotees: siddha (perfect devotees) and sādhaka (aspiring devotees). The sādhaka devotees are not qualified to see Goloka. The siddha devotees are of two kinds: vastu-siddha (perfect in reality) and svarūpa-siddha (perfect in conception). The vastu-siddha devotees are persons who by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy are taken directly to Goloka. The svarūpa-siddha devotees are persons who, although they are not taken, by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy, from the material world and placed in Goloka, can still see the true form of Goloka. There are many kinds of devotees whose eyes of devotional service are gradually opened, by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Some can see a little of Goloka, some can see more of Goloka, and some can see a great deal of Goloka. According to the degree they have attained Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy, to that degree they can see Goloka. In the stage of sādhana the devotee can have a brief glimpse of Goloka in Gokula in the material world. When a devotee leaves the stage of sādhana-bhakti and attains bhāva-bhakti, then he can see Goloka to a greater extent. When a devotee attains the stage of prema, then he can see Goloka to a very great extent.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what is the difference between Goloka and Vraja?

Gosvāmī: Whatever can be seen in Vraja can also be seen in Goloka. However, persons with different kinds of qualification may see Vraja differently. The truth is that Goloka and Vṛndāvana are not different in any way. However, there may differences in different persons' ability to see. A person tightly bound by the mode of ignorance will see Vraja as just another place in the material world. A person influenced by the mode of passion will see Vraja as a pleasant place. A person in the mode of pure goodness will see Vraja more clearly than the others. In this way different people are more or less able to properly see the land of Vraja.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I can understand a little. Please give one or two examples to help me understand. Examples comparing things in the spiritual world to things in the material world are always imperfect. Still, they can be useful, for the nature of one thing can be hinted by comparing it to another.

Gosvāmī: This is a very difficult topic. If one has a direct spiritual vision, he is forbidden to reveal it to others. If by Kṛṣṇa's mercy one is able to see directly, one must keep that revelation always a secret. I will repeat to you what the previous ācāryas have taught about this. Anything more than that you will soon see for yourself by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Pure spiritual perception exists in Goloka. Material ideas do not exist there at all. To nourish the rasas, the Lord's spiritual potency (cit-śakti) manifests all wonderful states of being (bhāva). In this way many ideas and conceptions are manifested. In Goloka Kṛṣṇa is beginningless. He is never born. Still, to help the Lord's pastimes, the Lord's spiritual potency convinces Nanda and Yaśodā that they are Kṛṣṇa's parents. In this way the

vātsalya-rasa is manifested. In madhura-rasa the wonderful varieties of vipralambha (separation) and sambhoga (enjoying pastimes together) are also manifested by the Lord's spiritual potency. In this way the parakīya-rasa and svakīya-rasa are manifested in an eternal present (nitya-vartamāna). Look, in this way many different ideas and beliefs are manifested by Yogamāyā in Vraja. Yogamāyā convinces Yaśodā that Kṛṣṇa was born in her maternity-room. Yogamāyā convinces the gopīs that they were married to Abhimanyu, Govardhana-gopa, and others. In this way the parakīya-rasa is nourished. These various ideas and beliefs created by Yogamāyā are not really untrue. They are part of the total reality of Goloka. Thus the different residents of Goloka do indeed see things differently.

Vijaya-kumāra: Should one purify his thoughts by meditating on tbe Lord's pastimes in the eight periods of the day (aṣṭa-kālīna-līlā) and in this way be able to see the Lord in meditation?

Gosvāmī: It is not like that. One first sees the Lord's pastimes in Vraja, and then one remembers those pastimes of the eight periods of the day. By engaging in devotional service one obtains Kṛṣṇa's mercy, and then the Lord's pastimes are manifested before one. There is no need to first purify one's thoughts by meditating on the Lord's pastimes.

Vijaya-kumāra: It is said:

yādṛśī bhāvanā yasya
siddhir bhavati tādṛśī

"One attains a perfection that corresponds to his meditation."

Does this mean that when one attains perfection he will obtain what he meditated on during the period of sādhana-bhakti? therefore one should strive to meditate purely on Goloka.

Gosvāmī: What you say is true. All the ideas and beliefs present in Vraja are pure truths. There is nothing imperfect or wrong about them. If there were anything untrue about them, they would be faulty. When one perfectly practices sādhana-bhakti, he attains perfection. What one purely meditates on during the practice of sādhana-bhakti, one directly sees when one attains perfection. Try to perfrom the duties of sādhana-bhakti nicely. Do not try to purify these activities. To purify them is beyond your power. With His inconceivable potency, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself will purify them. If you try to purify them yourself, you will be pricked by the thorn of material ideas. If Kṛṣṇa is merciful to you, the fruit you pick will not be bitter.

Vijaya-kumāra: Today I have become fortunate. I have one more question. Do the Lord's wives in Dvārakā reside in Vaikuṇṭha? If not, do they reside in Goloka?

Gosvāmī: All bliss is found in Viakuṇṭha in the spiritual world. There is no attainment higher than Vaikuṇṭha. Dvārakā and all the cities where the Lord resides are manifested in Vaikuṇṭha. Each in her own abode, the Lord's wives in

these different cities serve the Lord there. As far as madhura-rasa is concerned, only the girls of Vraja reside in Goloka. Whatever pastimes were manifested in Vraja in the material world are all manifested in Goloka. Also, in the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad it is seen that Rukmiṇī-devī, following the svakīya-rasa, enjoys pastimes in Māthura-purī in Goloka.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, the activities of parakīya-rasa are manifested in a certain sequence in Vraja in the material world. Are they all manifested in exactly the same sequence in Goloka?

Gosvāmī: They are all exactly the same. They are all spiritual. Only the beliefs created by Yogamāyā are absent. Those beliefs do not remain there. Only the pure spiritual part remains there. I cannot explain that any more clearly. By the power of your devotional activities you will come to understand what I mean.

Vijaya-kumāra: At the time of cosmic devastation the entire material world disappears. How, then, is it possible that the Supreme Lord enjoys pastimes eternally in His abode of Vraja in the material world?

Gosvāmī: The Lord's pastimes in Vraja are eternal in two ways. Traveling in a great circle through the numberless material universes, the Lord manifests all His pastimes, one after another. In this way the Lord's pastimes are manifested eternally. Also, the Lord's pastimes always exist in the spiritual eternal present (nitya-vartamāna), even they they may be invisible to material eyes (aprakaṭa).

Vijaya-kumāra: If the Lord openly manifests (prakaṭa-līlā) His pastimes in every material universe, dos that mean that every universe has its own land of Vraja?

Gosvāmī: Yes, it does. Goloka has the power to manifest itself anywhere. In every material universe the abode of the Lord's pastimes is manifested. The world of Goloka also manifests itself in the heart of every devotee of the Lord. Why does the land of Māthura (Māthura-maṇḍala) continue to exist in the material world, even though the Lord no longer manifests (prakaṭa) His pastimes there?

Vijaya-kumāra: The Lord continues to enjoy pastimes there eternally, even though those pastimes cannot be seen by material eyes (aprakaṭa). Also, to show mercy to the devotees, the Lord keeps His abode manifested in the material world.

In that way the day's conversation ended. Again and again thinking of the Lord's pastimes during the eight periods of the day (aṣṭa-kālīya-sevā), Vijaya-kumāra returned to his residence.

Chapter Thirty-two
Madhura-Rasa-vicāra
Madhura-rasa

Vijaya-kumāra honored prasādam and took rest at night. Vrajanātha completed his devotional activities, chanted the holy names of Lord Hari on his beads, and went to sleep. Vijaya-kumāra did not sleep. He used to think that Goloka was a different place. Know he could understand that Goloka and Gokula were not

different. The parakīya-rasa has its root in Goloka. However, how could Kṛṣṇa be a paramour? That was his only doubt. Now he thought, "Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute Truth. The potency and the master of potencies are not different. If Kṛṣṇa and His potency are not different, then how can Kṛṣṇa be the husband or the paramour of His potency?" Once he thought, "Tomorrow I will place this question before my spiritual master, and he will remove my doubt." The again he thought, "It would not be good to ask the master again about Goloka. Still, I must throw this doubt far away." Thinking very seriously about all this, he fell asleep. Asleep, he dreamed that he met his spiritual master and placed this question before him. In the dream his spiritual master resolved the doubt. The spiritual master said, "Bābā Vijaya-kumāra, Kṛṣṇa's desires are not dependent on the wishes of others, pushed here and there like an elephant prodded with a goad. He eternally desires to conceal His own opulence and divine power, and instead manifest His charming sweetness. He makes His potency exist as a separate entity. Then His potency manifests Herself as millions and millions of beautiful girls. In this way His potency serves Him very diligently. Kṛṣṇa is not very pleased when His potency serves Him in the mood of opulence. With the wonderful power of His potency, He makes these manifestations of His potency into married girls. Then He becomes their sole paramour. Desiring to enjoy the parakīya-rasa, Kṛṣṇa rejects His own natural self-sufficiency (ātmārāma-dharma), and enjoys the rāsa dance and other wonderful pastimes with His potencies, who are all convinced that they are the wives of others. In all these activities, His flute becomes a dear friend. In this way the parakīya-rasa is eternally perfect in the realm of Goloka. It is for this purpose that the pastime forests of Goloka and Vṛndāvana exist. Vraja's rāsa-maṇḍala, Yamunā shore, Govardhana Hill, and other pastime places all exist in Goloka also. In this way svakīya-rasa and parakīya-rasa both exist in Goloka. Pure svakīya-rasa is splendidly manifested in Vaikuṇṭha. Svakiya-rasa and parakīya-rasa, which are simultaneously one and different from each other, are both seen in Goloka. Look. This is very wonderful. Although the parakīya-rasa in Vraja seems to be material and Kṛṣṇa seems to be an ordinary paramour, the truth is that it is not material and Kṛṣṇa is not a paramour at all. And why not? Kṛṣṇa has been enjoying the company of His potencies from a time without beginning. Their relationship is actually the perfection of svakīya-rasa, of the love of a husband and wife. That His potencies are married to others and Kṛṣṇa is their paramour is only an idea created to nourish the bliss of Their pastimes in Vraja. This same idea also nourishes the Lord's pastimes in Goloka, which is far from the world of matter. In Gokula, which is manifested within the material world, Yogamāyā creates the idea that Kṛṣṇa's potencies are married to others and Kṛṣṇa is their paramour."

Hearing this explanation in his dream, Vijaya-kumāra threw all his doubts far away. He became fully convinced that Goloka beyond the material world, and Gokula situated within the material world are indeed the same place. Then the bliss of the rasas of Vraja appeared in his heart. He became firmly convinced of Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes in Vraja during the eight periods of the day (aṣṭa-kālīna). Rising the next morning, he thought, "My spiritual master has been merciful to me without any limit." From that time he had full faith in his spiritual master's descriptions of the rasas.

Vijaya-kumāra honored prasādam, and, at the appropriate time, shedding tears of love, fell down before his spiritual master's lotus feet. Filled with spiritual love,

the spiritual master picked him up and said, "Bābā, you have attained Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. Simply by seeing you, I have become fortunate." He hugged Vijaya-kumāra, and then he began to sing these verses from Prema-vivarta:

prasanna haiyā kṛṣṇa jāre kṛpā kore
sei jana dhanya ei saṁsāra bhitare

"A person who has attained Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy is the most fortunate person in the entire world.

golokera parama-bhāva tāra citte sphure
gokule goloka pāya māyā paḍe dūre

"The spiritual love of Goloka is manifest in his heart. He sees Goloka and Gokula. Māyā flees from him."

After singing this song for many minutes, the spiritual master again became aware of the external world. Then Vijaya-kumāra offered daṇḍavat obeisances to him.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I do not know anything about Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy. I only know that everything has come from your mercy. Stopping all efforts to see Goloka directly, I am now content to place my eyes on Gokula. For now it is good that I try to understand the wonderful variety of rasas in Vraja. Now I will return to the original topic we were discussing. O spiritual master, May it be said that the gopīs who thought of Kṛṣṇa as their husband are situated in svakīya-rasa?

Gosvāmī: The gopīs who thought of Kṛṣṇa as their husband may at that time be situated in svakīya-rasa. However, the natural position of the girls in Gokula is parakīya-rasa. Although their natural position is not svakīya-rasa, because they may marry Kṛṣṇa by the gandharva rite or another rite, they may for some time be situated in svakīya-rasa. This is manifested in the Lord's Gokula pastimes.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I have many questions. I shall ask them according to the sequence presented in Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi. Now I would like to learn about the nāyakas (heroes). There are four kinds of nāyakas: anukūla (friendly), dakṣiṇa (sincere), śaṭha (deceptive), and dhṛṣṭa (arrogant). What is the nature of the anukūla hero?

Gosvāmī: A hero who is attached to one heroine and does not desire any other, is an anukūla hero. Lord Rāmacandra has that kind of love for Sītā. Lord Kṛṣṇa has anukūla love for Śrī Rādhikā.

Vijaya-kumāra: I wish to learn how the anukūla hero is manifested in the four personality types that begin with dhīrodātta. Please be merciful and describe the dhīrodatta-anukūla hero.

Gosvāmī: The dhīrodātta-anukūla hero is grave, humble, tolerant, merciful, true to His word, averse to praising Himself, modest, and generous at heart.

However, the dhīrodātta-anukūla hero will renounce these qualities in order to secretly meet with His beloved.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the dhīra-lalita anukūla hero?

Gosvāmī: The dhīra-lalita hero is naturally very funny, always in full youthfulness, expert in joking, and free from all anxieties. If He always enjoys pastimes with the same heroine, the dhīra-lalita hero becomes a dhīra-lalita anukūla hero.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is a dhīra-praśānta anukūla hero?

Gosvāmī: A dhīra-praśānta anukūla hero is very peaceful, forbearing, considerate, and obliging.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is a dhīrodatta anukūla hero?

Gosvāmī: A dhīrodatta anukūla hero is very envious, proud, easily angered, restless, and complacent.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is a dakṣiṇa hero?

Gosvāmī: The word "dakṣiṇa" means “honest". A hero who does not stop feeling respect, awe, and love for His previous beloved, even after He becomes attached to a new beloved is a dakṣiṇa hero. A dakṣiṇa hero treats His many beloveds equally.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is a śaṭha hero?

Gosvāmī: A hero who is affectionate to His beloved when she is present, but blasphemes her when she is not present, is a śaṭha hero.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the qualities of a dhṛṣṭa hero?

Gosvāmī: A dhṛṣṭa is expert at fearlessly speaking lies, even when His body clearly bears many marks showing how He enjoyed with another beloved.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, how many different kinds of heroes are there?

Gosvāmī: As far as we are concerned, there is no hero but Kṛṣṇa. In Dvārakā He is perfect. In Mathurā He is more perfect. In Vraja He is most perfect. In each of these places He is both husband and paramour. In this way He is six (3 X 2) heroes. In each of these six different situations He is also the four kinds of heroes that begin with dhīrodātta. In that way he becomes 24 (2 X 3 X 4) different kinds of heroes. In each of these 24 situations he is also an anukūla, dakṣiṇa, śaṭha, and dhṛṣṭa hero. In this way He becomes 96 (2 X 3 X 4 X 4) kinds of heroes. Thus there are 24 svakīya heroes and 24 parakīya heroes. The svakīya heros are less prominent, and the parakīya heroes are more prominent. In the rasas and pastimes of Vraja the 24 kinds of parakīya heroes are manifested eternally. In different kinds of pastimes a different kind of hero is required. In this way Kṛṣṇa assumes the roles of these different kinds of heroes.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, now I can understand the different qualities of the hero and heroine. Now I request that you teach me about the hero's different assistants.

Gosvāmī: The hero has five kinds of assistants. They are: ceṭa (confidential messenger), viṭa (valet), vidūṣaka (comedian), pīṭha-mardaka (constant companion), and priya-narma-sakhā (dear friend). All these assistants are expert at speaking joking words, always bound by ties of strong friendship, an expert judge of time and circumstances, expert, and expert at speaking confidential words to pacify the gopīs when they become angry.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the ceṭas? Please say.

Gosvāmī: The ceṭas are expert at arranging Kṛṣṇa's rendezvous with the gopīs.

The ceṭas are naturally bold and arrogant. Bhaṅgura and Bhṛṅgāra are prominent among Kṛṣṇa's ceṭa companions in Gokula.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the viṭas? Please say.

Gosvāmī: teh viṭas are expert in dressing and decorating Kṛṣṇa. They are clever, skilled in conversation, and expert in bringing other under their control. kadara and Bharatibandhu are prominent among the Kṛṣṇa's viṭa companions.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the vidūṣakas? Please say.

Gosvāmī: Th vidūśakas are fond of eating, fond of quarreling, and expert at inducing laughter by means of their funny gestures, expert jokes, and funny appearance. vasanta, madhumaṅgala, and many other gopas are prominent among Kṛṣṇa's vidūṣaka companions.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the pīṭha-mardakas?

Gosvāmī: The pīṭha-mardaka has qualities like those of the hero. He is the hero's constant companion. Śrīdāmā is Kṛṣṇa's pīṭha-mardaka companion.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the qualities of the priya-narma-sakhā?

Gosvāmī: The priya-narma-sakhā companions have taken shelter of friendship with Kṛṣṇa. They know Kṛṣṇa's closest secrets. Subala and Arjuna are prominent among Kṛṣṇa's priya-narma-sakhā friends. The priya-narma-sakhās are the best of these five kinds of assistants. Among these five assistants the ceṭas, viṭas, vidūṣakas, pīṭha-mardakas, and priya-narma-sakhāsthe ceṭas are in dāsya-rasa, the pīṭha-mardakas are in vīra-rasa (chivalry), and the others are in sakhya-rasa. The ceṭas are servants, and the other four kinds of assistants are friends.

Vijaya-kumāra: Are there nom women among the assistants?

Gosvāmī: yes. There are. They are the dūtīs (messengers).

Vijaya-kumāra: How many different kinds of dūtīs are there?

Gosvāmī: There are two kinds of dūtīs: svayam-dūtī (messengers of their own accord) and āpta-dūtī (they who are appointed as messengers). The svayam-dūtīs are Kṛṣṇa's sidelong glance and the sound of His flute.

Vijaya-kumāra: Ah! Who are the āpta-dūtīs?

Gosvāmī: Vīrā, who is expert at speaking bold and outrageous words, and Vṛndā, who speaks sweetly, are Kṛṣṇa's two āpta-dūtīs. The svayam-dūtīs and these two āpta-dūtīs are extraordinary. In addition there are many ordinary dūtīs, such as Liṅginī, Daivajñā, and Śilpa-kāriṇī. It is better that I describe them later, when we discuss the heroines and messengers.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I understand Śrī Kṛṣṇa's natures, qualities, and other features as a hero. I have also learned that Kṛṣṇa eternally enjoys pastimes as both a husband and a paramour. As a husband He enjoys pastimes in Dvārakā, and as a paramour He enjoys pastimes in Vraja. Our Kṛṣṇa is a paramour. Therefore we must learn about the beautiful girls of Vraja.

Gosvāmī: Almost all of Kṛṣṇa's gopī-beloveds in Vraja are in the parakīya-rasa. And why not? In madhura-rasa nothing is higher than parakīya. The svakīya-rasa felt by the queens in Dvārakā is dull and stunted in comparison. Therefore the parakīya-rasa gives the most pleasure to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the meaning of all this?

Gosvāmī: Lord Śiva, who is expert at understanding the mellows of madhura-rasa, explains that when women are very contrary or hard to find, or when they are protected by a host of obstacles, then Kāmadeva uses his most powerful weapons. Viṣṇugupta also explains that when the hero is forbidden to meet His beloved, or

when His doe-eyed beloved is unapproachable, then the hero's heart is very strongly attracted to His beloved. Look, even though He is always self-satisfied (ātmārāma), Kṛṣṇa expanded into as many forms as there were gopīs in the rāsa dance pastime. A sādhaka devotee should try to understand the rāsa dance pastime of the Lord. The instruction is given that if a sādhaka devotee desires to attain auspiciousness, then with devotion he should enter into an understanding of the rāsa dance pastimes. Of course, he should not be so foolish as to try to imitate Lord Kṛṣṇa's activities in the rāsa dance. The meaning is that the devotee should try to understand how much the gopīs love Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please clearly describe the love the gopīs feel for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Gosvāmī: Kṛṣṇa is a gopa, He is the son of Nanda. He enjoys the pastimes of madhura-rasa only with the gopīs. He does not enjoy these pastimes with no other girls. A devotee who is qualified for madhura-rasa, and who is either a sādhaka-bhakta or a bhāva-bhakta, should worship Kṛṣṇa as the gopīs do. In your meditation you should serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa as the fortunate gopīs of Vraja do. If you cannot think of yourself as a gopī married to someone other than Kṛṣṇa, then you will not be able to attain the parakīya-rasa. To think that they are married to someone lese is the nature of the gopīs in Vraja. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has written (Śrī Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi, Kṛṣṇa-vallabhā-prakaraṇa 19):

māyā-kalita-tādṛk-strī-
śīlanenānusūyubhiḥ
na jātu vraja-devīnāṁ
patibhiḥ saha saṅgamaḥ

"The vraja-gopīs never meet with their husbands, nor do their husbands ever feel jealous, for the gopīs' husbands are all creations of Yogamāyā."

The gopīs' weddings and husbands are both creations of Yogamāyā. The gopīs never had any husband but Kṛṣṇa. Still, in the eternal present (nitya-vartamāna) that is the feature of time in the spiritual world, the gopīs eternally think that they are married to someone other than Kṛṣṇa. If this were not the case, then the wonderful rasas where the beloved is contrary, unattainable, surrounded by obstacles, and forbidden, would not be possible. It is because she refuses to accept parakīya-rasa that Goddess Lakṣmī in Vaikuṇṭha cannot become one of Kṛṣṇa's beloveds in the rasas of Vraja.

Vijaya-kumāra: How does a gopī think herself married to someone other than Kṛṣṇa?

Gosvāmī: A gopī thinks, "I was born in a gopa's house. At the appropriate time I was given in marriage to a certain gopa." Thinking in this way, a g develops a strong yearning to enjoy pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. In this way the gopīs think that they are married to a certain gopa, and that they have no children. This is called "gopī-bhāva" (the assumptions of the gopīs).

Vijaya-kumāra: How does a male attain this conception?

Gosvāmī: It is only because of the power of Māyā that a soul residing in the

material world imagines that it is male. In the understanding of pure spirit, Kṛṣṇa is the only male and all others are female. In spirit there is no sign of material male or female. Still, if one intently meditates on this rasa, one can becoem qualified to become a gopī in Vraja. A person who yearns to attain the madhura-rasa will becoem qualified to become a gopī in Vraja. By again and again desiring in this way, one attains that perfection.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the glory of being a gopī married to a gopa other than Kṛṣṇa?

Gosvāmī: When the vraja-gopīs married to other gopas yearn to enjoy pastimes with Kṛṣṇa, then the greatest splendor and the greatest virtues decorate them with the beauty of pure love. Their rasa is sweeter than the rasas of Lakṣmī and all the goddesses of fortune.

Vijaya-kumāra: How many different kinds of beautiful girls are there in Vraja?

Gosvāmī: There are three kinds: sādhana-praā (persons who became gopīs by performing sādhana-bhakti), devī (demigoddesses who became gopīs), and nitya-priyā (eternally dear gopīs).

Vijaya-kumāra: Are the sādhana-parā gopīs divided into different groups?

Gosvāmī: The sādhana-parā gopīs are divided into yauthikī and ayauthikī.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the yauthikī gopīs?

Gosvāmī: Persons who performed sādhana-bhakti in order to enter this rasa in Vraja, take birth in Vraja and become yautikī gopīs, that is gopīs who belong to certain groups.

Vijaya-kumāra: Which sages in this way took birth in Vraja?

Gosvāmī: Some sages found that even after dutifully worshiping Lord Gopāla, they still could not attain their desired perfection. However, when they were able to personally see the glorious handsomeness of Lord Rāmacandra, they diligently performed sādhana-bhakti in order to attain their desire. As a result they attained ecstatic love (bhāva) and they took birth in Vraja as gopīs. This is described in the Padma Purāṇa. In the Bṛhad-Vāmana Purāṇa it is said that some of these gopīs attained their desired perfection at the beginning of the rāsa dance.

Vijaya-kumāra: How did the personified Upaniṣads take birth as gopīs?

Gosvāmī: When they saw the gopīs' good fortune, the intelligent Upaniṣads became filled with wonder. They faithfully performed austerities, and as a result were born in Vraja as gopīs filled with spiritual love (premavatī).

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the ayauthikī gopīs?

Gosvāmī: Persons who, seeing the gopīs' passionate love for Kṛṣṇa, yearn to become like them, and to attain this end engage in sādhana-bhakti, become the ayauthikī gopīs, which are divided into two groups: prācīnā (elderly) and navīnā (young). In this way one, two, or three of these gopīs are born in Vraja. The prācīnā ayauthikī gopīs eventually attain sālokya-mukti, and in the spiritual world they associate with the eternally dear (nitya-priyā) gopīs. After a lifetime as demigoddesses, human beings, or other kinds of beings, the pṛacīnā ayauthikī gopīs take birth in Vraja. Eventually they become prācīnā gopīs and at the end attain the sālokya-mukti I have just described.

Vijaya-kumāra: I can understand this description of the sādhana-parā gopīs. Now please describe the devīs.

Gosvāmī: When Lord Kṛṣṇa took birth as an aṁśa incarnation among the demigods in Svargaloka, some eternally dear (nitya-priyā) gopīs took birth as aṁśa

incarnations among the demigoddesses to please Him. When Kṛṣṇa took birth in His original form in Gokula, they took birth as daughters of the gopas. They became the dear friends (prāṇa-sakhī) of the eternally dear (nitya-priyā) gopīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, when did Lord Kṛṣṇa take birth as an aṁśa incarnation among the demigods?

Gosvāmī: Taking birth from Aditi's womb, Lord Kṛṣṇa appeared as the aṁśa incarnation Vāmana. The demigods are also vibhinnāṁśa manifestations of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Śiva and Brahmā were not born from a mother's womb. Brahmā and Śiva possess fifty of Lord Kṛṣṇa's qualities, as do the ordinary souls. However, Brahmā and Śiva are not counted among the ordinary souls, for they are vibhinnāṁśas. In addition to the fifty qualities all individual souls posses, Brahmā and Śiva also possess five other qualities. Therefore they are called the best of the demigods. Gaṇeśa and Sūrya are also considered on the same level as the millions of Brahmās. All other demigods are considered ordinary individual souls. All the demigods are vibhinnāṁśas manifested from Lord Kṛṣṇa. The wives of the demigods are also vibhinnāṁśas of the Lord's cit-śakti (spiritual potency). Before Kṛṣṇa's appearance on the earth, Brahmā ordered the demigoddesses to take birth on the earth in order to please Kṛṣṇa. Following Brhamā's order, they took birth in different places in Vraja according to their own inclination and their activities in sādhana-bhakti. These demigoddesses born in Vraja became dear friends (prāṇa-sakhī) of the Lord's eternally dear (nitya-priyā) gopīs. They yearned to attain the association of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, the personified Upaniṣads took birth as gopīs. Did the goddesses who rule over any other scriptures also take birth in Vraja?

Gosvāmī: In the Padma Purāṇa, Sṛṣṭi-khaṇḍa, it is said that Gāyatrī-devī, the mother of the Vedas, took birth as a gopī and attained Lord Kṛṣṇa's association. It was at that time that she manifested the form of Kāma-Gāyatrī.

Vijaya-kumāra: Is the Kāma-Gāyatrī not beginningless?

Gosvāmī: The Kāma-Gāyatrī is certainly beginningless? However, there is a time when this beginningless Gāyatrī first appeared in the form of the Goddess Gāyatrī who is the mother of the Vedas. Because of her engagement in sādhana-bhakti, the Goddess Gāyatrī could understand how fortunate the Upaniṣads were to have become gopīs. Then, accompanied by the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad, she took birth in Vraja. In this way it is understood that the Kāma-Gāyatrī is eternal, and the Goddess Gāyatrī who is the mother of the Vedas is eternally distinct from the Kāma-Gāyatrī.

Vijaya-kumāra: All the Upaniṣads took birth as gopīs in Vraja. They all accepted the gopa-hero Kṛṣṇa as their husband (pati). Following the marriage ritual of the gandharvas, these gopīs then accepted Kṛṣṇa as their husband. This much I understand. However, the nitya-priyā (eternally dear) gopīs associate with Kṛṣṇa from time without beginning, and in that relationship Kṛṣṇa is their paramour. Is this relationship created by Māyā?

Gosvāmī: It may be created by Māyā, but it is not created by the Māyā of the material world. The Māyā of the material world has no power to touch Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Even though it may be manifested within the material world, Lord Kṛṣṇa's Vraja pastimes are far beyond the touch of the material Māyā. Another name of the Lord's cit-śakti (spiritual potency) is Yogamāyā. She arranges Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes so that ordinary people influenced by Māyā see them as

material. She makes the nitya-priyā gopīs in Goloka think they are married to persons other than Kṛṣṇa, and she also brings those gopīs to Vraja in the material world. She arranges the nitya-priyā gopīs' wedding ceremonies, and she arranges that Kṛṣṇa becomes their paramour. The all-knowing supreme male, Kṛṣṇa, and His all-knowing spiritual potencies voluntarily accept the rasa roles Yogamāyā gives Them. Thus it is seen that this is the best of all rasas, Lord Kṛṣṇa is supremely independent, all His desires are at once fulfilled, and His icchā-śakti (the potency that fulfills His desires) is supremely glorious. The great glory of this rasa is not seen in Vaikuṇṭha, Dvārakā, and other places. When they attain sālokya liberation, the prāṇa-sakhī gopīs and the nitya-priyā gopīs leave behind any idea that Kṛṣṇa may be their husband. Then their idea is that He is their paramour. That is their final attainment.

Vijaya-kumāra: This conclusion is very wonderful. Now I am fully satisfied. O master, please teach me about the nitya-priyā gopīs.

