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Jaiva Dharma

Chapter 1

The Living Entities' Eternal Religion and his Transitional Religions Duties

Jambudvipa is the worthiest planet in the solar system. Bharat-Varsha (India) is the choicest land on earth. Gauda-mandala, or Bengal is spiritually the most eminent province in India, and Navadvīpādhama is the crest-jewel of Bengal. In one corner of Navadvīpa, on the Banks of Bhagirathi Ganga, eternally shining in a spiritual splendour prospers the region of Godrūma. The woody bowers of Godrūma had in the past provided places of spiritual retreats to many elevated and saintly souls. Pradyumna-Kunja, a simple meditation cottage, was located in the arbour where Sri Surabhi, in the hoary past and meditated and worshiped Lord Gau-rāṅga Sundara within her heart Lord Gaurāṅga Sundara. The present occupant of this cottage, Sri Premadasa Paramhansa Babaji Mahā-saya, is a śikṣa-disciple (a disciple who has received spiritual instructions) of Sri Pradyumna Brahmācari, who is an eternal associate of the Supreme Lord (bhāgavata-pārsada). Paramhansa Babaji passes his days in the ecstasy of chanting the holy name continuously. Babaji Mahārāja is an erudite scholar having mastered all the branches of philosophy and the different scriptures. He chose Godrūma as his place of mediation with the knowledge that it is, according to spiritual conclusions an exact replica of Nandagrāma (of Vraja). His daily routine comprised of chanting a minimum of two hundred thousand names of God, humbly offering innumerable prostrated obeisances to all the Vaiṣṇavas. He went and begging for his food, a little from each house of the cowherd men till he had sufficient for the day. The extra time he had after these daily chores he chose never to waste in village prattles. He read aloud 'Prema-vivarta' written by Śrīla Jagadānanda Paṇḍita, an eternal associate of Lord Caitāṅya, his eyes brimming with tears of exultation. Daily on these occasions, the saintly devotees from the neighbouring cottages eagerly gathered around Premadasa Babaji to hear him read. And why not? firstly 'Prema-Vivarta' a text saturated with spiritual mellows or rasa, and besides, Babaji Mahārāja's mellifluous voice was so rousing it doused the flames of material misery in the hearts of the congregated devotees. One afternoon after completing his prescribed number of rounds of chanting the holy name Babaji Mahārāja sat in a small clearing in the wood, in the bower called Sri Madhavi-malati and began to recite from 'Prema-Vivarta'. Soon he felt spiritual emotions stir within his heart just then a sannyāsi, or a person of the renounced order approached him and fell flat before him in utter humility and remained supine for a considerable length of time. At first Babaji Mahārāja was not aware of his presence since he was already deep in meditation, but right after he came out of his meditation he noticed that a

sannyasi, lay before him offering him obeisances. Babaji Maharaja was overcome with modesty—he considered himself lower than the grass and so fell on his hands and knees in front of the sannyasi. He cried out —“Oh my Lord Caitanya ! Oh Nityananda ! kindly be merciful to this fallen wretch !” Babaji Maharaja turned to the sannyasi and addressed him —“sir ! I am very low and without means, why do you embarrass me so”? The sannyasi stood up and touched Babaji’s feet into awe and respect and sat down. Babaji Maharaja was quick to offer him a straw mat to sit on and himself sat down in a corner. He began to speak in a faltering voice, choked with devotionalsentiments —“Dear Sir ! how may this fallen soul be of service to you ?” The sannyasi put down his kamanda (a water pot impersonalist sannyasis carry) and addressed Babaji Maharaja with folded hands.

"Respected master ! I am very unfortunate ! I have thoroughly studied the six branches of philosophy (Sankhya, patanjala, Vaise-sika, Nyaya, Utara and purva Himanisa) Vedas, Vedanta, the upani-shads while residing in holy places of pilgrimages like Varanasi. I have spent a good number of years in serious debates on the different conclusions of the scriptures. For the last twelve years I accepted initiation into the sannyasi order from Srila Saccidanada Sarasvati. After my initiation I travelled widely to all the places of pilgrimage, always associating with other sannyasis who are in the line of Sri Sankaracarya. I have graduated the first three levels of the renounced order namely Kuticaka, Bahudaka, Hamsa, I attained the final stage of sannyasi, the Paraamhansa level, for sometime. In Varanasi I accepted the vow of silence and deeply contemplated on the teachings of Sri Sankaracarya, who compressed the essence of his philosophy in the statements of the vedas calling them `mahava-kya` or great sayings. These were ---`aham brahmasmi`, `prajnanam brahma`, `tat tvamasi` etc. One day a vaisnavaa saint passed me by loudly singing the glorious pastimes of Lord Hari. I opened my eyes and saw tears cascading down his cheeks soaking him and his body erupted with goose flesh. In a rapt voice he loudly sang ---`Sri Krsna Caitanya prabhu Nityananda ! and danced with faltering steps, and sometimes he tripped and fell to the ground. The sight of him and his song stirred up such unknown emotions within me that I find it impossible to describe this experience to you. Although certain deep feelings were touched within me, but in order to maintain my position of respect as a Paramhansa I could not meet him. O what shame ! Fie on my position of respect ! shame on my luck ! yet a strange thing happened : I do n't know the reason, but from that moment my mind became attracted to Lord Caitanya's lotus feet. Later I anxiously searched for that vais-nava saint, but without success. I clearly perceived that by seeing this vaisnava saint and hearing God's name chanted by him, the pure joy I experienced, I have never ever felt before. I would have never believed that such intense bliss is available to the human beings. I pondered on this subject for a few days and finally concluded that the best thing for me is to take shelter at the feet of a Vaisnava. I left Varanasi and went to Vrndavana-dhama. I saw many vaisnavas there. They were repeating the names of Sri Rupa, Sri Sanatana, Sri Jiva Goswami with feelings of separation and sorrow. They were absorbed in meditation on the pastimes of Sri Radha and krsna. Then they mentioned the name of Navadvipadham a and immediately went into ecstasy and began rolling in the dust. My desire to see Navadvipa increased in great measures. I first circumambulated the hundred and sixty eight square-mile

area of Vraja dhama and arrived in Mayapura a few days ago. In Mayapura I heard your praises and so I have come to find shelter at your feet. Kindly bestow your mercy on me and accept me as your servant, this will make my life worthy and complete."

Babaji Maharaja took a straw between his teeth, thus exhibiting great humility and with a choking voice he said "My dear sir of the renounced order, I am a useless soul. I have spoiled my life trying only to fill my belly, get enough sleep and talk of trivialities. I have taken shelter of this land where Lord krsna Caitanya has performed His many pastimes and how so me passing my days. Unfortunately, I do not understand by percipi-ence the nature of spiritual love of Godhead, krsna. You are truly fortunate ! Because you were benedicted by seeing a real Vaisnava. This granted you, even though it was for a moment only, the divine relish of krsna prema. Indeed you are a recipient of Sri krsna Caitanya's mercy. I will remain ever grateful if in your moment of ecstasy of love of Godhead you can remember a fallen wretch like me with fondness." Babaji Maharaja went over to the sannyasi and warmly embraced him and showered him with tears of joy streaming down his eyes. The sannyasi Thakura experienced ineffable exultation from a Vaisnava's touch. He began to cry and dance. While dancing he sang a chorus

"(Jai) Sri krsna Caitanya Sri Prabhu Nityananda
(Jai) Premadasa guru, jai bhajan ananda."

(All glories to Lord krsna Caitanya, Lord Nityananda prabhu, my spiritual master Premadasa Babaji and the bliss of chanting the holy name).

After a long time of singing and dancing Sannyasi Thakura composed himself and sat down. Sannyasi Thakura and Babaji Maharaja started exchanging views. Babaji Maharaja spoke with humility --"O great sage ! Please spend a few days here in Pradyumna Kunja and purify me by your association." Sannyasi Thakura replied ---"I surrender my life and body to you. Why a few days, I pray that I may spend the rest of life here in serving you." Sannyasi Thakura is well versed in all the scriptures. He knows only too well that one must stay in the guru's ashram (gurukula) and receive spiritual instruction. Hence he stayed on Pradyumna-kunja, One day Babaji Maharaja addressed him ---"O great one ! Sri Pradyumna Brahmachari (my spiritual master) has shown great compassion towards me and granted me sanctuary at his feet. Presently he resides in a remote section of Navadvipa in the village of Sri Devapalli: he is intensely absorbed in worshipping Lord Nrsimha-deva. Let us visit him today after we have completed madhukari, or making our rounds collecting food from door to door.

That afternoon they crossed the Ganga and arrived in Sri Devapalli. As they came down the Suryatila mound they saw Sri Pradyumna Brahmachari inside the Sri Nrsimhadeva temple. Still at a distance, Babaji Maharaja prostrated himself on the ground offering obeisances to his guru. Sri Brahmachari Thakura moved by tender affection came out of the temple to greet him and lifted him up with both hands, and lovingly clasped him to himself. He enquired about Babaji Maharaja's well being. They sat down and discussed spiritual topics at length. He turned to

Sannyasi Thakura and gave a full introduction about him to Brahmacari Thakura. Brahma-cari Thakura addressed him affectionately ---`My dear son ! you have found the proper spiritual master. Now try to study sincere-ly `Prema-virarta` from the able Premadasa Babaji ."

`Kiba vipra, kiba nyasi, sudra kena naya yei
krsna tattva- vetta sei guru haya."
(c.c.Madhya 8/127)

Following his guru`s example Sannyasi Thakura offered Sri Brahma-cari Thakura, who was thus his grand spiritul master, or `Parama-guru`, prostrated obeisances and humbly replied. `Dear Master ! you are an eternal associate (parsada) of Lord Caitanya, your compassionate glance can purify many thousands of sannyasi like me, so I beg for your kindness.Sannyasi Thakura had never formally learnt the ways of Vaisnava etiquette before. He keenly observed the dealings between his guru and his paramaguru and realising that this was the standard behavior began to unreserv-edly emulate it. Babaji Maharaja and Sannyasi Thakura stayed for the evening worship, or Sandhya arati and returned to Godruma.

Days passed quickly : Sannyasi Thakura felt an urge to ask Babaji Maharaja certain philosophical questions. Except for the vaisna-va attire, Sannyasa Thakura had all the other distinguishing features of a devotee. He had already developed qualities like sama (equanimity), dama (sense control) , brahma-nistha (unwaver-ing commitment to the absolute truth)etc. From brahma `nistha` begins to sprout the attachment for the Supreme Personality`s divine pastimes. Concurrent to this quality developed gradually the feelings of humility and meekness.

One day at sunrise, Babaji Maharaja having completed his monning ablutions sat in the calm of `madhavi-mandapa` grove and began to chant the holy name on the tulasi mala (rosary made of tulasi). He was deeply meditating on the dawn pastimes of the Divine Couple: a time when Their amorous exchanges in the love groves of Vrndavan are about to end. Incessant tears streamed down his cheeks. He became transfixed in his specific devotional humour that was immanent of his original spiritual identity. In his meditation he executed his designated devotional duties scheduled for the dawn pastimes of the Divine Couple in Their transcenden-tal abode. Awareness of his body and the surrounding ph enopmenal world began to fade away. Sannyasi Thakura,at first watching from a polite distance, came nearer to Babaji Maharaja and began closely observing with awestruck wonder the ecstatic symptoms mainfest on Babaji`s person.

Still in deep meditation Babaji Maharaja called out---"Oh: sakhi! quickly quieten that hag monkey Kakkhak, she will disturb my dear Srimati Radharani and Sri Govinda`s blissful sleep. If They wake up Lalita sakhi will be very upset and she will surely chastise me.Look over there ! Ananga-manjari is making signs to that effect. You are Ramana-manjari, and you have been given this duty, you should execute it conseintiously." Babaji Maharaja spoke these words and fell down in an ecstatic swoon. Sannyasi Thakura realised that the words were addressed to him. From that moment he understood what was his original spiritual identity (siddha-

deha) and his specific devotional service. He prepared himself for his new devotional assignments.

Dawn was spreading across the eastern horizon. The sun peeped out bathed in morning glory. Birds chirped their greetings and a light breeze carried their songs far. The sunlight draped the beautiful bower of Madhavi mandapa in its flaming glow. Nature blushed with pristine pulchritude. Babaji Maharaja, sitting on a straw mat was slowly coming back to the present from his meditation. He began to quietly chant on his mala. Taking this opportune moment Sannyasi Thakura prostrated before him and offered obeisances. With hands folded in humble submission Sannyasi Thakura sat up and addressed Babaji Maharaja ---" Dear Master ! Your poor servitor would like to ask a question. Kindly embalm his raging mind with the answer. Let your words infuse the divine honou of Vraja within my heart terribly seared by flames of monism and impersonal Brahman. "

Babaji Maharaja -- You are a fit candidate. I will try my best to answer any question you have.

Sannyasi Thakura -- Dear Master! I have always heard words in praise of religion wherever. I went and everywhere, I asked people what is religion The sad truth is that all the answers varied, were different and conflicted with into the rest. Therefore I would like to know from you - "What is man's religious duty? Why do the different religious teachers preach their ver-sion as being the true religion? If there is one religion then why are the numerous religious stalwants not following that single spiritual path ?

Babaji Maharaja quietly worshipped Lord Caitanya`s lotus feet in his mind and began his dissertation. ---"O fortunate one ! listen attentively, I will explain to you what is true religion. The inherent and permanent nature, or characteristic of any Substance is its eternal religion, or dharma. The characteristics of a substance is designed according to its structure, or make up. By the mercy of Lord krsna when a substance is brought into exist-ence, a permanent characteristic always accompanies it. That nature, or characteristic is the substance`s eternal religion, or dharma. Due to certain circumstances or due to contact with another substance, the original substance`s character becomes transformed, or changed. With time when this transformed charac-teristic becomes firm it assumes the position of a permanent companion to the associate substance, much like its own eternal and immanent nature. But this new characteric is not its inher-ent nature --it is defined as `nisarga`, or a condition which seems natural. `Nisarga` usurps the position of the inherent nature and arrogates as being eternal. Let us take the substance water as example. Liquidity is its inherent nature. When water freezes to ice solidity becomes its assumed nature or `nisarga ! Nisarga` is a temporary condition. Because it is brought about by a catalyst or agent and when the agent is removed it also disap-pears. But inherent nature is eternal---even when the substance goes through changes it remains inseparably together, often latent within the changed substance and in time and by the he force of circumstances is able to reassert itself.

The substance's inherent nature is its eternal religion or `nityadharmā ! The substance's `nisarga`, or assumed nature is its temporary functioning. One who knows what is `vastu`, or the absolute reality, is able to discriminate between eternal spiritual activity and impermanent religious performances. Without this knowledge a person will confuse the eternal with the temporary. Sannyasi Thakura: -what is the meaning of `vastu',and what is the definition of svabhava ! ?

Babaji Maharaja: -The Sanskrit word `vastu' is a derivative of the root word `vas,' conjugated with the suffix `tu'. This means anything that exists or can be perceived is called `Vastu'. `Vastu' is of two kinds - `vastava-vastu' and `avastava-vastu'. `Vastava-vastu' is transcendental truth, or real substance. `Avastava-vastu' is a material object possessing inert qualities. `Vastava-vastu's existence is a reality. `Avastava-vastu's existence is a matter of perception. This perception is at times accurate and at other times a hallucination : The statement of Srimad Bhagavatam, 1:1:2---`vedyam vastavamatra vastu sivatam` asserts that `vastava vastu` decisively denotes spiritual, or transcendental truth.

The Supreme personality of Godhead alone is that `vastava vastu`. Jiva is a fractional part of that `vastu`, and `maya` is his energy. Therefore `vastu` means the Supreme Lord, His energy and jiva all three principles together. Proper comprehension of their relationship with each other is true knowledge. There are many different conceptions about these three principles but all of them are mundane. In `Vaisesika` school of thought arguments on substance and numerals are based entirely on `avastava vastu`. The specific attributes of `vastava-vastu` form its intrinsic nature. Jiva is a vastava vastu, his nature therefore is his permanent, inherent characteristic.

Sannyasa Thakura --Master ! I would like to have a better grasp on this subject.

Babaji Maharaja--- Srila Krsnadas Kaviraja is a very elevated saint who has received the direct mercy of Lord Nityananda. He once showed me a handwritten manuscript. The book's name was Sri Caitanya Caitamrta' and in it appears Lord Caitanya's deliberations on this topic--- Jivera svarupa haya krsnera nitya dasaKrsnera tatastha sakti bheda bheda prakasa/ krsna bhuli sei/jiva anadi/bahirmukha / ataeva maya tare deya samsara-duhkha. (C.C.Madhya 20/108,117).

(It is the living entities constitutional position to be an eternal servant of Krsna because he is the marginal energy of Krsna and a manifestation simultaneously one and different from the Lord. Forgetting Krsna, the living entity has been attracted by the external feature from time immemorial. Therefore the illusory energy [maya] gives him all kinds of misery in his material existence.)

Lord Krsna is wholly and absolutely spiritual. To describe Him, many persons use the analogy where he represents the only sun of the spiritual world, Jiva is merely a particle of His rays and innumerable. To use the comparison of a rock, which is a minute part of a gigantic mountain, as a parallel to describe Jiva who is an infinitesimal part and parcel of Lord Krsna, will be inaccurate. Because the countless millions of Jiva who emit out of the Supreme Lord Krsna does not in anyway affect

or diminish the absolute wholeness of the Lord. Therefore the vedas have put forward the analogy of the fire to represent the Supreme Lord and its tiny sparks are the Jivas. The real fact is that no comparison is truly appropriate. Whether jiva is described as the tiny spark from a conflagration, a minute particle of ray of the sun, or a speck of gold from the mine—none of these comparisons are striking or round all perfect. But if one can overlook the mundane concepts in these analogies then the actual truth about jiva will facility crystallise. Lord Krsna is the infinite spiritual substance while jiva is His infinitesimal part—also a spiritual substance. Both Lord krsna and jiva are qualitatively same ---being of the same spiritual nature, but in size the Supreme Lord is the complete whole while jiva is His part only, therefore disparity between them is a permanent feature of their nature. Supreme Lord krsna is jiva's eternal master and jiva is His eternal servant ---this then is their characteristic relationship. Lord krsna is the all attractive person drawing the jivas to Him. Krsna is the Supreme Controller and jiva is eternally controlled by Him. Krsna is the Seer while jiva is being seen. Lord krsna is absolute, jiva is incomplete and tiny. Krsna is omnipotent and jiva is impotent. Therefore it is natural for jiva to be eternally subservient to krsna, and this is also his intrinsic nature---his `dharma'.

Lord krsna is the possessor of unlimited energies; in the matter of manifesting the spiritual world the Lord displays His full blown internal potency similarly in creating the jivas He exhibits another of His energies, namely the marginal energy, or tatastha sakti. The work of organising this imperfect material cosmos is carried out by a specific energy of the Lord ---this energy is known as tatastha sakti, or marginal potency. The method in which tatastha sakti acts is that it creates a substance which can interact with both the material and the spiritual natures. By nature, material energy is diametrically opposite to spiritual energy and therefore they are incompatible. Jiva is a spiritual spark---a product of the spiritual nature, yet but the influence of divine energy he is able to relate to this mundane energy. That divine energy is called `tatastha sakti.