Gosvāmī: If you were not qualified to hear these explanations would Lord Gauracandra make these confidential truths appear in my mouth? Look, all-knowing Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī kept these truths hidden in his heart, although in some places in his commentaries, in his Kṛṣṇa-sandarbha, and in other books he did reveal them. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī was always anxious that if unqualified persons heard these confidential truths, they would take shelter of irreligion. Seeing how the Vaiṣṇavas mostly misunderstood the rasas and accepted rasābhāsa, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī became anxious. For this reason he took great care not to write anything that would support any false conclusion. You are qualified to hear these things. I do not reveal these truths to unqualified persons. Now I will describe the nitya-priyā gopīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the nitya-priyā gopīs? Although I have studied many scriptures, I still yearn to drink the nectar words that come from my spiritual master's saintly mouth.

Gosvāmī: The nitya-priya gopīs in Vraja, among whom Rādhā and Candrāvalī are the most important, possess transcendental beauty, intelligence and a host of virtues. In this way they are like Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. They are described in these words of Brahma-saṁhitā (5.37):

ānanda-cinmaya-rasa-pratibhāvitābhis
tābhir ya eva nija-rūpatayā kalābhiḥ
goloka eve nivasaty akhilātma-bhūto
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

"I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who resides in His own realm, Goloka, with Rādhā, who resembles His own spiritual figure and who embodies the ecstatic potency (hlādinī). Their companions are Her confidantes, who embody the extensions of Her bodily form, and who are imbued and permeated with ever-blissful spiritual rasa."*

In these words of Brahmā, which are the essence of all the Vedas, the nitya-priyā gopīs are described. The nitya-priyā gopīs are said to be "nitya" (eternal)

because they are the Lord's spiritual potency, and therefore they are beyond the limitations of time and space imposed by the material energy. They are an eternal spiritual reality. The word “kalābhiḥ" here may refer to the sixty-four arts practiced by the nitya-priyā gopīs in their eternal pastimes. Or, this word may have another meaning. The commentary of this verse explains:

kalābhiḥ svāṁśa-rūpābhiḥ śaktibhiḥ

"Here the word `kalābhiḥ' means `with the potencies who are expansions of Her form'."

What I have explained to you are the opinions of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī. Please know that these confidential explanations are the great treasure that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī keep hidden in the vaults of their hearts.

Vijaya-kumāra: My ears yearn to hear the names of the nitya-priyā gopīs.

Gosvāmī: Rādhā, Candrāvalī, Viśākhā, Lalitā, Śyāmā, Padmā, Śaibyā. Bhadrikā, Tārā, Vicitrā, Gopālī, Dhaniṣṭhā, and Pālī are among the names of the nitya-priya gopīs written in the Skanda Purāṇa, Prahlāda-saṁhitā, and other scriptures. Candrāvalī is also known by the name Somābhā. Rādhā is also known by the name Gāndharvā. Khañjanākṣī, Manoramā, Maṅgalā, Vimalā, Līlā, Kṛṣṇā, Śārī, Viśāradā, Tārāvalī, Cakorākṣī, Śaṅkarī, Kuṅkumā, and many other gopīs are also famous in this world.

Vijaya-kumāra: How do these gopīs relate to each other?

Gosvāmī: All these gopīs are yūtheśvarīs (leaders of groups of gopīs). There are hundreds and hundreds of groups, and in each group there are hundreds of thousands of gopīs. From Rādhā to Kuṅkumā, all these gopīs are yūtheśvarīs. Viśākhā, Lalitā, Padmā, and Śaibyā are also mentioned here. Among the yūtheśvarīs, eight gopīs, headed by Rādhā, are considered the most fortunate. They are called the "pradhānā" (most important) gopīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: Viśākhā, Lalitā, Padmā, and Śaibyā are all pradhānā gopīs. They are all very expert in making Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes especially glorious. Why were they not clearly mentioned as yūtheśvarīs?

Gosvāmī: They have all transcendental virtues and they are certainly very qualified to become yūtheśvarīs. However, Lalitā and Viśākhā are so overcome with bliss simply by associating with Śrī Rādhā that they have no desire to become independent yutheśvarīs themselves. Some gopīs are followers of Śrīmatī Rādhā, and other gopīs are followers of Candrāvalī. This is described in the scriptures.

Vijaya-kumāra: Still, I have heard that Lalitā does indeed have a group. What is it like?

Gosvāmī: Śrīmatī Rādhā is the foremost of all group leaders. Out of special affection and respect some gopīs are said to belong to Lalitā's group or Viśākhā's group. However, Lalitā, Viśākhā, and the other eight principal friends (aṣṭa-sakhī) of Śrī Rādhā are considered the leaders of different factions in Śrī Rādhā's group. By great good fortune one may be able to enter Śrīmatī Lalitā's group.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, in which scriptures are the names of the gopīs found?

Gosvāmī: All these names are found in the Padma Purāṇa, Skanda Purāṇa, and Bhaviṣya Purāṇa Uttara-khaṇḍa. In the Sātvata Tantra many other names are also found.

Vijaya-kumāra: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is the crest jewel of all scriptures in the world. If all these names were found in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, that would be a source of great bliss.

Gosvāmī: Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam is a scripture that teaches the highest truth. It is an ocean filled with the nectar of the spiritual rasas. Persons expert at relishing the spiritual rasas (rasika) can see that all the truths of the rasas are described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam. The name of Śrī Rādhā and the names of all the gopīs are secretly written in Śrīmad-Bhaāgavatam. If you carefully read the verses of the Tenth Canto, you will see them all. To keep unqualified persons far away, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī described all these things very secretly. O bābā Vijaya-kumāra, what will happen if you give japa beads to a person who will wear them only as an ornament around his neck?the more the reader is exalted in devotional service, the more he will understand the secrets hidden in Śrīmad-Bhaāgavatam. Here the skill of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī was shown in his power to explain very confidential truths in a way that the people in general could not understand. Only a reader qualified to understand these secrets properly has the power to understand them at all. The truth is that without taking shelter of the disciplic succession (guru-paramparā), no one can understand these truths. A person studying on his own cannot understand them. Carefully study Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi, and you will become able to see how all the rasas are described in Śrīmad-Bhaāgavatam.

After talking for a long time, they ended the day's conversation about the Lord (iṣṭa-goṣṭhī). Again and again thinking about the transcendental hero and heroines in the spiritual world, Vijaya-kumāra walked to Haracaṇḍī-sāhi's place. As he thought about the vidūṣakas, pīṭha-mardakas, and other associates of the Lord, he tasted many different kinds of happiness. As he thought about Kṛṣṇa's flute and the other svayam-dūtī messengers, tears came from his eyes. The spiritual love (bhāva) of Vraja rising in his heart, Vijaya-kumāra blissfully danced. The pastimes and gardens he saw last night splendidly rose again in his heart.

Chapter Thirty-three
Madhura-rasa-vicāra
Madhura-rasa

Today Vijaya-kumāra and Vrajanātha bathed in Indradyumna-sarovara, honored prasādam, and returned home. After eating, Vrajanātha went to see the samādhi of Haridāsa Ṭhākura. Vijaya-kumāra went to the temple of Śrī Rādhā-kānta and offered obeisances to his spiritual master. At at appropriate time Vijaya-kumāra asked about Śrī Rādhikā. Vijaya-kumāra said, “O master, Śrī Rādhā is the be-all-and-end-all of my life. How can I describe it? When I hear the name `Rādhikā', my heart melts. Even though Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the only goal of my life, still I

like to taste only the descriptions of His pastimes with Śrī Rādhā. I do not like to hear descriptions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa if Śrī Rādhā is not included in them. O master, I would like to say that I no longer wish to call myself Vijaya-kumāra Bhaṭṭācārya. I wish to be known as a maidservant protected by Śrī Rādhā. I do not wish to speak the wonderful descriptions of Vraja to materialists. When persons unqualified to understand the transcendental rasas (arasika) discuss the glories of Śrī Rādhā, I yearn to flee from that place.

Gosvāmī: You are fortunate. As long as you did not have full faith in the gopīs you were not qualified to understand the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Descriptions of those pastimes are far beyond what ordinary human beings can understand. Even the demigoddesses in Devaloka are not qualified to understand them. O Vijaya-kumāra, I have already described the gopīs who are dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa. Among them Rādhā and Candrāvalī are the most important. Each of them presides over millions and millions of groups of beautiful gopīs. At the time of the great rāsa-dance, the rāsa-dance circle is beautiful with many hundreds of millions of beautiful gopīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, Candrāvalī may preside over millions and millions of groups of gopīs. Still, I wish that the glories of Śrī Rādhā will be the only sweet nectar to flood and purify my contaminated ears. I am your surrendered disciple.

Gosvāmī: Between the two of themRādhā and Candrāvalīit is Rādhā who is the personification of the highest ecstatic love (mahā-bhāva-svarūpa). It is She who has the greatest spiritual qualities. She is superior to Candrāvalī in every way. Look. The Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad calls Her by the name Gāndharvā and glorifies Her. In the Ṛk-pariśiṣṭa it is said that Lord Mādhava is glorious because Rādhā stands by His side. In the Padma Purāṇa, Nārada declares, "As Rādhā is dear Kṛṣṇa, so Her pond, Rādhā-kuṇḍa, is also dear to Him. Of all the gopīs, Rādhā is the most dear to Lord Kṛṣṇa." And why not? What is Rādhā's nature? She is the great hlādinī-śakti, the best of Lord Kṛṣṇa's potencies. Rādhā is the essence of the hlādinī-śakti (hlādinī-sāra-bhāva).

Vijaya-kumāra: These descriptions are very wonderful! What is Śrī Rādhā's nature?

Gosvāmī: My Rādhikā is the most beautiful (suṣṭhu-kānta-svarūpa). She is the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu. She is glorious with the sixteen ornaments. She is also decorated with twelve other kinds of ornaments.

Vijaya-kumāra: What do you mean by the word “suṣṭhu-kānta-svarūpa"?

Gosvāmī: It means that Her form is so beautiful that even the most exquisite garments and ornaments are insignificant in comparison to Her and therefore powerless to make Her any more beautiful. Her hair is gracefully curly, Her face is a blossoming lotus flower, Her large eyes are beautiful, and Her large breasts are wonderfully beautiful. Her waist is slender, Her shoulders are graceful, and Her fingernails shine like a row of jewels. In the three worlds there is no festival of beauty that compares with Her.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the "sixteen ornaments"?

Gosvāmī: The sixteen ornaments are: 1. Her pleasant bath, 2. The glistening jewel decorating the tip of Her nose, 3. Her blue garments, 4. Her belt, 5. Her braids, 6. Her earrings, 7. the sandal paste anointing Her limbs, 8. the flowers placed in Her hair, 9. Her necklace, 10. the lotus flower in Her hand, 11. the

betelnuts in Her mouth, 12. the musk dot on Her chin, 13. the mascara around Her eyes, 14. the colorful designs and pictures drawn on Her cheeks, 15. the red lac on Her feet, and 16. the tilaka markings on Her forehead.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the "twelve ornaments"?

Gosvāmī: 1. The wonderful jewel that crowns Her head, 2. Her golden earrings, 3. the belt around Her hips, 4. the golden locket around Her neck, 5. Her golden śalākā earrings, 6. the bracelets on Her wrists, 7. the ornament on Her neck, 8. the rings on Her fingers, 9. Her pearl necklace, 10. Her armlets, 11. Her ankle-bells, and 12. the rings on Her toes are the twelve ornaments decorating Śrī Rādhā's limbs.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the most prominent transcendental qualities of Śrī Rādhā.

Gosvāmī: Like the qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the qualities of Vṛndāvana's queen Rādhā are limitless and cannot truly be counted or listed in full. Among them these twenty-five may be considered prominent:

1. She is very sweet.
2. She is always freshly youthful.
3. Her eyes are restless.
4. She smiles brightly.
5. She has beautiful, auspicious lines.
6. She makes Kṛṣṇa happy with Her bodily aroma.
7. She is very expert in singing.
8. Her speech is charming.
9. She is very expert in joking and speaking pleasantly.
10. She is very humble and meek.
11. She is always full of mercy.
12. She is cunning.
13. She is expert in executing Her duties.
14. She is shy.
15. She is always respectful.
16. She is always calm.
17. She is always grave.
18. She is expert in enjoying life.
19. She is situated at the topmost level of ecstatic love.
20. She is the reservoir of loving affairs in Gokula.
21. She is the most famous of submissive devotees.
22. She is very affectionate to elderly people.
23. She is very submissive to the love of Her friends.
24. She is the chief gopī.
25. She always keeps Kṛṣṇa under Her control.*

Vijaya-kumāra: I would like to hear an explanation of “5. She has beautiful, auspicious lines."

Gosvāmī: The Varāha Purāṇa, Jyotiḥ-śāstra, Kāśī-khaṇḍa, Matsya Purāṇa, and Garuḍa Purāṇa describe the auspicious lines. These lines are: I. On the left foot:

1. a barleycorn mark at the root of Her left toe,

2. below that toe a cakra,
3. below the middle toe a lotus flower,
4. below the lotus flower a banner,
5. below the banner a flag,
6. a ūrdhva-rekhā line extending from the middle-toe to the middle of the sole,
7. below the small toe an elephant-goad

II. On the right foot:

1. at the root of the right beg toe a conchshell,
2. on the heel a fish,
3. below the small toe an altar,
4. above the fish a chariot,
5. a mountain,
6. an earring,
7. a club,
8. the mark of a śakti weapon,

III. On the left hand:

1. a long life-line beginning at the meeting of the forefinger and middle finger, and extending to below the little finger.
2. below that another line going from below the lifeline to the middle of the space between the forefinger and thumb,
3. from below the thumb a curving line rises from the wrist and goes to the space between the thumb and forefinger. 4-8. on the tips of each of the fiver fingers is a cakra,
9. below the ring finger is an elephant,
10. below the life-line is a horse,
11. below the middle line is a bull,
12. below the small finger is an elephant goad,
13. a fan,
14. a Śrī tree,
15. a yūpa,
16. an arrow,
17. a tomara weapon,
18. a flower garland.

IV. On the right hand:

1-8. In the right hand, like the left, there are three prominent lines including the life-line, and on the tips of each finger a cakra.
9. below the forefinger a cāmara,
10. below the small finger and elephant goad,
11. a palace,
12. a dundubhi drum,
13. a lightning bolt,
14. two carts,

15. an archer's bow,
16. a sword,
17. a waterpot.

Thus on the left foot are 7 signs, on the right foot 8 signs, on the left hand 18 signs, and on the right hand 17 signs. Altogether there are 50 auspicious lines.

Vijaya-kumāra: Others cannot have all these auspicious qualities?

Gosvāmī: An individual soul may have a drop of some of these qualities, but Śrī Rādhā has them all in perfect fulness. The demigoddesses may have them slightly more than others. Still, Śrī Rādhā has them all, and in Her they are all perfectly spiritual, untouched by matter. And why not? In the material world these qualities are never manifested in purity, perfection, and completeness. Gaurī and other demigoddesses may have these qualities, but in these demigoddesses the qualities are not pure, perfect, or complete.

Vijaya-kumāra: Ah! Śrīmatī Rādhikā's beauty and qualities are inconceivable. Only by Her mercy can one see or understand them.

Gosvāmī: Gazing at Śrī Rādhā's beauty and qualities, even Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself is bewildered and enchanted. How can I properly describe them with my words?

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, please be merciful and describe Śrī Rādhā's friends (sakhīs).

Gosvāmī: Śrī Rādhā's group is the best of all. The girls in Her group are all decorated with all transcendental qualities.Their charming playfulness always attracts Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: How many different kinds of friends (sakhīs) does Śrī Rādhā have?

Gosvāmī: They are of five kinds: 1. sakhī (friends), 2. nitya-sakhī (eternal friends), 3. prāṇa-sakhī (life friends), 4. priya-sakhī (dear friends), and 5. parama-preṣṭha-sakhī (most dear friends).

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: The sakhīs include Kusumikā, Vṛndā, and Dhaniṣṭhā. These gopīs are famous among the sakhīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the nitya-sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: The nitya-sakhīs include Kasturī, Maṇi-mañjarī, and many others.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the prāṇa-sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: The prāṇa-sakhīs include Śaśīmukhī, Vāsantī, Lāsikā, and many others. In many ways they are like the queen of Vṛndāvana Herself.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the priya-sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: The priya-sakhīs include Kurāṅgākṣī, Sumadhyā, Madanālasā, Kamalā, Mādhurī, Mañjukeśī, Kandarpa-sundarī, Mādhavī, Mālatī, Kāmalatā, Śaśikalā, and many others.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: The parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs include lalitā, Viśākhā, Citrā, Camapakalatā, Tuṅgavidyā, Indulekhā, Raṅgadevī, and Sudevī. These eight are the most important of all the gopīs. Therefore they are called parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs. They are situated in the topmost love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Sometimes they show more loev to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and other times they show more love for Śrī Rādhā.

Vijaya-kumāra: I understand what the word "yūtha" (group) means. What does

thew ord "gaṇa" (sub-group) mean?

Gosvāmī: Every yūtha is divided into sub-groups, which are called gaṇas.For example, Lalitā is a member of Śrī Rādhā's group. However, Lalitā herself has followers, and they are called the members of Lalitā's gaṇa (sub-group).

Vijaya-kumāra: That the gopīs are married to gopas other than Kṛṣṇa is one of the most important characteristics. Still, it does not look good.

Gosvāmī: In this material world "woman" and “man" are only external designations. Because of past material activities one soul becomes a "woman" and another soul becomes a "man". In the material world of Māyā, many people are filled with petty or sinful desires. For this reason the great sages have forbidden, except within the institution of marriage, contact with women. Writing about the rasas, poets have generally avoided describing the love of a woman for a paramour. However, in the Lord's spiritual pastimes this kind of love is one of the rasas. The sexual affairs of men and women in the material world is a perverted reflection of that original rasas in the spiritual world. Therefore material sexual activities are very dull, pathetic, and a breeding ground for a host of anxieties (kuṇṭha). Also, the rules of religion place many restrictions on these activities. For these reasons men in the material world are enjoined to avoid approaching the wives of others. However, if Lord Kṛṣṇa, whose form is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss, is the only male and the only hero, and he accepts this activity to increase the sweetness of His spiritual rasas, He is never contaminated and He is not to be criticized. He is independent of the material institution of marriage. When Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who enjoys pastimes in Goloka, came to the material world from Goloka, He took the transcendental parakīya-rasa with Him. Therefore no one should criticize Him for enjoying the parakīya-rasa with the gopīs who have come from Goloka.

Vijaya-kumāra: What exalted symptoms of love did the gopīs from Goloka display?

Gosvāmī: Before the gopīs Lord Kṛṣṇa appears only in His form as the son of Nanda. The nondevotee philosophers are far from understanding the gopīs' exalted love for Kṛṣṇa. Even the devotees find it difficult to understand that love. When Kṛṣṇa's manifests His form as Nandanandana, His opulence never eclipses His sweetness. One time, as a joke, Kṛṣṇa manifested His four-armed form before the gopīs, who were not at all impressed. However, when Śrī Rādhā approahced, the four-armed form at once disappeared. Because of the greatness of Rādhā confidential parakītya love, Kṛṣṇa again became two-handed

Vijaya-kumāra: Now my desires are all fulfilled. O master, please describe the different kinds of heroines (nāyikās).

Gosvāmī: There are three kinds of heroines (nāyikās): 1. svakīyā, 2. parakīyā, nad 3. sāmānyā. I have already described the spiritual svakīya and parakīya heroines. Now I will describe the sāmaṇyā heroines. Students of material rhetoric (alaṅkāra) explain that the sāmānyā heroines are prostitutes, interested only in money. If their lover has no good qualities, then they hate him, and of he is virtuous, stil they do not really love him. Therefore their so-called love is only a perverted reflection of love. It is not true love. Sometimes it is said that Kubjā in Mathurā was such a sāmānyā heroine who does not really love her hero. I do not agree. I place her among the parakīyā heroines.

Vijaya-kumāra: How did she become qualified to become a parakīyā heroine?

Gosvāmī: When Kubjā was an ungly, disfigured woman, she never loved any man. However, when she saw Kṛṣṇa and desired to place sandal paste on His limbs, then she thought of Him as her beloved. For this reason I say her love in in the parakīya-rasa. However, the desire to please only Kṛṣṇa, a desire possessed even by the queens at Dvārakā, was absent in Kubjā. Therfeore her love was inferior to the love of the queens. When she tugged at Kṛṣṇa's upper garment and begged that He enjoy amorous pastimes with her, her love for Him was mixed with her own selfish desires. Therefore her love is considered sādhāraṇī (ordinary).

Vijaya-kumāra: Because Kubjā is considered in the parakiya-rasa, I can see that the svakiya and parakiya heroines are both divided into two sub-groups. How many different sub-groups are there? Please describe them.

Gosvāmī: In the spiritual rasas the svakīyā and parakīyā heroines are of three kinds: 1. mugdhā, 2. madhyā, and 3. pragalbhā.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, when by your mercy I think of the spiritual rasas, I naturally think of myself as a gopī in Vraja. At that time I do not think of myself as a male in the material world. When I hear of the different kinds of heroines, my heart becomes agitated. And why not? I do not know what I should do so that some day I may love the Lord as the gopīs do. So that some day I may attain this kind of service to Lord Kṛṣṇa, I now place this question before your holy feet: What is the nature of the mugdhā heroines? Please describe them.

Gosvāmī: These are the qualities of the mugdhā heroine: She is in the bloom of youth (nava-yauvanā), amorous (kāminī), contrary in love (rati-dāne vāmā), and submissive to her girl-friends (sakhī-vaśī-bhūtā). Although externally she is shy to enjoy amorous pastimes, within her heart she secretly and diligently labors to make various arrangements to enjoy with her lover. When her lover offends her, tears flow from her eyes. At that time she neither speaks sweetly, speaks harshly, nor becomes angry.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the qualities of the madhyā heroine?

Gosvāmī: These are the qualities of the madhyā heroine: She is equally amorous and shy, she is in the full bloom of youth, and all her words are touched with a small amount of arrogance. She enjoys amorous pastimes until she faints unconscious. Sometimes her heart is gentle. Sometimes it is hard. Sometimes she is jealous, sometimes peaceful, and sometimes agitated. Sometimes she is both peaceful and agitated (dhīrādhīra). A heroine who, when her lover offends her, mocks him with crooked words, is called "dhīrā madhyā". A heroine who in that situation attacks her lover with merciless angry words is called an "adhīrā madhyā" heroine. A heroine who in that situation sheds tears, speaks sweetly, and then also speaks crooked words to mock her lover is called a "dhīrādhīrā madhyā gopī. In a madhyā heroine the natures of the mugdhā and pragalbhā heroines are mixed together. The madhyā heroine is the best of the three kinds of heroines.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the qualities of the pragalbhā heroine?

Gosvāmī: These are the qualities of the prgalbhā heroine: She is in the full bloom of youth, blinded with pride, and very eager to enjoy amorous pastimes. She is very passionate. Pushed by the rasas, she attacks her lover. Her words and deeds are very passionate. When her jealousy is aroused, she becomes very harsh. The pragalbhā heroines are of three kinds: 1. dhīrā, adhīrā, and dhīrādhīrā. The dhīrā pragalbhā heroine pretends to be disinterested in enjoying with her lover. Externally she is polite and respectful. She carefully conceals the passion in her

heart. The adhira pragalbha heroine beats her lover with cruel words. The dhiradhira pragalbha heroine is like the dhiradhira madhya heroine. The madhyā and pragalbhā heroines are also divided into jyeṣṭhā (older) and kaniṣṭhā (younger). In this way there are jyeṣṭhā-madhyā and kaniṣṭhā-madhyā heroines and also jyeṣṭhā-pragalbhā and kaniṣṭhā-pragalbhā heroines. The differences of jyeṣṭhā kaniṣṭhā are considered according to the nature of the heroine's love for the hero.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, how many kinds of heroines are there all together?

Gosvāmī: There are fifteen kinds of heroines. Very young heroines are always mugdhā. The three basic kinds of heroines are mugdhā, madhyā, and pragalbhā. The madhyā and pragalbhā heroines are further divided into dhīrā, adhīrā, and dhīrādhīrā. Thus there are seven kinds of svakīyā heroines, seven kinds of parakīyā heroines, and fifteen kinds of heroines in all.

Vijaya-kumāra: What different conditions of life do the heroines experience?

Gosvāmī: The eight different conditions of life are: 1. abhisārikā (going to meet her lover), 2. vāsaka-sajjā (dressed and decorated to meet her lover), 3. utkaṇṭhitā (yearning to meet her lover), 4. khaṇḍitā (whose meeting with her lover is broken), 5. vipralabdhā (separated from her lover), 6. kalahāntaritā (quarreling with her lover), 7. proṣita-bhartṛkā (her lover has gone far away), and 8. svādhīna-bhaṛtrikā (she dominates her lover). The previously described fifteen kinds of heroines all experience these eight conditions of life.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the abhisārikā heroine?

Gosvāmī: A heroine who arranges that her lover meet her, or who goes to meet her lover is called "abhisārikā". If, going to meet her lover, she wears white clothing when he moon is bright, she is called "jyotsnābhisārikā". If, going to meet her lover, she wears dark clothing when the moon is dark, she is called "tamo-'bhisārikā". She is so shy she seems to hide behind her own body. Silent, nicely decorated, and her head carefully covered, she goes, accompanied by a dear friend, to meet her lover.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the vāsaka-sajjā heroine?

Gosvāmī: A heroine who, anxious to meet her lover, carefully decorates both her body and the meeting-place is called “vāsaka-sajjā". She yearns to enjoy amorous pastimes, keeps her eyes fixed on the path her lover will walk, discusses with her friends the pastimes of love, and again and again waits for her messenger's return. These are her activities.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the utkaṇṭhitā heroine?

Gosvāmī: A heroine who is filled with longing and anxiety when her lover is, though no fault of his own, late in coming to the rendezvous, is called "utkaṇṭhitā" by persons learned in the different bhāvas. Her heart is feverish, she trembles, she speculates about why her lover has not yet come, she becomes irritated, and she sheds tears. These are her activities. She is not like the vāsaka-sajjā heroine. She worries that her lover, now under the control of some other girl, will not come to meet her.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the khaṇḍitā heroine?

Gosvāmī: When, the time of rendezvous long passed and the night almost over, the lover finally comes, his body bearing the clear marks of his having enjoyed pastimes with some other girl, the heroine is called "khaṇḍitā". This heroine's activities are anger, long sighs, and silence.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the vipralabdhā heroine?

Gosvāmī: A heroine who becomes anxious when, somehow or other, her lover does not come to their rendezvous, is called "vipralabdhā". Unhappy at heart, she laments, weeps, faints, sighs, and performs other like activities.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the kalahāntaritā heroine?

Gosvāmī: A heroine who will not forgive her lover, even when, surrounded by all her friends, he humbly falls before her feet, and who manifests lamentation, grief, withering, and sighing, is called "kalahāntaritā".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the proṣita-bhartṛkā heroine?

Gosvāmī: A heroine whose lover has gone to a faraway place is called "proṣita-bhartṛkā". She praises the virtues of her lover, is humble, becomes thin and emaciated, suffers insomnia, and becomes melancholy, restless, stunned, and anxious. Her activities are like that.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the svādhīna-bhaṛtrikā heroine?

Gosvāmī: A heroine whose lover always stays with her and is submissive to her is called "svādhīna-bhaṛtrikā". Her activities are to enjoy pastimes with him in the forest, in the water, while picking flowers, and in other like situations.

Vijaya-kumāra: The svādhīna-bhaṛtrikā heroine must be very happy.

Gosvāmī: If her lover is completely controlled by his love for her and if he cannot leave her even for a moment, the svādhīna-bhaṛtrikā heroine is called "mādhavī". Among the eight kinds of heroines, three kindssvādhīna-bhaṛtrikā, vāsaka-sajjā, and abhisārikā are happy at heart. They are nicely decorated with garments and ornaments. However, the other five kinds of heroineskhaṇḍitā, vipralabdhā, utkaṇṭhitā, proṣita-bhartṛkā, and kalahāntaritādo not wear ornaments. A hand resting on their left cheek, they lament.

Vijaya-kumāra: Their love for Kṛṣṇa brings them unhappiness! What does that mean?

Gosvāmī: Love for Kṛṣṇa is spiritual and always blissful. These seeming sufferings are actually included among the wonderful variety of blissful spiritual emotions. In the material world these emotions are suffering, but in the spiritual world they are different kinds of bliss. A person who has the power to taste spiritual bliss can understand. Other cannot.

Vijaya-kumāra: Among the different kinds of heroines, what are the different degrees of love?

Gosvāmī: According to the intensity of their love for Kṛṣṇa, the heroines are of three kinds: 1. uttama (high), 2. madhyama (intermediate), and 3. kaniṣṭhā (low). As the heroines love Him, so Kṛṣṇa loves them in the same degree. This is well known.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the uttamā heroine?

Gosvāmī: The uttamā heroine is willing to renounce any activity in order to please her lover, even for only a moment. Even if he makes her unhappy, she never is displeased with him. If someone lies that her lover is unhappy, her heart becomes ripped to shreds.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of a madhyamā heroine?

Gosvāmī: When she hears that her lover is unhappy, she becomes sad at heart.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of a kaniṣṭhā heroine?

Gosvāmī: The kaniṣṭhā heroine is anxious that obstacles will prevent her from meeting her lover.

Vijaya-kumāra: How many kinds of heroines are there?

Gosvāmī: There are 360 kinds of heroines. The first mentioned fifteen kinds of heroines are each divided according to the next mentioned eight kinds of heroines. In this way (15 X 8) there are 120 heroines. These 120 kinds of heroines are each divided according to the last mentioned three kinds of heroines. In this way there are 360 kinds of heroines.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I have heard about the heroines. Now I wish to hear about the different kinds of yūtheśvarīs (group leaders).

Gosvāmī: According to friends and enemies, the yūtheśvarīs are of three kinds: 1. svapakṣa (allies), 2. vipakṣa (enemies), and 3. taṭastha (neutrals). According to their good fortune they are of these kinds: 1. adhikā (great), 2. samā (moderate), and 3. laghvī (light). They are also of these three kinds: 1. prakharā (harsh), 2. madhyā (moderate), and 3. mṛdvī (sweet). Here "prakharā" is a synonym for “pragalbhā". When the quality of harshness is manifested only very slightly, the yūtheśvarī is considered mrdvi. When sweetness and harshness are equally present, she is considered madhya. The yūtheśvarīs are also divided into 1. atyantikī (great), and 2. apekṣikī (less). When a yūtheśvarī has no equal in any sphere, she is considered atyantikādhikā (the best of atyantikīs). This refers to Śrī Rādhā alone. She is a madhyā, and in Vraja She has no equal.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the apekṣikādhikās (the second level of the great)?