`Tatarekha, or the margin line lies between the river water and the bank, hence it is both water and land, being situated where the two meet. Since the divine energy is situated on the margin it takes on the characteristics of both the land and the water ---one receptacle but with two natures. As mentioned earlier, jiva is of the spiritual nature, but constitutionally he is made in a way that makes him prone to always come under the sway of the material energy. Thus jiva cannot be likened to the pure spiritual nature which is transcendental to, and beyond the reach of material natures influence. Yet jiva, who is spiritual cannot be categorised as material. Because jiva is a different concept from both matter and spirit he is designated as the jiva principle. In this respect one must accept the existing eternal disparity between the Supreme Lord and jiva.

The Supreme Lord is the master and controller of `maya': meaning `maya' is fully subservient to the will of the Supreme Lord. Jiva is control prone to `maya's influence: at any time he can be forced to submit to maya's dictates. Therefore the Supreme Lord, jiva and maya, all these three principles are spiritual realities and are eternal. Amongst them the Supreme Lord, who is described in the vedas as ----

`nityo nityonam', is declared as the ultimate eternal cause of all three principles. Constitutionally jiva is krsna's eternal servant and the emblem of the Lord's marginal potency. From this analysis of facts we can conclude that jiva is simultaneously one with, and different from the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Jiva is subservient to `maya', while the Supreme Lord is the controller of maya'in this respect there exists an eternal difference between jiva and God.

Jiva's original nature is spiritual, Just as the Supreme Godhead is intrinsically spiritual. Jiva is one of the Supreme Lord's divine energies. It is for this reason that jiva and the Supreme Lord are considered non-different. The fact is that jiva and the Supreme Lord are simultaneously same and different. In such cases the concept of eternal disparity is preponderant. Servitorship to krsna is jiva's eternal religion. When jiva forgets this truth he is enslaved by `maya', from that moment on jiva turns away from krsna--- he rejects Him. From the time jiva comes into this material world he has already rejected krsna, and so there are no historical statements recording his fall down. This truth justifies the use of the phrase --- `anadi bahirmukha'(eternally turned away from the spiritual realm).

The instant jiva rejects krsna and embraces material existence his eternal religion becomes perverted. In contact with `maya'he develops a mundane nature (nisarga) which paves the way for `naimittika dharma',or impermanent religious performances. Nitya dharma,oreternal religious duties is only one of its kind-- it cannot be interrupted and it is flawless. `Naimittika dharma'is described in various ways by people as appearing in many different forms and conditions. Abruptly Paramhansa Babaji Maharaja fell silent and began to chant on his beads. Sannyasi Thakura was keenly listening throughout the discussion and now having offered his prostrated obeisances to Babaji Maharaja said-`Master ! Today I will meditate on your esoteric teachings and return tomorrow with whatever queries I have and present them at your lotus feet'.

Chapter 2 Jiva's Eternal Religion is pure and Ever-Existing

Next morning Sannyasi Thakura found Babaji Maharaja absorbed in relishing the spiritual humour of Vraja Vrndavana and so he did not approach him with his queries. Later that afternoon having finished their meal consisting of food collected from beggings (madhukari)they were sitting in the shady bowers of Sri Madhavi-Malati. Babaji Maharaja in his benign manner began to speak-`O my good devotee ! What conclusion did you arrive at after hearing the deliberations on religion'. Sannyasi Thakura was instantly joyful and without further vacillation he enquired -`Dear Master ! if,as you said that Jiva is infinitesimal in stature,then how can his eternal religious duties be absolute and pure ? If jiva's religion is complimentary to his size then how can that religion be ever extant-imperishable ?"

Babaji Maharaja heard these questions quietly. He meditated on Lord Caitanya's lotus feet and with a gentle smile on his lips he began to speak - ``Dear sir ! Even though jiva is infinitesimal his religion is absolute, pure and ever existent. His tiny stature is merely a characteristic of jiva. The only infinite entity is the Supreme Brahman, or Lord Krsna. The countless jivas are His minute part and parcel. Just as small sparks crackle out of the big flame similarly the jivas have emanated from the absolute indivisible Supreme Lord, Krsna. Each spark possesses the same fiery attributes of the flame, in like manner every jiva is capable of manifesting the same absolute excellences of the Supreme Brahman. A single spark in contact with an inflammable object can ignite into a raging conflagration which can consume the entire world, giving proof of its awesome potential; similarly when jiva attains the ultimate objective-- of divine love of Lord Sri Krsna, he can inundate the entire universe with love of Godhead.

As long as jiva is unable to inter-relate with the true objective of his original spiritual nature, or his true religion, the infinitesimal jiva appears incapacitated. The truth is that real religion comes to light only by contact with its ultimate source. Try to thoroughly research into the truth about jiva's eternal religion. Devotion, or divine love is jiva's eternal religion. Jiva is nonmaterial, - meaning he is of transcendental substance. He is made up of spiritual consciousness and loving devotion is his intrinsic attribute. Unalloyed servitorship to Krsna is the purest manifestation of divine love. Therefore the original and eternal religion of jiva is loving devotional surrender to Lord Krsna.

Jiva experiences two different conditions--the state of pure consciousness and the state of material consciousness (or being imprisoned by `maya'). In the state of pure consciousness (suddhavastha) jiva is wholly spiritual ; he is then free from all material attachments and contact. But even in his pure state jiva remains infinitesimal. It is solely because of his minute stature that it is possible for him to change his station. The infinite and absolute Supreme Person, krsna, by His very nature, never changes His divine position, or station. Indeed He is Infinite, absolutely whole, pure and forever extant. While jiva by his constitution is infinitesimal, partial, is capable of becoming contaminated and is an inexperienced upstart. Yet jiva's inherent nature and quality is the same as that of the Supreme, namely ----infinite, complete, pure and eternal. If jiva remains uncontaminated he maintains, and perfectly manifests his intrinsic qualities, or original nature. But when he cohabits with the illusory energy, or maya his original nature becomes distorted into being contaminated, uprooted and a pathetic target inviting the wrath of the dualities of material nature. Jiva becomes entangled in material life as soon as he forgets his position as a servant of krsna.

As long as jiva is undefiled he can take pride in his original identity ---as an eternal servant of Lord krsna. When maya's contact contaminates him this pride, or self knowledge contracts and takes on different manifestations, his original identity becomes shrouded by a gross and a subtle body. His subtle body now accepts a separate identity. This new identity then amalgamates with the gross body and transforms into a third identity. The jiva in his pure state possesses a singular identity--- servant of krsna. But in his subtle body jiva arrogates as the enjoyer of

the results of his actions. At this juncture jiva's original pure ego as krsna's servant becomes covered over by his subtle body's false ego. Further, when jiva acquires his gross body he is illusioned into identifying with his many material conditions:--- a brahmana, a king, rich, poor, sick, healthy, suffering, a wife, a husband etc.

These false identities give a aberrated impression of jiva's original consciousness. Unalloyed spiritual love of God is the pure jiva's true and original religion. When perverted, this spiritual love manifest in the subtle body as mundane emotions of happiness and sorrow, love and hate etc. Again in the gross body the perversion intensifies and displays itself in the shape of material sense gratification and other activities for self preservation such as eating drinking etc. Jiva's eternal religion finds expression only in his pure state of consciousness. The religion, or nature that assert themselves in his contaminated state is a quasi permanent religion, or 'naimittika dharma'. We know that 'nitya-dharma' or eternal religion is absolute, pure and ever-existent. I will explain 'naimittika dharma' another day in detail.

The principles of vaisnava religion mentioned in the scripture, Srimad Bhagavatam is known as 'nitya dharma'. All the collective religions of the world can be broadly grouped into three categories:--- 'nitya-dharma', 'naimittika dharma', and anitya dharma, or impermanent religion. A religion that denies the existence of God refusing to discuss about Him and does not accept that the soul is eternal is called 'anitya-dharma' (impermanent religion). The religion which believes in the eternity of both God and the soul but prescribes mundane and transient methods for attaining the grace of God is described as 'naimittika dharma':

'Nitya-dharma,' or eternal religion promulgates the application of pure devotional service on the platform of love of Godhead to achieve the ultimate destination of becoming an eternal servant of Lord krsna. 'Nitya dharma' is given various appellatives according to different countries, races, languages, yet it is one and super excellent. The best example of 'Nitya-dharma' is Vaisnavism which is widely practiced in India. The spiritual teachings propagated by our beloved Lord Sri Caitanya to the entire world is indeed the purest state of Vaisnavism, therefore the pure devotees who divine in spiritual relishes, whole heartedly embrace His instructions".

At this juncture Sannyasa Thakura, spoke with folded palms--- 'Dear master, I am able to realise at every moment the incomparable excellence of the pure Vaisnavism preached by Lord Sri Caitanya. I am also perceiving the inadequacy in the philosophy of monism propounded by Sri Sankaracarya. Yet a question keeps nagging me which I cannot keep back from asking you. ---Lord Sri Caitanya embodied and exhibited the pinnacle of spiritual love, is this condition any different from the stage of liberation attained in monism ?'

Paramhansa Babaji prostrated himself respectfully at the mention of Sri Sankaracarya's name. He said--- 'my dear sir always remember this verse : sankarah sankarah saksad." (Sri Sankaracarya is Lord Siva himself) Sri Sankara is the spiritual preceptor of the Vaisnavas and so Lord Caitanya acclaimed him as an 'acarya', Sri Sankaracarya is an elevated vaisnava. India, at the time of his

appearance, gravely required a guna-avatara (an empowered incarnation of Godhead embodying one of the three gunas, or material modes) of his stature.

India at the time had practically given up the cultivation and studies of the Vedas, the practice of 'varna-asrama dharma' all due to the spread of Buddhism and the philosophy of voidism. Voidism is another appellative for atheism. Buddhism does ever so slightly acquiesce the principle of the eternal spirit soul but still the religion remains an impermanent religion or 'anitya dharma'. Those days the brahmana's had all but forsaken the vedic religion and converted to Buddhism. Armed with super human powers Sri Sankaracarya appeared at this historic moment and reinstated the pristine glory of the Vedas and modified voidism to brahman-ism, or monism. This was a spectacular achievement, and India will remain always indebted to Sri Sankaracarya.

Works in the world can be judged by two standards. Some works are specific to a particular time (tatkalika) and others are for all times (sarvakalika) Sripad Sankaracarya's achievement belong to the first category of works i.e. 'tatkalika'. A great deal of good resulted from it. Sri Sankara laid a firm foundation on which later Sri Ramanujacarya and Madhvacharya constructed the sprawling edifice of pure vaisnava philosophy. Therefore Sri Sankaracarya is one of the greatest well wishers and past torch bearer of the Vaisnava religion.

The spiritual guidelines Sri Sankara has given the vaisnavas act as beacons on their path to progress. 'Sambandhajnana'(knowledge of the eternal relationship between jiva, prakrti and bhagavan) is absolutely essential for the conditioned jivas. The Vaisnavas and Sri Sankaracarya unanimously believe that spiritual substance is different and transcendental to both the body and gross bodies of this material nature. Both the parties are of the same opinion regarding the principle of jiva. They also agree that liberation means to give up one's attachments of the material world Upto the stage of mukti, or liberation, the Vaisnavas concur with Sri Sankaracarya on many philosophical points Sri Sankaracarya also taught that one's consciousness is purified by worshipping the Supreme Lord Hari after which 'mukti', or liberation is attained.

Where Sri Sankara remains silent is refusing to comment on the wonderful spiritual realisations of the jiva after he acquires 'mukti'. Sri Sankaracarya was confident, knowing well that once the jivas were set on the path of liberation which was attainable by worshipping Supreme Hari, they would gradually develop taste and attachment for devotional service and ultimately become pure devotees of the Lord. Hence, Sri Sankaracarya after plainly indicating the proper way did not further delve on the esoteric aspects of Vaisnava philosophy. Those who have serutinizingly studied the commentaries of Sri Sankaracarya can comprehend their underlying but profound quintessence. While those who deliberate only on the external and superficial aspects of his teachings are diverted from the vaisnava path.

Viewed from a specific stance monistic liberation and unalloyed devotional service

(prema) ostensibly have somethings in common. A compressed explanation about monistic liberation will only compound in high lighting the differences between prema and itself. First one must properly analyse the subject of prema. Prema can be simply defined as the principle, or emotional humour that invokes natural attraction between two spiritual substances for each other. It is however imperative in prema that the two spiritual substances maintain seperate, individual identities. That humour which eternally draws all the spiritual objects to krsna is called 'krsna prema'.

Lord krsna is eternally situated in His singularly unique position and the jiva's individual identity in an eternally serving mood towards Him is the absolute axiomatic principle, or the eternally self-perfected principle in the philosophy of prema. Three statuses, or modalities namely: asvadaka (relisher), asvadya (the object of relish) and asvadana (the act of relishing) are inherent in prema. In the exchanges of 'prema', or divine love, if the asvadaka (the relisher) and asvadya (the object of relish) were to merge then 'prema' cannot be 'nitya siddha', or eternally self-perfected truth. If the pure state of a spiritual substance which is untainted by any material contact be described as monistic liberation, or advaita siddhi (perfection in nondualism) then prema and monistic perfection are the same. But the contemporary scholars of the Sankaracarya school of thought are not content with just accepting 'advaita siddhi' or perfection in monistic thought to be a specific stage in the gamut of spiritual perfections. On the contrary they vociferously arrogate that 'advaita siddhi' is the ultimate goal of spiritual realisation, thus they misconstrue the vedic truth.

This aberration of facts undermines the quality of eternity of 'prema' hence the vaisnavas have concluded that this philosophy is unvedic. Sripad Sankaracarya described the concept of 'advaita' or nondualism as a specific condition of the Absolute Truth when It is in a state of pure transcendence. Unfortunately his foolish followers are unable to grasp the esoteric import of this philosophy and in the process they are denigrating his reputation. Describing that the transcendental conditions of pure divine love (prema) are illusory or 'maya' they are preaching a most degraded philosophy in the world which goes by the name of 'mayavada philosophy'.

The followers of this philosophy ---the 'mayavadis' categorically deny the existence of more than one spiritual substance. They even refuse to accept that the spiritual element of 'prema' is intrinsic to the spiritual substance. Their theory is that as long as Brahman (the nondual transcendental truth) remains single he is transcendental to 'maya', or material nature. When he accepts a form and becomes a jiva, he acquires diverse shapes and is afflicted by maya. Therefore they consider the eternal, pure and absolutely spiritual body (or diety) as maya, or illusory. They even insist that the jiva's seperate and individual identity is illusory, and so 'prema' and the transcendental transformations of prema appear illusory. The obvious follow up on this is that with help of this logic they establish that 'advaita jnana' or monism is free of illusion. Their misinterpreted version of 'advaita siddhi' and prema' are philosophically poles a part.

Lord Caitanya's instructions on the process of relishing `prema', or loving devotional service and His teachings in general exemplified by His own character and pastimes are all absolute and transcendental ---they embody the acme of perfection, the highest stage of advaita siddhi. `Mahabhava' or the pinnacle of bhava (loving spiritual emotions) is an ecstatic transformation of unalloyed prema. One experiences extreme, divine exultation in loving krsna. Therefore the separate and intrinsic stirrings of sublime emotions in each relisher and the object of relish, and the intimate relationship between them acquires an extraordinary and wonderful presence. The inconsequential mayavada philosophy is therefore inept to contribute anything at any stage of `prema'.

Sannyasa Thakura (very respectfully) --Dear master ! now I am fully convinced that this `mayavadi' philosophy is indeed loose and feeble. By your mercy all my doubts have been dissipated. I am feeling a strong urge to instantly discard my mayavadi Sannyasi apparel.

Babaji Maharaja `Dear sir ! My advice in this regard is one must be dispassionate about the outer dress--- no attachment, no hate.

When the heart and consciousness inside becomes purified the outer garment is automatically cleansed. When much stress is laid on grooming the external looks and dress the disciplining of consciousness within is neglected. My opinion is that after one is cleansed from within and is then inspired to conduct himself comprising of the other saintly devotees, his external appearance like dress and so on, are removed of blemishes. Just wholly surrender yourself to the ideals of Lord Caitanya and then whatever external activities inspire you, you can execute them with the proper consciousness. Always remember the following instruction of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

"Markata-vairagya na kara loka dekhaiyna/ yathayogya visaya bhunja anasakta haiyna/ antare nistha kara, bahye loka-Vyavahara acirat krsna tomaya karibe uddhara." (C.C.Madhya ch.16.Text 238-9)

"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. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu continued:--`within your heart you should keep yourself very faithful, but externally you may behave like an ordinary man. Thus krsna will soon be very pleased and deliver you from the clutches of maya".

Sannyasi Thakura understood the import of what Babaji Maharaja said and refrained from further mentioning the subject of changing the dress. With folded hands he addressed Babaji Maharaja---"Dear master, I have surrendered myself at your feet as your disciple, therefore whatever instructions you give me I will accept them without argument. After listening to your teachings I have realised that /pure love of Godhead alone love is Vaisnava religion. This indeed is jiva's eternal religious principle. But the fact is that different countries practice different religions, hence how should I think about them?

Babaji Maharaja---" My dear sir, religion is one and not many. Jiva has only one

religion and that is known as the Vaisnava religion. Religion may appear to be different according to the various languages, countries and races ! This one religion of the jiva is referred to with many names by people, but no one can create another new religion. The unblemished pristine love the minute particle of spiritual substance has for the Supreme absolute whole is defined as jiva's religion. The jivas possess a variety of habits and natural traits which hem his religious practices with certain material conformities thus making religion appear refracted. Therefore to differentiate it from a state of aberration and bring into focus its pristine standards jiva's true religion has been named Vaisnava dharma. To the degree 'vaisnava dharma' practices are present in other religions, to that degree, that religion is considered pure.

A few days ago in Vrndavan I had humbly placed a question to Srila Sanatana Gosvami, who is an eternal and confidential associate of the Supreme Lord. My query was : is the concept of 'aish' an arabic word in Islam religion, the same as 'prema'---or is there any difference ? Srila Gosvami is an erudite scholar well versed in all scriptures and especially his proficiency in arabic is astounding. Many other accomplished savants like Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Jiva Gosvami were also present in that assembly. I reproduce Srila Sanatana Gosvami words.---

"Yes the word 'aish' is indeed meaning 'prema'. The muslims use this term even in worshipping God, But generally it implies mundane love affairs. Description of 'aish' and the emotions it conveys in the story of 'Laila Majnu' and in the holy Hafez gives us the impression that the muslim religious scholars were unable to grasp what is pure transcendence. They have referred to physical attraction as well as platonic love as 'aish' or prema. They have failed to perceive not only the pure spiritual substance but also the truth about jiva's spontaneous and spotless love for Krsna. I have never come across in any of their religious texts, discussions on divine love. The spiritual emotion of 'prema' is conspicuously present in the Vaisnava religion alone.

The muslim concept of 'ru' is not the same as the pure spirit soul,infact I get the impression that 'ru' more closely describes the conditioned soul. Knowledge of pure love of Godhead,Krsna is missing in all the other religious literatures. The Vaisnava religious text Srimad Bhagavatam delineates in detail this pure, sublime love of Krsna --- a love, shorn of all deceit and caprice. I am very sure that prior to Lord Caitanya no one has ever taught the science of pure love of Godhead,Krsna, as exhaustively as He has done. If my words inspire faith and devotion in you then wholeheartedly subscribe to this philosophy." After I heard Srila Sanatana Gosvami's instructions I had offered him my repeated obeisances. Sannyasi Thakura was truly moved by these instructions, he immediately fell at his feet and offered obeisances to Babaji Maharaja.