Gosvāmī: A yutheśvarī who accepts another yūtheśvarī as her superior is called "apekṣikādhikā".

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the atyantikā laghu (or atyantikī apekṣikī)?

Gosvāmī: A yūtheśvarī who is not inferior to the other heroines is called "atyantikā laghu". In relation to the atyantika adhikā yūtheśvarī (the greatest yūtheśvarī, Śrī Rādhā), all the heroines are laghu (inferior). Aside from the atyantikī laghus, all the yūtheśvarīs are adhikas. Still, the atyantikī adhikā yūtheśvarī (the greatest yūtheśvarī, Śrī Rādhā) should never be considered their equal or inferior. Also, the atyantikī laghu yūtheśvarīs should not be considered equal to the adhikā yūtheśvarīs. There is but one kind of sama-laghu yūtheśvarī. Divided according to the qualities of madhyā, adhikā, prakharā, and the like, there are twelve kinds of yūtheśvarīs. They are: 1. atyantikā adhikā, 2. sama-laghu, 3. adhika-madhyā, 4. sama-madhyā, 5. laghu-madhyā, 6. adhika-prakharā, 7. sama-prakharā, 8. laghu-prakharā, 9. adhika-mṛdvī, 10. sama-mrdvī, 11. laghu-mṛdvī, and 12. atyantika-laghu.

Vijaya-kumāra: I wish to hear about the different kinds of dūtīs (messengers).

Gosvāmī: The heroines thirsting for association with Kṛṣṇa need the help of the dūtīs. The dūtīs are of two kinds: 1. svayam-dūtī (messengers who act on their own initiative), and 2. āpta-dūtī (messengers given a specific order).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the āpta-dūtī messengers?

Gosvāmī: When great enthusiasm breaks apart any shyness she may have possessed, and, bewildered with love, she openly declares her love for the hero, that is a svayam-dūtī messenger. These messengers are three kinds: 1. kāyika (bodily gestures), 2. vācika (words), and 3. cākṣuṣa (glances).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the vācika (words) messenger?

Gosvāmī: Hints (vyaṅga) expressed in words are of two kinds: 1. śabda-vyaṅga (the hint is present in the sound of the words) and 2. artha-vyaṅga (the hint is present in the meaning of the words). Sometimes the hints are directly related to

Kṛṣṇa, and other times the hints pretend to be about some other topic.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the hints directly related to Kṛṣṇa?

Gosvāmī: they are of two kinds: 1. hints to Kṛṣṇa Himself), and 2. hints spoken on some pretext.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are hints to Kṛṣṇa Himself?

Gosvāmī: Speaking proudly, lamenting, and begging are some of the many ways hints may be expressed before Kṛṣṇa Himself.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the hint in the form of a lament?

Gosvāmī: A lament expressed by the sound of the words (śabda-vyaṅga) is one kind of lament-hint, and a lament expressed by the meaning of the words (artha-vyaṅga) is another kind of lament-hint. You studied rhetoric (alaṅkāra). I need not give many examples.

Vijaya-kumāra: Yes. That is good. What is the nature of a hint in the form of begging?

Gosvāmī: Begging is of two kinds: 1. begging for oneself, and 2. begging on behalf of another person. Then begging may again be divided into these two kinds: Begging expressed by the sound of the words (śabda-vyaṅga), and 2. begging expressed by the meaning of the words (artha-vyaṅga). The begging described here is all hints. When the begging is for oneself, the heroine tells her own story. When the begging is on behalf of another person, the speaker tells another's story.

Vijaya-kumāra: I understand these direct hints. In them the heroine may directly accuse Kṛṣṇa of something. These hints are also śabda-vyaṅga (according to the sound) and artha-vyaṅga (according to the meaning). Many poets have expertly placed such clever hints in the mouths of actors and actresses. Now please explain vyapadeśa (a pretext).

Gosvāmī: In the alaṅkāra-śāstra it is said the apadeśa and vyapadeśa are synonyms. Apadeśa means to indicate one thing while speaking of another. In this way one speaks words that clearly mean one thing while hinting a request to serve Kṛṣṇa in a certain way. This is called "vyapadeśa". “Vyapadeśa" should be spoken by a messenger (dūtī).

Vijaya-kumāra: Vyapadesa is then a kind of trick where a request has a hidden meaning. Now please describe purastha-viṣaya-gata-vyaṅga (the hint of talking about something before one's eyes).

Gosvāmī: When one thinks, "Kṛṣṇa has heard, but He did not hear", and when Kṛṣṇa changes the subject, talking instead about some nearby animal or something else, that is the hint called "purastha-viṣaya-gata-vyaṅga". This hint is of two kinds: 1. śabda (sounds) and 2. artha (meaning).

Vijaya-kumāra: By your mercy I understand everything. Now please describe the hints given by bodily gestures.

Gosvāmī: Gesturing with the fingers, moving quickly on some pretext, covering the body our of fear and shyness, scratching the ground with one's foot, scratching the ear, making a gesture of applying tilaka, dressing in a certain way, moving the eyebrows, embracing a gopī friend, hitting a gopī friend, biting one's lips, playing with one's necklace, making one's ornaments tinkle, moving one's shoulders, writing the name "Kṛṣṇa", and twining a vine around a tree are all included among the hints given by bodily gestures.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now please describe the hints given by the eyes.

Gosvāmī: Laughing and smiling with the eyes, half-closing the eyes, moving the

eyes, looking in the distance, crooked glances, glancing with the left eye, and sidelong glances are some of the hints given by the eyes.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I understand the svayam-dūtīs. You have only given some hints. But that is good enough. There are limitless kinds of such messengers. Now please describe the āpta-dūtīs.

Gosvāmī: The messenger who is a beautiful vraja-gopī, who is affectionate and eloquent, and whom one can trust to faithfully keep a secret, even to the end of life, is this kind of messenger (āpta-dūtī).

Vijaya-kumāra: How many kinds of āpta-dūtīs are there?

Gosvāmī: The āpta-dūtīs are of three kinds: 1. amitārthā, 2. nisṛṣṭārthā, and 3. patra-hārī. A messenger, understanding the meaning of various hints and signs, brings the lovers together, is called an "amitārthā dūtī". A messenger who uses the persuasive power of her eloquent words to bring the lovers together is called a "nisṛṣṭārthā dūtī". A messenger who carries letters is called a "patra-hārī".

Vijaya-kumāra: Are there any other āpta-dūtīs?

Gosvāmī: The śilpa-kāriṇī (artists), daivajñā (astrologers), liṅginī (brāhmaṇa girls), paricārikā (maidservants), dhātreyī (nursemaids), vanadevī (goddesses of the forest), sakhīs (gopī friends), and many others are also counted among the āpta-dūtīs. The śilpa-kāriṇīs included girls who use their skill at drawing pictures to arrange for the meeting of the lovers. The daivajñās use their knowledge of astrology to arrange the lovers' meeting. The liṅginīs dress in the garments of brāhmaṇa ascetics, like Paurṇamāsī. There are many paricārikā messengers, such as Lavanga-manjari and Bhanumati. The dhātreyīs are the women who had been nursemaids to Rādhā and the other gopīs. The vanadevī is the goddesses of Vṛndāvana forest). The sakhīs have already been described. They also become messengers. These girls carry messages, either direct and clear messages, or messages filled with hints and suggestions, hints that may be either śabda-vyaṅga or artha-vyaṅga, both of which I have already described. In this situation there may be vyapadeśa (statements with a hidden meaning), artha-mūla, praśaṁsā (words of praise), ākṣepa (words of lamentation), and many other kinds of words also.

After hearing all these explanations, Vijaya-kumāra offered respectful obeisances to his spiritual master's feet, and then took his leave. Thinking and thinking of all these descriptions, he walked home.

Chapter Thirty-four
Madhura-rasa-vicāra
Madhura-rasa

Quickly honoring prasādam, and then walking by the seacoast, Vijaya-kumāra went to Kāśī-miśra's home. As he looked at the waves in the ocean, the thought of

the ocean of rasas entered his heart. He thought, "Ah! This ocean reminds me of ecstatic love (bhāva) for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Even a material thing can remind one of spiritual love. This ocean is like the ocean of rasas my spiritual master described. Some day I will throw this gross and subtle material body far away, I will attain the form of a mañjarī, I will go to the shore of the ocean of rasas, and I will taste the sweetness of the rasas. Lord Kṛṣṇa, who is dark like a monsoon cloud, is the only master of my life. Śrī Vṛṣabhānunandinī (Śrī Rādhā), who stays by His side, is the queen of my life. This ocean is like the ecstatic love Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa feel for each other. Their rasas and bhāvas are an ocean garlanded with waves. When bhava arises, then there are wonderful waves in this ocean. Then I am a sakhī (gopī) standing on the shore. Then I float in the ocean of prema-rasa (the rasas of spiritual love). Lord Kṛṣṇa is the ocean of rasas. Kṛṣṇa is dark like the ocean. Śrī Rādhā is the waves of love (prema) in that ocean of Kṛṣṇa. She is beautiful with a fair complexion. The many great waves in that ocean are Her friends (sakhīs). The smaller waves are Her maidservants (paricārikās). I am very far from them all. I am a maidservant of Rādhā's maidservants." Thinking and thinking in this way, Vijaya-kumāra fell unconscious. Soon he regained consciousness. Slowly he approached his spiritual master and offered daṇḍavat obeisances to his feet. Humbly he sat down. Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī embraced him and said, "O Vijaya-kumāra, is everything well with you?" Vijaya-kumāra replied, "O master, your mercy is the root of all auspiciousness. I am a follower of the sakhīs (gopī friends of Śrī Rādhā). Therefore I will to clearly understand about the different kinds of sakhīs.

Gosvāmī: O Vijaya-kumāra, to properly glorify the sakhīs is beyond the power of the individual souls. You are a follower of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, so you can understand all this. The beautiful girls of Vraja who are sakhīs are expert in manifesting many (vistāriṇī) pastimes of love (prema-līlā). They are great reservoirs filled with faith in Vraja's divine youthful couple. A person who wishes to clearly understand them is certainly very fortunate. When describing the different groups of gopīs, I have already described the different kinds of sakhīs, namely the sakhīs who are adhikā, samā, and laghvī, and the sakhīs who are prakharā, madhyā, and mṛdvī. I explained all these divisions yesterday. Here is the evidence for them, from Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī (Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi, Sakhī-prakaraṇa, 3-5):

prema-saubhagya-sad-guṇādy-
ādhikyād adhikā sakhī
samā tat-samyato jñeyā
tal-laghutvāt tathā laghuḥ

"In the matter of spiritual love, good fortune, and spiritual virtues, and in other matters also, the sakhīs are divided into three groups: 1. adhikā, 2. samā, and 3. laghu.

durlanghya-vākya-prakharā
prakhyātā gauravocitā
tad-ūnatve bhaven mṛdvī
madhyā tat-samyam āgatā

"A prakharā sskhī speaks heavy words that are difficult to counter. A mṛdvī sakhī does not speak harshly at all. A sama sakhī stands midway between the prakharā and mṛdvī sakhī.

atyantikādhikatvādi-
bhedaḥ pūrvavad atra saḥ
sva-yūthe yūtha-nāthaiva
syād atrātyantikādhikā

"The sakhīs may be divided into different types, beginning with the atyantādhikā. In each group of sakhīs, the leader is atyantādhikā.

sā kvāpi prakharā yūthe
kvāpi madhyā mṛduḥ kvacit

"Some of the atyantādhikā sakhīs are prakharā, some are madhyā, and some are mṛdvī."

Vijaya-kumāra: The yūtheśvarī is the leader of a particular group. You have already described how the yūtheśvarīs are atyantika and how they are divided into three kinds: prakharā, madhyā, and mṛdvī. In this way they are either atyantādhikā prakharā, atyantādhikā madhyā, or atyantādhikā mṛdvī. This you have already explained. Now please describe the different kinds of sakhīs.

Gosvāmī: In each group the yūtheśvarī is the only atyantādhikā sakhī. The other sakhīs are all apekṣikādhikā, apekṣikā samā, or apekṣikā laghvī. Then again, these are also divided into prakharā, madhyā, and mṛdvī. In this way the three groups are multiplied by three to bring nine groups altogether. They are:

1. apekṣikādhikā prakhara, 4. apekṣikā-samā prakharā, 7. apekṣikā-laghvī prakharā
2. apekṣikādhikā madhyā, 5. apekṣikā-samā madhyā, 8. apekṣikā-laghvī madhyā
3. apekṣikādhikā mṛdvī , 6. apekṣikā-samā mṛdvī, and 9. apekṣikā-laghvī mṛdvī.

The antyantikā laghvī is of two kinds: 1. atyantika laghvi, and 2. sama-laghvi. Two this two is added the preceding nine, and to them is added the yūtheśvarī. In this way there are twelve types of heroines in each group.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, which famous gopīs are examples of each of these

different kinds of sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: Lalitā and many other sakhīs in Śrī Rādhā's group are apekṣikādhikā prakharā sakhīs. Viśākhā and many other sakhīs in that same group are apekṣikādhikā madhyā sakhīs. Citrā, Madhurikā, and many other sakhīs in that group are apekṣikādhikā mṛdvī sakhīs. However, Lalitā and the other aṣṭa-sakhīs (eight closest friends of Śrī Rādhā) are all apekṣikā laghvī when compared to Śrī Rādhā Herself.

Vijaya-kumāra: Are the apekṣika-laghvī prakharā sakhīs and the other groups of sakhīs like them further divided into other kinds of sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: The Laghvī prakharā sakhīs are of two kinds: 1. vāma (left wing), and 2. dakṣiṇa (right wing).

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the qualities of vāma sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: They are always very proud. If there is some slackening in the respect shown to them, they become angry. They are not submissive to their lover. Such a sakh.i is called “vāmā". In Rādhā's group, Lalita and many others are considered vāmā prakharā sakhīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the qualities of thw dakṣiṇa sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: These heroines cannot tolerate pride. These heroines speak sweetly to their lover and they are conquered by His sweet words to them. Such a sakhī is called “dakṣiṇā". In Śrī Rādhā's group. Tuṅgavidyā and many others are dakṣiṇā prakharā sakhīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the atyantikā laghvī sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: These sakhīs are always sweet. They are less important than the other sakhīs. Kusumikā and many others are said to be atyantikā laghvī sakhīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: How do the sakhīs carry messages?

Gosvāmī: The sakhīs bring the hero, who has come a great distance, to meet the heroine. That is the message they carry.

Vijaya-kumāra: Are the sakhīs ever heroines?

Gosvāmī: The yūtheśvarīs are heroines eternally. The apekṣikādhikā prakharās, apekṣikādhikā madhyās, and apekṣikādhikā mṛdvīs may be either heroines or sakhīs. They have both natures. When gopīs of an inferior status are present, they may assume the role of heroine. When a gopī of superior status is present, they assume the role of sakhī. The gopīs of inferior status consider them heroines, and the gopīs of superior status consider them sakhīs. Therefore they are called "nāyikā-prāya" (almost heroines). The apekṣikā prakharā, apekṣikā madhyā, and apekṣikā mrdvīs also play double roles. They become sakhīs when superior gopīs are present, and heroines when inferior gopīs are present. The apekṣikā prakharā, apekṣikā madhyā, and apekṣikā mrdvīs are most often saklhīs. Because the yūtheśvarī and the previous described three classes of gopīs are superior to them, the atyantika laghvi gopīs are considered here as a fifth category. They are always sakhīs. In the presence of the yṭheśvarī, the apekṣikā gopīs are all sakhīs and dūtīs (messengers). Then they are not heroines. The atyantikā laghvī gopīs are always sakhīs. They are never heroines, and they are never dūtīs.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the sakhīs that act as dūtīs?

Gosvāmī: The yūtheśvarīs are always heroines. Everyone always honors them. They do not carry messages. However, the yūtheśvarī entrusts to her favorite sakhī the task of carrying messages. However, when one of her sakhīs becomes the

object of the hero's love, the yūtheśvarī will become a gauṇa (secondary) kind of messenger on her behalf. Here "gauna" means that the yūtheśvarī does not come and go for long distances carrying messages. This kind of carrying messages is of two kinds: 1. when Kṛṣṇa is present, and 2. when Kṛṣṇa is not present.

Vijaya-kumāra: In what different ways are messages carried when Kṛṣṇa is present?

Gosvāmī: These messages are of two kinds: 1. hints, and 2. direct statements.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the hints?

Gosvāmī: When, by a sidelong glance, an eyebrow movement, a movement of the forefinger or another part of the body, or another kind of hint, a sakhī sends Kṛṣṇa to the heroine, that is called the message in the form of a hint.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the direct statements?

Gosvāmī: When, either directly to Lord Kṛṣṇa or secretly behind his back, the messenger speaks appropriate words, that is called a message in the form of a direct statement.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the messages when Kṛṣṇa is absent?

Gosvāmī: Here one sakhī brings another sakhī to Kṛṣṇa. There are many ways a message can be carried in this way. These are all considered carrying a message when Kṛṣṇa is not present.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are messages carried for the nāyikā-prāyā (almost heroine)?

Gosvāmī: When an apekṣikādhikā prakharā, apekṣikādhikā madhyā, or apekṣikādhikā mṛdvī carry a message for a gopī of inferior status, this is called “carrying a message for a nāyikā-prāyā". The sama sakhis and madhya sakhis are naturally friends. Their friendship is mostly sweet and for the most part they have no differences between them. Paṇḍitas learned in the science of spiritual love (prema) can understand all this.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "a message carried by a sakhī-prāyā (one who is amost a sakhī)?

Gosvāmī: These are messages carried by a ladghu-prahharā, laghu-madhyā, or laghu-mṛdvī gopī. When they are engaged in carrying messages they are called "sakhī-prāyā" (almsot sakhī).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is a nitya-sakhī (always a sakhī)?

Gosvāmī: Gopīs who only wish to be a sakhī and never desire to become a heroine are called "nitya-sakhī". The nitya-sakhīs are of two kinds: 1. atyantikā laghvī and 2. apekṣikā laghvī.

Vijaya-kumāra: Do the sakhīs eternally possess certain specific qualities, like the quality of being prakharā (harsh), qualities that they always manifest and never abandon?

Gosvāmī: Although certain qualities are part of the eternal nature of each gopī, sometimes, according to time, place, and circumstances, the gopīs manifest other qualities, even qualities that are the opposite of their ordinary nature. An example of this is Lalitā's attempt to calm Rādhā's jealous anger.

Vijaya-kumāra: It seems to me that Rādhā takes great care to arrange the meeting of Lord Kṛṣṇa with Her friends.

Gosvāmī: O Vijaya-kumāra, I can say something about that. When a sakhī sent with a message meets Kṛṣṇa in a secluded place, and He requests that she enjoy with Him, she will not agree. She will not break the trust of the gopī friend who

sent her with the message.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the sakhīs' activities?

Gosvāmī: The sakhīs have sixteen kinds of activities: 1. To praise the virtues of the hero before the heroine and to praise the virtues of the heroine before the hero, 2. to make the hero and heroine attached to each other, 3. to arrange for the rendezvous of the hero and heroine, 4. to give the heroine to Kṛṣṇa, 5. to speak eloquent jokes, 6. to give consolation, 7. to decorate the heroine in her room, 8. to reveal to the hero the love in the heroine's heart and to reveal to the heroine the love in the hero's heart, 9. to hide faults, 10. to teach the heroine how to deceive her husband and other superiors, 11. to bring the hero and heroine together at the appropriate time, 12. to fan with a cāmara and perform other like services, 13. to reproach the hero or heroine when it is appropriate, 14. to carry a message, 15. to save the heroine's life, and 16. to be careful and diligent in everything. Many examples could be given to illustrate each of these. What more shall I say?

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I understand these brief explanations. later I will see the examples given in the book Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi. Now I have learned a great deal. O master, now I would like to learn about the sakhīs' affection for each other and love for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Gosvāmī: The sakhīs are of two kinds: 1. the sakhīs whose love for Kṛṣṇa and their own yūtheśvarī is not equal, and 2. the sakhīs who love Kṛṣṇa and their own yūtheśvarī equally.

Vijaya-kumāra: What sakhīs have love for Kṛṣṇa and their own yūtheśvarī that is not equal?

Gosvāmī: These gopīs, who are called "asama-snehā sakhīs" are of two kinds. Some love their yūtheśvarī more than they love Kṛṣṇa. Others think, "I am a maidservant of Kṛṣṇa." These gopīs will not leave their group to join another, Still, they love Kṛṣṇa more than they love their yūtheśvarī. A gopī who is proud to serve her yūtheśvarī, and who loves her yūtheśvarī more than Kṛṣṇa, is called “sakhī-senhādhikā".

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are they?

Gosvāmī: Among the five kinds of sakhīs I have already described, those who are simply called sakhīs love Kṛṣṇa more (kṛṣṇa-snehādhikā). The previously described nitya-sakhīs and prāṇa-sakhīs love their yūtheśvarī more (sakhī-senhādhikā).

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the gopīs that love Kṛṣṇa and their yūtheśvarī equally?

Gosvāmī: The gopīs that love Kṛṣṇa and their yūtheśvarī equally are called "sama-snehā".

Vijaya-kumāra: Of these sakhīs who are the best?

Gosvāmī: The sakhis who love Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa equally, and who think, "I am a follower of Rādhā" are the best of all. They are called "priya-sakhīs" and parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs".

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, please describe the rivalries of the different groups of sakhīs.

Gosvāmī: All the groups of Vraja-gopīs are divided in four ways: 1. sva-pakṣa (one's own group), 2. suhṛt-pakṣa (friends), 3. taṭastha-pakṣa (neutral parties), and 4. paritpakṣa (enemies). The gopī groups associate with the suhṛt-pakṣas and taṭastha-pakṣas, and they avoid the pratipakṣas. In this way there is exchange of rasas.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the sva-pakṣa, pratipakṣa, and the others.

Gosvāmī: The sva-pakṣa I have already explained. Now I will explains how the suhṛt-pakṣas and the other groups differ. The suhṛt-pakṣas are of two kinds: 1. iṣṭa-sādhaka (friends pushed together to do something favorable).and aniṣṭa-sādhaka (friends pushed together to do something unfavorable). The taṭastha-pakṣa is frinedly to both the sva-pakṣa and the pratipakṣa.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the pratipakṣas.

Gosvāmī: The vipakṣas are enemies. They destroy was is good and bring what is evil. The vipakṣas manifest trickery, malice, restlessness, envy, spite, mercilessness, pride, and a host of other like qualities.

Vijaya-kumāra: How is pride manifested?

Gosvāmī: False ego, self-importance, arrogance, mocking, conceit, and haughtiness are the six manifestations of pride.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of false ego?

Gosvāmī: When one praises the sva-pakṣa and reviles the pratipakṣa, that is false ego.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is self-importance?

Gosvāmī: When one explains how one's own group has the most exalted spiritual love, that is self-importance.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is arrogance?

Gosvāmī: When one is convinced that one's own group enjoys the most exalted spiritual pastimes, that is arrogance.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is mocking?

Gosvāmī: When one laughs at the other group, that is mocking.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is conceit?

Gosvāmī: When pride improves one's devotional service, that is conceit in this context.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is haughtiness?

Gosvāmī: To openly declare one's own superiority is called haughtiness. To criticize other sakhīs and speak sarcastically about them is also haughtiness.

Vijaya-kumāra: Do the yūtheśvarīs show malice directly?

Gosvāmī: No. The yūtheśvarīs always keep their gravity and decorum. They do not openly express malice. Even if a prakharā sakhī speaks maliciously in her presence, the yūtheśvarī continues to speak pleasantly.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, the yūtheśvarīs in the Lord's Vraja pastimes are all eternally perfect. They are one of the Lord's potencies. What does it mean that malice and other inauspicious qualities are present among them? Seeing these qualities, nondevotee philosophers will criticize the Lord's Vraja pastimes. They will say, "If malice and other inauspicious qualities are present in the spiritual world, then why do the devotees criticize or renounce the material world?" O master I am a resident of holy Navadvīpa, where, by the will of Lord Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, many materialists may be seen. Some are followers of karma-kāṇḍa. Some are barren logicians. Some are impersonalists. In this way there are many offenders. They condemn the Lord's pastimes. They claim that the Lord's pastimes are material and are filled with imperfections.

Gosvāmī: Persons (arasika) who cannot understand the Lord's spiritual rasas claim that it is not right for the Lord's personal associates manifest malice or other seemingly inauspicious qualities. When one is at last able to understand the

spiritual truth, then one can see Vraja's madhura-rasa, which is the dear friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Lord who destroys all sins and whose transcendental form enchants a multitude of Kāmadevas. Malice and other seemingly inauspicious emotions felt by Lord Kṛṣṇa's personal associates are meant to enhance Lord Kṛṣṇa's transcendental pleasure when the associates are in His company. Apart from these pastimes with Kṛṣṇa, these seemingly inauspicious qualities are not manifested. At that time there is only love.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I am a tiny creature. These confidential truths do not easily enter my heart. Please be merciful and explain it very simply and clearly. That will be auspicious for me.

Gosvāmī: The rasas of spiritual love (prema-rasa) are like a great ocean of milk. However, material logic is bitter like cow's urine. One who can understand the spiritual rasas obtains an auspicious life. And why not? It is after a person performs many pious deeds that Bhakti-devī (the goddess of devotional service) places the fruit of the hlādinī-śakti in his heart. Thus a person who shuns the study of material logic obtains the final truth. On the other hand, persons who use material logic to understand the truth cannot understand the spiritual truth, which is inconceivalbe, beyond the understanding of the material mind. The so-called truth they accept is filled with misconceptions. However, you are a fortunate soul. Therefore by the grace of Bhakti-devī you understand everything. However, to make the truth very clear, I must answer your question. You are not a material logician, nor a follower of karma-kāṇḍa, nor a follower of jñāna-kāṇḍa, nor a doubter. You are a sincere devotee engaged in vaidhi-bhakti devotional service. I will explain the truth to you. I have no objection. You asked two kinds of questions. One kind of question takes shelter of dry material logic. The other kind of question may be satisfied by faith in devotional service. You should not answer the question posed by the impersonalist. Why not? Because they have no faith in the actual truth, and thus they will not believe what is the true answer. Without taking shelter of the Lord's cit-śakti (spiritual potency) a soul imprisoned by Māyā cannot understand the inconceivable spiritual truth merely by using the instrument of material logic in a great series of debates. That is the fate of persons who have no faith in the Supreme Personality of Godhead. many different kinds of persons engage in devotional service. Persons who are qualified to understand the madhura-rasa can understand all these truths from their spiritual master. O Vijaya-kumāra, the Lord's pastimes and rasas in Vṛndāvana are very wonderful. The Lord's madhura-rasa is very different from the amorous pastimes of the material world. By studying Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's five-chapter description of the Lord's rāsa dance, a devotee will uproot the disease that grows in his heart. What disease grows in the heart of the souls imprisoned by Māyā? The disease is material lust. A soul who has taken shelter of the subtle material body consisting of mind, intelligence, and false ego, who is filled with material desires, who identifies with the gross material body made of seven elements beginning with flesh, and who thinks it is a man or a woman, does not have the power to throw material lust far away very easily. Only by hearing about the Lord's Vraja pastimes will that soul be able to throw material lust far away. In the end, such a person is able to see the great wonder that is the Lord's madhura-rasa pastimes in Vṛndāvana. When He throws the impersonalist philosophy far away, then the spiritual madhura-rasa is eternally manifest before him. When he understands the lesser importance of the

Lord's majestic feature in vaikuṇṭha, the soul can understand the supreme glory of the Lord's eternal and splendid rasas. The the soul is filled with intense transcendental bliss. Then the dry happiness of impersonalism and the dull pleasures of the material world become very unimportant for him. Then he is filled with a bliss that is perfect and complete. This perfect and complete bliss is manifest in many places and in many ways. In some bhāvas it is manifested as affection and other like emotions, and in other places it is manifested as malice and other so-called inauspicious emotions. Material malice and material inauspicious emotions are all abominable. These spiritual emotions are not like them. They are all various transformations of spiritual bliss. They are like waves in the great ocean of the spiritual rasas. They make that ocean glorious. The conclusion of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī is that these different rasas show the wonderful variety of ecstatic love (bhāva). In the sva-pakṣa, these bhāvas are all the same. In the suhṛt-pakṣa the bhāvas are slightly different. In the taṭastha-pakṣa, the bhavas are slightly similar. In the vipakṣa, the bhāvas are completely different. Look. when the bhāvas are not compatible the situation is not pleasant. In that situation the supremely blissful rasas produce malice and other seemingly inauspicious emotions.

Vijaya-kumāra: Why do sva-pakṣas and vipakṣas exist?

Gosvāmī: When two heroines have the same nature, sva-pakṣa and vipakṣa are manifested. In this way friends and enemies are manifested from the spiritual rasas. The purpose of these emotions is to increase the sweetness of the Lord's spiritual madhura-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: Are Rādhā and Candrāvalī equally powerful?