Paramhansa Babaji --- ` My dear devotee, I am about to reply your second question. Please hear attentively. Sanskrita terms like 'jivasrsti'(creation or birth of jiva), 'jivagatham'(jiva's material form, or the forming of his body) etc. are used in a mundane sense. Material words cling to mundane feeling and impressions. Material time, within this illusory energy, has three conditions: -- past,present and

future. Time in the spiritual world has a singular aspect -- it is always in the present; past and future are totally absent. The jiva and the Supreme Lord Krsna exist in that spiritual time. Hence jiva is eternal and indestructible and his religion ---Krsna prema, or love of Krsna is also ever present. The mundane conditions of birth, growth, decay etc influenced by material time have been imputed on jiva after his imprisonment in this material world. Jiva's miniature size does not divest him of his intrinsic nature of being transcendental and indestructible. Jiva's material form is already determined even before he enters this material energy. Whatever exists in the spiritual world remains always the same because divisions of past and future are absent.

Jiva and his religion are both eternally present and indestructible. Although I am elucidating these topics but you can fathom their meanings only to the extent of your realisation of the spiritual nature. I am just giving indications, you must perceive their purport in deep meditation. Mundane logic and arguments will not enable you to properly comprehend these subjects. As much as one can extricate his power of perception from perplexities of material enthrallment to that degree he is enlightened about the spiritual world.

First one must repeatedly endeavour to perceive his original spiritual identity and chant Krsna's name purely then his true nature will begin to prominently assert itself. One's spiritual perception cannot be honed by the processes of either mystic yoga or empirical knowledge. Direct devotional service to Krsna alone can reawaken the perfection of religion inherent within one. Simply chant krsna's holy name with full enthusiasm. Chanting alone is to be considered pure devotional service. After chanting regularly for a period of time you will experience a wonderful attraction for the Lord's name. As a concomitant to this attraction comes the gradual realisation of one's spiritual nature. Of all the limbs of devotion, chanting is the chief and offers quick results. Srila krsna dasa Kaviraja has written a wonderful book where he has recorded Lord Caitanya's instructions---

‘Bhajanera madhye srestha nava-vidha bhakti`krsna-prema', krsna dite dhare maha-sakti tara madhye sarvasrestha nama samkirtana niraparadhe nama laile paya premadhana'

(C.C. Antya ch.4. Text 70-71)

O learned one ! (Among the ways of executing devotional service, the nine prescribed methods are best, for these processes have great potency to deliver Krsna and ecstatic love for Him. 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 offences, one very easily obtains the most valuable love of Godhead) if you should ask me---who is a Vaisnava? my answer is simply--- one who chants krsna's names purely is a vaisnava. Vaisnavas are of three types, namely: kanistha (neo-phyte), madhyama (intermediate), and uttama (most advanced). One who occasionally chants krsna's names is a kanistha vaisnava. One who constantly chants krsna's names is a madhyama vaisnava. An uttama vaisnava is he who by his very appearance inspires others who see him to spontaneously

chant krsna's names. Accord-ing to the teachings of Lord Caitanya one must strictly go by these symptoms to describe a Vaisnava's level.

Inerbriated by Babaji's nectarean instructions Sannyasi Thakura began to sing---
`hare krsna hare krsna krsna krsna hare hare: hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare' and gently awayed to and fro in a stately dance. He immediately realised that he was acquiring a sublime taste for chanting the holy name. He fell at his guru's lotus feet and prayed ---"O divine master ! please be merciful unto this lowly wretch."

Chapter 3

Transitional religious duties are Incomplete, Pedestrian, Impure and Evanescent

It was one o'clock in the night and Sannyasi Thakura was in deep meditation chanting the holy name. He suddenly walked out into the silky night and slowly climbed to the top of an elevation situated where the woods of Godruma ends. He began peering to-wards the north. The fullmoon at the zenith was waving its magic wand with its ray's.All around the grounds and Navadvipa glowed in silver glory.Nestled not so far away, Mayapura arrested his attention. Sannyasi Thakura expelled his breath and exclaimed ---`Ahoy! there, I can see a wondrous and blissful dhama.'Large mansions, temples and archways, all constructed with precious gems corroscuring with magnificence has set a glow the shores of the peacefully flowing jahnavi, Ganga. The resounding swell of congregational singing of the holy name from several quaters rose up to the satin sky and fiercely pierced it. Thousands of devo-tees were playing on the Veena like Sri Narada and swirling about in a stately dance. Off to one side the chief of the demigods Sri Mahadeva, white as a lily, was playing on his dumberu, dancing wildy and singing ---`O my dear Visvambhara (Caitanya) ! be merciful to me! He kept falling to the ground in ecstasy.

In another corner Lord Brahma was addressing an august assembly of Vedic sages and explaining to them the purport of this vedic verse.---

`Mahan-prabhur-vai purusah sattvasyaisah pravartakah sunirmalami-mam praptimisano jyotirvyayah". (Svet. Up. 3:12)

(This Personality must be the Supreme Controller, hence the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He is the origin of all inspiration and intelligence within man. Unal-loyed peace can be attained by his mercy alone. He is immeasura-bly effulgent, glowing witha golden hue: He is infinite, inex-haustible and the embodiment of divine love'.

Another area was helter shelter with activities of jubilant and dancing demigods headed by Indra, the King of heaven. They sang-ing in loud chorus ---"Jai prabhu Gauracandra, jai nityananda." The birds sitting on trees cooed in unrestrained me Clody---`gaura nitai'. Bumble bees stumbled along amongst the flower gardeners inebriated with the ambrosia of Lord Gauracandra's sweet name. Mother Nature, enmaddened by the delicious nectar of Lord Gauracandra's name was breaking out in the splendour of lush profusion.

Alas ! where hides this gorgeousness when I look towards Mayapuradham during the daytime? And what exactly is inspiring me to behold this sight now ?"

All this moment Sannyasi Thakura remembered his gurudeva and spoke out aloud--`O my master !today I realise that you have blessed me to perceive the transcendental realm of Mayapura.Today onwards I will strive to present myself as a devotee of Lord Caitanya.I can see that everyone in the spiritual land of Navadvipa is decorated with tulsi neck-beads,tilaka markings,and hari-nama chaddars I will also follow them.`As he made his decision Sannyasi Thakura went into a blissful trance.

Sannyasi Thakura gradually calmed himself. True that he regained his equilibrium but in the bargain the miraculous vision vanished from sight Sannyasi Thakura broke down crying saying --Oh how fortunate I am, that I was able to see,even if for a few moments,the spiritual abode of Navadvipa.'

Next morning Sannyasi Thakura hastened to the river and set afloat his mayavadi sannyasi staff down the stream.He then put around his neck three strands of tulsi neck-beads and applied the`urdhapundra'Vaisnava tilaka mark on his forehead and began to dance,singing`Hari ! Hari !.The Vaisnavas of Godrumadvipa who saw the wonderful transformation in his appearance and demeanour blessed him and then fell to the ground to offer him their obeisances.Seeing this Sannyasi Thakura become bashful and said to the assembly--`How extra ordinary ! I accepted the vaisnava dress code solely to attract the blessings of the vaisnavas,but now I am confronted with this dilemma.I have heard my gurn often repeat this instruction----`trnad-api sunicena taror api sahisnunaamani-na manadena kirtaniyah sada harih.'

"One who thinks himself lower than the grass,who is more tolerant than a tree,and who does not expect personal honour but is always prepared to give all respect to others,can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord."(C.C.Antya 20/21).

Sannyasi Thakura seriously considered in his mind : I regard all these Vaisnavas as my gurus.Yet they are offering obeisances to me,what future does my spiritual life have ? ' Weighed down with such cogitation his footsteps heavily tread back to his guru . He prostrated himself before Paramhansa Babaji.

Babaji Maharaja had come to the woody retreat of Madhavi -Mandapa to chant the holy name. He saw wonderful transformations in Sannyasi Thakura, both in his attire and sentiment. He stood up and embraced his disciple, showering him with cascading tears and said --'O my dear Vaisnava dasa (servant of the vaisnavas) I am feeling great spiritual exhilaration by touching your blessed body.'

Babaji's pronouncement gave Sannyasi Thakura his new name. 'Vaisnavadasa' replaced his previous appellation. For Sannyasi Thakura this day ushered in a novel and wondrous life. It helped him to discard the stigmas of the mayavadi's false-ego due to his designation as a Sannyasi, its saffron-rob and the pride of possessing vast knowledge.

Later that afternoon Vaisnavas from Navadvipadhama and Sri Godru-ma assembled in the Pradyumnakunja bower to receive spiritual instructions and blessings from Paramhansa Babaji. They were patiently seated all around him softly chanting the holy name on their tulasi-beads. Chanting and saintly association were having wonderful affect on them and spiritual emotions started welling up inside them their eyes brimmed with tears and they called out --'O my Lord Ganranga Nityananda --'Ah my Lord, husband of Mother Sita', --'all glories to Sacinandana, son of Mother Saci'. They discussed with each other Krsna conscious topics. Some of them circumambulated tulasi devi and greeted each other with prostrated obeisances. Just then Vaisnava dasa arrived on the scene. He first circumambulated tulasi devi, and then fell to the ground rolling in the dust tread by the hallowed feet of the Vaisnava saints. Some of the senior Vaisnavas whispered -'Is he not the Sannyasi Thakura! look at him, what a miraculous change!'

While still rolling on the ground Vaisnavadasa petitioned: today, I am indeed extremely grateful to have received the Vaisnava's lotus feet dust. By my gurudeva's mercy I have come to know full well that for the jiva, vaisnava's lotus feet dust is the only means to perfection. The pure Vaisnava's lotus feet dust, the sanctified water of his foot-bath- known as caranamrta, and remnants from his eating plate known as adharamrta are the three ingredients that constitutes the doctor's prescription against material disease (bhava-roga) as well as the prescribed patient's diet for it. Their potency is not merely restricted to act during ailings from the material disease, or nescience but reinforces even one who is cured of the material disease rewarding him with the highest bliss. My dear Vaisnava saints! pray do not think that I am making an ostentatious exhibition of my erudition, in fact my heart of late has disgorged the demon of false pride.

I was born into a brahmana family, studied all the different scriptures, finally I entered the renounced order of life. My false ego knew no bounds. But since I became attracted to the Vaisnava philosophy the seed of humility became implanted in my heart. Now, gradually by your grace, I have exorcised the arrogance born of high lineage, the prestige of material education and the vain-glory that accompanies the supreme position of the renounced order. Therefore I have

concluded that I am simply a shelterless infinitesimal soul. My life is meaningless without finding the sanctuary of the Vaisnava's lotus-feet. My birth as a brahmana, my scholarship and the renounced religious order were inexhorably dragging me into the dark vortex of illusion. I have opened up my mind to you Vaisnavas without any caprice, so now you are free to deal with me, your servant, in any way you deem fit.

Many of the Vaisnavas after hearing Vaisnavadasa's earnest con-fessions addressed him ---`O saintly soul ! We are always avari-ciously awaiting to receive the feet-dust from Vaisnavas of your stature, kindly offer it to us and make our lives worthwhile. You are the receptacle of Babaji Maharaja's divine grace, thus sanc-tify us by your association. It is stated in the Brhan-naradiya purana----
`bhaktistu bhagavad-bhakta-sangena parijayate sat-sangah prapyate pumbhah sukrtaih purvasancitaih.

"Devotional sentiments are evoked by the purifying association of advanced devotees. The jiva can come into close contact with a pure devotee only by accruing the pious results of many previous births."

We were able to attain your holy association only due to our past lives accumulated piety which fostered devotion. And now on the strength of your association we are hopeful to achieve pure devotion to the Supreme Lord."

Once these humble vaisnava exchanges amongst each other were concluded Vaisnavadasa took his place to one side of the seated assembly and enhanced it's dignity. The new chanting beads and bead-bag he carried in his hand acquired an auspicious aura. This august assembly that day accounted for another very fortunate soul in their midst. From childhood this person had studied Arabic which made him adopt the mannerisms of the ruling muslim nobility. This brought him position and prestige in the land. A resident of Navadirpa he belonged to a higher stock of brahmanas inheriting vast landed property: he had become an expert in the art of diplomancy and politics. For many years he had exploited to his own advantage his position of power and enjoyed it's benefits, but happiness still eluded him.

As a last resort he began to chant the holy name. Early in life, when still a young boy he was taught Indian classical music by expert exponents from Delhi. This he thought qualified him to take lead in kirtana' singing sessions. Although the vaisnavas were not fond of the typical palace - court classical touch in his singing of `Kirtanas', oblivious of this he interpolated these classical tunes in kirtana in an attempt to parade his muses . He would stare at their faces to record their responses. He continued in this manner for some days . Quite suddenly one day he started a feeling pleasure in singing the holy name. Finally he took up residence in a Vaisnavas house in Sri Godruma to enable him to participate in kirtana with the vaisnavas of Sri Navadirpa dhama.

Today , he accompanied by his landlord, he to joined the other vaisnavas in the woody bowers of `Pradyumna kunj: Sitting there he was keenly observing how the vaisnava's behaved with humility with each other. He also attentively listened

to Vaisnavadasa's talk. Certain doubts had welled up in his mind. He was already an eloquent speaker so without hesitation he boldly addressed the assembly. He enquired---"The religious scripts of Manu and other smrtis have described the brahmanas as the highest class of men in the social order. They have prescribed the chanting of gayatri mantra and other prayers at least thrice a day (tri-sandhya and vandana) as the brahmana's daily , as well as eternal religious duties. If that be so then why are the activities of the Vaisna-vas opposed to these religious duties?

Vaisnavas are not fond of dialectics. Had this question been raised by caste brahmanas who are known to be argumentative, they would have declined to answer and avoid confrontation. But in this case since the enquirer was devotionally inclined and a singer of `kirtana's everyone conceded that if Sri Paramhansa Babaji answered the question it would very much satisfy the assembly. Babaji Maharaja respectfully heard the unanimous decision of the Vaisnavas. He first offered prostrated obeisances to the assembly and began to speak---`dear exalted vaisnavas, if you have no objections than let the stalwart Vaisnavadasa, tackle this ques-tion, exhaustively" . Everyone approved of this suggestion.

Vaisnavadasa felt very elated listening to his guru's instruc-tions and with due humility he began to deliberate ---`I am an extremely fallen soul in dire conditions. It would be precocious of me to speak anything in this learned and august assembly, yet I cannot contravene my guru's command. I have decided that what-ever knowledge I have received by way of nectarean instructions from my guru's lotus lips I shall sincerely strive to recapitu-late from memory'. He then walked up to Paramhansa Babaji and smeared the dust from his lotus feet all over his body and head.

Standing erect he continued his dissertation ---`Let the Supreme Personlity of Godhead Sri Krsna Caitanya who is the embodiment of divine bliss: whose bodily effulgence is brahman and `paramatma' or Supersoul . His partial manifestation: who is the ultimate source of all partial and full blown expansions of the absolute Lord inspire us with superior intelligence. Religious books of Manu and such others are corollaries of the Vedas and are held in high esteem as the law books for the human society that define authorised and unauthorised actions. Human nature is divided into two states regulated and spontaneous (vaidhi and raganuga). As long as man's consciousness is under the influence of `maya', it will indeed remain in the vaidhi stage. Once the consciousness shakes off the shakles of `maya' it passes out of `vaidhi' and manifeets its `raganuga ' nature . The `raganuga' state of consciousness is man's original and pure condition---it is in-nate, transcendental and free from all material inerbrieties. The pure spirit soul's involvement with matter is dissolved only by Lord krsna's desire: but till as such time Lord Krsna does not desire it, jiva's material entanglement is merely in the process of gradually metamorphosing towards emancipation. In this condi-tion the jiva, who is althought by nature liberated has factually has not fully attained liberation. When jiva is actually liberat-ed his `ragatmika'nature , or pure spontaneous spiritual

senti-ments become self manifest as a tangible truth.

The residents of the spiritual realm of Vraja are by nature `ragatmika'. Jivas who are gradually striving towards emancipation take shelter of the `ragatmika' nature and become `raganugas'. For the jiva this is a coveted and excellent position. Because as long as this position eludes the jiva his consciousness remains en-grossed in the illusory material entanglement. The ignorant conditioned jiva interprets his material attachment which is due to close and habitual contact with it as his innate, original pro-clivity. At this stage he has not yet developed spontaneous spiritual attraction for the supra-mundanstate. His consciousness becomes deeply implicated in the attitudes of `me' and mine in relating with matter.

In a state of consciousness that dictates---`this is my body and I am this body , affection towards persons and objects that facilitates luxury and comfort to this body and hate towards persons and objects that hinders these luxuries are normal reactions. Sucked into this whirlpool of duality the foolish jiva expresses love or hate on the physical, social and regulative planes. He discriminates between friend and foe--- trifles over matter. Unnecessarily he grooms affection for wealth and women, thus chaining him to the see-saw routine of happiness and distress. This is known as `samsara, or material life. Attachment to this wheel of `samsara' makes the jiva transit through different phases of birth, death, experiencing the results of actions, success and failure.

Thus the conditioned jiva finds spiritual involvement a noisome burden. He cannot realise what in truth is spiritual life. Alas ! he forgets that spiritual activities are his inherent preoccupations and eternal nature. He becomes so mesmerised by mundane attraction that although he is an infinitesimal part of the Supreme Absolute he witnesses his own disgrace. Most people caught in the wheel of `samsara' do not consider this misery an affliction. For the enthralled `jiva ; what to speak of attaining the `ragatmika' nature even the `raganuga' nature is totally alien to him. Sometimes by the power of the saints mercy `raganuga' nature appears in the jiva's heart. Therefore `raganuga' nature is very rare and almost impossible to attain. Samsara, or material life is deprived of this rare state of existence.

The Supreme Lord is omniscient and Unlimitedly benevolent. He saw that the jiva's imprisoned in the clutches of `maya' were being deprived of a direct perception of the transcendental nature. Therefore he considered the possible means for their ultimate good. How can the jiva's mesmerised by `maya' best recollect their lost Krsna consciousness. Association of saintly souls enlightens the jiva's about their real identity that of being Lord krsna's eternal servant. But there are no specific rules for associating with saints, hence how can it be expected that it can automatically happen or for that matter be even beneficial to others if it should happen. Therefore for the greater good of the people in general the introduction of a regulative spiritual discipline (vidhimarg) became imperative. Thus by the Supreme Lord's benign grace the scriptures appeared: the brilliant sun

of scripture, fathered by the Supreme Lord himself, has a Crisen in the expansive sky like heart of culture to disseminate religious rules and instructions amongst all living entities.

At the very first came the Vedas. The Vedas were ordained to be divided in three sections : karma, or fruitive activities, jnana, or empirical knowledge and 'bhakti', or loving devotion to the Supreme Lord. Jivas, deluded by 'maya', are in varying degrees of conditioning. Some are in deep ignorance, others slightly knowledgeable, still others fairly well educated about a wide range of subjects , and so on. Commensurate to the person's level of intelligence the scriptures have offered him specific instructions. This is defined as the jiva's right , or eligibility (adhikara) . This adhikara is as numerous as the jivas themselves. Yet on the consideration of their salient symptoms these rights are grouped in three categories: karma-adhikara, jnana-adhikara, prema-adhikara. These categories are also specified in the Vedas. The Vedas have constructed the various rules and regulations, or vidhi, and have ascertained the do's and don't's defining the parameters of the jiva's three rights . This vidhi it is described as 'vaidha-dharma: or regulative religious principles. The attitude that urges the jiva to embrace 'vaidha-dharma' is his 'vaidhi' nature, or love of discipline. One who is bereft of this characteristic is an unruly, uncultured being. Their kind is always pledged to illicit, sinful activities. They are ostracised by the Vedas and condemned as 'mlecchas'.

The three categories of rights described in the vedas has been elaborated upon by the wise sages and handed down to us as the 'samhita' scriptures. They form the vedic corollary literatures. Great vedic pundits like Manu has delineated the 'karma-adhikara' in twenty religious treatise. The philosophers have explained 'jnana-adhikara' in books dealing with logic and empirical analysis. The great sages -- authors of the puranas and of the sattvik tantric treatise have conclusively delved on the principles of 'bhakti' and its practical application. All these literatures are very much a part of the vedas. The young and inexperienced philosophers who are students of the vedic scriptures often turn a blind eye to the very quintessence of all the vedic scriptures and instead get carried away by a small segment of the vedas . They praise it in a manner which places it to occupy the highest pedestal in vedic conclusions there by hurting many an unwary researcher down to the pit of polemics and doubts.

The Bhagavad Gita formulates the marvellous conclusion of all these scriptures. A research into it reveals that if 'karma', or fruitive work does not aim at 'jnana', or empirical knowledge 'karma' is rendered impotent, fit only to be rejected. Similarly if both 'karma' and 'jnana' do not culminate in 'bhakti yoga', or they must also be discarded on the grounds of becoming heretical practices. Therefore the Vaisnava conclusion based on the vedic teachings is that 'karma-yoga', 'jnana-yoga' and 'bhakti-yoga' are in truth constitute the same path of yoga; or process of spiritual elevation. For the conditioned soul the initial step towards self-realisation begins with him taking up 'karma', or fruitive work. Later he is promoted to 'karma-yoga', or the renunciation of fruitive results, then to 'jnana-yoga' and

finally to devotional service, or bhaktiyoga ! Unless the deluded jiva is not pointed out and properly explained any one of these levels he is unable to reach the highest platform of that of 'bhakti-yoga'.

Exactly what is 'karma'? Any endeavour, be it physical or mental, carried out to sustain life is 'karma'. 'Karma' is of two kinds : auspicious and inauspicious. Auspicious 'karma' begets auspicious results. While inauspicious 'karma' brings inauspicious results to the jiva. Another name for inauspicious 'karma' is 'papa', (sin), or 'vikrama' (perverted unscriptural activities). Abstaining from auspicious work is 'akarma'. Both 'vikarma' and 'akarma' are bad. Only auspicious work is good. Auspicious work is of three sorts : nitya (daily, eternal), naimittika (periodic) and 'kamyā' (desirable). 'Kamyā-karma' is shamefully selfish hence is considered plebian. Whereas the virtues of both 'nitya-karma' and 'naimittika-karma' are praised in the scriptures. The scriptures, after deliberating on what the good and bad aspects are, have concluded that only 'nitya', 'naimittika' and 'kamyā' are in truth make up 'karma' and indeed, not 'akarma' or 'vikarma'. And since 'kamyā-karma' has been rejected, it being dispensable, then only 'nitya-' and 'naimittika-karma' really fit the descriptions of karma.

The definition of 'nitya-karma' is, activities which are beneficial for the body, mind, community and life-after are known as nitya-karma. It is everyone's duty to execute it. When an activity begins as a motivated action and gradually becomes a regulated responsibility it is termed 'naimittika-karma'. Daily rites like 'sandhya', (chanting gayatri thrice a daily) 'vandana' (chanting of vedic prayers); using righteous means to protect society and physical health, following the path of truthfulness are all considered 'nitya-karma'. Offering of oblations and performing others rites for the satisfaction of the departed souls of parents; executing penances to counteract sinful reactions and so on are 'naimittika-karma'.

To ensure that nitya and naimittika karma are properly performed the compilers of scriptures have closely studied the characteristics and natural propensities of human beings, and so towards reaching this objective they have formulated a system of life known as the 'varnasrama-dharma'. The essence of this system is that since the human beings are endowed with volition they are grouped in four categories as per their nature as : brahmana, ksatriya, vaisya, sudra. The material conditions and social status they opt for to go through life, are also of four kinds known as 'asrama'; they are--brahmachari, grahastha, vanaprastha and sannyasa. Those who are addicted to akarma and vikrama are the outcastes ostracised from the four religious and social orders of 'varnasrama'-system.

The religious orders or castes are determined by a person's nature, birth, actions and qualifications. When the order is decided by birth alone then the purport and purpose is defeated. The 'asramas', or social statuses are ascertained by the fact whether a person is : single or unmarried, married, rejected the marital

arrangements and staying away from wife and severed all worldly ties with family and friends. A brahmachari is unmarried; a grhastha is married and living with his wife; a vanaprastha is disinterested in family affairs, and a sannyasi is disgusted with material life. The sannyasi ashrama is certainly the most elevated of the four. The brahmana on the other hand is the best amongst the four religious orders.

The crest jewel of all scriptures--the Srimad Bhagavatam has described---

“varnanamasramanam ca janma-bhumi-anusarinihasana prakrtayo nram nicainir-
ca-uttamottamahsamo damastapah saucah santosah ksantir-arjjavammad-bhaktis
ca daya satyam brahma-prakrtaya-stvimah tejo balam dhrtih sauryyam
titiksaudyam-udyamah sthairyam brahman-yam aisvryam ksatra prakrtaya-
stvimah astikyam dana-nistha ca adambho brahma-sevanam
atusthirarthopacayarvaisya prakrtaya stvimah susrusanam dvijagavam devanam ca
apy mayaya tatra labdhe-na santosah sudra-prakrtaya stvimah asaucamanrtam
steyam nastik-yam suska-vigraha kamah krodhas ca tarsas ca svabhavo'ntyava-
sayinam ahimsa satyamasteyama-kama-krodha-lobhata bhuta-priya-hiteha ca
dharmo'yam sarvavarnikah.

(S.B.Canto 11 Ch.17.text 15-21)

“Corresponding to the specific part of the social anatomy of varna and ashrama a man appears in, his high or low propensities are formed. The loins and legs are the lower anatomy, the sudra varna and grhastha-ashrama are produced from here, hence the sudra varna and grhastha-ashrama are afflicted with a lowly nature.

The brahminical characteristics are :--tranquility, self-control, austerity, purity, always satisfied, forgiving, simplicity, devoted to God, pained at others suffering, truthful.

The ksatriya's nature is: ---valourous, strong, patient, undaunted, tolerant, noble, enthusiastic, stable, wealthy.

The vaisya's symptoms are:-faith in God, charitable, straight forwardness, serving the brahmanas, acumen in handling matter and money.

The sudra's qualities are:-to serve without deceit the demigods brahmanas, and cows; to be satisfied from the income obtained from such service.

The characteristics of those who are outcastes are as follows :
impure, untruthful, dishonest, agnostic, quarrelsome, lusty, angry, greedy for material things.

The principles that must be emulated by all religious and social orders are of non-violence, truthfulness, honesty ; freedom from lust, anger and greed; endearing all living entities and benevolent to everyone."

I refrain from translating these slokas since I am in an august assembly of devotees and all of you are able to comprehend its imports. I simply want to get one point across that the system of varna and asrama is the foundation on which a civilized society can stand. To the degree the varnasrama system is not in practice in a particular country irreligiosity is prominent there to that extent.

Let us now analyse the two terms --`nitya-karma' and `naimittika-karma'. A deep probe into the essence of the scriptures reveal that these two terms relating to `karma' are never referred to in a purely spiritual sense but only as a prop or a secondary means. Expressions like ---`nitya-dharma', (eternal religion) `nitya-karma'(eternal unmotivated spiritual duties), `nitya-tattva' (eternal spiritual principle) `nitya-satya' (eternal truth) are used only to describe jivas pure and transcendental state of consciousness and cannot be used for any other purpose .

The use of the term `nitya' previously was to denote a type of fruitive activity .It became necessary so as to give someone in material life an incling into the endlessness of eternity and the absolute. `Karma, or fruitive action , can never be eternal. Only when `karma', by the process of `karma-yoga'(renunciation of results) , seeks out jnana (empirical research for the truth) and `jnana' in turn sublimates to `bhakti' (devotional service) can `karma' and `jnana' be described as `nitya', but solely in a figurative manner. The brahmana's `sandhya-vandana' has therefore been termed `nitya-karma' only because these physical and psychi-cal activities directs one from a backward position towards pure devotion, or bhakti, Since `bhakti' is the eternal religion and any path, starting from whatever backward point helps to identify it , may also be called `nitya' or eternal .Though in truth it is not eternal. This is known as the `upacara ', or being instrumen-tal.

Purposeful reveiwng will reveal that as far as the jiva is concerned cultivating unalloyed love for Lord Krsna is the only nitya-karma, or eternal activity. The appropriate term for this is `cid-anusilana', or reseaching into the Absolute Spiritual being . Any practice that can be pressed into use in order to achieve this objective is an intermediary of `nitya-karma' (eternal spiritual duties). Hence if for this reason it was given the appellation `nitya' it is not a mistake. In a pedantic sense it is better to describe it as `naimittika' rather than `nitya'. `Karma' or fruitive activity including it's two divisions--`nitya', and `naimittika' is merely a means and not an absolute principle.

The analysis of truth asserverates that searching for the abso-lute transcendental reality is the only eternal religion (nitya-dharma) of the jiva, all other religious are `naimittika'(periodic or temporary). Varnasramadharmas, astanga-yoga (path of eight fold mystic yoga) sankhya (speculative and deductive knowledge) tapasya (ansterity) are all `naimittika'. Hypothetically if jiva was not in a conditioned state, engaged in matter , then all these religious practices would have been rendered redundant . In fact jivas conditioned state is causal. It is the cause that created all these religious duties and lent credence to them . Factually they are `naimittika'

dharma, or temporary religious practices.

The brahmanas superior status in society, the sandhya and vandana rites and his final gesture of superannuation from fruitive work in tandem with his acceptance of the renounced order of sannyasa are all `naimittika dharmas'. These religious rituals have been very eloquently eulogised in the scriptures as holding a high pedestal in the ladder of spiritual elevation. Yet in comparison to `nitya karma' (eternal spiritual duties) they are offered a humble station. As this verse from Srimad Bhagavatam will show:--

`viprad-dvi-sad guna-yutad-aravinda-nabhapadaravinda-vimukhat svapacam varistham manye tad-arpita -mano- vacane-hitartha pra-nampunati sa kulam na tu bhurimanah'.

(SB 7/9/10)

The twelve qualifications of a brahmana are as follows: truthful-ness, self-control, austerity, unmaliciousness, modesty, tolerance, non-enviousness, expert in conducting sacrifices, charitable, patient, studies the Veda, observes religious vows . A brahmana of this calibre is indeed worshipable anywhere in the world, but in spite of possessing such attributes if he is bereft of devotion to the Supreme Godhead , Krsna then a candala devotee ---an outcaste, lowborn devotee is certainly superior to him.

The purport of this verse is that if a lowborn candala first purifies himself by associating with saintly souls and embraces the transcendental path of devotional service (to krsna) which is jiva's nityakarma (eternal spiritual duty) then he is far superior to a brahmana (by birth) who has rejected the search for the Absolute Truth (krsna), or `nitya karma', and instead has busied himself with `naimittika-karma'.

We find two varieties of human beings in this world:- uditaviveka (awakened consciousness) and anuditaviveka (slumbering consciousness). The second variety of humans are in great majority in the world. The first type (uditaviveka) are a rarity.

Amongst the second variety (anuditaviveka) of humans the brahmanas are certainly the most advanced and the prescribed religious practices for this caste like sandhya-vandana etc (nitya-karma) are foremost among all other religious practices .

Another appellation for uditaviveka is `vaisnava'. The `vaisnavas' demeanor therefore is naturally quite different from that of persons who are with anuditaviveka. Although different the vaisnava's behavior does not affront the religious tenets of persons with anuditaviveka knowing that these laws are meant to discipline them. The essence of all the scriptures are the same. Persons possessing

shumbering consciousness find themselves rigid-ly obedient to the simple, extraneous and fractional instructions of the scriptures. Persons of awakened consciousness embrace the deeper scriptural purports as their benign friend. The rituals and executions may differ but the purports remain the same. To the inexperienced eye of a layman the activities of a person in awakened consciousness may seem contrary to the social norms but in essence they are not.

The view from the position of being in awakened consciousness is different, they consider that the instructions regarding `naimit-tika-dharma' are apt for the general populace, but in the fact is `naimittika-dharma' is incomplete, plebian, diluted and evanes-cent.

Naimittika-dharma in practice is devoid of direct , transcenden-tal activities. On the surface it looks as if one is acting on the transcendental plane , but factually it makes one take up mundane duties which are in pursuance of transcendental activi-ties, and it merely provides the means to approach the transcen-dental goal. Once the means delivers the goal it strives for, it becomes obsolete. Hence the means is not a complete paradigm in itself , ---but simply a fraction of the way towards reaching the goal. Likewise naimittika-dharma can never be the complete way . For example the brahmana's sandhya, vandana rituals are like his other religious duties . They are temporary and dictated by stringent stipulations. It is impossible to conduct these duties cursorily and without rigidity.

At a later stage after long steady adherence to rules and regula-tions , when one comes in the circle of saintly association and is thus purified , he develops spiritual taste for the transcen-dental activity of chanting the holy name. At this juncture his duties of sandhya-vandana are superceded. The chanting of the holy name is a cent percent and absolute transcendental activity. Sandhya vandana are just the means that helps elevate one to accept his prime duty of that of chanting , it can never become an absolute spiritual dharma . Although `naimittika dharma' is appreciated because it shows one the way to spiritual elevation nevertheless it is in itself, inef-fectual and adulterated. Only the absolute spiritual principle is desirable and progressive.

Both matter and cohabiting with matter is undesirable for the jivas. `Naimittika-dharma' is supported by a plethora of mundane principles and practices. In fact they are capable of giving only such extraneous benefits as to keep the people simply enthralled in the mundane nature , making them believe that they cannot exist without such fringe perquisites. For example a brahmanas worship of the Supreme Lord is certainly very beneficial but the fact that he arrogates as being superior to all other jivas , deprecates his act of worship and offers him insignificant reli-gious benefits.

The practices in the eight fold yoga system endows the yogi with vibhuti or mystic

power . It is a rather inferior result and is very inauspicious for the jivas. Both bhukti (sense enjoyment) and `mukti (salvation) are inseparable from `naimittika dharma'. If one can escape their clutches then he can facily approach the ultimate goal of life, namely the transcendental path of devotional service. Therefore for the jivas , `naimittika-dharma' contains a major portion of irrelevant activities and their concomitant results.

Naimittika-dharma is impermanent. It cannot be practiced as an eternal religion under all the different conditions jiva has to go through. The brahminical religious duties of a brahmana, or the Vedic duties of statecraft ship of the Ksatriya and so on are discarded with the termination of the body which is considered as the immediate cause and reason for earthly duties. After being born as a brahmana a living entity may receive a very low birth in his next life as a `candala' or dog-eater. Therefore, the nai-mittika-dharma prescribed for the brahmana, is not applicable to the low class candala as his `svadharma', or specific innate religion. The use of the term `svadharma' in this instance is merely figurative. In every new birth the living soul changes his `svadharma' but never his `nitya-dharma', or eternal spiritual duties which remains constant.

If I was to be questioned as to what is Vaisnava-dharma my terse reply is:-- it is jiva's eternal religion, or nitya-dharma. In a liberated state the Vaisnava devotee engages in the transcendent-tal activity of unalloyed devotional service, or love of God in pure Krsna consciousness. When still in a conditioned state and under the influence of material nature the vaisnava devotee maintaining an awakened consciousness (udita-viveka), pursues transcendental devotional service. He accepts from the material world everything which is condusive to spiritual activity and rejects everything that is detrimental.

His actions are not stultified by an over regard for scriptural slipulations of does and donts. He appreciates and executes any scriptural regulation that enhances his Krsna consciousness. But if they are deterrents then he discards them. The Vaisnava devo-tees are the jewels of the earth. They are everyone's well- wishing friend. They bring good fortune to this world. I beg humbly to offer these points for consideration to this august assembly of vaisnavas. Also kindly exonerate me from my mistakes.

Vaisnavadasa offered his prostrated obeisances to the gathering of devotees and sat down demurely to one side. His dissertation had an amaging impact on the gathering: They were moved to pro-fuse tears and spontaneous praise for Vaisnavadasa. The whole village reveberated with sounds in of his enlogy.

The inquisitive brahmana singer tacitly acknowledged the esoteric truths contained in Vaisnavadasa's talk. Of course, some of the arguments produced doubts in his mind. However, the seed of faith for the Vaisnava dharma become lodged deeper into his heart. He stood up and with folded palms spoke out

aloud---`dear respected audience, I do not claim be a vaisnava, yet by constantly hearing the holy name I have become a vaisnava. If all of you could kindly enlighten me with some valuable instructions then I can dissipate many doubts clouding my mind.

Sri Premadasa Babaji Maharaja feeling compassion for the brahmana replied---`please try to associate with Vaisnavadasa as often as possible. He is erudite in all the branches of scriptures. He has studied in depth the Vedic literatures and after embracing the renounced order of Sannyasa he was residing in Varanasi. Our most beloved Lord Sri Krsna Caitanya, out of His causeless mercy, has attracted him to come to Navadvipa dham. He has diligently tu-tored himself in the Vaisnava philosophy and is now fully conver-sant in it. He has developed deep attachment and love for chant-ing."

The brahmana enquirer was Sri Kalidasa Lahiri. On hearing Babaji Maharaja's instructions he decided in his mind to accept Vaisnavadasa as his guru. He pondered---`he is a brahmana by birth and he had taken up the renounced order of life hence he is certainly eligible to instruct another brahmana. Further more, he has proven himself to be knowledgeable in Vaisnava philosophical conclusions. Therefore I can learn a lot about Vaisnavism from him. He thus approached Vaisnavadasa and prostrated himself at his feet and said---`my dear respected sir, kindly shower your grace upon me." Vaisnavadasa reciprocated by offering prostrated obei-sance to Lahari Mahasaya and replied ---`I will remain always grateful to you if you look upon me with compassion.'The spread-ing purple haze in the horizon announced the end of day. The assembly stood up and dispersed to their individual dwellings.

Lahiri Mahasaya also lived in a hut surrounded by greeneries but it was in a residential locality and a little hidden from inquis-itive eyes. The small courtyard in front of the hut was taken up by a small bower of Madhavi flower-creepers and a tiny platform for the tulasi plant. On either side of the courtyard stood two rooms. The whole area was fenced-off by strong bamboo strips. A neemtree sapling, a healthy hedge of mogra flowers and other fruit and flower trees lent unassuming splendour to this quiet niche.