Gosvāmī: No. No. Śrī Rādhā is full of the highest ecstatic love. She is the essence of the hlādinī-śakti. Candrāvalī is manifested from a tiny particle of Śrī Rādhā's transcendental form. Still, in order to increase the prema-rasa (loving pastimes) of Śrī Rādhā, Candrāvalī is manifested as if she were Rādhā's equal and rival (vipakṣa). Look, it is not possible for these two yūtheśvarīs to be completely alike. If these two seem sometimes to be equals, it is only an accident, like the path of a bookworm accidentally forming the shape of a certain letter of the alphabet. In truth, the sva-pakṣas and vipakṣas are needed to make the rasas glorious.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, now I have no doubts. The nectar of your words flows into my ears and enters my heart, where it destroys all the bitterness that was there. In my heart I can now understand the transformations of madhurarasa. Lord Kṛṣṇa is eternal and full of knowledge and bliss. He is the only hero (nāyaka). I meditate on His form, qualities, and activities. He is dhīrodātta, dhīra-lalita, dhīra-praśānta, and dhīrodhatta. His qualities are anukūla, dakṣiṇa, śaṭha, and dhṛṣṭa. He is always served by His are ceṭa, viṭa, vidūṣaka, pīṭha-mardaka, and priya-narma-sakhā companions. He likes to play the flute. Lord Kṛṣṇa, who enjoys the madhura-rasa, is manifest in my heart. I have also understood the descriptions of the beautiful girls of Vraja who have taken shelter of the madhura-rasa. They are heroines (nāyikā). The heroines are of two kinds: 1. svakīya, and 2. parakīya. The best rasa is that of the parakīya heroines in Vraja. These heroines are of three kinds: 1. sādhana-parā, 2. devī, and 3. nitya-priyā. Divided into many, many different groups, the girls of Vraja serve Lord Kṛṣṇa. There are many millions and millions of such girls of Vraja, each one of them subordinate to one of the many, many yūtheśvarīs. Rādhā and Candravali are the most important of the

yūtheśvarīs. There are five kinds of sakhis: 1. sakhī, 2. nitya-sakhī, 3. prāṇa-sakhī, 4. priya-sakhī, and 5. parama-preṣṭha-sakhī. In Rādhā's group the eight sakhis headed by Lalitā are parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs. These eight sakhīs headed by Lalitā are qualified to become yūtheśvarīs themselves, but they do not form separate groups, for they prefer to remain followers of Śrī Rādhā. Still, many other girls of Vraja consider themselves followers of these eight sakhis. The heroines are divided in different ways: as mugdhā, madhyā, and pragalbhā, as dhīrā, adhīrā, and dhīrādhīrā, and as kanyā, svakīyā, and parakīyā. In this way there are fifteen different kinds of heroines. The heroines have eight different conditions of life, which begin with abhisārikā. The heroines are also divided into uttamā, madhyamā, and kaniṣṭhā. In this way there are 360 (15 X 8 X 3) different kinds of heroines. Knowledge of the friendship and other emotions felt by the yūtheśvarīs is now also present in my heart. Knowledge of the messengers and sakhīs is now also manifested in my heart. Now I am able to understand the shelter in whom the rasas rest. Now I understand the viṣaya and āśraya, and, included within them, the vibhāva and ālambana. Tomorrow I will take shelter of your feet and learn from you about the uddīpanas. Lord Kṛṣṇa been very kind to me, to give me such a kind spiritual master. Tomorrow I will be very well nourished by drinking the nectar words that flow from your mouth.

Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī embraced Vijaya-kumāra and said, "Bābā, I am very fortunate to have you as a disciple. You like to ask many questions, and Lord Caitanya Himself has placed all the answers in my mouth." Then the two of them wept tears of love. After that they were both stunned and motionless.

Seeing how fortunate Vijaya-kumāra had become, Dhyānacandra and the other great souls there became plunged into great transcendental bliss. At that moment some pure Vaiṣṇavas came to visit the Śrī Rādhā-kānta temple. They began to sing this song of Caṇḍī-dāsa:

sei kebā śunaila śyāma-nām
kāṇera bitara diyā marame paśila go
ākula karila mora prāṇ

"O friend, whom did I hear pronounce the name `Syāma'? That name entered my ears. Then it traveled to my heart. Now my life breath trembles.

nā jāni kateka madhu śyāma-nāma āche go
badana chāḍite nāhi pāre

japite japite nāma abaśa korila go
kemane pāiba sai tāre

"I do not know why the name `Syāma' is so sweet. My mouth cannot renounce saying it. I say it again and again. My senses are all overwhelmed. What will become of me?

nāma para-tāpe jāra aichana karila go
aṅgera paraśe kibā hay

jekhāne basati tāra nayane dekhiyā go
juvatī dharama kaiche ray

"If this name makes my senses burn with fever, what would happen if the bearer of this name were to touch my limbs? If I were were to see this person with my eyes, How could I continue on the religious path?

pāśarite kari mane pāśarā nā jāya go
ki kariba ki habe upāy

kahe dvija-caṇḍi-dāse kulavatī kula-nāśe
āpanāra jauvana jācāy

"In my heart I decide to forget Him, but He will not be forgotten. What will I do? Considering the fate of a saintly young girl in danger of destroying her family, the brāhmaṇa Caṇḍī-dāsa speaks these words."

Accompanied by karatālas and mṛdaṅga, everyone sang this song. An hour and half passed in this way. Everyone was plunged in spiritual love (prema). When the spiritual bliss was a little broken, Vijaya-kumāra offered daṇḍavat obeisances to Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī and the other Vaiṣṇavas, respectfully bade them farewell, and began walking to Haracaṇḍi-sāhī's house.

Chapter Thirty-five
Madhura-rasa-vicāra

Madhura-rasa

Again and again Kṛṣṇa appeared in his thoughts. Vijaya-kumāra's heart was attracted to Kṛṣṇa. His ordinary dealings were now chaotic. He ate a little of what food was around, and then ran like a madman to his spiritual master, and then fell down before his feet. Gopālaguru Gosvāmī carefully picked him up and embraced him. Vijaya-kumāra said, "O master, I wish to learn about the uddīpanas in madhura-rasa." Then the saintly Gosvāmī carefully spoke.

Gosvāmī: The qualities, names, activities, decorations, and other things directly and indirectly related to Kṛṣṇa and His beloved gopīs are the uddīpanas in madhura-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the qualities.

Gosvāmī: The qualities are of three kinds: 1. mental, 2. verbal, and 3. physical.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the mental qualities?

Gosvāmī: Gratefulness, forgiveness, and kindness are included among the many mental qualities.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the verbal qualities?

Gosvāmī: The verbal qualities are words that delight the ear.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the physical qualities?

Gosvāmī: Youthfulness, splendor, charm, beauty, delight, sweetness, and gentleness are included among the physical qualities. Four kinds of youthfulness take shelter of madhura rasa. They are: 1. vayaḥ-sandhi, 2. navya-vayasa, 3. vyakta-vayasa, and 4. pūrṇa-vayasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vayaḥ-sandhi?

Gosvāmī: The point where bālya and yauvana meet is called vayaḥ-sandhi. It is also called "prathama-kaiśora". When kaiśora arises, that is vayaḥ-sandhi. Here balya and paugandha are synonyms. The sweetness of the gopīs' vayaḥ-sandhi age is an uddīpana that inspires Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is navya-vayasa?

Gosvāmī: It is the beginning of yauvana. In this age the gopīs smile gently, their eyes are restless, their hearts are beginning to become agitated, and their breasts are beginning to manifest.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vyakta-vayasa?

As this question was spoken, a Śrī Vaiṣṇava and pandita sannyasi from the Sankara-matha came to see the Deity. The Śrī Vaiṣṇava considered himself a male servant of the Lord, and the Śaṅkara sannyāsī was plunged in dry meditation on impersonal Brahman. Neither of them were qualified to hear about the vraja-gopīs. It is forbidden to discuss madhura-rasa with persons firmly convinced of their material malehood. Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī and Vijaya-kumāra at once stopped their conversation and made small talk about other things. After a short while the two guests left to see the siddha bakula tree. Gently smiling, Vijaya-kumāra repeated his question.

Gosvāmī: When the breasts are clearly manifested, three folds of skin are manifested on the waist, and all the limbs are splendid, then the age is said to be

vyakta-vayasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is pūrṇa-vayasa?

Gosvāmī: When the hips are large, the waist slender, all the limbs splendid with extraordinary beauty, the breasts large, and the thighs like banana trees, the age is called pūrṇa-vayasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I understand these different ages. Now please describe form.

Gosvāmī: When the form is so splendid and glorious that it seems to be decorated even when it is not, is called splendor. When all the limbs are beautiful, that is called splendor.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is charm?

Gosvāmī: When all the limbs shine with a splendor like the splendor of pearls, that is called charm.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is beauty?

Gosvāmī: When each limb is shaped in the most appropriate way, and when all the limbs are combined together in the most beautiful way, that is called beauty.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is delight?

Gosvāmī: When one's wonderful qualities make those nearby also wonderful in the same way, that is called delight.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sweetness?

Gosvāmī: When the body's beauty is so great that it cannot be described, that is sweetness.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is gentleness?

Gosvāmī: When the body is so soft and delicate it cannot tolerate even the slightest touch, that is called gentleness. Gentleness is of three kinds: 1. great, 2. intermediate, and 3. less.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, now I understand all these qualities. Now please describe the names.

Gosvāmī: Transcendental names, such as the name Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, are the birthplace of the rasas and bhāvas.

Vijaya-kumāra: I understand. Now please describe the activities.

Gosvāmī: The activities are of two kinds: 1. anubhāva, and 2. līlā. Anubhāva was already described after vibhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe līlā.

Gosvāmī: Beautiful pastimes, dancing, playing the flute, milking the cows, herding the cows from the hill, and other like activities are all called līlā.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are beautiful pastimes?

Gosvāmī: The rāsa dance, and playing games with a ball are included among the numberless beautiful pastimes that charm the heart.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the decorations?

Gosvāmī: garments, ornaments, garlands, and ointments are the four kinds of decorations.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the things directly related to Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs?

Gosvāmī: Two kinds of things are directly related to Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs. They are: 1. things touching, and 2. things nearby.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the things touching?

Gosvāmī: The sound of the flute, the sound of the buffalo-horn bugle, the singing, fragrance, tinking of the ornaments, footprints, sound of the vīṇā, and

artistic skill are included among the things touching.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the sound of the flute?

Gosvāmī: From Kṛṣṇa's mouth, nectar flute-music flows. That music is the best of the uddīpanas.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please be kind and describe the things nearby.

Gosvāmī: Flower remnants, peacock feathers, mineral dyes from the hills, the cows, the stick, the flute, the buffalo-horn bugle, the sight of Kṛṣṇa's dear associates, the dust raised by the cows, Vṛndāvana, The living entities and things that have their shelter in Vṛndāvana, Govardhana Hill, the Yamunā, and the rasa-dance arena are included among the things nearby.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who are the living entities that have taken shelter in Vṛndāvana?

Gosvāmī: Many birds, bees, deer, forest groves, vines, tulasī plants, karṇikā flowers, and kadamba trees have taken shelter of Vṛndāvana.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the things indirectly related to Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs?

Gosvāmī: The moonlight, clouds, lightning, springtime, autumn, full moon, breeze, and birds are included among what is indirectly related.

After hearing about all these uddīpanas, Vijaya-kumāra was silent for a moment. Pushed by the uddīpabas, ecstatic love arose in his heart. Then the anubhāvas became manifested on his body. With a choked voice, Vijaya-kumāra said, "O master, please describe the anubhāvas. When describing His līlās, you said they were part of Lord Kṛṣṇa's activities. When I understand the anubhāvas I will be able to know the full outline of Kṛṣṇa's activities."

Gosvāmī: The anubhāvas are of three kinds: 1. alaṅkāra, 2. ubhāsvara, and 3. vācika.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the alaṅkāras?

Gosvāmī: In their yauvana age the beautiful girls of Vraja manifest twenty kinds of alaṅkāra (ornaments). With these ornaments they conquer their beloved. These ornaments are:

Ornaments manifested from the body: 1. bhāva, 2. hāva, 3. helā.

Ornaments manifested spontaneously: 4. śobhā, 5. kānti, 6. dīpti, 7. mādhurya, 8. pragalbhatā, 9. audārya, 10. dhairya.

Natural ornaments: 11. līlā, 12. vilāsa, 13. vicchitti, 14. vibhrama, 15. kila-kiṃcita, 16. moṭṭayita, 17. kuṭṭamita, 18. vibboka, 19. lalita, and 20. vikṛta.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is bhāva in this context?

Gosvāmī: When the heart is steady in madhura-rasa, that state is called "rati". The first manifestation of rati is called "bhāva". When the heart is stady in rati, that state is called "sattva". When the heart becomes agitated with ecstatic love, that is called "bhāva".

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what is hāva?

Gosvāmī: To tilt the neck, move the eyes or eyebrows, or give other hints of love is called "hāva".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is helā?

Gosvāmī: When the amorous hints of hāva are more openly expressed, that is

called "helā".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is śobhā?

Gosvāmī: The beauty that amorous pastimes use to decorate the limbs is called "śobhā".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is kānti?

Gosvāmī: When amorous desires are satisfied, the splendor then manifested is called "kānti".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is dīpti?

Gosvāmī: When youthfulness, enjoyment, place, time, virtues, and other like things bring a great and glorious splendor, that splendor is called "dīpti".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is mādhurya?

Gosvāmī: Skill in all activities is called “mādhurya".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is pragalbhatā?

Gosvāmī: To be self-assured and free from doubt is called "pragalbhatā". This brings great splendor to every limb.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is audārya?

Gosvāmī: To be humble in every situation is called “audārya".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is dhairya?

Gosvāmī: When the mind is exalted, that is called “dhairya".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is līlā?

Gosvāmī: To imitate the beloved's graceful garments and actions is called "līlā".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vilāsa?

Gosvāmī: When walking, staying still, sitting, the mouth, the eyes, and many other things are all employed to give amorous hints to the beloved, that is called "vilāsa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vicchitti?

Gosvāmī: If there is great beauty, even though the ornaments are few, that is called "vicchitti". In the opinion of some scholars of rasa, when the lover commits an offense, the sakhīs carefully decorate Him, and in spite of all efforts, the girl remains angry, her condition is called vicchitti.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vibhrama?

Gosvāmī: When, at the time of going to meet her beloved, a girl is so bewildered with amorous desire that she decorates herself with necklace, garland, and other ornaments in the wrong way, that is called "vibhrama".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is kila-kiṇcita?

Gosvāmī: Pride, desire, weeping, laughing, envy, fear, and anger, when they are manifested as symptoms of happiness when one meets the beloved, are called "kila-kiṇcita".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is moṭṭāyita?

Gosvāmī: When, by remembering the beloved or receiving news of him, the lover feels love and then desire, that is called “moṭṭāyita".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is kuṭṭamita?

Gosvāmī: When the lover touches the beloved's breast, and the beloved, although actually pleased, puts on an outward show of anger, that is called "kuṭṭamita".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vibboka?

Gosvāmī: When pride and jealous make the beloved insult the lover, that is called "vibboka".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is lalita?

Gosvāmī: When the movements of the body and the eyebrows show softness, that is called "lalita".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vikṛta?

Gosvāmī: When shyness, pride, and anger are expressed not by words but by actions, that is called "vikṛta". In this weay twenty ornaments are manifested from the body and mind. Some scholars of rasa add two more ornamentsmaugdhya and cakitato this list.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is maugdhya?

Gosvāmī: When, even though she already knows the answer, the beloved, as if she didn't already know, asks the lover anyway, that is called "maugdhya".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is cakita?

Gosvāmī: When, even though there is no reason to fear, the beloved tells her lover that she is very afraid, that is called "cakita".

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, thus I have heard about these alaṅkāras (ornaments). Now please teach me about the udbhāsvaras.

Gosvāmī: When the ecstatic love present in the heart is splendidly manifested in the body, that is called “udbhāsvara". When in madhura-rasa the belt, bodice, and braids become loosened, the limbs are agitated, the mouth is opened wide, and, with dilated nostrils there is heavy breathing, that is called "udbhāsvara".

Vijaya-kumāra: All these udbhāsvaras could easily have been included within moṭṭāyita and vilāsa.

Gosvāmī: They have a different kind of glory. Therefore they are considered separately.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, now please describe the verbal anubhāvas.

Gosvāmī: Alāpa, vilāpa, saṁlāpa, pralāpa, anulāpa, apalāpa, sandeśa, atideśa, apadeśa, upadeśa, nirdeśa, and vyapadeśa are the twelve verbal anubhavas.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is ālāpa?

Gosvāmī: When one speaks pleasing, flattering words, that is called "ālāpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vilāpa?

Gosvāmī: When one laments, that is called "vilāpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is saṁlāpa?

Gosvāmī: Pleasing conversations are called “saṁlāpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is pralāpa?

Gosvāmī: Meaningless words are called "pralāpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is anulāpa?

Gosvāmī: Repeating the same thing over and over is called "anulāpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is apalāpa?

Gosvāmī: To explain something a second time is called “apalāpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sandeśa?

Gosvāmī: To send a letter to a beloved in a faraway place is called "sandeśa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is atideśa?

Gosvāmī: To say, "His words are my words" is called “atideśa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is apadeśa?

Gosvāmī: While speaking about one thing to reveal another is called "apadeśa"

Vijaya-kumāra: What is upadeśa?

Gosvāmī: To give instruction is called "upadeśa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is nirdeśa?

Gosvāmī: To affirm, "I am that person" is called "nirdeśa"

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vyapadeśa?

Gosvāmī: To misrepresent one's true desire is called “vyapadeśa". All these anubhāvas are present in all the rasas. However, they are famous for making the madhura-rasa sweet.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, why are these rasa anubhāvas considered separately?

Gosvāmī: When the ālambanas and uddīpanas enter the heart, bhāva is manifested. Then the symptoms called “anubhāvas" are manifested on the body. If all the anubhāvas were not discussed separately, then it would not be possible to see their natures clearly.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now please describe the sāttvika-bhāvas in madhura-rasa.

Gosvāmī: The eight sāttvika-bhāvas, beginning with being stunned and perspiring, which I had previously described, are also present in madhura-rasa. However, in this rasa they are manifested in a different way.

Vijaya-kumāra: How is it different?

Gosvāmī: Look at the Lord's Vraja pastimes. being stunned comes from joy, fear, wonder, melancholy, and anger. perspiration comes from joy, fear, and anger. Standing up of the body's hairs comes from wonder, joy, and fear. Choking up of the voice comes from melancholy, wonder, anger, and fear. Trembling of the body comes from fear, joy, and anger. Becoming pale comes from melancholy, anger, and fear. Shedding tears comes from joy, anger, and melancholy. Devastation comes from either happiness or distress.

Vijaya-kumāra: Are these sāttvika ecstatic symptoms manifested differently in madhura-rasa?

Gosvāmī: Yes. They are. When before I described the sāttvika-bhāvas I explained that they were manifested as either dhūmāyita (smoky), jvalita (blazing), dīpta (shining), or uddīpta (brightly shining). In madhura-rasa these bhāvas are manifested in only two ways, as either uddīpta (brightly shining) or sudīpta (brilliantly shining).

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, please be kind to me. Please describe the vyabhicāri-bhāvas in madhura-rasa and make me happy.

Gosvāmī: The thirty-three vyabhicari-bhavas or sancari-bhavas, which begin with nirveda (disappointment), and which I have previous described to you, are almost all present in madhura-rasa. Only augrya (violence) and ālasya (laziness) are not present in this rasa. In madhura-rasa these saṇcāri-bhāvas are very wonderful.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the most wonderful thing about them in this situation?

Gosvāmī: The love for Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-prema) that Kṛṣṇa's friends and superiors feel for Him in sakhya-rasa and the other rasas, becomes saṇcāri-bhāva in madhura-rasa. In in other words what was sthāyi-bhāva in the other rasas becomes saṇcāri-bhāva or vyabhicāri-bhāva in madhura-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What else is wonderful in this situation?

Gosvāmī: The vyabhicāri-bhāvas are not considered direct ingredients of madhura-rasa. Even tha vyabhicaris that begin with maraṇa (death) are not direct ingredients. Instead of being ingredients, the vyabhicāri-bhāvas are considered the qualities of madhura-rasa. The vyabhicāri-bhāvas are the qualities, and madhura-rasa is the possessor of the qualities. That is the proper conclusion.

Vijaya-kumāra: How are the vyabhicāri-bhāvas manifested in this rasa?

Gosvāmī: Nirveda (disappointment) is born from suffering, unpleasantness, envy, melancholy, calamity, and offense.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is dainya (humilty) born?

Gosvāmī: Dainya is born from unhappiness, fear, and offense.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is glāni (guilt) born?

Gosvāmī: Glāni is born from fatigue, anxiety, and attraction.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is śrama (fatigue) born?

Gosvāmī: Śrama is born from losing one's way, dancing, and attraction.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is mada (intoxication) born?

Gosvāmī: Mada is born from drinking liquor. In this way one becomes jubilant and one also loses one's power of discrimination.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is garva (pride) born?

Gosvāmī: Garva is born from good fortune, beauty, virtue, and obtaining what is the best of all.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is śaṅkā (doubt) born?

Gosvāmī: Śaṅkā is born from theft, offense, cruelty to others, lighting, fearsome creatures, and fearsome sounds.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is āvega (intense emotion) born?

Gosvāmī: Avega is born from seeing the object of love, hearing about the object of love, seeing what is not loved, and hearing about what is not loved. The heart becomes bewildered by these intense emotions.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is unmāda (madness) born?

Gosvāmī: Unmāda is born from intense bliss or separation from the beloved.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is apasmāra (forgetfulness) born?

Gosvāmī: Apasmāra is born from unhappiness, which upsets the body and the mind.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is vyādhi (disease) born?

Gosvāmī: Vyādhi is born from fever and other like causes. it is also born from anxiety, intense emotion, and other feelings.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is moha (confusion) born?

Gosvāmī: Moha is bewilderment of the mind. Moha is born from joy, separation, and sorrow.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is mṛti (death) born?

Gosvāmī: Mṛti is not directly manifested in madhura-rasa. Sometimes there is the desire for death.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is ālasya (laziness) born?

Gosvāmī: Alasya is not directly manifested in madhura-rasa. When a strong person pretends that he is not strong, that is called ālasya. Alasya does not exist in devotional service to Lord Kṛṣṇa. However, it is seen indirectly, as the opposite of true devotional service.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is jāḍya (inertness) born?

Gosvāmī: Jāḍya is born from hearing about the beloved, seeing the beloved, seeing what is unpleasant, and separation from the beloved.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is vrīḍā (bashfulness) born?

Gosvāmī: Vrīḍā is born from first meeting, doing what should not be done, words of praise, and words of insult.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is avahitthā (concealment) born?

Gosvāmī: Avahitthā, or concealment, is born from treachery, shyness,

cleverness, fear, and respect.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is smṛti (remembrance) born?

Gosvāmī: Smṛti is firm belief based on previous direct perception.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is vitarka (argumentativeness) born?

Gosvāmī: Vitarka is born from melancholy or doubt.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is cintā (anxiety) born?

Gosvāmī: Cintā is born from failing to attain what one desires, or attaining what one does not desire.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is mati (thoughtfulness) born?

Gosvāmī: Mati is giving though to understand something.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is dhṛti (endurance) born?

Gosvāmī: Dhṛti is steadiness of the mind. It born from the absence of suffering and the attainment of the best thing.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is harṣa (happiness) born?

Gosvāmī: When, because of seeing or attaining the object of one's desires, one is pleased, that is called "harṣa".

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is autsukya (eagerness) born?

Gosvāmī: Autsukya is born from the desire to see or attain the beloved.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is augrya (violence) born?

Gosvāmī: Violence is called "augrya". As I have already said, it is not manifested in madhura-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is amarṣa (haughtiness) born?

Gosvāmī: Inability to tolerate disrespect and insult is called "amarṣa".

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is asūyā (ency) born?

Gosvāmī: Asūyā is hatred of another person's good fortune. It comes from good fortune and virtue.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is cāpala (impudence) born?

Gosvāmī: Lightness of the mind is called "cāpala". It is born from attraction and revulsion.

Vijaya-kumāra: From what is nidrā (dizziness) born?

Gosvāmī: Nidrā is born from exhaustion.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is supti (sleepiness)?

Gosvāmī: Supti is sleepiness.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is bodha (alertness)?

Gosvāmī: Bodha is the opposite of sleepiness.

O Bābā Vijaya-kumāra, all these vyabhicaris are manifested in four ways: 1. utpatti, 2. sandhi, 3. śāvalya, and 4. śānti. When the bhāva is first manifested, that is called “utpatti". When two bhāvas join together, that is called “bhāva-sandhi". When two different manifestations of one kind of bhāva join together, that is called "svarūpa-sandhi". When different kinds of bhāvas join together, that is called “bhinna-sandhi". When many different bhāvas are mixed together, that is called "bhāva-śāvalya". When a bhāva disappears, that is called "bhāva-śānti".

Thus hearing about the vibhāvas, anubhāvas, sāttvika-bhāvas, and vyabhicāri-bhāvas of madhura-rasa, Vijaya-kumāra could understand the sāmagrīs (ingredients) of this rasa. His heart became plunged in prema (pure love). Still, he thought he had no prema. Falling at His spiritual master's feet, and weeping and

weeping, he said, "O master, why is my heart not plunged in prema? Please be merciful and tell me." Gopālaguru Gosvāmī replied, "Come tomorrow, and I will teach you about prema. You have understood the sāmagrīs (ingredients) of prema. But prema is still not openly manifested in your heart. The prema that is the same as sthāyi-bhāva you have heard from me in a general way. When you hear how prema is manifested in madhura-rasa, you will attain all perfection." After speaking these words, Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī embraced Vijaya-kumāra. Vijaya-kumāra offered daṇḍavat obeisances, and then he returned to his own residence.

Chapter Thirty-six
Madhura-rasa-vicāra
Madhura-rasa

Today Vijaya-kumāra came at the appointed time and offered daṇḍavat obeisances to Śrī Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī. Seeing that today Vijaya-kumāra was very eager to learn about sthāyi-bhāva, the spiritual master began to speak.

Gosvāmī: The sthāyi-bhāva of madhura-rasa is madhura-rati.

Vijaya-kumāra: What causes madhura-rati to become manifested?

Gosvāmī: Madhura-rati is manifested from abhiyoga, viṣaya, sambandha, abhimāna, tadīya-viśeṣa, upamā, and svabhāva. Each item in this list is better than the preceding item. In this way the rati that is manifested from svabhāva is the best of the ratis.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is abhiyoga?

Gosvāmī: To openly reveal one's love (bhāva) is called “abhiyoga". One may make the revelation personally, or another person may do it.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is viṣaya?

Gosvāmī: The five viṣayas are sound, touch, form, taste, and fragrance.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sambandha?

Gosvāmī: The five glorious sambandhas are family, beauty, virtue, and pastimes.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is abhimāna?

Gosvāmī: When, given the choice of many beautiful and pleasing objects, a person conclusively chooses one, and one alone, demanding, "I want *that* one", that is called "abhimāna".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is tadīya-viśeṣa?

Gosvāmī: The tadīya-viśeṣas are footprints, the land of the cows, and dear friends. In this context the land of the cows is the land of Vṛndāvana, and the dear friends are the devotees who love Kṛṣṇa deeply.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is upamā?

Gosvāmī: When one thing is somewhat like another, that is called "upamā".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is svabhāva?

Gosvāmī: The nature that manifests spontaneously, without any external cause, is called "svabhāva". Svabhāva is of two kinds: nisarga and svarūpa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is nisarga?

Gosvāmī: A habit born from repetition is called “nisarga". Qualities, form, and hearing are included among the causes of nisarga. The meaning here is that when the soul again and again acts in a certain way, after many births he develops a habit, which is called "nisarga". Therefore, if when hearing about Lord Kṛṣṇa's qualities and form a person suddenly and passionately (haṭhāt) falls in love (bhāva) with Kṛṣṇa, that love is caused not by the immediate circumstances, but by repeated past devotional activities (nisarga).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is svarūpa?

Gosvāmī: What is unborn, beginningless, and self-perfect is called "svarūpa". Svarūpa is of three kinds: 1. kṛṣṇa-niṣṭha (faith in Kṛṣṇa), lalanā-niṣṭha (faith in the gopīs), and ubhaya-niṣṭha (faith in both Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs). Persons of demonic nature do not attain kṛṣṇa-niṣṭha. On the other hand, persons of godly nature easily attain it. Persons who are spiritually enlightened can attain lalanā-niṣṭha. Sometimes even without seeing or hearing of Kṛṣṇa's form and other features a person suddenly develops intense love for Him. When one has both kṛṣṇa-niṣṭha and lalanā-niṣṭha, that is called "ubhaya-niṣṭha".

Vijaya-kumāra: Is every aspect of madhura-rasa manifested from the seven causes abhiyoga, viṣaya, sambandha, abhimāna, tadīya-viśeṣa, upamā, and svabhāva?

Gosvāmī: The beautiful girls of Gokula love Kṛṣṇa with a love that is part of their own nature (svabhāva), a love that is naturally perfect (svarūpa-siddha), a love that is not caused by on the seven causes that begin with abhiyoga. Rather, their love is caused by various different pastimes. However, for the sādhana-siddha (who attained perfection by engaging in sādhana-bhakti) and nisarga-siddha-sādhaka (who are still striving to attain perfection) devotees, the seven causes that begin with abhiyoga do indeed inspire love for Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: One or two examples here would be very pleasing to the heart.

Gosvāmī: This kind of love is attained by practicing rāgānuga-bhakti. It cannot be attained by vaidhi-bhakti. This kind of love stays far away from a person who practices vaidhi-bhakti. When a devotee engaged in sādhana-bhakti sees the loving service the beautiful girls of Vraja offer to Lord Kṛṣṇa, and when that devotee yearns to serve Kṛṣṇa in the same way, then the previously mentioned causes, with priyajana (the dear friends of Kṛṣṇa) especially prominent, and now numbering only six because svabhāva is not present here, become the causes of his ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. In this way the devotee gradually attains rati (spiritual love). When the devotee attains the stage of sādhana-siddha, then he may attain lalanā-niṣṭha.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different kinds of rati?

Gosvāmī: There are three kinds of rati: 1. sādhāraṇī (ordinary), 2. samañjasā (proper), and 3. samarthā (perfect). Kubjā is an example of sādhāraṇī-rati. She yearned for her own personal enjoyment in Kṛṣṇa's company. Therefore her love is of an inferior nature. The Dvārakā queens' love is samañjasā (proper). And why not? They enjoyed Kṛṣṇa's company within the religious institution of marriage. The love of the Gokula goddesses, the gopīs, is samarthā. It exists in a plane above the ordinary activities of the world and the ordinary rules of religion. This samarthā love is not improper (asamañjasā). Rather, because it has the power to bring the highest goal of life, it is the most proper (ati-samañjasā). Sādhāraṇī love is like a jewel, samañjasā love is like a cintāmaṇi jewel, and samarthā love, which has no equal, is like a Kaustubha jewel.

Vijaya-kumāra: (weeping and weeping) What a wonderful description this is! I wish to learn more about sādhāraṇī rati.

Gosvāmī: When by directly seeing Kṛṣṇa a person yearns to enjoy in His company, and in this way feels a love that is not yet very intense, that love is called "sādhāraṇī". Because that love is not yet very intense, the desire for one's own enjoyment is still present within it. When the desire for personal enjoyment becomes dwarfed, then what remains to dwarf the growth of real love?

Vijaya-kumāra: What is samañjasā rati?