Madhavadasa Babaji was its owner. Initially this Babaji was very strict in his devotional practices, later due to bad association he deviated from the path of vaisnavism. Intimate relationship with a woman had corrupted his devotional mood. To add to his shame his pecuniary conditions forced him to give out one of his rooms on rent and to go out begging. Lahiri Mahasaya was his tenant.

Lahiri Mahasaya suddenly woke up in the middle of the night. Lying awake he reviewed Vaisnavadasa's speech in his mind trying to extract out it's essence. A slight stirring outside arrested his attention. He peered outside and saw Madhavadasa Babaji talking with a woman. The woman noticed his presence and silently slipped away into the dark. Madhavadasa Babaji came and stood quietly in front of Lahiri Mahasaya hanging his head in shame.

Lahiri Mahasaya : What is this Babaji ? !

Madhavadasa Babaji's cheeks were streaked with tears and he said -- only my head ! what can I say ! Alas ! what I was before, and look at me now ! Paramhamsadasa Babaji used to respect me so much ! But now I am too ashamed to meet him.

Lahiri Mahasaya gently prodded -- why don't you explain every-thing a little more clearly so we can understand.

Madhavadasa replied---the woman you just saw was my wife before I took to the renounced life. Soon after I received initiation and left home she took up residence on the banks of the Ganga in Santipura and started living in a hut. A fairly long time passed without incidents. Once, I visited Sripat Santipura and accident-tally met her. On meeting I asked her why she had renounced family life and home. She tried to explain that she had grown disinter-ested in family life because she felt deprived of being able to serve her husband. So she decided to reside in a holy place and there maintain her life from begging and also learn about spirit-uality.

I immediately returned to Godruma without further comment. After a while she also moved to Godruma and took up residence in a pious milkman's house. My troubles began when almost daily I would meet her, somewhere or the other. The more I tried to avoid her, she on the other hand, intensified her intimacy with me. She has now built an `ashram'. Every night she waits till very late and then visits me, meticulously bringing about my downfall. I have become infamous every where. My spiritual progress has been severely reversed. I am the black sheep amongst the followers of Lord Sri Caitanya. After the incident with Chota Haridas, I am the next to be condemned of being a contemptible culprit. The sober society of Babaji's have so far not chastised me, but they do not respect any more.

Lahiri mahasaya gave him a patient hearing and cautioned --`Madhavadas Babaji, you must be very careful !' Then both re-tired to their respective rooms for the rest of the night. But for Lahiri Mahasaya sleep was elusive. His mind was swarming with thoughts. He concluded that Madhavadas Babaji had become a `bantasi'(one who eats his vomit.) He was sliding further down to depravity. Therefore it was not advisable for Lahiri Mahasaya to remain here; not so much because of bad association which he could avoid but his reputation may also be tarnised. The saintly Vaisna-vas will no longer instruct him and look upon him with respect.

In the morning Lahiri Mahasaya went to see Sri Vaisnavadasa in Pradyumna-Kunja and greeted him respectfully. He then requested him for a small space for him to live. Vaisnavadasa approached Paramhamsa Babaji with this request and was granted permission to stay in one of the corner huts. Lahiri Mahasaya made an arrange-ment with a brahmana family near by, for his daily meals.

Chapter 4

Nityadharm (eternal religion) is Another Expression for Vaisnava dharma (Vaisnavism)

The hut given to Lahiri Mahasaya was next door to Sri Vaisnavada-sa. A few jackfruit trees and mango trees near by stood as senti-nals. Skirting the sides were saplings of petite areca, or betel-nut. In the centre of the courtyard lay a large circular platform. A sacred monument from the past, it was there since the time Sri Pradyumna Brahmachari took up residence here. Vaisnavas have been circumambulating and offering prostrated obeisances to this platform, affectionately named 'Surabhi-cabutara', for many many years.

It was a late evening of the dark fortnight Vaisnavadasa was in his hut sitting on a straw mat and chanting the holy name. A flickering lamp feebly probed the black shadows from Lahiri Mahasaya's room. He saw a dark, and shining object, more like a serpent, lying coiled in front of Vaisnavadasa's door. Lahiri Mahasaya got up in a flash and armed himself with a strong stick, brightened the flame, picked up the lamp and moved towards the snake. On stepping outside he found the serpent had disappeared. Lahiri Mahasaya whispered a caution to Vaisnavadasa--`please be very careful, a snake has entered your hut."

Vaisnavadasa replied placidly--`Lahiri Mahasaya why do you bother about snakes. Kindly come inside and sit down without fear." He came inside hesitatingly and sat down on the mat. His mind could not be at rest. He said--`In this respect our Santipura is far better; it's a township so no danger of snakes. Nadia is infested with snakes, and especially Godruma because all around there are woods----slightly inconvenient for the urbanised folks to live here.

Sri Vaisnavadasa Babaji placated him saying--Lahiri Mahasaya, it is absolutely unnecessary to agitate your mind with such trivialities. You must have heard of the Pariksit Maharaja episode from Srimad Bhagavatam. He totally ignored the threat of impending death from a snake bite. With a placid mind he absorbed himself in Lord Krsna's nectarean pastimes as narrated by the great devotee Sri Sukadeva Gosvami thus providing him with divine bliss. Snakes cannot even get to the jiva's spiritual body what to speak about biting him. Only the serpent of separation from the topics of Krsna consciousness causes the biggest harm to the body.

This material body is impermanent and will have to be discarded one day. Only physical labour is preordained for this material tabernacle. When, by krsna's will, this body decays then nothing can save it. But as long as the body is not destined to die then it cannot be harmed even if one sleeps next to a snake. Therefore one

of the symptoms of a Vaisnava is that he is free from the fears of snake bites and such. If the heart is constantly petrified with such forebodings then how will you dovetial your love towards the Supreme Lord's lotus feet. Simply abandon your fear of snakes and the attempt to kill the one you just saw.

Lahiri Mahasaya spoke with deference --`respected sir, your words of wisdom has driven away all fears from my heart. I now know that only when I elevate my heart and thoughts can I become eligible for self realisation. Those great sages who dwell in caves and meditate on the Supreme Lord in loving devotion are unafraid of wild beasts. Infact they are fearful of associating with worldly-minded people but peacefully coexist with forest creatures.

Sri Vaisnavadasa Babaji continued to preach ---`Once bhaktidevi'(pure devotional service) enters the heart, the jiva's heart is automatically elevated. He then becomes dear to all the living entities in the world. A pure devotee is always loved and revered by both the saints and worldly minded people. Therefore man must strive to become a Vaisnava.

Lahiri Mahasaya immediately replied--`sir you have evoked a strong faith in me for `nitya-dharma': you have convinced me of many similarities existing between `nitya-dharma' and vaisnavad-hama. But somehow I am still in doubt about the parity of vaisna-vadhama with nitya dharma I beg you to kindly explain the principles to me exhaustively.

Sri Vaisnavadasa Babaji began to speak ---`In the name of `vais-nava dharma' two seperate dharmas (religions) are being practiced in the world. The suddha vaisnava dharma pure and proper, and the perverted viddha-vaisnava dharma. The suddha-vaisnava dharma is considered to be a singular spiritual principle but is divided in four sections according to the different devotional humours, or rasas, They are: dasya(servitorship), sakhya (friendship), vatsa-lya (parental) and madhurya (conjugal). In truth vaisnava dharma is one and is also known as nitya dharma, or para dharma (the supreme religion). The Vedic aphorsm---`yaj-jnate sarvam vijnatam bhavati' (meaning : by realising Him in truth everything becomes known) factually describes the suddha vaisnava dharma, which you will come to know gradually.

Viddha-vaisnava dharma (impure vaisnava dharma) is of two varie-ties: karma-viddha-vaisnava dharma (suddha-vaisnava-dharma pol-luted by fruitive work) and jnana-viddha-vaisnava dharma (suddha-vaisnava dharma contaminated by empirical knowledge). According to the opinion of the smartas (followers of the smrti scritures) wherever there is stress on rules and methodology in the vaisnava-dharma it is known as karma viddha-vaisnava-dharma. The philosphy of this branch of vaisnava-dharma is that even if one is initiated with the vaisnava mantra he worships the univer-sal form of Lord Visnu as a part of the religious

rituals. Their philosophy says that although Lord Visnu is the controller of all the demigods. He is nevertheless a part of the rituals and Him-self subjected to the reactions of fruitive or ritualistic results. In other words Lord Visnu is under the influence of karma not that karma is subservient to the will of Lord Visnu.

Further they claim that the process of worship, devotional surrender and spiritual practices are all different rituals comprising karma. Because the law of 'karma' is the highest principle, unsurpassable by any other. The materialistic philosophers and logicians practice this brand of Vaisnavism from time immemorial.

In India such philosophers often arrogantly declare themselves vaisnavas and do not acknowledge the sincere followers of pure vaisnavism as Vaisnavas. Admittedly it is their misfortune.

Jnana-vidya-vaisnavism is also very rampant in India. In the opinion of these empiricists 'brahman', the unknowable Absolute Truth is the highest philosophical principle. They say that in order to attain the impersonal 'brahman'-realisation one must worship the personal forms of Surya (sugod), Ganesa, Sakti (Durgadevi), Siva and Lord Visnu. And when one acquires full 'jnana', or knowledge, he discards the worship of these personal forms. Finally, he achieves the impersonal brahman realisation. Many who follow this philosophy deride the pure vaisnavas. Their kind of personal worship is also known as 'panca-upasana' (worship of five deities). Worship of Lord Visnu, initiation and other rituals, mostly pertaining to Lord Visnu and sometimes may even include Radha-Krsna worship, but still it can never be called as suddha-vaisnava-dharma.

If these varieties of vidya-vaisnavism is separated from the vaisnava-dharma, what remains is suddha-vaisnava-dharma which is the real Vaisnava dharma. Due to the ill influence of Kaliyuga many people cannot ascertain suddha-vaisnava-dharma and mistake the vidya-vaisnava-dharma as the real vaisnava-dharma.

As per the conclusions of Srimad Bhagavatam man's spiritual quest branches off in three categories of nature: brahman-nature (impersonal brahman), paramatma nature (supersoul) and bhagavat nature (Supreme Personality of Godhead). Some of the persons with a proclivity for brahman veer towards impersonal realisation and they embrace the path of panca-upasana to achieve their goal. The jnana-vidya Vaisnavism is born out of this practice.

In the category of paramatma nature, some are attracted to pursue the eight fold path of mystic yoga and meditate on the supersoul within the heart. This philosophy propagates that the worship of Lord Vishnu, initiation into the Vishnu mantra and meditation are all part of the rituals of karma; karma-vidya-vaisnava dharma arises out of this philosophy.

Due to the 'bhagavat'-nature the fortunate jivas develop an attraction for unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Their worship of the Supreme

Lord is not a part of the process of either karma or jnana---but of the principle of pure devotion. This philosophy then is the real vaisnava dharma, or suddha-vaisnava-dharma. In the statement of Srimad Bhagavatam--`vadanti tat tattva vidadas tattvam yaj jnanam advayam brahmrti paramatmeti bhagavaniti sabdyate. (S.B.1/2/11).

(Learned transcendentalists who know the Absolute Truth call this nondual substance Brahman, paramatma or Bhagavan). Please observe that the bhagavat principle surpasses both the principles of brahman and paramatma to become the highest principle. This bhagavat principle is pure Visnu-tattva, or the category of pure transcendence, the absolute nature. The followers of this principle are the pure souls. Their nature is described as `bhakti' or pure devotion. The numerous appellations of Hari bhakti (devotion to the Supreme Lord Hari) are suddha-vaisnava-dharma, nitya-dharma, jaiva-dharma (the pure souls eternal religion) bhagavat-dharma, paramartha-dharma (religion that leads to the highest realisation) para-dharma etc. All the religious rites and activities emanating from both `brahman nature' and `paramatma nature' are defined as `naimittika' (temporal). The search for impersonal brahman realisation is motivated by material desire hence it is temporal, or naimittika meaning not eternal. A person suffering from the material conditioned state is eager to sever his bondage. He makes this struggle against material bondage a reason or motive to take up the path of impersonal realisation, or naimittika dharma, thus it is not an eternal path. Jivas who desire for the subtle enjoyment available in the bliss of `sa-madhi' (total meditative absorption) in paramatma dharma (super-soul) make this subtle happiness a motive, and embrace the process of naimittikadharma. Hence even the paramatma dharma is also temporary, leaving only bhagavat dharma as the sole, eternal dharma.

Lahiri Mahasaya gave patient audience to his words and said---" dear master! kindly explain to me what is pure Vaisnavism. It is rather late in life that I am receiving spiritual guidance from someone who kindly accepted me in the shelter of your lotus feet. I have heard that even after taking initiation, though from an undeserving person, when an aspirant meets a bonafide spiritual preceptor he must again accept, and this time, a proper spiritual initiation and scriptural instructions. For the past few days I have been taking to heart your delineation of scriptural conclusions. They have made me develop faith in the Vaisnava thought. Therefore, out of compassion for me, first kindly instruct me in vaisnava theism, then initiate me into the vaisnava fold and purify me.

A trifle unsettled by the statement, Vaisnavadas Babaji said ---"dear sir, I will indeed try to teach you everything within the purview of my realisation but I am not eligible to become an initiating guru. However, for now, just school yourself in the pure Vaisnava theology. The original and primeval spiritual preceptor of the universe, Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, has declared that Vaisnava theology has three fundamental principles: sambandha (inter-relational), abhidheya (denotative) and prayojana (prime necessity). One who is realised in this knowledge and disciplines his life accordingly, is a pure vaisnava, an unalloyed

devotee of the Lord.

The sambandhatattva or the inter-relational principle has three main thought forms: the material creation, or the illusory energy maya; the jiva, meaning the servitor and the controlled; finally the Personality of Godhead who is the Supreme Controller. The Supreme Lord is one and unsurpassable, omnipotent, all-attractive, the only abode of unlimited opulence and sweet tenderness (madhurya), and the only shelter for both the jiva and maya sakti (external potency). Although He is simultaneously the shelter and ultimate source of jiva and maya-sakti, He marvelously maintains His unique and full independence from everything.

The Lord's bodily effulgence, known as brahmajyoti, is situated far away from Him and manifests itself as the impersonal Brahman. His divine powers have produced the material cosmos and the jivas. He represents Himself in His creation by His partial expansion as the supersoul, or paramatma and controls it. In the section of the spiritual sky known as paravyoma or Vaikuntha, where His opulence predominates, He presides as Lord Narayana. While in Goloka Vrndavana His madhurya potency is pre-eminent and He relishes it as the Lover of the gopi damsels, the all-attractive Supreme Lord Krsna.

The Lord's expansions and escapades are eternal and endless. Nobody or nothing is even near equal to Him in anything, -what to speak of surpassing Him. All His different manifestations and pastimes are a result of His super-natural, divine powers. These transcendental powers are variagated and innumerable. However, the jiva is introduced to only three. The first of them is cid-vikrama (spiritual potency)--- all of the Lord's pastimes, or lila, are directly conducted by It. The other potency is known as jiva potency, or tathastha sakti (marginal potency) by which the jiva is created and by which he exists. Maya-sakti, or the illusory potency, is the third. This external energy manifests the mundane universe, objects, time and fruitive actions. Thus sam-bandha-tattva is the relationship between jiva and God, between God; man and the material nature and between the material nature; God and man. Complete comprehension of this truth leads to sam-bandha-jnana, or knowledge. One cannot become a true vaisnava without this knowledge.

Lahiri Mahasaya further enquired---" I have heard from vaisnavas that they are controlled by feelings and emotions and have no need for knowledge. How best can this statement be explained ? So far, even I was carefully fine tuning my feelings in chanting the holy name, I never cared for sambandha-jnana.

Vaisnavadasa Babaji replied---`cultivating and seasoning spiritual sentiments to its ultimate stage is indeed the highest goal of a vaisnava, but they must be pure. Those who consider the impersonal brahman as the final destination and try to develop `bhava', or feelings in the course of achieving it are far off the mark. Their `bhava' and spiritual endeavours are impure---it is merely a false show of the real `bhava'. A miniscule drop of pure `bhava' brings spiritual perfection to jiva, but sentimentalism further poisoned by empirical knowledge computes chronic chaos in jiva's spiritual pursuits. He who nurtures the monistic path of brahman

realisation in his heart is merely deceiving the world with attempts at 'bhakti-bhava' or spiritual feelings of devotion. Therefore the cultivation of sambandha-jnana is imperative for the vaisnava devotees.

Lahiri Mahasaya spoke in an awed voice----"Is there any truth higher than brahman ? If the Supreme Godhead is the cause of brahman then why the empirical philosophers do not discard their search for brahman and take up devotional service to the Person-ality of Godhead.

Vaisnavadasa Babaji gave a short laugh and replied---"Be he Lord Brahma, the four Kumaras, Sukadeva Gosvami, Sri Narada Muni or Lord Siva---all of them ultimately sought the supreme sanctuary of Lord Hari's lotus feet. Trying to fathom the subject more deeply Lahiri Mahasaya asked---'God is endowed with a form which presupposes limitations, then how can He be the source of the unlimited brahman ?

Babaji Maharaja replied---'One of the ingredients of this material creation called akash, or sky, is also unlimited. If this be true then does that place the unlimited brahman in a more unique position ? The Supreme Lord's divine potency, manifest as His bodily lustre, is infinite and omnipresent, yet simultaneously He accepts a definite form. Have you experience of any parallels.? It is because of this unsurpassable nature that the Personality of Godhead is superior to the brahman concept. He personifies a wonderful all-attractive quality--- complimented by omnipresence, omniscience, omnipotence, boundless compassion, the source of paramount bliss in absolute degrees. Is not such a clearly defined identity ideal ? Or do you prefer an entity who possesses no characteristics or potencies and has an impersonal, omnipresent existence ?

The truth is that brahman is impersonal manifestation of the Supreme Lord. Both the personal and the impersonal aspects of the Personality of Godhead exist harmoniously and simultaneously. Brahman is but a fraction of the Supreme Lord. Philosophically myopic persons are overwhelmed by the formless, tasteless, impersonal, inscrutable, endless aspect of the Absolute Truth. But persons who are farsighted and demand the full vista, cannot be satisfied with anything less than the complete whole--- the Absolute Truth in the entirety. The Vaisnavas are not impressed by the impersonal concept because it is contrary to the eternal theistic principle and to the edicts of pure spiritual love. The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna, is the source and shelter of both the personal and impersonal concepts, He is the shoreless ocean of sublime joy drawing to Himself all the pure souls.

L.M.---Lord Krsna took birth, grew up and performed activities and finally relinquished His body, then how can His form be eternal?

V.B.---Lord krsna's body is sat (eternal) cit (fully cognizant) and ananda (absolutely bliss). It does not experience material birth, activities, death and so on.

L.M.---Then why are there descriptions in Mahabharata and other scriptures of it ?

V.B.---The transcendental, Absolute Truth is beyond words and descriptions. The advanced, self realised souls behold the form of Lord Krsna and His pastimes on the screen of their pure con-sciousness. Any attempt to express them in words automatically becomes mundane, historical facts. Those readers who are able to extract the essence from scriptures like Mahabharata will perceive Lord krsna's pastimes as spiritual. But people of gross intelligence will view them as mundane.

L.M.---When meditating on Lord krsna's form I get the feeling in my heart as if I am being bound by time and space. Is there any method of meditation on the Lord that can overcome this ?

V.B.---Meditation is an activity of the mind. As long as the mind is not on the pure spiritual plane meditation cannot touch the divine. When mind, or consciousness becomes imbued with devotion it becomes gradually spiritualised and then the meditation is naturally transcendental. Vaisnavas who relish the bliss of serving Lord Krsna and chants his holy name cannot be influenced by the material energy. They attain the supra-mundane state. They are transported to the spiritual realm where they meditate on the Lord's daily dalliances and enjoy rendering intimate service to him.

L.M.---Please be merciful and give me a taste of that transcen-dental experience.

V.B.---First you must drive away all materialistic speculations and concepts. Then when you begin to chant the holy name incessantly, very soon that spiritual perception will start to awaken in your heart. The more you engage in debates and arguments, the mind becomes further entangled in gross profanities. Whereas if greater endeavour is made to increase the taste in chanting then conversely the material inebrieties decrease and transcendence seeps into the heart.

L.M.---My earnest desire is that you kindly tell me about it in detail.

V.B.----When the mind is unable to experience this feeling through words, it shies away. That plane can be attained only by sincere application of the transcendental process. Curb your contentious nature and chant continuously for a few days, you will find that all doubts have dissipated and all questions have ceased.

L.M.----I have now understood that if one develops faith in Lord Krsna and tastes the nectar of His holy name one attains the supreme destination. I will thoroughly learn about sambandha-jnana and take full shelter in the holy name.

V.B.---Wonderful ! yes,study sambandha-jnana properly.

L.M.---I feel I have understood the truth about the Supreme Personality of Godhead. God is the one and only highest truth. Brahman and paramatma are

subordinate to Him. He is omnipresent yet He resides in the spiritual world with a wonderful spiritual form. He is the embodiment of eternality, absolute knowledge and unlimited bliss and is the fountain head of all energies. And although He is the controller of all potencies He is driven by the urge to seek exhilaration in the company of His Hladini-sakti (pleasure potency). May I request you now to kindly tell me about the jiva principle.

V.B.---Lord Krsna possesses countless potencies, of which 'tatas-tha-sakti'(marginal energy) is one. This energy is located in the buffer region between the spiritual sky and the material nature and enjoys the benefit of close communications with both, The jiva principle , or soul , is produced from it. The jiva's form is that of an infinitesimal particle of spiritual energy. His miniscule form makes him vulnerable to come under material energy's sway. Simultaneously because of his innate spiritual status even with a slight spiritual support , he can become an eternal resident of the transcendental abode of the Lord and experience supreme joy. Jivas are of two varieties-: liberated and conditioned : The liberated jivas are citizens of the spiritual world and the conditioned jivas are imprisoned in the material world. Conditioned jivas are again of two kinds-: with awakened consciousness (udita-viveka) and those with unawakened consciousness (anudita-viveka). Human beings, who have no aspiration for self-realisation , along with the entire animal kingdom, belong to the category of unawakened consciousness , and they are also conditioned. Those jivas who have embraced the path of Vaisnavism possess awakened consciousness. This is so because besides the Vaisnavas no one is interested in spiritual emancipation. Hence the scriptures declare that service to vaisnavas and associating with them are far more superior to any other activity. Implicit faith in the scriptures inspire the udita-viveka (vaisnavas) to relish chanting the holy name, that same faith creates an eagerness to serve and associate with Vaisnavas. The jivas with unawakened consciousness have not developed enough faith in the scriptures to take up chanting the Lord's name .Their religious activities are restricted to worshipping Lord krsna's deity form in conformity with previously established family traditions and rules. Therefore their hearts lack the religious sentiment required to serve and associate with vaisnavas. L.M.----Master,I have grasped the truth about the Supreme Godhead krsna, and the jiva principle. Kindly elaborate upon the 'maya' principle.

V.B.---- 'Maya', the illusory energy is non-reality and transient. It is one among Lord krsna's energies. Its nomenclatures are inferior material energy, external energy etc. Darkness is always far away from the light; similarly maya remains at a good distance from Lord Krsna and His devotees. The maya energy has created this material world with its fourteen planetary systems , the material ingredients of earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and the false ego, or the mundane identity of this body. The conditioned jiva's gross and subtle bodies are both products of maya. Liberation removes the covering of material contamination over jiva's spiritual identity. To the extent jiva is in maya's clutches he is alienated from Lord Krsna . And to the degree he has shrugged off maya's mantle of serfdom he advances towards Krsna's lotus-feet. The material world came into existence by Lord Krsna's desire , for the jiva to exploit and enjoy it. This mundane universe is

not a permanent residence for the jiva----it is merely a prison-house that lodges him , tempo-rarily

L.M.--O Master ! Kindly enlighten me on the eternal relationship between maya,Jiva and Krsna.

V.B.--Jiva is a minute spiritual spark hence he is eternally a servant of Lord Krsna.The material nature acts as a dungeon where he is held captive.Here he can take advantage of saintly associa-tion which helps him begin the process of chanting .Then gradual-ly,by Lord Krsna's mercy,he regains his even perfected spiritual identity and relishes the sweet nectar of devotional service to the Lord , in His transcendental abode.This then is the confiden-tial truth about the eternal relationships between these three principles.How can you engage in pure devotion without this knowledge ?

L.M.--If knowledge is acquired through education and study then is it imperative to first be a scholar before one can become a vaisnavas ?

V.B.--To be a vaisnava,neither formal education nor fluency in a particular language is a must.What is essential for the jiva is to eradicate material illusion,or nescience . This can only be accomplished when he takes complete shelter at the lotus-feet of a bonafide spiritual master who is a pure vaisnava saint . He infuses the disciples heart with the knowledge of sambandha-tattva through his teachings and exemplary actions.This is the correct explanation of diksa(initiation)and siksa (spiritual instructions).

L.M.--What follows diksa and siksa ?

V.B.--One must cultivate an ideal moral character and practice Krsna consciousness.This stage of development is known as abhid-heya tattva,or the process by which one achieves the desired goal.All the scriptures , including the vedas , have repeatedly stressed the importance of this type of application and hence Lord Caitanya has termed this as the abhidheya-tattva(also mean-ing :that which needs to be done).

L.M.-(eyes brimming with tears).O master ! I take shelter at your lotus-feet.Your wonderful instructions have made me grasp the knowledge of sambandha-tattva.Concurrent to this learning process and by your mercy my previous misconceptions and so have gradual-ly disappeared.Now kindly teach me what is `abhidheya-tattva'.

V.B.--Atlast you can stop worrying !Your humble attitude is a definite indication that Lord Caitanya has blessed you.For the captive jiva in this material world , saintly association is the only recourse.The guru and saintly vaisnavas inherent people about the science of self-realisation out of their instruct compassionate nature . As a result of executing this science of devotional service he gradually

approaches the ultimate realisation--the essential truth.Devotional service to the Supreme Lord Hari is the only means (abhidheya) to achieve that ultimate goal.

L.M.--What must one do to serve the Supreme Lord Hari, i.e. engage in Hari-bhajan ?

V.B.--Engaging in bhakti , or devotional service means Hari-bhajan.Bhakti is divided into three stages--sadhana,bhava and prema.One must practice sadhana-bhakti in the beginning which then leads up to the stage of `bhava-bhakti'. When `bhava-bhakti' matures to love of Godhead it is known as `prema-bhakti'.

L.M.----please elaborate on `sadhana-bhakti'--- it's form and application.

V.B.---Srila Rupa Gosvami has extensively researched this subject in his book `Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhuh', which I will try to summarise as succinctly as possible. Sadhana-bhakti has nine limbs as enumerated in the Srimad Bhagavatam : "sravanam kirtanam visnoh smaranam padasevanamarcanam vandanam dasyam sakhyam-atmaniveda-nam."

(SB.7/5/23)

(Prahlad Maharaja said : hearing and chanting about the transcendental holy name,form,qualities, paraphernalia and pastimes of Lord Visnu, remembering them serving the lotus feet of the Lord, becoming His servant, considering the Lord one's best friend, and surrendering everything unto Him (serving Him with the body, mind and words) constitutes pure devotional service .)

Srila Rupa Gosvami has further divided these nine limbs into branches and sub branches arriving at sixty four variations. An important fact about sadhana-bhakti is that it has two divisions : vaidhi-bhakti and raganuya-bhakti. Vaidhi-bhakti has nine limbs. In raganuya-bhakti one must surrender at the lotus feet of not just any guru , but exclusively to an eternal associate of Krsna , in Vraja , known as a Vrajabasi . Serve Krsna internally (in the mind) imbued with the devotional mood of a vrajabasi. A person's level of devotion and dedication will decide his eligibility to practice one or the other form of sadhana-bhakti.

L.M. What are the criteria for eligibility in sadhana-bhakti ?

V.B. The guru judges a sincere neophyte's ability to adhere to scriptural rules and regulation . Accordingly he initiates him into the process of vaidhi-sadhana-bhakti. If and when the neo-phyte is inclined towards raganuya-bhakti then the guru guides him into the esoteric path of bhajana in raganuya-bhakti.

L.M How to discern eligibility ?

V.B A neophyte who does not possess the purified intellect or ability to grasp the

philosophical precepts of ragamaya-bhakti but is nevertheless attracted to deity worship and following scriptural injunctions is eligible for vaidhi-bhakti. Whereas someone who is desirous of worshipping and serving the Supreme Lord without having to depend on the scriptural stipulations and whose heart is naturally drawn to hari bhajana is a fit candidate for raganuya-bhakti .

L.M Revered master ! Kindly ascertain my eligibility or adhikara so that I may understand this principle. I am unable to comprehend the two concepts : vaidhi-bhakti and raganuya-bhakti .

V.B You have but to test your own heart to know your eligibility. Do you firmly believe that without strictly following the scriptural edicts worshipping and serving the Supreme Lord is not possible ?

L.M I feel there is great benefit from sadhana and bhajana (devotional service and worship) conducted according to scriptural instructions. But of late another view is strongly emerging in the mind that Hari bhajana opens up to an ocean of `rasa' which is available by sincere `bhajana', or devotional service in deep meditation.

V.B Do you see ! Scriptural injunctions are your supreme command, Hence you should embrace the path of vaidhi-bhakti. Gradually the precepts of raganuya-bhakti will begin to crystallise.

Lahiri Mahasaya could not restrain the tears which slowly began to well up . He touched Vaisnavadas Babaji's feet and said ----" O master ! with your divine wisdom initiate me according to my eligibility.

I do not want to dabble in philosophy outside my ken." Babaji Maharaja stood up and embraced him quietly indicating for him to sit down.

L.M Kindly instruct me precise the method of bhajana I should take up.

V.B Begin by seriously chanting the holy name. Among the different limbs of devotion(bhajana) chanting is the most efficacious. The holy name and the beholder of the name is one and the same. Chanting without committing offences will quickly lead to complete perfection . Take up chanting with full faith. The other branches of devotional practices are all included in chanting .They are : hearing,chanting,remembering the Lord's pastimes serving His lotus feet in meditation , worshipping His deity,offer ing prayers,becoming His servant and friend, totally surrendering to Him.

L.M O master I am eager to begin. Please shower me with your mercy.

V.B. Dear sir, please always repeat the following mantra and avoiding the offences

` hare krsna hare krsna krsna hare hare
hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare '

As Babaji Maharaj uttered the maha-mantra he gently pressed a chanting bead made of tulasi wood into Lahiri Mahasaya's hand.

Lahiri Mahasaya began to chant the maha-mantra on his new beads and felt tears of jubilation streak down his face. He said " Dear master ! I am feeling so much joy I am unable to describe it ." and collapsed at Babaji's feet.

Carefully Babaji lifted him and held him steady. After a period of stunned silence Lahiri Mahasaya said -- 'I am indeed blessed ! never have I experience such exhilaration.'

V.B Revered sir ! truly you are blessed ! You have sincerely taken shelter of the holy name.You have showered great fortune upon me too.

Lahiri Mahasaya returned to his cottage . Having received initiation into chanting , he started chanting on his new beads pushing aside all fears. Days went by in chanting,Lahiri Mahasaya now decorated his body in twelve places with vaisnavas tilaka mark-ings.He refused to eat anything other than prasadam,--food of-fered to Lord.He increased his daily chanting to two lakh(two hundred thousand) names of the Lord daily.He offered prostrated obeisances to pure vaisnavas as soon as he saw them.He began his daily routine by first offering worship to Paramhansa Babaji.He served his spiritual master Vaisnavadasa Babaji constantly and deligently.He lost all interest in trivial talks as well as and classical music.A metamorphosis took place in Lahiri Mahasaya.The new Lahiri Mahasaya was a vaisnava.

One day Lahiri Mahasaya approached Vaisnavadas Babaji,prostrated humbly before him and enquired--'O master ! what is prayojana-tattva(the principle of spiritual necessity).

V.B.--Love of Godhead,Krsna , is prayojana-tattva for the jiva.Constant sadhana(in devotional service)leads to`bhava',or the stage of experiencing spiritual sentimentsss.When`bhava'ma-tures it takes on the appellative --`prema',or love of Godhead.This then is man's eternal religion and source of supreme joy :- It is his absolute necessity.The absence of`prema'results in man's suffering,material entanglement and attachment to mat-ter.Nothing is superior to`prema'.Lord Krsna,the embodiment of transcendental Absolute Truth is subdued by `prema'alone.`Anan-da',or bliss when intensified and percolated into the essence turns to `prema'.

L.M. --(chocking with tears) Will I be ever eligible to experi-ence`prema'.

V.B. --(Firmly embracing him)Behold !In a matter of days you have elevated yourself from `sadhana-bhakti'to bhava - bhakti. Lord Krsna will soon benedict you.

These utterances from his guru had a magic effect on Lahiri Mahasaya . He began to roll in the dust in joy and exclaimed -- `Hurray ! Nothing can surpass the `guru' in importance . Alas, how foolishly I have wasted so much of my life . My `guru' has lifted me out of the dark well of materialism by his unlimited mercy.

Chapter 5 Vaidhi - Bhakti is Eternal Religion - Not Temporary

Lahiri Mahasaya had left behind a large household in Santipura . His two sons have completed their education and are well placed in their career. Candranath who is thirty five is in charge of the household and maintainance of the landed properties . He is a well qualified doctor and disinterested in spirituality , yet he is an esteemed member of the brahmana society . His success allows him to a fair crew of servants , maid - servants and guards . The second son -- Devidasa , from his childhood was academic and studied the scriptures , specialising in the branch of logic (nyaya) and smrti (vedas corollaries dealing with rituals) . He has established a small school teaching a dozen or so students and is the proud recipient of the academic degree- 'vidya- rat-na'.

The placid Santipura one day was suddenly astir with the rumour that Kalidasa Lahiri had donned the renounced attire of a Vaisna-va. It became the topic of discussion everywhere . As was usual people aired their views . Some of the cutting remarks went like this : He seemed to be doing alright till now , suddenly he's become senile ,and distruptively so !." Well ! Well ! what's possessed him ! a happy household , a respected brahmana , obedi-ent sons and wife -- what sorrows could ' ve prompted him to such an extreme recourse '?

" Such an ignominous eventuality was but natural religion and spirituality '. The righteous population condoned Lahiri Mahasaya action saying that he was truly pions because inspite of a con-tended material situation he developed the desire to take shelter of the holy name . Finally someone carried the news of these rumours to Devidas Vidyaratna .

Vidyaratna took his misgivings about these surrupticions murmurs about father to his elder brother and said -- ` It's really unfortunate what happened to father . He was living in Godruma because of it's salubrious surroundings but he has fallen into bad company . I dare not hear what's being said in this town .

Candranath contributed -- ` my brother ! some of these rumours have reached my ears . Our family is very respected but now all those rumours about father -- I can't show my face anymore . All these years we have vehemently opposed Advaita Goswami's family and philosophy and look what happened to our own family . I think we should consult mother and act as required ". That afternoon the two brothers sat down for lunch in the long sun - washed verandah on the first floor of their mansion . A widowed brahmana's young daughter was serving them looked on by the mother . Candranath said - " mother , have you heard anything about father " ?

The mother replied -- ` why ? he is quite well . He has absorbed himself in chanting -- why don't you bring him here from Nadia ? Devidas retorted mildly -- ` He may be alright but what is being batted around in public makes me shaky . I think by bringing him here we will definitely loose face in society .

A little taken aback the mother enquired -- " What is the matter with your father ? The other day I met the ladies from Advaita Goswami's house on the ganga banks and they were saying that my husband was very fortunate because the vaisnava community really respected him " .

An exasperated Devidas replied - ` Has he been honoured or has he invited calamity on us is the question . In his advanced age he should be here being served by us instead he is eating the remains of some half - naked persons in Kaupinas (loin - cloth) and smearing the good name of our reputed family . Alas ! this is the doing of Kaliyuga ; after so much intelligent research he ended up doing this ?

The mother conceded -- ` Then the best thing to do will be to bring him here and keep him in hiding . Here you can gradually and patiently try to convince him of his mistakes . Candranatha made the decision -- ` there's nothing else we can do . Devidasa , take a few men secretly to Godruma and convince father to come back " .

Devidasa spoke hesitatingly -- ` I'm sure you know that father dislikes me because he thinks I am an atheist . He may not listen to me , - it just now occurred to me .

Devidasa's maternal cousin sambhunath was known to be their father's favourite because he had served Lahiri Mahasaya satisfactorily for quite sometime . So it was decided that both Samb-hunatha and Devidasa will proceed to Godruma . A servant was immediately sent in advance to Godruma to rent a residence in a brahmana's house . Next day Devidasa and Sambhunatha started off for Godruma . They alighted from the palanquin on reaching their temporary residence in Godruma and sent off the bearers keeping back a brahmana cook and two servants .

Early that evening Devidasa and Sambhunatha walked to Pradyumna - kunj . Upon arrival they saw Lahiri Mahasaya seated on a small , square leaf - carpet on the raised platform known affectionately as the Sri - surabhi - cabutara in the middle of a wide , open courtyard . His eyes were shut and he was chanting on his

beads . Twelve bright tilaka markings decorated his body . Sambhunath and Devidasa softly padded upto him and climbing on the platform they prostrated before him in respect . Startled , Lahiri Mahasaya opened his eyes . Recognising them he said -- ` Ah ! it's you.

Sambhu . What brings you here ? And how are you Devi " ? They replied respectfully that they were both keeping well by his blessings . Lahiri Mahasaya enquired about their lunch and was told not to worry about it since they had already eaten .

Just then they heard loud utterances of the Lord's name coming from the direction of Premdasa Babaji's cottage in Madhavi - malati - mandapa . Vaisnavadasa Babaji came out of his cottage and asked Lahiri Mahasaya the reason for the loud chanting from Paramhamsa Babaji's quarters . Both of them went to investigate and saw many visiting vaisnavas were circumambulating Premdasa or Paramhamsa Babaji accompanied by loud chanting . They also joined the rest and after offering prostrated obeisances all of them sat down on the mandapa . Devidasa and Sambhunatha sidled to the back of the assembly and sat down -- like cranes amongst swans .

One of the visiting vaisnavas said -- " We have come from the township of Kantaka - nagar . Our main purpose for coming is to see holy sites of Navadvipa - Mayapur and take the feet - dust of Paramhamsa Babaji " .