Gosvāmī: When by hearing the qualities of Kṛṣṇa a girl yearns to become His wife, her intense love is called “samañjasā". Still, in this love there is sometimes the desire for personal enjoyment. However, without this desire the wife will not be under Kṛṣṇa's dominion.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is samarthā love?

Gosvāmī: In rati the desire for enjoyment is always present. In sādhāraṇī rati and samañjasā rati the devotee desires her personal enjoyment. When the desire for enjoyment is completely free for the desire for one's own personal enjoyment, and one desires only the enjoyment of the beloved, that kind of love is called "samarthā".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is that like? Please explain and make it more clearly understood.

Gosvāmī: the desire for enjoyment is of two kinds. One kind is the desire theta the beloved will please my own senses. The other kind is the desire that I will please the senses of my beloved. The first kind of desire is called "kāma" (lust). And why not? In that situation one is eager only for his own happiness. In the second kind of desire one is eager for the happiness and well-being of the beloved. That desire is the desire of love (prema). In sadharani love the desire for personal enjoyment is strong. In samanjasa love that desire is not strong. In samartha love the desire for enjoyment is of a different nature. It is, as I have already said, the desire that the beloved should enjoy.

Vijaya-kumāra: In loving affairs the touch of the beloved inevitably brings pleasure. How is it possible that in samarthā love this pleasure is not desired?

Gosvāmī: that desire is inevitably difficult to stop. Still, in samarthā love that desire of the heart is very weak. In this kind of love the desire to please the beloved is very strong. That desire then embraces the desire for personal enjoyment, and in that embrace both desires become one. Because this is the strongest (sāmartha) of all kinds of love, it is called "samarthā".

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the glories of samarthā love?

Gosvāmī: Among the seven previously described causes beginning with abhiyoga, sambandha may be manifested, or tadiya-visesa may be manifested, or svarupa may be manifeasted, and in this way samartha love may come into being. Or, forgetting all these, this very powerful love may come into being by itself.

Vijaya-kumāra: How do the desire for personal enjoyment and the desire that the beloved should enjoy join and become a single desire?

Gosvāmī: The beautiful girls of Vraja love Kṛṣṇa with samarthā love. They desire only for His happiness. When they associate with Kṛṣṇa, they certainly experience their own happiness. However, they accept only those activities that bring happiness to Kṛṣṇa. Thus the desire for personal enjoyment and the desire only to please Kṛṣṇa meet in the waves of sublime and wonderful pastimes. In that

condition the desire for personal enjoyment does not exist apart from the desire to please Kṛṣṇa. In this way the desire for personal enjoyment ceases to exist.

Vijaya-kumāra: Aha! How wonderful is this love! I yearn to hear of it's highest glories.

Gosvāmī: When this love (rati) matures it reaches the stage called "mahā-bhāva". All the liberated souls seek this stage of love. The five kinds of devotees attain it to the degree they are able.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I request that you explain the different stages of this love.

Gosvāmī: It is said (Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi, Sthāyi-bhāva-prakaraṇa):

syād dṛḍheyaṁ ratiḥ premā
prodyan snehaḥ kramād ayam
syān mānaḥ praṇayo rāgo
'nurāgo bhāva ity api

"When rati becomes very intense, it is called “prema". As prema gradually manifests its sweetness, it is called sneha, māna, praṇaya, rāga, anurāga, and bhāva."

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, please give an example.

Gosvāmī: As there is a progression in sweetness from sugar-cane seed to sugar-cane plant, to sugar-cane juice, to molasses, to gur, to sugar granules, to rock candy, so there is a progression in love from rati to prema, to sneha, to māna, to praṇaya, to rāga, to anurāga, and finally to bhāva. The word "bhāva" in this progression refers to mahā-bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: Why are so many different stages with so many different names grouped under the general heading of “prema"?

Gosvāmī: The six kinds of love, which begin with sneha, are all different pastime stages of prema. The paṇḍitas who are learned in this matter call them all by the name “prema". In this way prema is manifested.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the characteristics of prema?

Gosvāmī: Even though obstacles try to destroy their love, the love the boy and girl feel will not be destroyed. That is prema.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different kinds of prema?

Gosvāmī: There are three kinds of prema: 1. prauḍha (mature), 2. madhya (intermediate), and 3. manda (slow).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is prauḍa prema?

Gosvāmī: When the lover is anguished to think her delay may worry her beloved, that is prauḍha-prema.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is madhya prema?

Gosvāmī: When the lover is not concerned about the beloved's anguish, that is madhya prema.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is manda prema?

Gosvāmī: when the lover neither cares nor does not care, that is manda prema. This kind of love can inspire one to create obstacles to stop the exalted love of a

rival. O Vijaya-kumāra, Praudha, madhya, and manda are thus the three divisions of prema. They can also be described in these words: When the lover cannot tolerate the beloved's suffering, that is praudha prema. When the lover can tolerate the beloved's suffering, that is madhya prema. When the lover forgets whether the beloved suffers or not, that is manda prema.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I understand prema. What are the characteristics of sneha?

Gosvāmī: When it eaches its highest stage, prema is like a brilliant lamp. This is known as "cit-prema" (spiritual love). When it makes the heart melt, this spiritual prema is called "sneha". The by-product of sneha is that the lover never becomes satiated or disinterested, even if the lover sees the beloved at every moment.

Vijaya-kumāra: Are there different kinds of sneha, some better and some lesser?

Gosvāmī: In the lowest kind of sneha, the lover's heart melts at the touch of the beloved. In the intermediate kind of sneha, the lover's heart melts at the sight of the beloved. In the best kind of sneha, the lover's heart melts simply by hearing of the beloved.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the other different kinds of sneha?

Gosvāmī: Sneha is also of two kinds: 1. ghṛta-senha (ghee love) and madhu-sneha (honey love).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is ghṛta-sneha?

Gosvāmī: When love is very respectful (ādaramaya) it is called "ghṛta-sneha". When ghṛta-senha is mixed with madhu-senha, the result is very palatable. Ghṛta-senha is by nature cool. When the respect (ādara) is increased (ghanī-bhūta), this love becomes more intense. It is called “ghṛta-senha" because it has the qualities of ghṛta (ghee).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is respect (ādara).

Gosvāmī: Respect (ādara) comes from honoring others (gaurava). In this way respect and honor are interdependent. When love (rati) is manifested with them it is called, in this context, "sneha".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is gaurava (honor).

Gosvāmī: When one thinks of a person as a guru, that is called "gaurava". From gaurava is manifested sambhrama (esteem). This is all said to be included within ādara (respect). Adara and gaurava are interdependent.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is madhu-sneha?

Gosvāmī: When the lover thinks, "The beloved is my property", then that is called "madhu-sneha". many different rasas meet in this sweet love. This love is passionate, and therefore it brings warmth. Because this love is sweet (madhura), therefore it is called "madhu-sneha".

Vijaya-kumāra: What does it mean to think "The beloved is my property"?

Gosvāmī: Love is manifested in two ways. In one way the lover thinks, "I am the property of my beloved". In the other way the lover thinks, "My beloved is the property of me." In ghṛta-sneha the idea "I am the property of my beloved" is prominent. In madhu-sneha the idea "My beloved is the property of me" is prominent. Candrāvalī possesses ghṛta-sneha. Rādhā posseses madhu-sneha.

Vijaya-kumāra: (after offering daṇḍavat obeisances to his spiritual master). What is māna?

Gosvāmī: When sneha becomes exalted and manifests a new kind of sweetness, the lover manifests various crooked dealings with the beloved. That is called "māna".

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different kinds of māna?

Gosvāmī: There are two kinds of m.āna: 1. udātta, and 2. lalita.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is udātta-māna?

Gosvāmī: It is of two kinds. In one kind the lover is straightforward, open, and free of diplomacy. In the other kind the lover engages in concealment and crooked diplomacy. Udātta-māna is manifested in ghṛta-sneha.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is lalita-māna? I cannot say why, but somehow I feel attracted to it.

Gosvāmī: Lalita-māna is of two kinds. In kauṭilya-lalita-māna there is independence and crookedness. In narma-lalita-māna there are joking words. Both kinds of lalita-māna are manifested in madhu-sneha.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is praṇaya?

Gosvāmī: When the lover trusts the beloved and feels one at heart with the beloved, that is called "praṇaya".

Vijaya-kumāra: What does "trust" (viśrambha) mean in this situation?

Gosvāmī: The real nature of praṇaya is trust, which is called "viśrambha". Viśrambha is of two kinds: 1. maitra, and 2. sakhya. Viśrambha means "firm trust". This trust is not merely the secondary cause of praṇaya. It is the original cause of it, the very ingredient of which it is made.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is maitra-viśrambha?

Gosvāmī: When viśrambha is joined with humility, that is called "maitra".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sakhya-viśrambha?

Gosvāmī: When the lover is free from all fear and convinced that the beloved is completely under the lover's control, that is called "sakhya-viśrambha".

Vijaya-kumāra: Please clearly explain how praṇaya, sneha, and māna are related to each other.

Gosvāmī: In some situations sneha gives birth to pranaya, and from praṇaya māna is manifested. In other situations sneha gives birth to māna, ans from māna praṇaya is manifested. Therefore māna and praṇaya may assume both roles of either cause or effect. Viśrambha requires a separate explanation. Udatta and lalita exist in both maitra and sakhya. However, in sakhya they are also called "su-maitra" and "su-sakhya".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is rāga?

Gosvāmī: When praṇaya becomes exalted even great suffering is considered happiness. That stage of praṇaya is called “rāga".

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different kinds of rāga?

Gosvāmī: There are two kinds: 1. nīlimā-rāga and 2. raktimā-rāga.

Vijaya-kumāra: How many kinds of nīlimā-rāga are there?

Gosvāmī: There are two kinds of nīlimā-rāga: 1. nīlī-rāga and śyāma-rāga.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is nīlī-rāga?

Gosvāmī: In this rāga there is no possibility of loss or destruction. Externally there is great glory, and love is concealed within the heart. That is nīlī-rāga. Candrāvalī manifests this rāga before Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is śyāma-rāga?

Gosvāmī: When the beloved's delay makes the worried lover water the forest plants with a stream of tears, that is called śyāma-rāga.

Vijaya-kumāra: How many kinds of raktimā-rāga are there?"

Gosvāmī: Raktimā-rāga is of two kinds: 1. kusumbha, and 2. mañjiṣṭhā-

sambhava.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is kusumbha-rāga?

Gosvāmī: When the other rāgas manifest their beauty and glory, that is called "kusumbha-rāga". Kusumbha-rāha rests in a particular object. When it mixes with mañjiṣṭha-rāga, it produces withering and melancholy in a gopī who loves Kṛṣṇa (kṛṣṇa-praṇayī).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is mañjiṣṭha-rāga?

Gosvāmī: The eternal, unchanging, unalloyed, eternally very glorious love that Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Mādhava feel for each other is called mañjiṣṭha-rāga. The final conclusion is that ghrta, sneha, udatta, maitra, su-maitra, nilima, and other like bhāvas that have been described here are manifested in Candravali and by the queens headed by Rukmini. On the other hand, madhu, sneha, lalita, sakhya, su-sakhya, raktima, and other like bhāvas are manifested in Śrī Rādhā. Sometimes they are also seen in Satyabhama. I have already explained that the beautiful girls of Vraja are divided into many rival (sva-paksa and vipaksa) groups. In this way there is much dissension among them. When they relate to the other bhāvas, these create many different features. Only paṇḍitas learned in this particular topic can understand all this. In other words, I will not give a more elaborate explanation of it.

Vijaya-kumāra: To which bhāvas does the phrase "the other bhāvas" refer?

Gosvāmī: It refers to sthāyi-madhura-bhāva, the 33 vyabhicāri-bhāvas, and the seven bhāvas that begin with hāsya. Thus it refers to 41 bhāvas. These are the "other bhāvas" referred to here.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I understand rāga. Please explain anurāga.

Gosvāmī: The raga that is always newer and newer and makes the beloved newer and newer at every moment is called “anurāga".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the glorious wonder that this rāga manifests?

Gosvāmī: It brings the lover under the beloved's control and the beloved under the lover's control. It creates prema-vaicittya. It makes one yearn to take birth even as a very lowly being (if that birth is within the holy abode of Śrī Vṛndāvana). It is limitless and most exalted. It makes Kṛṣṇa present even when the devotee is separated from Him.

Vijaya-kumāra: I can easily understand how anurāga brings the lover and beloved under each other's control and how it makes one yearn to take birth as a tree or other lowly being (within the holy abode of Śrī Vṛndāvana). But, O master, what is prema-vaicittya?

Gosvāmī: Prema-vaicittya is the love the devotee feels in separation from Kṛṣṇa. You will learn about that later.

Vijaya-kumāra: Now please describe mahā-bhāva.

Gosvāmī: O Vijaya-kumāra, I am a very insignificant person. I am not really qualified to describe the wonders of the rasas of Vraja. Whatever Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Paṇḍita Gosvāmī have mercifully taught me, I will now reveal to you. Please consider it their mercy upon you.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I, the asker of questions, and very fallen and unintelligent. Please explain mahā-bhāva so even my heart can understand it.

Gosvāmī: Śrī Rādhā is the āśraya of anurāga, and Lord Kṛṣṇa is the viṣaya. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the son of Nanda, is the viṣaya in madhura-rasa. Śrī Rādhā is the āśraya. Anurāga is the sthāyi-bhāva. What that anurāga reaches its highest, most

glorious stage, it is called mahā-bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: Aha! Mahā-bhāva! Mahā-bhāva! Today I can understand something of mahā-bhāva. The highest point of all the bhāvas is mahā-bhāva. Please place on my ears an example of mahā-bhāva.

Gosvāmī: O Vijaya-kumāra, you are very fortunate. The following verse is an example of mahā-bhāva:

rādhāyā bhavataś ca citta-jatunī svedair vilapya kramāt
yunjann adri-nikuñja-kuñjara-pate nirdhūta-bheda-bhramam
citrāya svayam anvarañjayad iha brahmāṇḍa-harmyodare
bhūyobhir nava-rāga-hiṅgula-bharaiḥ śṛṅgāra-kāru-kṛtī

"Vṛndā-devī said to Lord Kṛṣṇa: O regal elephant who wanders in the jungles and mountains, Your amorous pastimes have shaken away Rādhā sadness in separation from You. With the red color of ever-new love, the artist of Your amorous pastimes paints a gloriosu picture in the palace of the world."

Vijaya-kumāra: Where does mahā-bhāva reside?

Gosvāmī: Mahā-bhāva does not reside in the Dvārakā queens. In resides only in the gopīs, the goddesses of Vraja.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does all this mean?

Gosvāmī: When the the lover and beloved are bound by ties of marriage, the relationship is svakīya-rasa, and the love is samañjasā. In this situation samarthā love, which brings the possibility of maha-bhava is not present. In Vraja, although svakīya-rasa is also present, parakīya-rasa predominates. In the highest stage of parakīya-rasa samarthā love, mahā-bhāva is manifested.

Vijaya-kumāra: How many are the different kinds of mahā-bhāva?

Gosvāmī: When it appears, mahā-bhāva floods the heart with nectar. Mahā-bhāva is of two kinds: 1. rūḍha, and 2. adhirūḍha.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is rūḍha mahā-bhāva?

Gosvāmī: When all the sāttvika-bhāvas shine very brightly, that is rūḍha mahā-bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the anubhāvas in mahā-bhāva.

Gosvāmī: Inability to tolerate the the eye's natural activity of blinking, agitating the hearts of those nearby, thinking a kalpa to be as long as a moment, worrying that Kṛṣṇa may be suffering, even when it is obvious that He is be happy, forgetting everything, thinking a moment to be as long as a kalpa, and although they are not bewildered, they forget everything about themsleves. These anubhāvas are present in both meeting the beloved (sambhoga) and separation from the beloved (vipralambha).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "inability to tolerate the the eye's natural activity of blinking"?

Gosvāmī: in this bhava the feeling of separation (vipralambha) is present in meeting (sambhoga). Here the lover is unable to tolerate even a brief moment's separation from the beloved. At Kurukṣetra the vraja-gopīs cursed the creator Brahmā for creating eyelashes that impeded their always seeing Kṛṣṇa. And why

not? The blinking of their eyelashes became an obstacle that stopped them from seeing Kṛṣṇa for a moment.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "agitating the hearts of those nearby"?

Gosvāmī: When they saw the gopīs' ecstatic love, the kings and queens present at Kurukṣetra felt deeply moved at heart.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "thinking a kalpa to be as long as a moment"?

Gosvāmī: the rāsa dance lasted for an entire night of Brahmā. Still, ht egopīs thought it lasted for only a moment.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "worrying that Kṛṣṇa may be suffering, even when it is obvious that He is be happy"? Gosvāmī: In Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.31.19) the gopīs worry that Kṛṣṇa will suffer if He places His lotus feet on their hard breasts.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "although they are not bewildered, they forget everything about themsleves"?

Gosvāmī: Because Kṛṣṇa is always present before them, they are not bewildered. However, when Kṛṣṇais present, they forget everything about their own bodies and about everything else in the material world.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "thinking a moment to be as long as a kalpa"?

Gosvāmī: Kṛṣṇa said to Uddhava, "When I was with the gopīs in Vrndavana, all the nights seemed to pass like half a moment. But now that I am separated from them, every night seems like a kalpa." This is an example of "thinking a moment to be as long as a kalpa"?

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I understand the rūḍha-bhāvas. Please describe the adhirūḍha-bhāvas.

Gosvāmī: When these rūḍha-bhava anubhāvas I have just described become very wonderful, the become the adhirūḍha-bhāvas.

Vijaya-kumāra: How many kinds of adhirūḍha-bhāva are there?

Gosvāmī: There are two kinds: 1. modana, and 2. mādana.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is modana?

Gosvāmī: When Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both feel adhirudha-bhava, and when They both manifest all the sāttvika-bhāvas with the most brilliant glory, that is called "modana". In modana-bhāva Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both become very agitated. This condition is the highest good fortune of spiritual love manifested among the gopī lovers of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: Where does modana-bhāva reside?

Gosvāmī: Modana-bhāva does not reside outside of Śrī Rādhā's group. Modana-bhāva is manifested in the very dear pastimes of the hlādinī-śakti. When the lovers are separated, modana gives birth to mohana.When there is great distress because of separation, the sāttvika-bhāvas are very brilliantly manifest.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the anubhāvas of mohana?

Gosvāmī: Embraced by His beloved, Kṛṣṇa falls unconscious. Although she suffers unbearably, a gopī still thinks only of how Kṛṣṇa will be happy. Thirsting for the touch of Kṛṣṇa, a gopī becomes mad and decides to commit suicide, thus filling the spiritual and material worlds with anxiety and making the nearby animals weep. Mohana-bhāva is possible in Śrī Rādhā, the queen of Vṛndāvana. These mohana vyabhicāri-bhāvas are not present in anyone but Rādhā.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, if you think it is right, then please describe divyonmāda (transcendental madness).

Gosvāmī: When it enters a certain indescribable state, mohana-bhāva becomes

like a bewildered condition. This very surprising and wonderful state is called "divyonmāda". This state has many different divisions, such as udghūrṇa (agitation) and citra-jalpa (surprising talk).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is udghūrṇa?

Gosvāmī: Many different kinds of activities can be called "udghūrṇa". When Kṛṣṇa went to Mathurā, Śrī Rādhā manifested udghūrṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is citra-jalpa?

Gosvāmī: Seeing one of the beloved's friends, with wonderful anger the lover harshly expresses her anxiety and longing. This is called "citra-jalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different kinds of citra-jalpa?

Gosvāmī: The ten kinds of citra-jalpa are: 1. prajalpa, 2. parijapita, 3. vijalpa, 4. ujjalpa, 5. sañjalpa, 6. avajalpa, 7. abhijalpa, 8. ājalpa, 9. pratijalpa, and 10. sujalpa. All these different kinds of citra-jalpa are manifested in the Bhramara-gītā chapter of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam's Tenth Canto.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is prajalpa?

Gosvāmī: Citra-jalpa has numberless wonderful forms. Therefore it is very difficult to describe it with any kind of completeness. When the lover spitefully, maliciously, and passionately insults the beloved, that is called “prajalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is parijalpita?

Gosvāmī: When the lover claims that the beloved, who is the master of her heart, is merciless, crooked, and fickle, is called "parijalpita".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vijalpa?

Gosvāmī: When in the heart one honors and loves Kṛṣṇa, although externally one casts spiteful glances and speaks spiteful words, is called "vijalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is ujjalpa?

Gosvāmī: When the lover angrily, arrogantly, and spitefully insults Kṛṣṇa, calling Him a rake and a rogue, that is called "ujjalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sañjalpa?

Gosvāmī: When the lover mocks Kṛṣṇa with many sarcastic words and asserts that Kṛṣṇa is ungrateful, that is called “sañjalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is avajalpa?

Gosvāmī: When the lover says that because Kṛṣṇa is harsh, lusty, and crooked, she is afraid of what loving Kṛṣṇa may bring, that is called "avajalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is abhijalpa?

Gosvāmī: When the lover says, "It is foolish and useless to fall in love with Kṛṣṇa. He is so cruel he tortures even the innocent birds.", these crooked words are called “abhijalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is ājalpa?

Gosvāmī: When the lover, filled with disgust, declares, “Kṛṣṇa is crooked and deceptive. He only gives us pain. We should stop talking of Him, and instead talk about something else, something more pleasant." that is called ājalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is pratijalpa?

Gosvāmī: When the lover declares, "Kṛṣṇa is a highwayman in loving affairs. He is a rake who likes to enjoy pastimes with many girls. Therefore he should not come anywhere near me." that is called "pratijalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sujalpa?

Gosvāmī: When the lover sincerely, deeply, humbly, and restlessly asks many questions about Kṛṣṇa, that is called “sujalpa".

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, am I qualified to understand mādana?

Gosvāmī: When the most exalted love of the hlādini-śakti, a love that is the best of all the bhāvas, is splendidly manifested, that is called "mādana". Mādana-bhāva is eternally manifested in Śrī Rādhā.

Vijaya-kumāra: Does envy exist in mādana-bhāva?

Gosvāmī: Envy is very prominent in mādana-bhāva. It is seen that even inanimate objects are envied. Again, sometimes it is seen that words of praise are offered to to all who have a relationship with Kṛṣṇa. Words describing envy of the Kṛṣṇa's flute and words praising the pulindā girls may be cited as examples here.

Vijaya-kumāra: At what stage is mādana seen?

Gosvāmī: The wonderful mādana-bhāva is manifested when the lover's meet and enjoy pastimes together. Mādana-bhāva is manifested in thousands of ways in the eternal pastimes.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, do the great sages give a description of mādana-bhāva?

Gosvāmī: Mādana-rasa is limitless. Even Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself could not understand everything about the spiritual mādana-rasa. The great sage Śukadeva Gosvāmī found himself unable to describe it completely. The rasa-ācārya Bharata Muni and many others were also unable to properly describe mādana-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What wonderful things have I heard! Even Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, the enjoyer of mādana-rasa, cannot understand it completely. Why is that?

Gosvāmī: Lord Kṛṣṇa is rasa personified. He is limitless, all-knowing, and all-powerful. Nothing is unknown by Him, unattainable for Him, or impossible for Him to do. He is inconceivably and simultaneously one and different from the rasas. He is each rasa and He is all rasas. He accepts each rasa. In this way He is "ātmārāma" (the enjoyer of the spiritual rasas). Nothing in the rasas is apart from Him. He is present in all the rasas simultaneously. Aside from Kṛṣṇa's own (ātma) rasa, there is also the rasa of others (para). Both these kinds of rasas bring the experience of the happiness of spiritual pastimes. When the rasa of others (para) is manifest in its highest stage, it is called "parakīya-rasa". This highest stage is manifested in all its glory in the land of Vṛndāvana. When the ātma-rasa (svakīya-rasa) is completely unknown, and only parakīya-rasa is known, that is the highest stage of mādana-rasa. In this way mādana-rasa is purely manifested in the Lord's aprakaṭa (invisible to material eyes) pastimes in Goloka. It is also manifested in the land of Vraja situated in the material world.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, your mercy to me has no limit. I request that you please give a summary of the whole madhura-rasa.

Gosvāmī: The various bhāvas manifested by the vraja-gopīs are all spiritual, beyond the touch of the material world. They are beyond the understanding of material logic. Therefore the human intelligence cannot describe the completely. I have heard in the scriptures that Śrī Rādhā had rāga (love) for Kṛṣṇa was manifested even in Her pūrva-rāga (the beginnings of love). From this rāga came the anurāga sneha. From that came māna and praṇaya. These topics cannot be understood completely. In sādhāraṇī-rati is manifested dhūmāyita. Senha, māna, praṇaya, rāga, and anurāga are manifested in samañjasā-rati. From that comes splendid dīpta-rati. Then are manifested rūḍha, uddīpta, modana, and sudīpta-rati. Please know that this is merely a general summary. And why not? There may be exceptions according to time, place, and object. Sādhāraṇī-rati culminates in

prema. samañjasā-rati culminates in anurāga. Samarthā-rati culminates in mahā-bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the extent of rati in sakhya-rasa?

Gosvāmī: The highest stage of the narma-sakhās is anurāga. However, Subala and some others among them attain mahā-bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: I have already described sthāyi-bhāva. Sthāyi-bhāva culminates in maha-bhava. Why are different rasas seen in sthāyi-bhāva, even though it has only one nature?

Gosvāmī: Sthāyi-bhāva is manifested in the different rasas. The secret activities of sthāyi-bhāva are not openly manifested. When there is contact with the sāmagrīs, then the different rasas may be seen. The appropriate samagris are manifested in sthāyi-bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: Are svakīya-rasa and parakīya-rasa both eternally manifested in madhura-rasa?

Gosvāmī: Yes. Svakīya and parakīya are both eternal. The difference between them is not merely a material designation. If the difference between them were material, the madhura-rasa and the other rasas would all be material in nature. The rasas are eternal, and they are manifested eternally. In the rasas there are ruci (attraction to Kṛṣṇa), bhajana (service to Kṛṣṇa), and prāpti (attainment of Kṛṣṇa). Svakīya-rasa is also present in Vraja. In that rasa the devotee thinks of Kṛṣṇa as her husband. In that rasa, ruci, sādhana (spiritual practice), bhajana, and prāpti are all manifested. The svakīya-rasa manifest in Dvārakā is the same as that of Vaikuṇṭha. However, please know that the svakīya-rasa of Vraja is different from the rasas of Goloka. In other words, Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of Vraja, resides in the highest portion of the Vaikuṇṭha world.

With great love Vijaya-kumāra offered daṇḍavat obeisances and returned to his residence.

Chapter Thirty-seven
Śṛṅgara-rasa-vicāra
Śṛṅgara-rasa (Madhura-rasa)

Again and again relishing the sweetness of the bhāvas, Vijaya-kumāra offered daṇḍavat obeisances to his spiritual master's lotus feet. He asked, "O master, I have understood vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika-bhāva, and vyabhicāri-bhāva. I have also understood sthāyi-bhāva. However the rasa that comes from the meeting of the sthāyi-bhāva with the previously described four ingredients has not yet manifested within me. Why is that?"

Gosvāmī: O Vijaya-kumāra, you should understand about the rasa called śṛṅgāra-rasa. Only then will you be able to understand the sweetness of sthāyi-

bhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is śṛṅgāra-rasa?

Gosvāmī: When madhura-rasa becomes very beautiful, it is called "śṛṅgāra-rasa". This rasa is of two kinds: 1. vipralambha (separation), and 2. sambhoga (enjoyment).

Vijaya-kumāra: I wish to learn about vipralambha.

Gosvāmī: Whether they meet or not, the two youthful lovers yearn to embrace and enjoy many pastimes. When these desires remain unfulfilled, their love (bhāva) becomes very great. This most intense emotional state, which make the happiness of meeting all the greater, is called "vipralambha". The word "vipralambha" means parting (viraha) or separation (viyoga).

Vijaya-kumāra: How does vipralambha make the happiness of sambhoga (meeting) greater?

Gosvāmī: When a red cloth is polaced again into red dye, the cloth is made even more red. In the same way, vipralambha increases the enjpyment of the lovers when the finally meet. Without vipralambha, the enjoyment of sambhoga does not become increased.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different kinds of vipralambha?

Gosvāmī: There are four kinds of vipralambha: 1. pūrva-rāga, 2. māna, 3. prema-vaicittya, and 4. pravāsa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is pūrva-rāga?

Gosvāmī: Before the young lovers meet they may somehow see each other, hear of each other, or in some other way come to know of each other. When, by these activities they become attracted to each other and begin to fall in love, that is called “pūrva-rāga".

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different ways they may see each other?

Gosvāmī: The lover may see Kṛṣṇa directly, see a pciture of Him, or see Him in a dream. These ways of seeing Him are called "darśana".

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the different ways they may hear of each other?

Gosvāmī: They may hear from the mouth of a poet reciting prayers, from the mouth of a gopī-friend, from the mouth of a gopī-messenger, or from a song, or in some other way. That is called "śravaṇa".

Vijaya-kumāra: What causes them to be attracted and fall in love (rati)?

Gosvāmī: I have already described the many causes of rati, causes that begin with abhiyoga. These are said to be the causes in pūrva-rāga also.

Vijaya-kumāra: Who attains pūrva-rāga first: Kṛṣṇa or the gopīs?

Gosvāmī: This may be considered in different ways. In the material world woemn are shy and possess other feminine qualities. For this reason it is the man who pursues the woman. However, it is also said that women are naturally more attracted to the affairs of love, and therefore doe-eyed women feel pūrva-rāga first. In the Bhakti-śāstras it is said that the devotee feels pūrva-rāga first, and the Supreme Personality of Godhead feels pūrva-rāga afterward. Therefore it is said that the vraja-gopīs feel pūrva-rāga most intensely, and they feel it first.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the vyabhicāri-bhāvas in pūrva-rāga?

Gosvāmī: Included among the vyabhicārī-bhāvas in pūrva-rāga are: disease, doubt, envy, fatigue, disappointment, eagerness, humility, anxiety, dizziness, alertness, lamentation, inertness, madness, confusion, and death.

Vijaya-kumāra: How many different kinds of pūrva-rāga are there?

Gosvāmī: There are three kinds of pūrva-rāga: 1. prauḍha, 2. sāmañjasa, and 3. sādhāraṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is prauḍha pūrva-rāga?

Gosvāmī: When it is manifested in samarthā-rati, pūrva-rāga is manifested as prauḍha-pūrva-rāga. In this kind of pūrva-rāga, yearning, death, and other conditions of life are manifested. The vyabhicāri-bhāvas are filled with yearnings.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe these different conditions of life.

Gosvāmī: It is said in the Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi:

lālasodvega-jāgarya-
tānavaṁ jaḍimātra tu
vaiyagryaṁ vyādhir unmādo
moho mṛtyu-daśā daśa

"Yearning, anxiety, wakefulness, emaciation, being stunned, bewilderment, disease, madness, illusion, and death are the ten conditions present in pūrva-rāga."

Vijaya-kumāra: What is yearning?

Gosvāmī: Yearning is an intense desire to attain the beloved. In it eagerness, restlessness, moving to and fro, sighing, and other like symptoms are manifested.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is anxiety?

Gosvāmī: Anxiety is when the mind is restless. In this condition there are deep sighs, restlessness, being stunned, worry, tears, becoming pale, perspiring, and other like symptoms.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is wakefulness?

Gosvāmī: Wakefulness is when sleep is destroyed. In this condition there are being stunned, being withered, being angry, and other like symptoms.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is emaciation?

Gosvāmī: Emaciation is when the body becomes very thin. In this condition there are weakness, giddiness, and other like symptoms. In some texts the word "vilāpa" (lamentation is read here.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is being stunned?

Gosvāmī: Inability to see any difference between what is desirable and what is not desirable, failure to answer questions, and the inability to see or hear are present when one is stunned. Inarticulate sounds made suddenly and for no reason, inertness, long sighs, and bewilderment are also included among the symptoms here.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is bewilderment?

Gosvāmī: The state of being deeply upset and thus unable to cope is called bewilderment. In this condition there are disappointment, melancholy, envy, and loss of discrimination,

Vijaya-kumāra: What is disease?

Gosvāmī: Disease is when, because of being unable to attain the beloved, one become pale and feverish. In that condition one yearns for coolness, one is bewildered, one sighs, and one falls to the ground.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is madness?

Gosvāmī: When, in every place, every condition, and every time one is bewildered and says things are other than they actually are, that is called madness. Hatred of the beloved, sighing, blinking of the eyes, and separation from the beloved are included in madness.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is illusion?

Gosvāmī: When the mind acts in a contrary, improper way, that is called illusion. Being motionless and fainting occur in illusion.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is death?

Gosvāmī: When, in spite of all efforts to make Him return, the beloved does not return, the lover, tormented by love, yearns for her own death. She bequeaths to her friends all her favorite things: the bumblebees, the gentle breeze, the moonlight, and the kadamba flowers. This is the anubhāva.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sāmañjasa pūrva-rāga?

Gosvāmī: Sāmañjasa pūrva-rāga is manifested in sāmañjasa-rati. In it are manifested desire, thoughtfulness, remembrance, glorifying the beloved's virtues, passion, lamentation, madness, disease, being stunned, and death.

Vijaya-kumāra: In this context what is desire?

Gosvāmī: To yearn for the touch of the beloved is called "desire". To attain this desire the lover decorates herself with ornaments and reveals her passion.

Vijaya-kumāra: In this context what is thoughtfulness?

Gosvāmī: To think of different ways to attain the beloved is called thoughtfulness. In this situation the lover carefully arranges the bed, sighs, and anxiously looks to see the beloved's arrival.

Vijaya-kumāra: In this context what is remembrance?

Gosvāmī: To think of the beloved and things in relation to Him is called remembrance. In this situation the lover trembles, has a seizure where she loses control of her limbs, weeps, sighs, and performs other like activities.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is glorifying the beloved's virtues?

Gosvāmī: To praise the beloved's handsomeness and other virtues is called glorifying the beloved's virtues. In this situation the anubhāvas include trembling, standing up of the body's hairs, and choking of the voice. In this situation anxiety, mad lamentation, disease, being stunned, and death are manifested in samañjasa pūrva-rāga as they are also in samañjasā-rati.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, please describe sādhāraṇa pūrva-rāga.

Gosvāmī: Sādhāraṇa samañjasa pūrva-rāga is like sādhāraṇa-rati. In it are manifested the six conditions beginning with lamentation, only their manifestation is softer. The situation is natural, so there is no need to give any examples. In this pūrva-rāga the lovers send love-letters, garlands, and other things to be placed in each other's hands.

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the love-letters?

Gosvāmī: Love-letters are of two kinds: 1. those that are not written with words, and 2. those that are written with words. Because in them the author reveals His or Her love, they are called "love-letters".

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the love-letters that are not written with words?

Gosvāmī: Without writing any words, the author may use her fingernail to draw a half-moon on a red flower-petal or leaf. That is called "a letter written without any words".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is a love-letter that is written with words?

Gosvāmī: When the lover personally writes with His or Her own hand verses in the Prākṛt language, that is called a "love-letter that is written with words". The ink for the letter may be red hiṅgula, musk, or black ashes and water. The pages of the letter are extraordinarily large flower petals. The stamp to seal the letter is made of kuṅkuma. Lotus fibers are the string to tie the pages together.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the sequence of events in pūrva-rāga?

Gosvāmī: First there is the sight of something pleasing to the eye. Then there is thinking of what one has seen. Then there is attachment, then yearning, then loss of sleep, then becoming emaciated, then renouncing all else, then destruction of shyness, then madness, then falling unconscious, and then death. These are the stages of love. These stages are manifested in both the hero and the heroine. However, they are manifested first in the heroines, and only later in Kṛṣṇa.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is jealous anger?

Gosvāmī: When the lovers meet, but the heroine will not allow her lover to touch her, that is called jealous anger. Disgust, anxiety, restlessness, arrogance, envy, concealment, loss, and worry are included among the sañcāri-bhāvas in jealous anger.

Vijaya-kumāra: Where does jealous anger rest?

Gosvāmī: Jealous anger rests in praṇaya (love). Before praṇaya exists jealous anger cannot be said truly to exist. If it exists at all, it is very stunted. Jealous anger is of two kinds: 1. with a cause, and 2. without a cause.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is jealous anger with a cause?

Gosvāmī: When the beloved gives His affection to a rival, and the lover feels jealous anger mixed with love (praṇaya), that is called jealous anger with a cause. The ancient sages affirm that without sneha fear is not possible, and without praṇaya, jealous anger is not possible. Therefore, when jealous anger is manifested, this reveals the love felt by the hero and heroine. A girl who sincerely loves her beloved cannot bear the idea of a rival for her beloved's affections. When the Dvārakā queens heard that Kṛṣṇa had given a pārijāta flower to Rukmiṇī, jealous anger arose only in the heart of Satyabhāmā and not in the heart of any other queen.

Vijaya-kumāra: In what different ways is the rival (vipakṣa) discovered?

Gosvāmī: There are three ways: 1. the lover hears about her rival, 2. she suspects the rival's existence, and 3. she sees the rival in a dream.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is hearing about the rival?

Gosvāmī: the lover may hear from the mouth of one of her friends, from the mouthof a parrot, or from the mouth of someone else. In these ways she hears about her rival.

Vijaya-kumāra: How does she suspect her rival's existence?

Gosvāmī: She may see the marks of amorous enjoyment, hear the name of her rival accidentally spoken, or see her rival in a dream. In these ways she may suspect the existence of a rival. On the limbs of her beloved she may see various signs of His having enjoyed with another girl. That is called "seeing the marks of enjoyment". Her beloved may accidentally speak the name of a rival. That is called, "hearing the name of her rival accidentally spoken". These things make the heroine so sad that she wishes she were dead. In a dream the lover may see Kṛṣṇa and a rival beloved. This is called "seeing the rival in a dream."

Vijaya-kumāra: What is directly seeing the rival?

Gosvāmī: The girl may directly see her beloved enjoying pastimes with a rival. That is called "directly seeing the rival".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is jealous anger without a cause?

Gosvāmī: When there is no real cause, but there is only a flimsy reflection of a cause, and the heroine takse shelter of praṇaya (love), the result is jealous anger without a cause. Jealous anger with a cause is itself a transformation of praṇaya. When the pastimes of praṇaya are manifested, one by-product is the creation of jealous anger without a cause. This kind of jealous anger is called "praṇaya-māna". The ancient paṇḍitas declare that spiritual love moves in a crooked way, like the movements of a snake. That is way the heroine manifests these two kinds of jealous anger, anger with and without a cause. This rasa has many vyabhicāri-bhāvas. Among them concealment is the most important.

Vijaya-kumāra: How does the beloved pacify jealous anger without a cause?

Gosvāmī: Jealous anger without a cause will be pacified spontaneously. No effort is needed to pacify it. In the course of joking and other like pastimes, it will go away. Jealous anger with a cause will be pacified when there are conciliation, quarrel, giving a gift, and bowing down to offer respects. Jealous anger may also be pacified by shedding tears, by joking pastimes, or in other ways also.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is conciliation?

Gosvāmī: Speaking affectionate words is called “conciliation".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is quarrel?

Gosvāmī: Quarrel is of two kinds: 1. Crookedly praising one's own glories, and 2. using a friend to criticize the beloved.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is giving a gift?

Gosvāmī: When on some pretext an ornament of other gift is given to the jealous beloved, that is called "giving a gift".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is bowing down to offer respects?

Gosvāmī: When the lover humbly falls at the feet of the jealous beloved, that is called "bowing down to offer respects".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "upekṣā"?

Gosvāmī: When, seeing that neither conciliation nor any other means will pacify His jealous beloved, the lover simply remains silent, that is called "upekṣā". Some scholars say that "upekṣā" here means that by speaking joking words the lover pacifies His jealous beloved.

Vijaya-kumāra: You used the word "rasāntara". What does that word mean?

Gosvāmī: To speak words that bring sudden fear to the jealous beloved is called "rasāntara". Rasāntara is of two kinds: 1. yādṛcchika, and 2. buddhi-pūrvaka. When it occurs accidentally it is called "yādṛcchika". When it happens because of the lover's great intelligence it is called "buddhi-pūrvaka".

Vijaya-kumāra: In what other ways can the lover break His beloved's jealous anger?

Gosvāmī: One way is to play the flute at an appropriate time and place. There are also other ways to remove the jealous anger of the vraja-gopīs. A small amount of jealous anger may be easily pacified. A moderate amount of jealous anger may require some effort. Intense jealous anger is difficult to pacify, even with great effort. When a gopī expresses her jealous anger at Kṛṣṇa, she may say, "O crooked one, O crest-jewel of the malicious, O king of cheaters, O king of the deceivers, O best of the wicked, O great demon, O hard-hearted one, O shameless one, O rake

whose playing is a host of sins, O lecher who hunts out the gopīs, O thief of beautiful girls' hearts, O destroyer of the gopīs' piety, O rake who mocks the saintly gopīs, O king of the debauchees, O great darkness of sins, O thief of the gopīs' garments, O highwayman who lurks in the valley of Govardhana Hill!"

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "prema-vaicittya"?

Gosvāmī: When, even though her beloved is present before her, a girl suffers, mistakenly thinking He is far away, that is called "prema-vaicittya". When she is so overwhelmed with intense love that her mind mistakenly thinks her beloved is far away, that is called "vaicittya".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "pravāsa"?

Gosvāmī: When, although previously they were together, the hero and heroine now stay in different countries, different towns, different rasas, or different localities, that is called "pravāsa". The vyabhicaris of the pravāsa separation are all the vyabhivaris of śṛṅgāra-rasa except for joy, pride, passion, and shyness. Pravāsa is of two kinds: 1. buddhi-pūrvaka, and 2. abuddhi-pūrvaka.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is buddhi-pūrvaka pravāsa?

Gosvāmī: When the beloved goes far away to perform a specific duty, that is called "buddhi-pūrvaka pravāsa". Kṛṣṇa's duty in this situation is to give pleasure to His devotees. This kind of pravāsa is of two kinds: 1. going a short distance, and 2. going far away. When the journey is far away, it is of three kinds: 1. future, 2. present, and 3. past. When the journey is far away, the lovers exchange letters.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is abuddhi-pūrvaka pravāsa?

Gosvāmī: When fate forces the beloved to live far away, that is called "abuddhi-pūrvaka pravāsa". In the grip of the demigods or other forces, the lovers are forced into many different situations. Anxiety, sleeplessness, agitation, being emaciated, bodily limbs becoming discolored, wild talking, disease, madness, bewilderment, and death are the ten conditions of life in this kind of pravāsa. When Kṛṣṇa goes far away, all these ten conditions of life are manifested. O Vijaya-kumāra, these different kinds of spiritual love (prema) and these ten conditions of life can be understood only by mercy. With mercy they cannot be understood.

Vijaya-kumāra: When my heart thinks about this description of separation, it says that separation is not an end in itself. Rather, it is meant to increase the ocean of pleasure the lovers feel when they meet. Although a soul imprisoned by Māyā will prefer the ocean of happiness obtained in meeting and think it better than the rasa of separation, still, the rasax of separatioon is eternally manifested. The Lord's pastimes would not be so wonderful if it were absent.

Chapter Thirty-Eight
Śṛṅgāra-rasa-vicāra
Śṛṅgāra-rasa

Folding his palms, Vijaya-kumāra asked his spiritual master about sambhoga

(enjoyment in meeting).

Gosvāmī: Śrī Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are of two kinds: 1. prakaṭa (manifested), and 2. aprakaṭa (unmanifested). Th separation from Kṛṣṇa I described occurs in the prakaṭa pastimes. In Vrndavana Kṛṣṇa eternally enjoys the rāsa dance and other pastimes with the gopīs. Therefore, because these pastimes are eternal, Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs are never separated. In the Māthura-māhātmya it is said that Kṛṣṇa eternally enjoys pastimes the gopas and gopīs. There the verb "krīḍati" (enjoys pastimes), which is in the present tense, affirms that Lord Kṛṣṇa eternally enjoys pastimes in Vṛndāvana. Therefore in Goloka or in Vṛndāvana, in Lord Kṛṣṇa's aparakāta (unmanifested) pastimes, Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs always enjoy together. Kṛṣṇa never goes to a faraway place. There is no separation. Gazing at each other, embracing, and enjoying many pastimes, Kṛṣṇa eternally enjoys (sambhoga) with the gopīs. This enjoyment (sambhoga) is if two kinds: 1. mukhya (primary) and 2. gauṇa (secondary).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is mukhya-sambhoga?

Gosvāmī: When Kṛṣṇa and the gopīs enjoy while they are awake, that is called "mukhya-sambhoga". Mukhya-sambhoga is of four kinds. The sambhoga that occurs soon after the pūrva-rāga is called saṅkṣipta (brief). The sambhoga that occurs after jealous anger is called "saṅkīrṇa" (narrow). The sambhoga that occurs after a nearby pravāsa (journey) is called "sampanna" (fortunate). The sambhoga that occurs after a faraway journey is called "samṛddhimān". (opulent).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is saṅkṣipta-sambhoga?

Gosvāmī: When fear, shyness, and other like emotions keep the meeting brief, that is called "saṅkṣipta-sambhoga".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is saṅkīrṇa-sambhoga?

Gosvāmī: When the lovers worry that an unpleasant obstacle may thwart their pastimes, and therefore Their enjoyment becomes like drinking hot sugar-can juice, that is called “saṅkīrṇa-sambhoga"

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sampanna-sambhoga?

Gosvāmī: When, after a long journey the lover meets His beloved, Their enjoyment is called "sampanna-sambhoga". This sambhoga is of two kinds: 1. āgati, and 2. prādhurbhāva. An ordinary meeting is called "āgati". When the two passionate lovers accidentally and suddenly come face-to-face, that is called "prādurbhāva". Prādurbhāva brings a great festival of the best transcendental happiness.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is samṛddhimān sambhoga?

Gosvāmī: This is when the young lovers have a rare opportunity to see each other. And why not? Because they are under the control of others, this does not always happen. Now that they are free from the control of others, they can enjoy without any obstacles. This is called "samṛddhimān sambhoga". This sambhoga is of two kinds: 1. concealed, and 2. openly manifested. I need not describe them now.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is gauṇa-sambhoga?

Gosvāmī: When one enjoys pastimes with Kṛṣṇa in a dream, that is called "gauṇa-sambhoga". These dreams are of two kinds: 1. sāmānya (general), and 2. viśeṣa (sepcific). This gauṇa-sambhoga is of two kinds. When the vyabhicāri-bhāva sleep is prominent, it is sāmānya gauṇa-sambhoga. Viśeṣa gauṇa-sambhoga is

when one wakens from the dream and sees that the waking reality is exactly the same as the dream. Thus the meeting with Kṛṣṇa in the waking state is exatly like the meeting with Him in the dream. This rasa is filled with the yearnings of love. The four divisions of saṅkṣipta, saṅkīrṇa, sampanna, and samṛddhimān also exist in gauṇa-sambhoga.

Vijaya-kumāra: Dreams aren't real. How can samṛddhimān sambhoga occur in a dream?

Gosvāmī: In the spiritual world waking and dreaming are the same. Uṣā and Aniruddha met in a dream. In the same way Kṛṣṇa and His beloved gopīs can meet in Their dreams. Perfected devotees (siddha-bhakta) sometimes have very wonderful dreams, and when they awaken they attain an ornament or something else that they first saw in their dream. These dreams are of two kinds: 1. being awake when one is dreaming, and 2. dreaming when one is awake. The gopīs' dreams, which are filled with spiritual love, are in the fifth condition of life, far beyond the yogīs' samādhi, which is in the fourth condition of life. Thus the gopīs' dreams are not at all like material dreams, which are born from the mode of passion. This means that the gopīs' dreams are not material and are not impelled by the material modes of nature. Rather, they are eternal spiritual reality. Therefore Lord Kṛṣṇa can certainly enjoy wonderful pastimes with the gopīs in their dreams.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe viśeṣa gauṇa-sambhoga.

Gosvāmī: The following are all the viśeṣa gauṇa-sambhoga (special situations of meeting): seeing, talking, touching, blocking the path, putting an obstacle on the path, pastimes in a house, pastimes in Vṛndāvana forest, pastimes in the Yamunā's waters, pastimes in a boat, pastimes of stealing flowers, pastimes at a ghāṭa (the dāna-keli pastime), playing hide-and-seek in the forest, drinking madhu nectar, Kṛṣṇa disguising Himself as a woman, pretending to be asleep, gambling with dice, tugging at garments, kissing, embracing, scratching with fingernails, drinking the nectar of each other's bimba-fruit lips, and enjoying amorous pastimes.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, playful pastimes (līlā-vilāsa) is one thing, meeting (samprayoga) is another thing. Of the two, which brings the most happiness?

Gosvāmī: Playful pastimes (līlā-vilāsa) bring more happiness that meeting (samprayoga).

Vijaya-kumāra: With what affectionate names do the gopīs address Kṛṣṇa?

Gosvāmī: The gopīs address Kṛṣṇa with the following affectionate names: Gokulānanda (O bliss of Gokula), Govinda (O pleasure of the cows, land, and senses), Goṣṭhendra-kula-candra (O moon born from the king of Vraja), Prāṇeśvara (O master of our lives), Sundarottaṁsa (O crown of all handsome men), Nāgara-śirmoaṇi (O crest-jewel of amorous heroes), Vṛndāvana-candra (O moon of Vṛndāvana), Gokula-rāja (O king of Gokula), and Manohara (O enchanter of our hearts). There are many other names also.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are of two kinds: 1. prakaṭa (manifested), and 2. aprakaṭa (unmanifested). Still, all His pastimes are the same spiritual reality. What are the different kinds of His prakaṭa pastimes in Vraja?

Gosvāmī: The Lord's prakaṭa pastimes in Vraja are of two kinds: 1. nitya (regular), and 2. naimittika (for some special occasion). The Lord's aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā (pastimes in the eight periods of the day) in Vraja are His nitya pastimes. Other pastimes, like His killing Pūtanā and other demons, and His going far away on a

journey, are His naimittika pastimes.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I wish to learn about the Lord's nitya pastimes.

Gosvāmī: O Vijaya-kumāra, would you like to hear the description given by the ancient sages, or would you like to hear the description given by the Six Gosvāmīs?

Vijaya-kumāra: I would like to hear the description given by the ancient sages.

Gosvāmī: It is said:

niśāntaḥ prātaḥ pūrvāhno madhyāhnaś cāparāhnakaḥ
sāyaṁ pradoṣa-rātriś ca kālāṣṭau ca yathā-kramam
madhyāhno yāminī cobhau ṣaṇ-muhūtra-mitau smṛtau
tri-muhūrta-mitā jñeyā niśānta-pramukhāḥ pare

"The eight periods of the day are: 1. the end of night, 2. the early morning, 3. the late morning, 4. midday, 5. the afternoon, 6. sunset, 7. evening, and 8. night. Midday and night last for six muhūrtas each. Evening and the other periods last for three muhūrtas each."

Two daṇḍas (24 minutes) equal one muhūrta (48 minutes). In the Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā, Lord Sadāśiva described Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in these eight periods of the day.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, am I qualified to hear these words of Lord Sadāśiva, the spiritual master of the universe?

Gosvāmī: Please listen. Lord Sadāśiva said (Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā 183-188):

parakīyābhimāninyas
tathā tasya priyā-janāḥ
pracchannenaiva bhāvena
ramayanti nijaṁ priyam

"Thinking of Him as their paramour, with hidden love the gopīs please their beloved Kṛṣṇa.

ātmānaṁ cintayet tatra
tāsāṁ madhye manoramām
rūpa-yauvana-sampannāṁ
kiśorīṁ pramadākṛtim

nānā-śilpa-kalābhijñāṁ
kṛṣṇa-bhogānurūpiṇīm
prārthitām api kṛṣṇena
tato bhoga-parāṅmukhīm

"One should think of oneself as a beautiful young gopī girl expert in various arts, pleasing to Lord Kṛṣṇa, reluctant to directly enjoy with Lord Kṛṣṇa even if He were personally to invite you, . . .
.fn 2

rādhikānucarīṁ nityaṁ
tat-sevana-parāyaṇām
kṛṣṇād apy adhikaṁ prema
rādhikāyāṁ prakurvatīm

. . . a follower of Śrī Rādhā, always devoted to Her service, more affectionate to Śrī Rādhā than to Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, . . .

prītyānudivasaṁ yatnāt
tayoḥ saṅgama-kāriṇīm
tat-sevana-sukhāsvāda-
bhareṇāti-su-nirvṛtam

. . . every day carefully and affectionately arranging the meeting of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, and becoming happy to see Them pleased by your service.

ity ātmānaṁ vicintyaiva
tatra sevāṁ samācaret
brāhma-muhūrtam ārabhya
yāvat sāntā mahā-niśā

"Thinking of oneself in this way, one should serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa from the early morning of brāhma-muhūrta to the end of night."

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the pastimes at the end of night?
Gosvāmī: Śrī Vṛndā-devī said (Śrī Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā 196-201):

madhye vṛndāvane ramye
pañcāśat kuñja-mandite
kalpa-vṛkṣa-nikuñje tu
divya-ratna-maye gṛhe

"In the middle of beautiful Vṛndāvana forest, which is decorated with fifty groves, in a grove of kalpa-vṛkṣa trees, in a glittering jewel palace, . . .

nidrito tiṣṭhatas talpe
niviḍāliṅgatau mithaḥ
mad-ājñā-kāribhiḥ paścāt
pakṣibhir bodhitāv api

. . . on a graceful bed, the sleeping, tightly embracing divine couple were awakened by birds following my command.

gāḍhāliṅgana-nirbhedaṁ
āptau tad-bhaṅga-kātarau
na manas kurutas talpāt
samutthātuṁ manāg api

"Their firm embrace broken, the divine couple became unhappy at the thought of Their impending separation. They had no wish to rise even slightly from Their bed.

tataś ca śārikā-saṅghaiḥ
śukādyair api tau mudā
bodhitau vividhair vākyaiḥ
sva-talpād udatiṣṭhatām

"Awakened by the cheerful words of many parrots and other birds, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa rose from Their bed.

upaviṣṭau tato dṛṣṭvā
sakhyas talpe mudānvitau
praviśya cakrire sevāṁ
tat-kālasyocitaṁ tayoḥ

"Seeing that the divine couple had happily risen from bed, the gopīs entered and served Them in ways appropriate to that time.

punaś ca śārikā-vākyair
utthāya tau sva-talpataḥ
gacchataḥ sva-sva-bhavanaṁ
bhīty-utkaṇṭhākulau mithaḥ

"When the female parrots spoke, the divine couple rose from Their bed. Very anxious, They returned to Their homes."

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the pastimes in the early morning?
Gosvāmī: There it is said (Śrī Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā 202-218):

prātaś ca bodhito mātrā
talpād utthāya sa-tvaram
kṛtvā kṛṣṇo danta-kaṣṭhaṁ
baladeva-samanvitam

"Wakened by His mother in the early morning, Lord Kṛṣṇa rose from bed. Then He and Balarāma brushed Their teeth.

mātrānumodito yāti
go-śālaṁ dohanotsukaḥ
rādhāpi bodhitā vṛddha-
vayasyābhiḥ sva-talpataḥ

"With His mother's permission, Lord Kṛṣṇa eagerly went to the barn to milk the cows. Then Śrī Rādhā, wakened by the elder gopīs, also rose from Her bed.

utthāya danta-kaṣṭhādi
kṛtvābhyaṅgaṁ samācaret
snāna-vedīṁ tato gatvā
snāpitā lalitādibhiḥ

"Śrī Rādhā rose, brushed Her teeth, anointed Herself with fragrant oils, and then went to the bathing-room, where Lalitā and the other gopīs bathed Her.

bhūṣā-gṛhaṁ vrajet tatra
vayasyā bhūṣayanty api
bhūṣaṇair vividhair divyair
gandha-mālyānulepanaiḥ

"Then She went to the decorating-room, where Her friends decorated Her with garlands, scents, oils, and many glittering ornaments.

tataś ca sva-janais tasyāḥ
śvaśruṁ samprārthya yatnataḥ
paktum āhūyate tūrṇaṁ
sa-sakhī sā yaśodayā

"Then, after first speaking to Rādhā's mother-in-law, Yaśodā called Rādhā and Her friends to cook breakfast for Lord Kṛṣṇa.

śrī-nārada uvāca

katham āhūyate devi
pākārthaṁ sā yaśodayā
satīṣu pāka-kartrīṣu
rohiṇī-pramukhāsv api

"Śrī Nārada said: O goddess, why did Yaśodā call Śrī Rādhā to cook when Rohiṇī and so many other expert cooks were present in her home?

śrī-vṛndovāca

durvāsasā svayaṁ datto
varas tasyai maharṣiṇā
iti kātyāyanī-vaktrāc
chrutam āsīn mayā purā

"Śrī Vṛndā said: The great sage Durvāsā gave Rādhā a boon that She would be the best of cooks. This I heard from the mouth of Kātyāyanī.

tvayā yat pacyate devi
tad-annaṁ mad-anugrahāt
miṣṭaṁ svādv-āmṛta-spardhi
bhoktur āyuṣ-karaṁ tathā

"Durvāsā said to Rādhā: O goddess, by my mercy whatever You cook will be more delicious than nectar. It will increase the life of whoever eats it.

ity āhvāyati tāṁ nityaṁ
yaśodā putra-vatsalā
āyuṣmān me bhavet putraḥ
svādu-lobhāt tathā satī

"That is why every day Yaśodā calls Rādhā to cook. Yaśodā thinks, "Eager to eat this delicious food, my son will live a very long life."

śvaśruś cānumoditā sāpi
hṛṣṭānandālayaṁ vrajet
sa-sakhī-prakarā tatra
gatvā pākaṁ karoti ca

"Receiving permission from Her mother-in-law, Rādhā becomes very happy. Accompanied by a host of friends, She goes to Kṛṣṇa's home to cook.

kṛṣṇo 'pi dugdhvā gāḥ kāścid
dohayitvā janaiḥ paraḥ
āgacchati pitur vākyāt
sva-gṛhaṁ sakhibhir vṛtaḥ

"Meanwhile, Lord Kṛṣṇa milked some cows and had the other boys milk the others. Then, called by His father, He and His friends returned home.

abhaṅga-mardanaṁ kṛtvā
dāsaiḥ saṁsnāpito mudā
dhauta-vastra-dharaḥ sragvī
candanākta-kalevaraḥ

"Then the servants happily massaged Lord Kṛṣṇa, bathed Him, dressed Him in clean garments, garlanded Him, and anointed His body with sandal paste.

dvi-phāla-baddha-keśaś ca
grīva-bhālopari sphuran
candrākāra-spurad-bhāla-
tilakālaka-rañjitaḥ

"Then the servants gathered Lord Kṛṣṇa's hair from His forehead to His neck and tied it in a topknot. They made the moon of the His forehead splendid with tilaka and curling locks of hair.

kaṅkanāṅgada-keyūra-

ratna-mudrā-lasat-karaḥ
muktā-hāra-sphurad-vakṣā
makarākṛti-kuṇḍalaḥ

"They decorated Lord Kṛṣṇa with armlets and bracelets. They made His hands splendid with jewel rings. They placed a necklace of pearls across His chest and decorated His ears with shark-shaped earrings.

muhur ākārito mātrā
praviśed bhojanalaye
avalambya karaṁ mātur
baladevam anuvrataḥ

"Again and again called by His mother, Lord Kṛṣṇa, holding His mother's hand, finally followed Balarāma into the breakfast-room.

bhuktvā ca vividhānnāni
mātrā ca sakhibhir vṛtaḥ
hāsayan vividhair vākyaiḥ
sakhīṁs tair hāsitaḥ svayam

"Accompanied by His mother and His friends, Lord Kṛṣṇa ate a breakfast-feast of many different kinds of foods. He told many jokes, laughing and making His friends laugh.

itthaṁ bhuktvā tathācamya
divya-khaṭṭopari kṣaṇāt
viśramet sevakair dattaṁ
tāmbūlaṁ vibhajann adan

"Then the servants brought betelnuts. After sharing them with His friends and chewing some Himself, Lord Kṛṣṇa rested for a moment on a splendid bed."