Paramhamsa Babaji felt extremely embarrassed and softly said -- ` I am but a fallen wretch and you have come to sanctify me ' . Soon it became known that these vaisnavas were very talented in sing-ing and glorifying the Lord . Mrdangas and Kartalas were brought and handed over to them . A clear , melodious voice of an elderly vaisnava started singing the following song :-

O lord Sri krsna - Caitanya , Nityananda Prabhu , Gadadhara , Advaita Acarya and the devotees of Lord Gauranga . O great vais-nava master , you are an ocean of compassion kindly shower this degraded soul profusely with your benediction . Distribute your kindness , O preceptor to save those who are inebriated with delusions of high parentage , learning , wealth , followings etc . My earnest prayer of you is that you reform my greed for wealth and women and the yearning for name and position . Grant me O sublime servitor of Krsna the taste in chanting , compassion for the living entities , the feeling of jubilation in vaisnava association . The shade of your lotus - feet is my elevated vaisnavas fell down limp entranced by love of Godhead -- it was a wonderful sight . Devidasa witnessed this silently and deliberat-ed in his mind that his father has fully given of himself for the highest spiritual quest . It might pose to be an impossible task to persuade him to return home to Santipura . The spiritual assembly dispersed at mid - night and the vaisnavas returned to their individual dwellings . Devidas and Sambhunatha took leave of Lahiri Mahasaya and returned to their room .

Next day Devidas and Sambhunatha went back after lunch to Lahiri Mahasaya's cottage , offered him respectful obeisances and sat down . Devidasa spoke to his

father -- ` father , I have a re-quest . Please return to our Santipura house . Here you are facing a lot of hardships . At home we can all serve you with pleasure . If you permit then we can even add a quiet and sepa-rate wing to our house " .

Lahiri Mahasaya replied -- " It sounds like a good idea , but here I have nice , saintly association which is difficult to find in Santipura . Besides , you also know that the people of Santi-pura are atheistic and love to criticize . Not exactly a peaceful place to live in . Indeed many brahmana families reside only hope and my sole support birth after birth " .

As the last strains of the song subsided another song started up - this one was composed by Lahiri Mahasaya :-

"Shackled by the chains of maya I was drowning in the ocean of material existence and you mercifully appeared and saved me by taking me in the sanctuary of your lotus - feet . Kindly hear me O Vaisnava master ! I have surrendered myself at your feet so drive away my distresses . The pride of high birth is a messenger of hell and material education is the art of nescience . Pray redeem my heart and offer it at Lord Nityananda's lotus - feet and let the smoldering pains be forever cooled . I beg for your mercy which has the power to make my tougue vibrate with the sublime names of the Divine Couple . I , Kalidasa humbly implore that the transcendental names of Sri Radha and Syama incessantly resonate and be invoked in my heart " .

The song started off as a solo but ended in a resounding chorus as if the song had intoxicating qualities that inerbrated all present . The last passage -- ` jaguka radha - syama ' went through endless encores and the devotees flung out their arms in ecstatic dance . A few there but by mixing closely with the weaver community their intelligence has become infected with guiles and skyness . Three symptoms characterise the Santipura population -- wearing thin fine clothings , rodomontading and vaisnava - baiting . The decendants of Advaita Acarya Prabhu are constantly harrassed living there . And sadly enough , due to the bad association , some of their family members are also turning critical against Lord Caitanya . Everything considered I think you should try to make my stay here in Godruma a proper one -- this is what I want .

Devidasa spoke warily -- " Father ! everything you said is true . Why do you have to communicate at all with the Santipura resi-dents ? In the quiet of your separate quarters you can pass your days in prayer and meditation pursuing your spiritual search . A brahmanas daily rituals and rites like sandhya and vandana etc . is his eternal religion. And to become immersed in such perform-ances is expected of a great soul as you are " .

Lahiri Mahasaya said patiently -- " My son ! Those times are of the past . Staying in the company of saintly devotees for a few months and having received spiritual instructions from my guru my attitudes and opinions have irreversibly changed . What you term as nitya - dharma (eternal religion) , I call it naimittika - dharma (temporary rituals) . Devotional service to the Supreme Lord , Hari is the soul's

only eternal religion -- sandhya , vandana etc. are factually naimittika - dharma .

Devidasa retorted -- " Father ! I have not come across any scrip-tures supporting your views . Are sandhya , vandana etc. not a part of Hari - bhajana (devotional service) . If they are then they are definitely nitya - dharma . Is there a distinction between sandhya - vandana and the vaidhi - bhakti process of sravana , kirtana and so on ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- Listen to me son , sandhya , vandana etc. are a part of karma - kanda (section of the Vedas that deals entire-ly with rituals and fruitive performances) and so are very dif-ferent from vaidhi - bhakti . The karma - kanda recommends the practice of sandhya , vandana etc. in attaining mukti , or salva-tion . Devotion to the Lord through sravana , kirtana and so on is performed without ulterior motives . And the descriptions in scriptures you read regarding the results of sravana , kirtana etc. are merely to arouse the spiritual interest in materialistic men . The only motive and result of worshiping the Supreme Lord is pure devotional service . The principle target of vaidhi - bhakti is to develop attachment, or rati in the neophyte's heart for Hari -bhakti .

Devidasa :- ` Father , then you must admit that the process of ` bhajana ' does gives rise to secondary , or minor results .

Lahiri Mahasaya :- Minor or secondary results depend entirely on he type of sadhaka (practitioner) . A vaisnava practices sadhana - bhakti in order to reach the stage of and pave the way for , perfection in bhakti . While someone who is not a vaisnava uti-lises these self same process (of sadhana - bhakti) to achieve two goals : sense gratification and salvation . One may not detect any aberrations in the actual form or theory of the prac-tice of sadhana - bhakti in these two instances , but the main distinction is in the degree of dedication . Worshipping the deity of Lord Krsna in the karma kanda process will result in cleansing the heart , getting mukti , mitigating material dis-tress and disease , and other such mundane advantages .

In bhakti , the same act of deity worship offers an increased taste for chanting Krsna's holy name . Ekadasi vows , to a karmi , absolves sins ; to a bhakta , or vaisnava , ekadasi vows aug-ment his devotion to the Supreme Lord . Do you notice the wide differences ? Ofcourse to accurately discern these subtle differ-ences one needs the Lord's blessings . The karmis cannot look beyond their minor (gauna) myopic goals , but the devotees succeed in obtaining the primary (mukhya) and absolute objec-tives . All the gauna results can be brought under two headings : bhukti (sense - gratification) and mukti (liberation) .

Devidasa :- Why have the scriptures gone at length's to praise these gauna results ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- The world is peopled with two types of men : uditā - viveka (awakened consciousness) and anuditā - viveka (slumbering consciousness) . Men with slumbering consciousness (anuditā - viveka) refuse any good or constructive work unless they see immediate and concrete results . Therefore the praises

heaped on `gauna' results are for the benefit of these people . But the purport of the scriptures do not indicate that people remain complacent with their ` gauna ' results ; rather it professes they become attracted at first by the gauna results and then with in a short time by the grace of a vaisnava , they are apprised about the ` mukhya ', or the main results , so that they gradually develop an attraction for it .

Devidasa :- Would you consider smarta (a pundit of smrti) Raghunandana and others like him , to be in the category of anudita - viveka ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- No , they were striving for the ` mukhya ' results , but they made arrangements through their writings to guide the anudita - viveka .

Devidasa :- In some scriptures you read only about the gauna results without a single mention of the ` mukhya results ', -- what is the explanation for this ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :-- The scriptures can be grouped into three categories according to the three levels of human consciousness . Scriptures in the mode of goodness are for the same category of humans . The same applies to the modes of passion and ignorance in regards to both scriptures and men .

Devidasa :- Which instructions in the scriptures should one then trust and believe , and which not ; how can a man elevate himself from the lower ranks of consciousness ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- Human beings can be classified according to their natures , habits , faiths and their various levels . A person in sattva - guna has a natural inclination and faith in sattvik scriptures , a rajasika person in rajasika scriptures and a tamasic person in tamasic scriptures . Trust and belief grows easily on the foundation of faith . When one performs his duties prompted by faith and level of understanding he can advance to higher levels of consciousness in the potent association of saintly persons . As concomitants , to his faith seeks the appropriate scriptures to repose on . The sages who wrote the scriptures were perfected personages . The methods employed by them , in formulating the scriptures , ensured that if anyone diligently and faithfully executes his specific duties , recommended in the scriptures of his level , then he progresses higher . Thus we find diversities in the many scriptures . Unwavering faith in the scriptures ushers in all good fortune . The Bhagavad Gita is the conclusion of all the scriptures and it has delineated this esoteric precept .

Devidasa :- I have been studying many different scriptures from my early years but today by your grace I have understood an unique philosophical point .

Lahiri Mahasaya :- The Srimad Bhagavatam writes -- " anubhyasca mahadbhyasca sastrebhyah kusalo narahsarvatah sarama - dadyat puspebhya iva satpadah " . (S.B. 11/8/10)

` Just as a bumble - bee collects honey - pollens from many different flowers so also should the wiseman , dedicated to the absolute truth , search out the essence

from big and small scrip-tures .

I remember , son , I used to call you an atheist ; but now I have stopped criticising people . No one should be faulted for adher-ing to their individual level , or adhikara ; because everyone thinks and acts according to their adhikara . In the appropriate time they all are promoted up . You are a pundit in the scrip-tures of logic (tarkasastra) and fruitive works (karma - sastra) , therefore there is no offence when you speak from your level of realisation , based on these scriptures .
Devidasa :- So far I held the false impression that there are no specified sections of the scriptures . But your words are a pundits in the vaisnava - sampradaya , and that they are fanatics who respect only revelation ; I am convinced now that there are broadminded seekers of truth among the vaisnavas . Are you presently studying scriptures under a savant ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- Son , you may term me a fanatic vaisnava or anything else , as you wish . My ` gurudeva ' lives in that cottage and does his bhajana . He has taught me the essence of all the scriptures , which I have repeated to you . If you are desirous of learning then approach him humbly and enquire from him with devotion . Come I'll introduce you to him " . Lahiri Mahasaya guided Devidasa to Vaisnavadasa Babaji's cottage and after introducing him he left him with his guru and retired to his own room, quietly sitting down to continue his chanting .

Vaisnavadasa :- Have you concluded your education my son ?

Devidasa :- I have studied upto ` Muktipada ' and ` Siddhanta - kusumanjali ' in nyaya - sastra . In smrti - sastra I have read all the books .

Vaisnavadasa :- I see you have worked hard in your studies of the scriptures . What have you learnt ? What is the outcome of your efforts ?

Devidasa :- ` Atyanta - duhkha - nivrttir - eva muktih ' . (mukti , or liberation means the cessation of all sufferings) One must constantly strive for this mukti . I am searching for this mukti , or release through faithfully executing my prescribed religious duties .

Vaisnavadasa :- Yes ! Like you at one time , I also studied those books and sought for that release .

Devidasa :- Am I to presume that you have given up that search?

Vaisnavadasa :- Son ,tell me what is the concept of mukti ?

Devidasa :- The nyaya - sastra espouses the existence of an eternal difference between jiva and brahman . Thus in nyaya - sastra it is not transparent exactly how mukti , or the cessation of all suffering takes place . But the vedantic view point holds that mukti is the quest for undifferentiated brahman (abheda - brahman means , jiva and brahman are qualitatively non - differ-ent) -- to me this is definitely more comprehensible .

Vaisnavadasa :- Son , I have thoroughly gone through the vedanta literatures in the line of Sankaracarya for a good fifteen years and then entered the sannyasa order for another few years . I had assiduously endeavoured for ` mukti ' . I accepted Sankaracaryas four maha - vakyas (principle quotes from the scriptures) and profoundly meditated on their implications . Finally I discarded that discipline and philosophy deciding it was shallow and imma-ture .

Devidasa :- What prompted you in your conviction ?

Vaisnavadasa :- It is certainly not easy to describe to others the trials and tests one confronts . How will the others under-stand " ?

Devidasa could understand from his conversation that Vaisnavadasa Babaji was a profound pundit , though guileless and realised . Devidasa had not studied the Vedanta and so he considered that if Vaisnavadasa Babaji kindly consented to teaching him he could as well master the Vedanta . So he said -- " sir, do you think I am an eligible candidate for studying the Vedanta ?

Vaisnavadasa :- Seeing that you have sufficient knowledge of sanskrit you can study Vedanta if you find a teacher .

Devidasa :- If you kindly teach me I am more than willing .

Vaisnavadasa :- My present situation is that I am simply a poor servant of the vaisnavas . Paramhansa Babaji was very merciful to me ; he instructed me to always chant the holy name , and so I try to do his bidding . I have very little time left . Besides Srila Rupa Goswami has strictly forbidden the vaisnavas to read or hear Sankaracarya's Saririka - bhasya . Hence I do not read or teach this book . However , Lord Caitanya , the original spiritu-al master of the entire creation , explained the Vedanta - sutra - bhasya to Srila Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya . This is available with a few vaisnavas as hand - written manuscript , you may copy this from someone and study it . In this I may help you understand if I can . In fact you can approach Srimat Kavi - Karnapura of Kancana - palli village and procure his copy .

Devidasa :- I will pursue this thing with care . Sir , you have vast knowledge of the Vedanta , kindly tell me very plainly if I can find the real essence of the Vedanta in studying the vaisnava commentary ?

Vaisnavadasa :- I have studied and taught the Sankara - commen-tary . I have also scrutinised other commentaries including the Sri - bhasya . The gaudiya - vaisnavas study the elaborations of aphorisms made by Lord Caitanya and explained by Sri Gopinatha Acarya . In my experience , I have not yet come across anything so superior and exhaustive . No further theories , annotations or new doctrines on the Supreme Lord's elaboration are necessary . The essence of all the Upanisads are available in these disserta-tions . If someone can take the pains to compile these elabora-tions systematically then no other commentaries will be

appreciated by the scholars " .

Vaisnavadasa Babaji's words gave Devidasa profound joy . He offered his prostrated obeisances to Vaisnavadasa Babaji and proceeded to his father's room . He narrated everything to his father . The father was jubilant and he said -- ` Devi , you have read and heard enough , but now you must search for the real purpose of life -- the ultimate goal .

Devidasa :- Father , I came to Godruma feeling extremely hopeful that I can bring you back with me . If you can kindly come just once more , we'll be very happy . Especially our dear mother is keen to have your ` darsana ' .

Lahiri Mahasaya :- I have accepted the shelter of the vaisnava's lotus - feet . I have taken a vow not to visit a non - vaisnavas house . First , all of you become vaisnavas then you can take me .

Devidasa :- Father I do not understand your instructions . We worship the Lord in our house . We have never shown disrespect to the holy name . We serve and care for guests and vaisnavas . Then are we not vaisnavas ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- I recognise that apparently there are no differences between your activities and the vaisnavas activities , yet you are not vaisnavas .

Devidasa :- Then please tell me what should we do to become vaisnavas ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- You must denounce your materialistic mentality , or naimittika - bhava (attachment to temporary rituals) and embrace the values of eternal religion , or nitya - dharma . Then possibly you can become vaisnavas .

Devidasa :- I have a nagging doubt which I want you to kindly dissipate . The vaisnava's devotional activities of sravana , kirtana , padasevana , arcana , vandana , dasya , sakhya and atma - nivedana are diluted with material activities . Then why can't these be called naimittika as well ? I detect a certain bias in this matter . Idol - worship , fasting , using material things in worship -- all these are mundane , how can they be nitya , or eternal ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- Son , I took a long time to grasp this point , so try to properly understand it . Human beings are of two kinds : worldly and spiritual . Worldly men seek only temporal and corporeal pleasures , respect and advancement . Spiritual persons are of three categories : surrendered to God , desiring knowledge and aspiring for mystic powers . Those aspiring for mystic perfections are absorbed in enjoying the fruits of ritual-istic performances , or karma - kanda . They want to display miracles by pressing into service different rites , sacrifices and yogic disciplines . They contribute to the view that if a Supreme Controller , or God exists then He is subservient to the laws of karma . Scientists belong to this group .

Persons desiring knowledge dabble in empirical philosophy to realise the brahman within themselves . To them God may or may not exist . To suit their purpose they

imagine God exists and they worship Him . Gradually their endeavours are rewarded with the appropriate results and at this point their imagined God , is no longer imperative . This devotion or worship of God at the time of enlightenment is transformed into fulfilment of knowledge . This philosophy does not accept that God or devotion to God are eternal .

The third category of spiritual men are those who are surrendered to God . Factually this group is the true seeker of spirituality . They believe in an eternal and unlimited God , who has created both the living entities and the material nature by His potencies . The living entities are His eternal servant's and the eternal serving mood is jiva's eternal religion . Jiva is unable to do anything by his own strength . Karma , or fruitive labour cannot offer jiva any eternal results . Empirical knowl-edge , or jnana warps and distorts the ultimate , eternal truth . All spiritual perfections for the jivas are ensured , only by the mercy of God in executing devotional service to Him .

The first two categories of spiritualists are thus known as ` karma - kandi (followers of karma - kanda) and jnana - kandi (followers of jnana - kanda) respectively . Only the third cate-gory can be termed as devotees . The first two types -- karma - kandi and jnana - kandi arrogate they are the true spiritualists , but in reality they are materialists , or worldly -- thus nai-mittika . All their religious practices are naimittika - temporal .

Thoe who worship Durgadevi , Ganesa , Siva , the Sungod are followers of jnana - kanda . Their participation in sravana ,kirtana and so on are done solely with the motive of obtaining emancipation , or mukti and finally in the hope of merging with brahman . Those among them who are not desirous of either bhukti (sense enjoyment) or mukti (emancipation) when performing sravana , kirtana etc , are factually serving the Supreme Lord Visnu through the medium of different demigods . The Supreme Lord's deity form is eternal , absolutely spiritual and omnipo-tent . If the deity form one worships is not accepted or believed to be the Supreme Lord Himself then his worship is mundane , impermanent . Son , the deity worship you conduct in the house is not a spiritual activity because you do not acknowledge that the Lord's deity form is eternal , transcendental . This proves that you are not surrendered to God . I hope you have been enlightened about the difference between nitya - upasana (eternal or tran-scendental deity woship) and naimittika - upasana (mundane ritualistic deity worship) ?

Devidasa :- Yes ! If one worships the deity form but does not accept this form as eternal then such worship is material and not spiritual . But can this mundane ritualistic worship offer the worshipper clues on other spiritual truths ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- That may be true , still such worship cannot be designated as an eternal spiritual activity . In vaisnava religion they worship the Lord's deity as His eternal form and hence their worship is transcendental activity .

Devidasa :- The deity forms which are worshipped are sculpted by men from matter -- how can I see them as absolute , eternal ?

Lahiri Mahasaya :- The deity vaisnavas worship is not the same . The Supreme Personality of Godhead is positively not like the nirakara brahman (formless brahman) . He is sat , cit , ananda vighraha , or the embodied form of eternity , absolute knowledge and transcendental bliss , endowed with all potencies . This is the spiritual form (sri murti) vaisnavas worship . At first the Lord's form appears in the devotees spiritual consciousness and takes shape in his mind . The Lord then manifests Himself in that deity form constructed by the devotee from his mind through the process of devotional service . When the devotee sees the Lord's sri - murti , the transcendental form of the lord appears in his heart and he merges them together as one .