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the pastimes of the late morning.
Gosvāmī: It is said (Śrī Sanat-kumāra-saḥitā 220-223):

gopa-veśa-dharaḥ kṛṣṇo
dhenu-vṛnda-puraḥ-saraḥ
vraja-vāsi-janaiḥ prītyā
sarvair anugataḥ pathi

"When, dressed as a cowherd boy, Lord Kṛṣṇa followed the cows to the pasture, all the people of Vraja affectionately followed Him on the path.

pitaraṁ mātaraṁ natvā
netrāntena priyā-gaṇān
yathā-yogyaṁ tathā cānyān
sannivartya vanaṁ vrajet

"Bowing down before His father and mother, casting sidelong glances at His gopī-beloveds, and dealing appropriately with all the others, Lord Kṛṣṇa sent them all back. Then He again proceeded to the forest.

vanaṁ praviśya sakhibhiḥ
krīḍitvā ca kṣaṇaṁ tataḥ
vañcayitvā ca tān sarvān
dvi-traiḥ priya-sakhair yutaḥ

"Lord Kṛṣṇa entered the forest, played for a while with His friends, and then slipped away with two or three especially close friends.

saṅketakaṁ vrajed dharṣāt
priyā-sandarśanotsukaḥ

"Eager to see His beloved, Lord Kṛṣṇa happily went to meet Her."

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the pastimes of midday.
Gosvāmī: It is said (Śrī Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā 223-262):

sāpi kṛṣṇe vanaṁ yāte
dṛṣṭvā taṁ gṛham āgatā

When She saw that Lord Kṛṣṇa had gone to the forest, Śrī Rādhā returned to Her home.

sūryādi-pūja-vyājena
kusumādy-āhṛti-cchalāt
vañcayitvā gurūn yāti
priyā-saṅgecchayā vanam

Then, on the pretext of gathering flowers and other things for the worship of the sun-god and other purposes, Śrī Rādhā tricks Her superiors and, yearning to meet Her beloved, goes to the forest.

itthaṁ tau bahu-yatnena
militvā sva-gaṇair vṛtaḥ
vihārair vividhais tatra
vane vikrīḍito mudā

"Finally meeting after a great effort, the divine couple enjoy many happy pastimes in the forest with Their associates.

āndolikā-śākhārūḍhau
sakhībhir dolitau kvacit
kvacid veṇuṁ kara-srastaṁ
priyayā coritāṁ hariḥ

"Sometimes Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoy pastimes on a swing hanging from a tree branch and pushed by the gopīs. Sometimes Rādhā steals the flute from Lord Kṛṣṇa's hand.

anveṣayann upālabdho
vipralabdhaḥ priyā-gaṇaiḥ
hāsito bahudhā tābhir
hṛta-sva iva tiṣṭhati

"Sometimes the gopīs hid and made Him search after them. Sometimes they teased and scolded Him. Sometimes they joked with Him and made Him laugh. In these ways they charmed Lord Kṛṣṇa and stole His heart.

vasanta-ṛtunā juṣṭaṁ
vana-khaṇḍaṁ kvacin mudā
praviśya candanāmbhobhiḥ
kuṅkumādi-jalair api

viṣiñcato yantra-muktais
tat-paṅkanāpitau mithaḥ
sakhyo 'py evaṁ viṣiñcanti
tāś ca tau siñcataḥ punaḥ

"Sometimes Lord Kṛṣṇa happily enters the forest in the beautiful springtime and with a sprinkler sprinkles the gopīs with water mixed with sandal, kuṅkuma, and other colorful scents. The gopīs respond by sprinkling Him. Then Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa sprinkle each other again and again.

tathānyartu-su-juṣṭāsu
krīḍito vana-rājiṣu
tat-tat-kālocitair nānā-
vihāraiḥ sa-gaṇau dvija

"O brāhmaṇa, in the forest groves the divine couple enjoy many different pastimes with Their associates, pastimes appropriate to the different times and seasons.

śrānto kvacid vṛkṣa-mūlam
āsādya muni-sattama
upaviśyāsane divye
madhu-pānaṁ pracakratuḥ

"O best of sages, sometimes They become tired. Then, sitting on a splendid throne under a tree, They drink nectar.

tato madhu-padonmatto
nidrayā militekṣaṇau
mithaḥ pāṇiṁ samālambya
kāma-bāṇa-vaśaṁ gatau

"Intoxicated by drinking nectar, their eyes become closed with sleepiness. Holding hands, They are attacked by Kāmadeva's arrows.

riraṁsū viśataḥ kuñjaṁ
khalat-pādābjakau pathi
tato vikrīḍatas tatra
kariṇī yūthapau yathā

"Desiring to enjoy, They place Their lotus feet in a forest grove. There They enjoy pastimes like two regal elephants.

sakhyo 'pi madhubhir mattā
nidrayā pihitekṣaṇāḥ
abhitaḥ kuñja-puñjeṣu
sarvā eva vililyare

"Intoxicated by drinking nectar, and their eyes closed with sleepiness, the gopīs entered the nearby forest groves.

pṛthag ekena vapuṣā
kṛṣṇo 'pi yugapad vibhuḥ
sarvāsāṁ sannidhiṁ gacchet
priyāṇāṁ parito muhuḥ

"Expanding into many forms, all-powerful Lord Kṛṣṇa approached each gopī individually.

ramayitvā ca tāḥ sarvāḥ
kariṇīr gaja-rāḍ iva
priyayā ca tathā tābhiḥ
sarovaram athāvrajat

"As an elephant king enjoys with His many wives, so Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoyed with the gopīs. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa, His beloved Rādhā, and all the gopīs entered a lake.

śrī-nārada uvāca

vṛnde śrī-nanda-putrasya
mādhurya-krīḍaṇe katham
aiśvaryasya prakāśo 'bhūd

"Śrī Nārada said: O Vṛndā-devī, if His pastimes of sweetness are like this, then when does Lord Kṛṣṇa manifest His pastimes of opulence? Please cut apart my doubt.

śrī-vṛndovāca

mune mādhurya-mayyāsti
līlā-śaktir harer dṛḍhā
tayā pṛthak kṛtaḥ krīḍed

"Śrī Vṛndā said: O sage, the powerful potency of the pastimes of sweetness is one of Lord Hari's potencies. With that potency Lord Hari enjoys pastimes with the gopīs.

rādhayā saha rūpeṇa
nijena ramate svayam
iti mādhurya-līlāyāḥ
śaktir naiśatayā hareḥ

"When in His original form Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoys pastimes with Śrī Rādhā, He manifests the potency of His pastimes of sweetness. At that time He does not manifest the potency of His pastimes of opulence.

jala-sekair mithas tatra
krīḍitvā sa-gaṇau tataḥ
vāsaḥ-srak-candanair divya-
bhūṣaṇair api bhūṣitau

"Accompanied by Their gopī friends, the divine couple enjoy pastimes of splashing each other in the water. Then They are decorated with splendid garments, ornaments, garlands, and sandal paste.

tatraiva sarasas-tīre
divya-ratna-maye gṛhe
aśnītaḥ phala-mūlāni
kalpitāni mayaiva hi

"Then, in a jewel cottage by the lakeshore, the divine couple eat a snack of delicious fruits and roots carefully prepared by me.

haris tu prathamaṁ bhuktvā
kāntayā pariveṣitam
dvi-trābhiḥ sevito gacchec
chayyāṁ puṣpa-vinirmitām

"After Their snack, Lord Hari and His beloved recline on a couch of flowers. There two or three gopīs serve Them.

tāmbūla-vyajanais tatra
pāda-samvāhanādibhiḥ
sevyamāno bhṛśaṁ tābhiḥ
moditaḥ presayīṁ smaran

"Served by the gopīs who offer Him betelnuts, fan Him, and massage His feet, Lord Kṛṣṇa, His thoughts fixed on His beloved, becomes filled with happiness.

śrī-rādhāpi harau supte
sa-gaṇā muditāntarā
kānta-dattaṁ prīta-manā
ucchiṣṭaṁ bubhuje tataḥ

"As Lord Kṛṣṇa slept, Śrī Rādhā and Her associates happily ate the remnants of His meal.

kiñcid eva tato bhuktvā
vrajec chayyā-niketanam
draṣṭuṁ kānta-mukhāmbhojaṁ
cakorī-van niśākaram

"After eating, Śrī Rādhā went to the bed to gaze on Her beloved's lotus face as a cakorī bird gazes at the moon.

tāmbūla-carcitaṁ tasya
tatratyābhir niveditam
tāmbūlāny api cāśnāti
vibhajantī priyālīṣu

"The gopīs there gave Her the remnants of betelnuts chewed by Lord Kṛṣṇa. Some She chewed and some She gave to Her friends.

kṛṣṇo 'pi tāsāṁ śuśruṣūḥ
svacchanda-bhāṣitaṁ mithaḥ
prāpta-nidra ivābhāti
vinidro 'pi paṭāvṛtaḥ

"Eager to hear what the gopīs said, Lord Kṛṣṇa only pretended to be asleep as He lay under the covers.

tāś ca kṣvelīṁ kṣaṇaṁ kṛtvā
mithaḥ kānta-kathāśrayāḥ
vyāja-nidrāṁ harer jñātvā
kutaścid anumānataḥ

"As they playfully joked about their beloved Hari they could gradually understand that He was only pretending to sleep.

vimṛśya vadanaṁ dṛgbhiḥ
paśyantyo 'nyonyam ānanam
līnā iva lajjayā syuḥ
kṣaṇam ūcur na kiñcana

"Seeing the signs of wakefulness on Lord Kṛṣṇa's face, they looked at each other and suddenly became silent out of embarrassment.

kṣaṇād eva tato vastraṁ
dūrī-kṛtya tad-aṅgataḥ
sādhu-nidrāṁ gato 'sīti
hāsayantyo hasanti tam

"Suddenly pulling the blanket from His limbs and exclaiming, "My, You must have had a pleasant sleep!", they laughed and make Lord Kṛṣṇa laugh also.

evaṁ tau vividhair hāsai
ramamānau gaṇaiḥ saha
anubhūya kṣaṇaṁ nidrā-
sukhaṁ ca muni-sattama

"O best of sages, in this way the divine couple enjoyed a pleant nap and a host of happy joking words.

upaviśyāsane divye
sa-gaṇau viṣṭrte mudā
paṇī-kṛtya mitho hāra-
cumbāśleṣa-paricchadān

"Sitting on a splendid throne and surrounded by Their associates, the divine couple gamble at dice, with garlands, kisses, and embraces as the winner's prize.

akṣair vikrīḍataḥ premṇā
narmālāpaḥ puraḥ-saram
parājito 'pi priyayā
jitam ity avadan mṛśā

"Joking with words of love, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa gamble with dice. Defeated by His beloved, Lord Kṛṣṇa slowly pronounces, "I have lost."

hārādi-grahane tasyāḥ
pravṛttastāyate tayā
tathaivaṁ tāḍitaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ
karṇotpala-saroruhaiḥ

"Taking the necklace and other prizes, Śrī Rādhā struck Lord Kṛṣṇa with a lotus flower.

viṣaṇṇa-vadano bhūtvā
gata-sva iva nārada
jito 'smi ca tvayā devi
gṛhyatāṁ yat paṇī-kṛtam

"O Nārada, His unhappiness showing on His face, Lord Kṛṣṇa felt as if He had lost a great treasure. "O goddess, You have defeated Me", He said. "Please take the winner's prize."

cumbanādi mayā dattaṁ
ity uktvā ca tathācaret
kauṭilya-tad-bhruvo draṣṭuṁ
śrotuṁ tad-bhartsanaṁ vacaḥ

"To see Rādhā's crooked raised eyebrows and hear Her words of rebuke, Lord Kṛṣṇa declared, "Now I will give You the kiss and the other prizes." Then He gave Her all the prizes.

tataḥ śārī-śukānāṁ ca
śrutvā vāg-āhavaṁ mithaḥ

nirgacchatas tataḥ snānād
gantu-kāmau gṛhaṁ prati

"Then, hearing the parrots calling, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa bathed and decided to return to Their homes.

kṛṣṇaḥ kāntām anujñāpya
gavām abhimukhaṁ vrajet
sā tu sūrya-gṛhaṁ gacchet
sakhī-maṇḍala-samyutā

"Taking leave of His beloved, Lord Kṛṣṇa returns to the cows. Accomopanied by Her friends, Śrī Rādhā goes to the temple of the sun-god.

kiyad dūraṁ tato gatvā
parāvṛtya hariḥ punaḥ
vipra-veṣaṁ samāsthāpya
yāti sūrya-gṛhaṁ prati

"Lord Kṛṣṇa goes a short distance, disguises Himself as a brāhmaṇa, and then goes to the temple of the sun-god.

sūryaṁ ca pūjayet tatra
prārthitas tat-sakhī-janaiḥ
tadaiva kalpitair vedaiḥ
parihāsyāvagarbhitaiḥ

"Requested by the gopīs, the disguised Kṛṣṇa worships the sun-god. Lord Kṛṣṇa then recites a host of imaginary Vedic prayers, prayers made up on the spot and filled with a host of errors.

tatas tā api taṁ kāntaṁ
parijñāya vicakṣaṇāḥ
ānanda-sāgare līnā
na viduḥ svaṁ na cāparam

"Finally understanding that this person was their beloved Kṛṣṇa, the intelligent gopīs became plunged in an ocean of bliss. Intoxicated with bliss they did not know who they were or who anyone else was.

vihārair vividhair evaṁ
sārdhaṁ yāma-dvayaṁ mune
nitvā gṛhaṁ vrajeyus tāḥ
sa ca kṛṣṇo gavāṁ vrajet

"O sage, in this way the divine couple and Their associates passed six hours enjoying many pastimes. Finally the gopīs returned to their homes and Lord Kṛṣṇa returned to the cows."

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the afternoon pastimes?
Gosvāmī: It is said (Śrī Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā 263-270):

saṅgamya tu sakhīn kṛṣṇo
gṛhītvā gāḥ samantataḥ
āgacchati vrajaṁ karṣan
tatratyān muralī-ravaiḥ

"Meeting with His gopa friends, taking the cows with Him, and attracting everyone with the music of His flute, Lord Kṛṣṇa returned to Vraja Village.

tato nandādayaḥ sarve
śrutvā veṇu-ravaṁ hareḥ
go-dhūli-paṭalair vyāptaṁ
dṛṣṭvā cāpi nabha-sthalam

kṛṣṇasyābhimukhaṁ yānti
tad-darśana-samutsukāḥ

"Hearing the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute and seeing the sky filled with the dust raised by the cows, King Nanda and all the men, women, and children of Vraja stopped all they were doing and ran to see Kṛṣṇa.

radhikāpi samāgatya
gṛhe snātvā vibhūṣitā
sampadya kānta-bhogārthaṁ
bhakṣyāṇi vividhāni ca

sakhī-saṅgha-yutā yāti
kāntaṁ draṣṭuṁ samutsukāḥ

"Śrī Rādhā, bathed and decorated, came, bringing many delicious foods for Her beloved. She and Her friends were all eager to see Kṛṣṇa.

rāja-mārge vraja-dvāri
yatra sarve vrajaukasaḥ
kṛṣṇo 'py etān samāgamya
yathāvad anupūrvaśaḥ

"On the royal road at the entrance to Vraja Village Lord Kṛṣṇa met all the people of Vraja one after another.

darśanaiḥ sparśanair vāpi
smita-pūrva-vilokanaiḥ
gopa-vṛddhān namaskāraiḥ
kāyikair vācikair api

"He met them with embraces, glances, and smiling glances. He bowed before the elder gopas and He honored them with His words.

sāṣṭāṅga-pātaiḥ pitarau
rohiṇīm api nārada
sūtrānta-sūcitenaiva
vinayena priyās tathā

"O Śrī Nārada, Lord Kṛṣṇa prostrated His entire body to show respect to His parents and to Rohiṇī-devī. From the corner of His eye He shyly glanced at His gopī beloveds.

evaṁ taiś ca yathā yogyaṁ
vrajaukobhiḥ prapūjitaḥ
gavālayaṁ tathā gāś ca
sampraveśya samantataḥ

"Then, in the ways proper for each, all the people of Vraja worshiped Lord Kṛṣṇa. Then Lord Kṛṣṇa took the cows into the barn.

pitṛbhyām arthito yāti
mātrā saha nijālayam

snātvā pitvā tathā kiñcid
bhuktvā mātrānumoditaḥ

gavālayaṁ punar yāti
dogdhu-kāmo gavāṁ payaḥ

"Requested by His parents, Lord Kṛṣṇa went home with mother Yaśodā. Requested by her, He bathed and then He ate and drank, and then He went to milk the cows."

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the sunset pastimes?
Gosvāmī: It is said (Śrī Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā 271-272):

tāś ca dugdhvā dohayitvā
pāyayitvā ca kāścana
pitrā sārdhaṁ gṛhaṁ yāti
payo-bhāra-śatānugaḥ

"After milking some of the cows, having the other gopas milk the other cows, and allowing the calves to also drink some of the milk, Lord Kṛṣṇa, accompanied by His father and by servants carrying the milk, returned home.

tatrāpi mātṛ-vṛndaiś ca
tat-putraiś ca balaiḥ saha
sambhuṅkte vividhānnāni
carvya-cūṣyādikāni ca

"Then, accompanied by Lord Balarāma, the gopa boys, and the boys' mothers, Lord Kṛṣṇa ate a feast of many different kinds of foods, foods to be chewed, licked, or consumed in other ways."

Vijaya-kumāra: What are the evening pastimes?
Gosvāmī: It is said (Śrī Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā 273-277):

tan mātuḥ prārthanāt pūrvaṁ
rādhayāpi tadaiva hi
prasthāpyante sakhī-dvārā
pakvānnāni tad-ālayam

"On Mother Yaśodā's request, Śrī Rādhā and Her friends had cooked this feast.

ślāghayaṁś ca haris tāni
bhuktvā pitrādibhiḥ saha
sabhā-gṛhaṁ vrajet taiś ca
juṣṭaṁ vandi-janādibhiḥ

"After enjoying the feast in the company of His father and the others, Lord Kṛṣṇa praises in with many words. Then, accompanied by the poets ansd reciters, Lord Kṛṣṇa goes to the assembly-house.

pakvānnāni gṛhitvā yā
sakhyas tatra samāgatāḥ
bahūni ca punas tāni
pradattāni yaśodayā

"Then mother Yaśodā gave abundant remnants from the feast to the gopīs who had brought it in the first place.

sakhyā tatra tayā dattaṁ
kṛṣṇocchiṣṭaṁ tathā rahaḥ
sarvaṁ tābhiḥ samanīya
rādhikāyai nivedyate

"Mother Yaśodā gives them the remnants from Lord Kṛṣṇa's plate. The gopīs take it and in a secluded place present it before Śrī Rādhā.

sāpi bhuktvā sakhī-varga-
yutā tad-anupūrvaśaḥ
sakhībhir manditā tiṣṭhed
abhisartuṁ mudānvitā

"Then Śrī Rādhā and Her friends honor Lord Kṛṣṇa's remnants. Then, to prepare for Her meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa, the gopīs decorate joyful Rādhā."

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I yearn to hear the pastimes of night.
Gosvāmī: Śrī Vṛndā-devī described them in these words (Śrī Sanat-kumāra-saṁhitā 278-277):

prasthāpyate 'nayā kācid
ita eva tataḥ sakhī

tasyābhisāritā sātha
yamunāyāḥ samīpataḥ

"One of the gopīs has already made arrangements for Śrī Rādhā's secret meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa by the Yamunā's shore.

kalpa-vrkṣa-nikuñje 'smin
divya-ratna-maye gṛhe
sita-kṛṣṇa-niśā-yogya-
veṣā yāti sakhī-yutā

"Accompanied by Her friends and dressed in garments suitable for a bright or a dark night, Śrī Rādhā goes to a jewel palace in a kalpa-vṛkṣa grove.

kṛṣṇo 'pi vividhaṁ tatra
dṛṣṭvā kautūhalaṁ tataḥ
kavitvāni manojñāni
śrutvā ca gītakāny api

"Meanwhile Lord Kṛṣṇa saw many festive ceremonies and heard many beautiful poems and songs.

dhana-dhanyādis taṁś ca
prīṇayitvā vidhānataḥ
janair ākārito mātrā
yāti śayyā-niketanam

"Then Lord Kṛṣṇa pleases the artists and performers with many valuable gifts and then, called by His mother, He goes to bed.

mātari prasthitāyāṁ tu
bhojayitvā tato gṛhān
saṅketakaṁ kāntayātra
samāgacched alakṣitaḥ

"When, after giving Him a nighttime snack, mother Yaśodā left the bedroom, unseen by anyone, Lord Kṛṣṇa left His home and went to meet His beloved.

militvā tāv ubhāv atra
krīḍitau vanarājiṣu
vihārair vividhai rāsa-
lāsya-gīta-puraḥ-saraiḥ

"Meeting in the forest groves, Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa enjoy singing, dancing, and many other pastimes.

sārdha-yāma-dvayaṁ nitvā
rātrer evaṁ vihārataḥ
suṣupsur viśet kuñjaṁ
pañcaśābhir alakṣitaiḥ

"After enjoying pastimes for seven and a half hours of the night, Lord Kṛṣṇa becomes sleepy. Accompanied by five or six gopīs and unseen by the others, He enters another forest.

nirvṛnta-kusumaiḥ klpte
keli-talpe manohare
suptāvatiṣṭhāṁ tatra
sevyamānau priyālibhiḥ

"Served by Their dear gopī friends, the divine couple sleeps there on a beautiful pastime-bed made of unstemmed flowers.

O Vijaya-kumāra, These are the aṣṭa-kālīya pastimes. They have all the sāmagrīs (ingredients) of the rasas. All these pastimes have been described in the books of the ancient sages. In every time, place, and situation, you should meditate on these pastimes and engage in devotional service.

Hearing these pastimes, the learned paṇḍita Vijaya-kumāra became plunged into the nectar of ecstatic love. Streams of tears flowed from his eyes. The hairs of his body stood up. He spoke one or two broken words in a choked voice. He fell before Śrī Gopāla-guru's Gosvāmī's feet, offering obeisances for a long time. Then he rose up and slowly walked home. Day and night these words about the rasas stayed in his heart.

Chapter Thirty-nine

Līlā-praveśa-vicāra
Entering the Lord's Pastimes

Now Vijaya-kumāra was always eager to hear about these pastimes. He did not like to hear about anything else. When he went to see Lord Jagannātha, Vijaya-kumāra could not remain peaceful and composed. For many days now he had studied the rasas. He had learned about madhura-rasa, sthāyi-bhāva, vibhāva, anubhāva, sāttvika-bhāva, and vyabhicāri-bhāva. One by one, the different kinds of ecstatic love entered his heart. They would bring him great delight, and then they would go away. Some days passed in this way. He did not understand how the presence of ecstatic love had changed him. One day, with tears in his eyes, he fell down before his spiritual master's feet and said, “O master, by your mercy I have learned everything. However, I am not able to make spiritual advancement. I have not attained sthāyi-bhāva and I have not entered Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Please teach me what I should do." Seeing how his disciple was rapt in ecstatic love, Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī was very pleased. In his heart he thought, "Love for Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa-prema) is such that its happiness brings distress, and its distress brings happiness." Then he openly said, "I will tell you how to enter Lord Kṛṣṇas' pastimes."

Vijaya-kumāra: How can I enter them?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has revealed the way in these words (Manaḥ-śikṣā 2):

na dharmaṁ nādharmaṁ śruti-gaṇa-niruktaṁ kila kuru
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pracura-paricaryām iha tanuḥ
śacī-sūnuṁ nandīśvara-pati-sutatve guru-varaṁ
mukunda-preṣṭhatve smara padam ajasraṁ nanu manaḥ

"Mind, don't do the pious and impious deeds described in the Vedas. Intently serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Always remember that Lord Caitanya is Lord Kṛṣṇa, the son of Mahārāja Nanda and my spiritual master is most dear to Lord Mukunda."

Don't perform the pious and impious deeds described in the Vedas. Reject this part of the Vedas and instead earnestly engage in rāgānuga-bhakti. Again and again serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Serve the Lord according to the rasas of Vraja. If you ask, "Who will teach me how to serve the Lord according to the rasas of Vraja?", then I will tell you. Please listen. Śrīdhāma Navadvipa, where Lord Caitanya appeared in Saci-devi's womb, is a manifestation of Vrndavana. Lord Caitanya is Kṛṣṇa Himself, Kṛṣṇa the son of Nandisvara's king. Lord Caitanya is not different from Kṛṣṇa. Thinking that Lord Kṛṣṇa has descended to Navadvipa to enjoy pastimes as Lord Caitanya, one should not reject the worship of Lord Kṛṣṇa as the amorous hero of Vraja and instead worship Lord Caitanya as the amorous hero of the young girls in Navadvīpa. Lord Caitanya is Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself. Still,

one should not criticize the devotees who worship Him with different mantras and meditate on Him separately. In the path of the rasas one should worship only Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of Rādhā, and Lord Caitanya one shoul worship as the spiritual master of the rasas of Vraja. One should meditate on Lord Caitanya's pastimes and on Lord Kṛṣṇa's aṣṭa-kālīya pastimes. One should not think that one's spiritual master is not a sakhī or a yūtheśvarī in Vraja. By worshiping in this way one will be able to enter Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I understand that one should reject other scriptures and other paths, worship Lord Caitanya, and serve one's spiritualmaster, aware that the spiritual master is a sakhī in Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. How can one make his heart steady and determined to follow this path?

Gosvāmī: Two things should be understood: 1. upāsaka-pariṣkṛti (the worshiper), and 2. upāsya-pariṣkṛti (the object of worship). You have learned about the rasas. Therefore you have learned about upāsya-pariṣkṛti. The upāsaka-pariṣkṛti has eleven bhāvas. Almost all of them you have already learned. Only one remains for your to learn.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe these eleven bhāvas.

Gosvāmī: These eleven bhavas are: 1. sambandha (relationship), 2. vayasa (age), 3. nāma (name), 4. rūpa (form), 5. yūtha (group), 6. veśa (garemnts), 7. ājñā (command), 8. vāsa (residence), 9. sevā (service), 10. parākāṣṭhāśvāsa (highest aspiration), and 11. pālya-dāsī-bhāva (the nature of a maidservant).

Vijaya-kumāra: What is sambandha?

Gosvāmī: Sambandha is the foundation of spiritual attainments. When one has a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, then thr bhavas are manifested. The final goal one attains is based on that relationship. Souls who address Kṛṣṇa as "master" become servants of Kṛṣṇa. Souls who address Kṛṣṇa as “friend" become friends of Kṛṣṇa. Souls who address Kṛṣṇa as "son" become the mother or father of Kṛṣṇa. Souls who address Kṛṣṇa as "husband" become queens at Dvārakā. In Vraja there is no śānta-rasa, and dāsya-rasa is curtailed. Each devotee attains a relationship according to his own natural inclination. You are naturally attracted to parakīya-rasa. Therefore you are a follower of Vraja's queen. In your relationship you say, "I am a maidservant of Śrī Rādhā's maidservant. Śrī is the controller of my life. Kṛṣṇa is the controller of Rādhā's life, and therefore Kṛṣṇa, the beloved of Rādhā, is the controller of my life also."

Vijaya-kumāra: I have heard that the great ācārya Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī preferred svakīya-rasa. Is that true?

Gosvāmī: Not one of the true followers of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected the pure parakīya-rasa. Who can be a better teacher of this rasa than Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī? He taught the truth of the pure parakīya-rasa. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī all accepted his teachings in this matter. In his own personal devotional service Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī did not accept svakīya-rasa. However, he did explain that even in Vraja some devotees manifest a scent of svakīya-rasa. When samartha-rati carries a scent of samañjasā-rati, then svakīya-rasa is present in Vraja. Therefore, when a slight sense of svakīya-rasa is present, the devotee may be called a worshiper in svakīya-rasa. Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī had two kinds of disciples. One group of his disciples was situated in pure parakīya-rasa. Another group of his disciples was situated in

parakīya-rasa mixed with svakīya-rasa. According to the different inclinations of his different disciples, he gave different appropriate instructions. This he clearly explained when he wrote the words:

svecchayā likhitaṁ kiñcit

"What I have written is appropriate for devotees who are inclined in a certain way."

Vijaya-kumāra: Now I clearly understand that the pure Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy teaches the pure parakīya-rasa. Now that I understand sambandha, please describe vayasa.

Gosvāmī: When you attain your relationship with Kṛṣṇa, you will have a wonderful form. In your case it will be the form of a beautiful girl in Vraja. That form will be manifested in a specific age appropriate to your service. The age from ten to sixteen years is called "kaiśora". That is generally the appropriate age in this situation. Therefore in your spiritual form your age begins at ten and, as you make advancement in service, increases up to the age of sixteen. That is called "vayaḥ-sandhi". Bālya (childhood), paugaṇḍa (pre-adolescence), and vṛddha (old age) do not exist among the beautiful girls of Vraja. Therefore you should know that your spiritual form is situated in the kaiśora age.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, What is nāma? I have already received a name. Please clearly explain "name" to me.

Gosvāmī: You naturally become the follower of a maidservant-friend of Śrī Rādhā. That friend's name is your name. Examining your nature, your spiritual master gives you a name. Pleas know that is your name eternally. The beautiful girls of Vraja will delight in addressing you by that name.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, please explain rūpa.

Gosvāmī: Your spiritual master reveals to you the nature of the beautiful and youthful kaiśora-age form that, according to your own inlcination, is your own form.You have an inconceivable beautiful spiritual form. If that were not so, then how could you be a maidservant of Śrī Rādhā?

Vijaya-kumāra: Please clearly describe "yūtha".

Gosvāmī: Śrī Rādhā is your yūtheśvarī. You belong to a gaṇa (sub-group) presided over by one of Śrī Rādhā's eight closest friends (aṣṭa-sakhī).Your spiritual master has placed you in Lalitā's gaṇa. Therefore, following Lalitā's orders you will serve your yūtheśvari (Śrī Rādhā) and playful Lord Kṛṣṇa, who enjoys pastimes with Her.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, who are the devotees that follow Candrāvalī as their yūtheśvarī?

Gosvāmī: After many births a soul will become a fortunate and desire to be the follower of a yūtheśvarī. A soul who has all good fortune enters the group led by Śrī Rādhā. The gopīs led by Candrāvalī strive to increase the bliss that Śrī Rādhā and Lord Kṛṣṇa enjoy in Their pastimes. Therefore the rival groups, called pakṣa and vipakṣa, make the taste of rasa sweeter. In truth Śrī Rādhā is the only real yūtheśvarī. Because She enjoys wonderful pastimes with Kṛṣṇa, She is glorious,

and a soul who serves Her becomes glorious also.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please explain veśa.

Gosvāmī: You spiritual master describes to you your garments, personal qualities, and the skills you have to perform various kinds of service.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe "ājñā".

Gosvāmī: Ajñās are of two kinds: 1. nitya (regular) , and 2. naimittika (occasional). A merciful sakhī orders you to engage in a certain regular (nitya) service. This service you should diligently execute during the eight periods of the day. Any other service she may give to you is naimittika service. That also you should execute diligently.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is vāsa?

Gosvāmī: Your eternal residence in Vraja is called “vāsa".

Vijaya-kumāra: You will take birth as a certain gopī in a certain village within the land of Vraja. Within that village you will be married to a certain gopa. However, you will be attracted by the sound of Kṛṣṇa's flute. You will be the follower of a certain sakhī. Her cottage at Rādhā-kuṇḍa will be your residence also. In this way your eternal nature is situated in parakīya-rasa.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe "sevā".

Gosvāmī: You are a follower of Śrī Rādhā. Your service is to serve Her. If, when she sends you with a message, and you meet Kṛṣṇa in a secluded place, Kṛṣṇa expresses His love for you and proposes that you enjoy with Him, you should not accept His proposal. You are Rādhā's maidservant, and without Her permission you cannot serve Kṛṣṇa. You are not independent. Although you love Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa both, your love and service to Rādhā is more important to you than your love and service to Kṛṣṇa. That is the explanation of the word "sevā". Your service is to serve Śrī Rādhā throughout the eight periods of the day. Following the descriptions in Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara's Kaḍacā (notebook), Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī describes these services in his poem Vilāpa-kusumāñjali.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is "parākāṣṭhāśvāsa"?

Gosvāmī: In the following two verses (Vilāpa-kusumāñjali 102 and 100), Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī describes parākāṣṭhāśvāsa:

āśā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayāti-gamitaḥ kila sāmprataṁ hi
tvaṁ cet kṛpāṁ mayi vidhāyasi naiva kiṁ me
prāṇair vrajena ca varoru bakāriṇāpi

"O Rādhā, for me somehow the present moment is flooded by a nectar ocean of many hopes. If You do not give Your mercy, then of what use to me are this life, the land of Vraja, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Baka?"

he nātha gokula-sudhākara su-prasanna-
vaktrāravinda madhura-smita he kṛpārdra
yatra tvayā viharate praṇayaiḥ priyārāt
tatraiva mām api naya priya-sevanāya

"O Lord Kṛṣṇa, O nectar moon of Gokula, O Lord whose cheerful face is a lotus flower, O sweetlly smiling one, O Lord melting with compassion, so I may serve You both with love please lead me to the place where Your beloved enjoys loving pastimes with You."

Vijaya-kumāra: Please descrive "pālya-dāsī-bhāva".

Gosvāmī: In the following words of Vraja-vilāsa-stava (text 29), Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī describes pālya-dāsī-bhāva:

sāndra-prema-rasaiḥ plutā priyatayā prāgalbhyam āptā tayoḥ
prāṇa-preṣṭha-vayasyayor anudinaṁ līlābhisāraṁ kramaiḥ
vaidagdhyena tathā sakhīṁ prati sadā mānasya śikṣāṁ rasair
yeyaṁ kārayatīha hanta lalitā gṛhṇātu sā māṁ gaṇaiḥ

"Flooded with the nectar of intense love for her two friends (Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa), who are more dear to her than her own life, affectionately arrogant in Their presence, and daily arranging for Their rendezvous, Lalitā-devī expertly teaches her friend Rādhā the art of jealous anger. I pray Lalitā-dev.i will one day accept me as one of her associates."

Vijaya-kumāra: How should such a pālya-dāsī (maidservant) act in relation to the other gopīs who are companions of Śrī Lalitā?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī studied all the rasa-śāstras under Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī. Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has written (Vraja-vilāsa-stava, text 38):

tāmbūlārpaṇa-pāda-mardana-payo-dānābhisārādibhir
vṛndāraṇya-maheśvarīṁ priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāḥ
prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhī-kulād api kilāsaṅkocitā bhūmikāḥ
keli-bhūmiṣu rūpa-mañjari-mukhās tā dāsikā saṁśraye

"By offering Her betel nuts, by massaging Her feet, by bringing Her water, by arranging for Her secret meeting with Lord Kṛṣṇa, and by performing many other services, many gopī maidservants affectionately please Śrī Rādhā, the great queen of Vṛndāvana forest. When the divine couple enjoy Their pastimes, these maidservants are not at all shy, even in the presence of the great gopīs for whom Śrī Rādhā is more dear than life. I take shelter of these gopī maidservants, who have Śrīmatī Rūpa-mañjarī as their leader."

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the other prominent sakhīs?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī gives this hint about their nature (Vraja-vilāsa-stava, text 30):

praṇaya-lalita-narma-sphāra-bhūmis tayor vā
vraja-pura-nava-yūnor yā ca kaṇṭhān pikānām
nayati param adhastād divya-gānena tuṣṭyā
prathayatu mama dīkṣāṁ hanta seyāṁ viśākhā

"Viśākhā-devī is the place where the youthful divine couple enjoys affectionate and playful joking pastimes. Her sweet transcendental singing eclipses the voices of the cuckoos. I pray that Viśākhā-devī may become pleased with me and accept me as her student."

Vijaya-kumāra: What is the nature of the vipakṣa (rival) gopīs?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī describes them. Please here his description (Vraja-vilāsa-stava, text 41):

sāpatnyoccaya-rājyad-ujjvala-rasasyoccaiḥ samudvṛddhaye
saubhāgyodbhaṭa-garva-vibhrama-bhṛtaḥ śrī-rādhikāyāḥ sphuṭam
govindaḥ smara-phulla-ballava-vadhū-vargeṇa yena kṣaṇaṁ
krīḍaty eṣa tam atra vistṛta-mahā-puṇyaṁ ca vandāmahe

"In order to increase the splendid and nectarean jealous love of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, who sometimes becomes proud of Her own good fortune, Lord Kṛṣṇa briefly enjoys pastimes with other gopīs, who blossom with many amorous desires. Let us offer our respectful obeisances to these gopīs, who must have performed many great pious activities in their previous births in order to play this role in the Lord's pastimes."

That is how you should think about the rival groups of gopīs (pakṣa and vipakṣa). However, when you are serving the Lord directly in the spiritual world, there may be a situation where mocking gopī rivals is appropriate. This direct service in the spiritual world is described in Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali. The proper way to relate to the other liberated associates of the Lord is described in Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Śrī Vraja-vilāsa-stava. The divine couple's pastimes are seen in Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Śrī Viśākhānandābhidhā-stotra and other prayers. You should see the aṣṭa-kālīya pastimes in those poems. The proper method of worship (paddhati) is seen in Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā. By following that method of worship you will become rapt in meditation on the divine couple's pastimes. Ecstatic love (bhāva) is seen in Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Sva-niyama-daśaka. You should carefully observe the vows described in that poem. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī described the rasas in his books. Lord Caitanya gave that task to him. However, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī did not describe how an aspiring devotee can enter into these rasas. That Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, following the teachings in Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara's Kaḍacā, described. Lord Caitanya gave these specific tasks to

these devotees, and they all followed His order.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe the tasks Lord Mahāprabhu ordered these devotees to perform.

Gosvāmī: The Lord ordered Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī to describe the method of worship according to the rasas. Following that order, Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī wrote his Kaḍacā, which is divided into two parts, one part describing the internal path (antaḥ-panthā) of worship according to the rasas, and the other part describing the external path (bahiḥ-panthā) of worship according to the rasas. The internal path he placed around the neck of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, who described that path in his writings. The external path Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī gave to Śrīla Vakreśvara Paṇḍita. That teaching is the great treasure of this temple. That treasure I have given to Śrīla Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī, and he has written that treasure into a book. You already have a copy of that book. Lord Mahāprabhu ordered Lord Nityānanda and Lord Advaita to preach the glories of the holy name, and He also gave Them the power to do it. Lord Mahāprabhu gave Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī the order to write books about the rasas, and He also gave him the power to do it. Lord Mahāprabhu gave Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī the order to write about vaidhi-bhakti and the relationship between vaidhi-bhakti and rāga-bhakti. The Lord also gave Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī the order to write about the Lord's prakaṭa and aprakaṭa pastimes in Gokula. Lord Nityānanada Prabhu and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī gave Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī the order to write books about sambandha, abhidheya, and prayojana, and they also gave him the power to do it. All of these great devotees fulfilled the orders they were given.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what task was given to Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya?

Gosvāmī: Lord Mahāprabhu gave Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya the task of expanding the rasas. Śrīla Rāmānanda Rāya used Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as his instrument in fulfilling this task.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what task was given to Śrīla Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya?

Gosvāmī: To Śrīla Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya He gave the task of explaining philosophy. Śrīla Sārvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya executed that task by having one of his disciples teach Śrīla Jiva Gosvāmī.

Vijaya-kumāra: What task did the Lord give to the great devotees in Bengal?

Gosvāmī: To the great devotees in Bengal the Lord gave the task of teaching the truth about Lord Caitanya and showing the people how to have faith in Lord Caitanya's descriptions of Kṛṣṇa-rasa. These devotees fulfilled that order by writing many books glorifying the rasas.

Vijaya-kumāra: What task was given to Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī?

Gosvāmī: To him was given the task of preaching the glories of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam.

Vijaya-kumāra: What task was given to Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī?

Gosvāmī: To Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī was given the task of stopping perverted misinterpretations of pure śṛṅgāra-rasa and also stopping the tendency not to have faith in vadhi-bhakti.

Vijaya-kumāra: Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī was the uncle and spiritual master of Śrīla Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī. What task was given to him?

Gosvāmī: To Śrīla Prabodhānanda Sarasvatī was given the task of showing the

world that the path of the rasas and anubhāvas in Vraja is the highest of all paths.

Hearing all this, Vijaya-kumāra thought himself very fortunate.

Chapter Forty
Sampatti-vicāra
The Greatest Good Fortune

Vijaya-kumāra decided that by hearing about the Lord's pastimes in Vraja, one gradually attains the greatest good fortune. Thinking in this way, he posed a question.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, I would like to know how may stages there are between first hearing about the Lord and finally attaining the greatest good fortune.

Gosvāmī: There are five stages: 1. śravaṇa-daśā (hearing), 2. varaṇa-daśā (desiring), 3. smaraṇa-daśā (remembering), 4. bhāvāpana-daśā (attaining ecstasy), and 5. prema-sampatti-daśā (the greatest good fortune of spiritual love).

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe śravaṇa-daśā.

Gosvāmī: When he attains faith in hearing about Kṛṣṇa (Kṛṣṇa-kathā), a soul throws materialism (bahirmukha-daśā) far away. In that stage the soul yearns to hear about Kṛṣṇa. Such a soul intently hears about Kṛṣṇa from an exalted devotee. This is described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (4.29.40):

tasmin mahan-mukharitā madhubhic-caritra-
pīyūṣa-śeṣa-saritaḥ paritaḥ sravanti
tā ye pibanty avitṛṣo nṛpa gāḍha-karṇais
tān na spṛśanty aśana-tṛd-bhaya-śoka-mohaḥ

"My dear king, in the place where pure devotees live, following the rules and regulations and thus purely conscious and engaged with great eagerness in hearing and chanting the glories of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in that place if one gets a chance to hear their constant flow of nectar, which is exactly like the waves of a river, one will forget the necessities of lifenamely hunger and thirstand become immune to all kinds of fear, lamentation, and illusion."*

Vijaya-kumāra: Sometimes the people hear about Kṛṣṇa from materialists. What is the result of that hearing.

Gosvāmī: One may hear about Kṛṣṇa from a materialist, or one may hear about

Kṛṣṇa from a devotee. These two kinds of hearing are different in many ways. By hearing about Kṛṣṇa from a materialist, the hearer does not gradually attain faith. On the other hand, by hearing about Kṛṣṇa from a devotee eager to engage in devotional service, the hearer attains spiritual piety. In some future birth spiritual faith will rise within him. When he attains this faith, a soul is eager to hear the glories of Kṛṣṇa only from the mouths of great devotees. This stage is called "śravaṇa-daśā". Śravaṇa-daśā is of two kinds: 1. krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā, and 2. krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is krama-hīna-śravaṇa-daśā?

Gosvāmī: When the hearing is done without determination, and when it does not touch Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, it is called “krama-hīna". If there is no touch of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, the rasas will not become manifested.

Vijaya-kumāra: What is krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā?

Gosvāmī: When hearing is done with great determination, and when it touches on Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes, then the rasas will become manifested. Hearign about Lord Kṛṣṇa's aṣta-kālīya nitya-līlā (regular pastimes in the eight periods of the day) and His birth pastime and other naimittika-līlā (occasional pastimes) is called "krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā". To properly engage in devotional service one must perform krama-śuddha-śravaṇa. By again and again engaging in krama-śuddha-śravaṇa-daśā and hearing the Lord's pastimes, one perceives how sweet the Lord's pastimes are. At that time the activities of raganuga-bhakti rise in the heart of the hearer. Then the hearer thinks in his heart, "Aha! Subala has such wonderful ecstatic love! I should serve Kṛṣṇa in sakhya-rasa, as Subala does." This kind of activity is called "lobha" (greedy desire). To thus worship Kṛṣṇa by greedily following the liberated residents of Vraja is called "rāgānuga-bhakti". I have given an example in sakhya-rasa. Rāgānuga-bhakti exists in the four rasas that begin with dāsya-rasa. By the mercy of Lord Caitanya, who is the master of our lives, you have become qualified for śṛṅgāra-rasa. Seeing the beautiful gopīs of Vraja, you have yearned to become like them. That yearning will lead you to the path of fulfilling that yearning. In truth, this is revealed in the conversation of the spiritual master and the disciple. That is śravaṇa-daśā.

Vijaya-kumāra: How does one attain the perfection of śravaṇa-daśā?

Gosvāmī: When one understands that Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are eternal, and when one declares that they are pure and spiritual, one's heart will become enchanted by them. Then one will become agitated with an intense desire to enter those pastimes. When he sees that the disciple is qualified, the spiritual master will show him the eleven bhāvas described in the scriptures. When the disciple's heart is passionately devoted to the Lord's pastimes, that is the perfection of śravaṇa-daśā. When he is greatly agitated in this way, the disciple attains varaṇa-daśā.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, what is varaṇa-daśā?

Gosvāmī: Bound with the shackles of the eleven bhāvas, the heart becomes passionately attached to the Lord's pastimes. Weeping, the disciple falls before his spiritual master's feet. Then the spiritual master's original form as a sakhī is manifested and the disciple manifests his original form as a gopī maidservant. This disciple is agitated to enagge in devotional service as a gopī. By serving the spiritual master, the disciple attains the supreme goal of his life and becomes a beautiful girl in Vraja. The disciple speaks these words (Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī's Śrī Premāmbhoja-marandākhya-stava-rāja 11-12):

tvāṁ natvā yācate dhṛtvā
tṛṇaṁ dantair ayaṁ janaḥ
svādasyāmṛta-sekena
jīvayāmuṁ su-duḥkhitam

"Taking a straw in his mouth, this person offers respectful obeisances unto you. This person is very unhappy. Please bring him to life by sprinkling him with the nectar of service to you.

na muñcec charaṇāyātaṁ
api duṣṭaṁ dayāmayaḥ
ato rādhālike hā hā
muñcainaṁ naiva tādṛśam

"O gopī friend of Śrī Rādhā, as merciful Lord Kṛṣṇa never rejects a surrendered soul, even a soul who has performed many misdeeds, in the same way I request that you please do not reject a person like me."

This state is called "varaṇa-daśā". Then, in his form as a sakhī, the spiritual master gives to his disciple residence in Vraja and orders him to take shelter of Lord Kṛṣṇa's holy name and meditate on Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. Then the spiritual master gives encouragement, saying, "Soon you will attain what your heart desires."

Vijaya-kumāra: What is smaraṇa-daśā?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī gives this description (Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.2.150-152):

kṛṣṇaṁ smaran janaṁ cāsya
preṣṭhaṁ nija-samīhitam
tat-tat-kathā-rataś cāsau
kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā

"Always meditating on Kṛṣṇa as the object of one's love, and always engaged in hearing and chanting His glories, a devotee should always live in the land of Vraja.

sevā sādhaka-rūpeṇa
siddha-rūpeṇa cātra hi
tad-bhāva-lipsunā kāryā
vraja-lokānusārataḥ

"Desiring to become like them, the sadhaka and siddha devotees should follow in the footsteps of the liberated residents of Vraja.

śravaṇotkīrtanādīni
vaidha-bhakty-uditāni tu
yāny aṅgāni ca tāny atra
vijñeyāni manīṣibhiḥ

"In this way the wise understand the activities of vaidhi-bhakti, which begin with hearing and chanting."

After hearing these two verses, Vijaya-kumāra asked, “What do the words `kuryād vāsaṁ vraje sadā' (a devotee should always live in the land of Vraja) mean?

Gosvāmī: Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī explains "To place one's body in the circle of Vraja means to place it is the circle of the Lord's pastimes. If one is not able to place his physical body in Vraja, one can meditate on living in Vraja. By this meditation one attains the final goal. Then one becomes the follower of a particular sakhī. one serves that sakhī in the forest, and one always meditates on that sakhī and her particular kind of love for Lord Kṛṣṇa. Thus you should engage your gross material body in the activities of vaidhi-bhakti, which begin with hearing and chanting and also, with the eleven bhāvas, you should meditate on the the pastimes of a liberated sakhī is Vraja. In this way you should engage in devotional service. Thus you should engage your material body in the activities of vaidhi-bhakti. When your spiritual body becomes manifest, you will become averse to all that is not related to Vraja.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please clearly describe this path.

Gosvāmī: The word "vraja-vāsa" means "to avoid the company of materialists". One should chant a certain prescribed number of holy names of Lord Hari and also meditate on the Lord's aṣṭa-kālīya pastimes. Do not think of your material body as an enemy. Rather, use it and all in relationship with it in favorable service to the Lord.

Vijaya-kumāra: (after deep thought) O master, these descriptions are very pleasing to my heart. How can I make my heart determined to follow this path?

Gosvāmī: When it attains raganuga-bhakti, the heart will be determined. And why not? If there is even a slight scent of raganuga-bhakti, then one will be inclined to Vraja. Then one will not longer be attracted to material things. If you are worried that you will stray from the path, then at first proceed gradually. When you become steady you will not be able to stray from the path.

Vijaya-kumāra: Please describe this gradual path.

Gosvāmī: Every day, for a certain amount of time, one should, avoiding all material interruptions, chant the holy name with sincere love. The time spent in this way should be gradually increased. When one finally spends all his time in

this way, he will attain very wonderful love for the Lord. At that time one will dread any external thing that may come to interrupt these activities.

Vijaya-kumāra: For how many days should one practice in this way?

Gosvāmī: Until, one is free from all material obstacles, or until material obstacles no longer arise in one's meditation.

Vijaya-kumāra: What does it mean "to remember the holy name with love"? Please clearly explain.

Gosvāmī: In the beginning one joyfully chants the holy name. That joy leads one to think, "the holy name is mine". From that feeling of possessiveness one attains love for the holy name. Gradually pure ecstatic love (bhāva) becomes manifested. This is called "bhāvāpana-daśā". At the stage of smaraṇa-daśā, love is merely an external imposition. However, in the stage of bhāvāpana-daśā genuine, pure love is manifested. In this way the devotee finally attains prema, the highest love. This is called "upāsaka-niṣṭha". There is also another path, which is called "upāsya-niṣṭha".

Vijaya-kumāra: What is upāsya-niṣṭha?

Gosvāmī: If one wholeheartedly yearns to attain prema, he should honor this advice given by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī (Manaḥ-śikṣā, text 3):

yadīccher āvāsaṁ vraja-bhuvi sa-rāgaṁ prati-janur
yuva-dvandvaṁ tac cet paricaritum ārād abhilaṣe
svarūpaṁ śrī-rūpaṁ sa-gaṇam iha tasyāgrajam api
sphuṭaṁ premṇā nityaṁ smara nama tadā tvaṁ śṛṇu manaḥ

"Mind, listen to me! If you desire to reside in Vraja birth after birth, and if you desire to directly serve the youthful divine couple, then with great love always remember and bow down before Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, his elder brother, Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, and all their associates and followers."

Vijaya-kumāra: How does one gradually become purified by meditating on the Lord's aṣṭa-kālīya pastimes?

Gosvāmī: Please consider what Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has said (Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi, Gauṇa-sambhoga-prakaraṇa) about the great wonder of the rasas manifested in the Lord's aṣṭa-kālīya pastimes:

atulatvād apāratvād
āpto 'sau durvigāhatam
spṛṣṭaṁ paraṁ taṭa-sthena
rasābdhi-madhuro mayā

"Because it is shoreless, peerless, and unfathomable, I merely stand on the shore of the ocean of rasa and touch only one drop of its sweetness."

Why should this not be so? The ocean of rasa is spirtiual, wonderful, all-pervading, and shoreless. If one tries to describe that spiritual ocean of rasa with words, his words will inevitably be both impure and incomplete. Even if the Supreme Lord Himself describes it, the hearers and readers, still bearing the faults that the material world impresses on them, will not be able to understand it perfectly. Therefore, because the ocean of rasa cannot be fathomed, one can merely stand at its shore and understand only a single drop of it.

Vijaya-kumāra: O master, if this is so, then how can I have any conception at all of the spiritual rasas?

Gosvāmī: the madhura-rasa is shoreless, peerless, and unfathomable. Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes are like that. However, Lord Kṛṣṇa has two transcendental qualities that give us hope.: He is all-powerful, and He can do whatever He likes. Therefore, even though the ocean of rasa is peerless, shoreless, and unfathomable, Lord Kṛṣṇa can shrink it so that it fits within the material world. The material world is indeed a very small place. Still, if Kṛṣṇa wishes He can bring His supremely glorious rasas to the small and insignificant material world. In this way He mercifully descends to the material world and He takes His spiritual and eternal rasas and pastimes with Him. When He descends to the material world, he brings with Him His own spiritual world of Mathura-mandala, which is beyond the touch of matter. One cannot ask how the Lord does all this. Why not? All this is down by His inconceivable potency. Even the demigods and other exalted beings are not intelligent enough to understand how it is done. In this way the Lord manifested His Vraja pastimes, which are the best of all pastimes, and which are beyond the touch of matter. I do not lament merely because I cannot understand them perfectly or completely.

Vijaya-kumāra: If the Lord's prakaṭa (manifested) and aprakaṭa (unmanifested) pastimes are the same pastimes, then why are the aprakaṭa pastimes considered superior?

Gosvāmī: These two kinds of pastimes are identical. Of this there is no doubt. They are both perfect, complete, glorious, and beyond the touch of matter. However, the prakaṭa pastimes can be seen and remembered by conditioned souls imprisoned in the material world, but the aprakaṭa pastimes can be.seen only by purified souls who are mature in devotional service and who have attained the stage of bhāvāpana-daśā.

O Vijaya-kumāra, to you I can disclose this secret. And why not? You are qualified to hear it. By practicing smarana-dasa for a long time, one eventually become qualified for bhavapana-dasa. During smaraṇa-daśā one begins to become cleansed of material contamination, but that cleansing is not complete until one attains bhāvāpana-daśā. By following smaraṇa-daśā one attains pure sādhana-bhakti. In this way, by the Lord's mercy, pure devotional service is manifested in the devotee's heart. That pure devotion attracts Kṛṣṇa. In this way, by Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy, the devotee advances beyond smaraṇa-daśā. This is described by teh Supreme Lord Himself in these words (Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 11.14.26):

yathā yathātmā parimṛjyate 'sau
mat-puṇya-gāthā-śravaṇābhidhānaiḥ

tathā tathā paśyati vastu sūkṣmaṁ
cakṣur yathaivāñjana-samprayuktam

"When a diseased eye is treated with medicinal ointment it gradually recovers its power to see. Similarly, as a conscious living entity cleanses himself of material contamination by hearing and chanting the pious narrations of My glories, he regains his ability to see Me, the Absolute Truth, in My subtle spiritual form."***

This is also described in the following words of Brahma-saṁhitā (5.38):

premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti
yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

"I worship the primeval Lord, Govinda, who is always seen by the devotee whose eyes are anointed with the pulp of love. He is seen in His eternal form of Śyāmasundara, situated within the heart of the devotee."*

A person who has attained the stage of bhavapana-dasa attains spiritual vision and thus can see his spiritual master as a sakhī and yūtheśvarī. He can also see Lord Kṛṣṇa, the master of Goloka. Still, until his liṅga-śarīra (subtle material body) is at last dissolved, he does not attain sampatti-daśā (the greatest good fortune) and he does not see Kṛṣṇa at every moment. When he attains bhavapana-dasa, the pure soul has complete control over his gross and subtle material bodies. However, only when he attains Lord Kṛṣṇa's complete and full mercy will the soul attain the final spiritual goal, where the soul completely breaks off all relationship with the material world of five elements. Bhāvāpana-daśā is also called "svarūpa-siddhi", and sampatti-daśā is also called "vastu-siddhi".

Vijaya-kumāra: When one attains vastu-siddhi, in what way will he see Lord Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities, pastimes, and abode?

Gosvāmī: I cannot answer. When I myself attain vastu-siddhi, I will be able to see and tell. When you attain sampatti-daśā, you will certainly be able to understand. You will understand without any struggle. And why not? You will see it all before your eyes. You will not need to ask questions. Even what the soul sees at the stage of svarūpa-siddhi or bhāvāpana-daśā an ordinary person cannot understand. And why not? even if he hears a person in bhāvāpana-daśā describe what he sees, an ordinary person will not understand the description. The nature of a soul situated in svarūpa-siddhi is described by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in these words (Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.3.29 and 1.4.12):

jane cej jāta-bhāve 'pi
vaiguṇyam iva dṛśyate

kāryā tathāpi nāsūyā
kṛtārthaḥ sarvathaiva saḥ

"If a person is completely detached from material enjoyment and has developed pure ecstatic devotion, even if he is sometimes accidentally found not living up to the standard of devotional service, one should not be envious of him."*

dhanyasyāyaṁ navaḥ premā
yasyonmīlati cetasi
antarvāṇibhir apy asya
mudrā suṣṭhu su-durgamā

"Only the most fortunate persons can achieve such success in life. Those who are simply academic students of the Vedic scriptures cannot appreciate how such a development takes place."*

Vijaya-kumāra: If this is so, then why do the Brahma-saṁhitā and other scriptures try to describe the world of Goloka?

Gosvāmī: When by the Lord's mercy they attain the stage of svarupa-siddhi, Brahmā and the demigods speak many prayers to describe what they have seen. However, ordinary persons who are less spiritually advanced cannot understand these prayers very well. Still, there is no need for the devotees to understand all these points. By Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy His prakata pastimes are manifested, and you can worship Him. By doing that you will attain all perfection. Within a short time you will attain great spiritual faith, and then the spiritual world of Goloka will be manifested before you. Gokula is the same as Goloka. And why not? Gokula and Goloka are not different places. That spiritual realm is not seen by the eyes of materialists. Materialists do not attain the stage of svarupa-siddhi. Only persons who are qualified can see these spiritual truths. Please Kṛṣṇa by engaging in His devotional service. Follow Kṛṣṇa's commands. By following Kṛṣṇa's commands, you will gradually attain His mercy. Then your vision will be pure and perfect.

Vijaya-kumāra had no longer any doubts. He followed the eleven bhāvas. He meditated on Lord Kṛṣṇa's handsome form and pastimes. Staying in a cottage by the seashore, he always tasted the sweetness of pure spiritual love (prema). Meanwhile, Vrajanātha's mother fell sick with cholera and died. Vrajanātha and his grandmother returned home. In Vrajanātha's pure heart was manifested pure love (prema) in sakhya-rasa. He passed his days staying among the Vaiṣṇavas by the Ganges shore at Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa. Vijaya-kumāra renounced household life and accepted the kaupīna of a sannyāsī. He lived by taking a little mahā-prasādam he obtained by mādhukarī begging. During the eight periods of the day he meditated on Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. At night he briefly slept. He honored a little prasādam. While he was awake he served the divine couple in ways appropriate to the particular time of day. On japa beads he always chanted the holy names of Lord Hari. Sometimes he danced, sometimes he wept, and sometimes he smiled to

see the waves in the ocean. Who can understand the symptoms of his devotional life? He accepted the name Nimāi dāsa Bābājī. He would neither hear nor speak gossip. He was very humble. His actions were pure. He was fixed in devotional service. When someone offered him mahā-prasādam or cloth for his kaupīna, he accepted only what he actually needed. He never accepted any more than that. When he chanted the holy names of Lord Hari tears would stream from his eyes, his voice would become choked, and the hairs of his body would stand erect. After only a few days he became perfect in devotional service. He obtained Lord Kṛṣṇa's mercy, and thus he became qualified to enter the Lord's aprakaṭa pastimes. Like Haridāsa Ṭhākura, when he died his material body was placed in a tomb by the seashore. Haribol.

guru-kṛṣṇa-baiṣṇabera kṛpā-bala dhari'
bhakatibinoda dina bahu jatna kari'

"Bearing with him the mercy of his spiritual master, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and the Vaiṣṇavas, a poor person named Bhaktivinoda labored greatly to write this book.

biracila jaiba-dharma gauḍīya bhāṣāy
sampūrṇa haila grantha māghī-pūrṇimāy

caitanyābda cāriśata daśe nabadwīpe
godruma-surabhi-kuñje jāhnavī-samīpe

"This book, the Jaiva-dharma, written in the Bengali language, was completed by the Ganges' shore, at Surabhi-kuñja, in Godruma, at Navadvīpa, on the full-moon day of the month of Māgha in the 410th year after Lord Caitanya's appearance in this world.

śrī-kali-pavana-gorā-pade yāṅra āś
e grantha paḍuna tini kariyā biśwās

"Persons who yearn to attain the feet of Lord Gaura, the deliverer of the Kali-yuga, will have faith in this book.

gaurāṅge jāṅhāra nā janmila śraddhā-leś
e grantha paḍite tāṅra śapatha biśeṣ

"I place a curse on any person who does not have even even the smallest particle of faith, but still reads this book.

śuṣka-mukti-bāde kṛṣṇa kabu nāhi pāy
śraddhābāne braja-līlā śuddha-rūpe bhāy

"Persons who speak the theory of dry impersonal liberation cannot understand Kṛṣṇa. Only faithful persons can purely understand Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja.

The End