The jnanis' understanding of deities is not the same as the vaisnavas ' . They believe that the brahman concept is infused into the material form of the deity with their imagination and brahman remains in that form as long as they require to worship it . Later , the form is considered a mere material object . Ponder on these points deeply and try to understand the differences in these approaches to deity worship . When one receives initiation into the path of Vaisnavism by the guru's mercy then even the differences in the results of the different forms of deity worship becomes known .

Devidasa :- I am slowly being convinced that the vaisnavas are not fanatics but are capable of analysis and probing the arcane . Worshiping the Sri - murti of the Lord , and extrapolating the concept of divinity on to matter and then worshiping the deity , stand in opposite poles . Yet the rituals and performances are apparently the same in both . Father you have removed a major doubt in my mind . I will contemplate on these subjects more seriously . I am totally convinced that the jnanis' worship of the deities are self hallucinating , or even self deceiving . All is well for now . I will continue our discussion later and pray at your feet for more answers ' .

Devidasa Vidyaratna and Sambhu returned to their lodging and came back to Lahiri Mahasaya later in the evening . No further discussions were possible because everyone was simply engrossed in the joy of singing and chanting the holy name . Next day in the afternoon they came and joined the other vaisnavas assembled in Paramhansa Babaji's courtyard . Devidasa and Sambhu sat close to Lahiri Mahasaya . Just then the kaji , (a muslim religions head and magistrate) of Brahmana Puskarini village arrived there . The vaisnavas stood up courteously to heartily welcome the kaji . The kaji exchanged warm greetings with the vaisnavas and joined them . Everyone was waiting expectantly to hear Babaji Maharaja speak .

Paramhansa Babaji addressed the kaji -- " You are truly fortunate being the descendants of Sri Cand kaji who was personally favoured by our Lord , Sriman Mahaprabhu . So please be merciful upon us " . The kaji replied -- ` By Lord Caitanya's mercy we are also the recipients of the vaisnavas mercy . Lord Gauranga is the lord of our heart . We begin everything by first offering our humble obeisance to Him " .

Lahiri Mahasaya was proficient in Urdu and Arabic -- the languages used by the Muslims . He had studied the holy Koran Sarif , reading all the thirty sefara . He was conversant with the sufi philosophy studying many of their literatures . Taking the opportunity of the kaji's presence he asked him -- " what is the Islam concept of ` mukti ' ?

kaji replied -- " what in sanskrit is known as jiva , we term it ` ru ' . ` Ru ' is found in two conditions of existence -- ` ru - mujar - rad and of acit is jisam . Mujar - rad is majar - radi and ru - tarakabi . The Islamic interpretations of ` cit ' is transcendental to time and space . ` Jisam ' is bound by time and space . Tarakabi - ru , or the conditioned soul is attributed with desire , mind and ` malafut ' , or knowledge . Mujar - radi - ru is pure and free of these attributes -- hence is , different . The mujar - radi - ru , or the pure souls reside in the spiritual realm of ` alam - misal '

` Ru ' is purified with the flowering of ` aisk ' , or love , or prema . The place to which ` payagambara saheb ' (prophet) was taken by ` Khoda ' (Supreme lord) is not influenced by ` jisam ' , but even there ` ru ' is a ` banda ' , or servant and ` Khoda ' is the master . Therefore the relationship between ` banda ' , or servant and ` Khoda ' , or God , is eternal . To attain this status by purification is known as mukti , or emancipation ; ` Koran ' and the sufi kitab (books) has recorded all these points but not everyone can comprehend the meanings lord Gauranga had instructed Cand kaji on this esoteric subject ; since then we are able to pursue the pure devotional path and become pure devotees .

LM-- What is the essence of koran ?

Kaji-- Koran has described bihista but has not mentioned ` eba-dat ' , although the life there is ebadata (eternal) ` Khoda ' is there and everyone is engrossed in sublime joy seeing ` Him ' . These are the explanations given by Lord Gauranga .

L.M-- Does ` Khoda ' have a form ?

Kaji-- The Koran denies ` Khoda ' of having any form . Lord Caitanya elucidated to Cand Kaji that Koran forbids a jisamani , murti , or material form of Khoda ; but does not forbid the pure mujar-radi form . The payagambara saheb had seen that ecstatic form of ` Khoda ' on the strength of his elevation and eligibility . But the other spiritual emotions were veiled .

L.M-- What is the sufi Philosophy ?

Kaji-- In their philosophy the main concept is anaya hak , or I am ` Khoda ' , or God . Your ` advaita ' philosophy (monism) and the muslims ' as a oyafa are very similar .

L.M-- Are you sufis ?

Kaji-- No we follow the pure devotional path - we are surrendered to Lord

Gauranga.

The discussion continued for sometime . Finally the kaji took leave of the vaisnavas offering them his respects. The evening concluded with congregational chanting of the holy name.

Chapter 6 The Eternal Religion and the Racial, Caste etc. Divide

Devidas, though a teacher, firmly believed since long that brahmanas were the noblest of castes-- it was their sole prerogative to pursue the path of spirituality . Mukti, or emancipation was not available to men of any other castes but only to a brahmana by birth. From birth a brahmana realised his oneness with brahman. Hence Devidas was naturally vexed about the conversation between the Kaji and the vaisnavas the other day. He was unable to grasp the meaning of the Kaji's talk. He thought to himself---`These yavanas (the sanskrit term for muslims) are very strange people. Their philosophy is equally an enigma. It is alright for my father to talk with them since he is proficient in Persian and Arabic languages and he has been researching the different religious philosophies. I wonder why he was so friendly to him ? A hindu has to take a bath if he simply touches a yavana, then why did Vaisnavadas Babaji and Paramahansa Babaji affectionately invite the Kaji to join their assembly and sit amidst them ?'

That night in the assembly Devidas, unable to contain his agitation had commented to Sambhu-- `Sambhu ! I will ignite the flames of religious debate and incinerate the pasanda (heretic) philosophy. This Navadvipa, which was the famous venue for debates on nyaya sastra between illustrious scholars like Sarvabhauma and Siromani; which witnessed Raghunath's great dissertations on the twenty-eight treatise which he compiled from all the smrti-sastra, has now to bear the ignominy of such upstart behavior of some vaisnavas who are more than affable to the yavanas ? I am sure the scholars and pedagogues of Navadvipa are not aware of this incident". It took Devidas a few days of preparation before he plunged himself into his self-assigned mission .

The afternoon was overcast with low hanging clouds shrouding the sun . That morning a continuous nagging drizzle had spread a dismal sheet of slick everywhere . At midday Devi and Sambhu ate hot khicuri . The vaisnavas were also delayed by of the inclement weather in going on their madhukari (collecting food from door to door) rounds. They had returned later than usual. Now at three in the afternoon having taken `prasadam'(offered foodstuff) some vaisnavas sat chanting on their beads in a large cottage adjacent to the madhavi-malati courtyard . Paramhansa Babaji Vaisnavadas Babaji, Anantadasa - a visiting vaisnava pandit from Nrsimhapal-li, Lahiri Mahasaya and Yadavadasa of Kulia village were already seated there . They were quietly relishing the rictar of chanting when suddenly

they were interrupted by the arrival of Devidasa Vidyaratna accompanied by Caturbhuj Pandit Padaratna of Samudra-garh, Cintamani nyaya-ratna (pundit in logic) of Kasi, Kalidasa Vacaspati of Purbasthali and the famous Krsnacudamani. The Vaisnavas heartily welcomed this small group of brahmana pundits and requested for them to sit down.

Paramhansa Babaji being the senior most said---`Most people complain that a rainy day, like today, is annoying . But not for us, because brahmana pundits, who are residents of the dham (holy pilgrimage) have graciously come today to sanctify our humble dwellings with their feet dust." The vaisnavas are naturally very humble, even more than a blade of grass. So they offered their respect by uttering--`Vipra-caranebhyo namah (I offer obeisances at the brahmanas feet). Brahmana pundits are a proud lot. Return-ing the vaisnava's greetings the pundits superciliously waved their hands in a gesture of blessing them and took their seats.

Devidas Vidyaratna had already prepared these young brahmana pundits for a debate. They grudgingly offered respects to Lahiri Mahasaya since he was their senior. Lahiri Mahasaya now conver-sant with the scriptural conclusions immediately reciprocated their offering of respects. Among the pundits Krsnacudamani was very expert in argument . He had a record of defeating many pundits in Kasi, Mithila etc. A person of diminutive stature, but with a shiny dark tan and a grave demeanour. His eyes were a pair of incandescent stars. He initiated the debate in that assembly.

Krsnacudamani began--`We have come today to have darsana of vaisnavas. We do not subscribe to all your etiquettes and activi-ties but we definitely appreciate your sincere devotion to God. The Supreme lord has said.

"Api cet suduracaro bhajate mam ananya bhaksadhur-eva sa mantav-yah samyag vyavasitohi sah" (BG.9/30).

(Even if one commits the most abominable action , if he is engaged in devotional service he is to be considered saintly because he is properly situated in his determination) .This quotation from the Bhagavad Gita is our proof. On the strength of it we have come to meet sadhus. But there is also a definite purpose to our coming. We want to challenge your malpractices of keeping amicable relationship and association with yavanas done in the name of `bhakti , or devotion. I request the best debater among you to come forward.

The vaisnavas were sad on hearing Krsnacudamanis reproach. Parama-hansa Babaji replied-- "We are but fools, what do we know about debating. Our norms and etiquettes simply emulate the example set by mahajana's or previous authorities , the acaryas and saints. We will silently hear your instructions from the scriptures."

Cudamani replied---`Such talks are highly irregular ! As a seg-ment of the Hindu society if your norms and actions , and if what you propagate are against scriptural injunctions they will surely destroy human kind. How can you justify your unauthorised behav-ior by quoting previous acaryas and saints ?Who can be

designated as a mahajana , -- only if one's conduct and speech are supported by the scripture can he be called a mahajana; otherwise addressing just anybody as a mahajana and citing scripture---`mahajan yena gatah sa panthah'(following in the footsteps of mahajanas) is not going solve the worlds raging problems."

The vaisnavas courteously left the assembly place and came together in another cottage to consult among themselves. They decided that since the pundits have blasphemed their mahajanas and if they are capable they should refute them. Paramhansa Babaji was not keen to represent them. And though Anantadasa Pundita was an expert in the philosophy of logic, or nyaya-sastra they chose Vaisnavadasa Babaji to debate on their behalf. They gathered that Devidasa Vidyaratna was the architect of today's dilemma. Lahiri Mahasaya spoke out unhesitatingly---`Devidasa is a very arrogant boy. He was definitely disturbed with our amiable dealings with the Kaji the other day , and so he must have incited these brahmana pundits to come here today." Vaisnavadasa Babaji bent down and touched Paramhansa Babaji's feet and said---" I carry the vaisnavas orders as a crown around my head; I believe that at long last all my education and research will prove worthy."

The drizzle , for quite some time had let up. The scattered clouds allowed little patches of blue to peep through. A large simple carpet covered the major portion of Madhavi-malati mandapa courtyard. The brahmana pundits sat to one side and the vaisnavas sat opposite them. Other learned vaisnavas from Godruma and around were requested to attend the debate, and they came and sat around the contestants. Many eager brahmana students also gathered there. The congregation swelled to a fair size. An estimated hundred brahman pundits and students on one side and about two hundred vaisnavas on the opposite side. Taking permission and blessings from the vaisnavas, Vaisnavadasa Babaji sat in front of the Vaisnavas--- a picture of calm composure. Just then everyone witnessed a wonderful omen and the vaisnavas jubilantly chanted out aloud the holy name . A confetti of flower petals rained down on Vaisnavadasa Babaji from above. The Vaisnavas concluded--- This is lord Caitanya's prasada, or mercy."

Krsnacudamani sitting across from them puckered his nose in obvious disdain and said---" As you think but , its not flowers but fruits of results that matters."

Vaisnavadasa Babaji began abruptly without further pomp or frills, he said---"Finally, it seems, in Navedvipa I find an assembly similar to those I've seen in Varanasi. It gives me much pleasure. Although I am a Bengali yet most of my life I've spent in Varanasi and other places studying and giving talks . My proficiency in bengali, therefore has lessened considerably. So I desire, that today's discussion be conducted in sanskrit." Krsna--cudamani had sincerely laboured hard to study the scriptures but other than learning by rote he was not conversant with sanskrit, hence was not confident. He felt shaky hearing Vaisnavadasa Babaji proposal and blurted out---" The fact is that we are holding this assembly in Bengal so speaking in bengali is appropriate. Besides I am not fluent in sanskrit like the pundits from the North west ". Everyone understood from Cudamanis expression that he was apprehensive of debating with Vaisnavadasa Babaji. So they requested Vaisnavadasa

to converse in bengali to which he readily agreed.

Cudamani began the debate with a series of questions: Is caste a permanent identity for the human being ? Are hindus and muslims of different castes ? Does a hindu become degraded by associating with a muslim ? In reply Vaisnavadasa said - `Yes , Nyaya - sastra states that jati , or caste is permanent , but the different categories of jati does apply to the human - kind due to their taking birth in separate countries. Rather it points out the differences in species of living entities like - goat species , cow species , human species etc.

Cudamani :-- I agree with your analysis but is there a distinction in species between hindus and muslims ?

Vaisnavadasa :-- Yes , there are some dissimilarities in both the castes , or species but they are not permanent . The human species is one ; the differences lie in language , country , attire , complexion caste etc., and based on these men have created imaginary differences .

Cuda :-- Are there no distinctions at all even on the basis of birth between a hindu and a muslim ? Or are the differences limited to the areas of attire , language etc. ?

Vaisnavadasa :-- The jiva is born into high or low caste as a result of his karma , or previous activities. According to their separate castes humans have specific duties . There are four castes -- brahmana , ksatriya , vaisya and sudra ; others are low born outcastes .

Cuda-- Are the yavanas outcastes ?

V.B-- Yes,by scriptural decree they are outcastes, they do not qualify for the four vedic castes.

Cuda-- If true,then how can a yavana become a vaisnava,and how does the aryan vaisnava socialise with them ?

V.B-- A devotee who has developed unalloyed devotion is a Vaisnava. Every human being is eligible to become a vaisnava. Due to their low-birth,a yavana has no right to perform the duties prescribed to a catur-varni (belonging to the four castes) but they have full eligibility to participate in devotional activities. And as long as the point regarding the subtle distinctions in karma-kanda , jnana-kanda and bhakti-kanda,or upasana-kanda (the three divisions of the entire vedic literature) are not meticulously analysed it is impossible to decide if a man has proper knowledge of the scriptures.

Cuda-- So be it. Karma,or the prescribed duty cleanses the consciousness . When the consciousness is cleansed he becomes eligible to gather knowledge,or jnana. There are two varieties of knowledgeable persons , or jnani--- nirbheda-brahmanvadi (follower of monism) and the vaisnavas who worship the personal form of God. Therefore without perfecting the stage of karma a person cannot become a

vaisnava . Muslims are not eligible to execute karma; then how can they perform 'bhakti'.?

V.B-- Persons outside the varna-asrama system--- the outcastes (antyaja) are also eligible to embrace the path of bhakti. This point has been supported by all the scriptures. The Bhagavad-Gita states:

"man hi partha vyapasritya ye'pi syuh papa-yonayahstriyo vaisyas tatha sudras te'pi yanti param gatim" (BG.9/32).

'O son of Prtha , those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth--- women, vaisyas (merchants), as well as sudras (menial labourers)--- can approach the supreme destination'.

The Naradiya Purana states:

"svapaco' pi mahipala visnu-bhakto dvija-adhikahvisnubhakti-vihino yo yatis-ca svapacadhikah".

'O king, if a candala (dog-eater) embraces the path of pure devotion to the Supreme Lord. Visnu , he is superior to a brahma-na. On the other hand, if a sannyasi is not a devotee of Lord Visnu then he is more degraded than a candala.

Cuda-- Granted,there are numerous scriptural proofs; but it is imperative to draw conclusions after proper analysis. What is the method for removing the blemish of a birth in a base caste. Can this birth-slur be abrogated in any way other than with demise and rebirth ?

V.B-- The misfortune of a low birth results from prarabdha-karma (sinful reactions of previous birth); it is eliminated by chant-ing the Lord's name. The Srimad Bhagavatam declares |-

"yan-nama sakrc chravanat pukkas'o pi vimucyate samsarat"

(SB.6/16/44).

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

"natah param karma-nibandha krntanam mumuksatam tirtha-padanukir-tanatna yat punah karmasu sajjate mano rajas-tamobhyam kalilam tato nyatha" (SB.6/2/46)

'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 knowl-edge 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.'

"aho bata sva-pace' to gariyan yaj-jihvagre vartate nama tubhyam tepus tapas te juhuvuh sasnur arya brahmanueur nama grnanti yete"
(SB.3/33/7).

`Oh, how glorious are they whose tongues are chanting the holy name ! Even if born in the family of dog-eaters, such persons are worshipable. Persons who chant the holy name of Your Lordship must have executed all sorts 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 !'

Cuda-- In that case why a candala, who is chanting the holy name, cannot perform yajna, or fire sacrifice ?

V.B-- For a person to be eligible to perform yajna, he must take birth as a brahmana. Even so, just as a brahmana must first receive the gayatri mantra or brahmin thread (savitra) initiation before he is allowed to perform different vedic rituals, similar-ly a candala, although purified by chanting the holy name must first be born in a brahmana family before he is eligible to conduct yajna. But it is also true that the different limbs of bhakti, which are incalculably superior to yajna (and other vedic rituals), are readily available to him.

Cuda-- This is a very strange siddhanta , or conclusion. One who is denied exercising an elementary right ends up having claim to a much superior position, what simple proofs can you put forward ?

V.B-- Human activities can be categorised under two headings : Vyavaharika (mundane, social) and paramarthika (spiritual). There are instances where a person is spiritually advanced but is disallowed to perform certain mundane, or Vyavaharika activities. For example: a person is born a muslim but acquires the qualities of goodness of a pure brahmana, in fact, spiritually he is brah-mana; yet he is barred from the Vyavaharika act of marrying a brahmana bride.

Cuda-- Why is he not eligible ? What will be his offence if he does it ?

V.B--If one acts against the human norms it is a social crime. Those who are proud of being conversant with social etiquettes will never acquiesce to such crimes. Therefore inspite of spirit-ual , or paramarthika eligibility one cannot go against the principles of society.

Cuda-- Kindly iterate the necessary qualifications for performing karma and bhakti.

V.B-- Mundane qualifications like a privileged birth, performing activities suitable to one's station, mentality etc are required for karma. Faith and devotion, according to , and towards scrip-tural conclusions (tattvik sraddha) , gives eligibility to exe-cute `bhakti'.

Cuda-- Pray do not confuse me with theological jargon but explain to me in prosaic terms, what is meant by suitable activities according to one's mentality (nature) ?

V.B-- Peacefulness, self-control,ansterity, purity, satisfaction, forgiveness, straight forwardness, devotion to God, compassion, truthfulness are some qualifications which constitute the brah-minical nature. Heroism, power,physical prowess , determination, tolerance, generosity, enthusiasm, steadfastness, leadership, opulence are hall marks of a ksatriya's nature. Religiosness, charity,dedication, humility , greed for wealth,etc are vaisya's nature. Serving the brahmanas,the cow and demigods ; satisfied with whatever comes his way are the qualifications of a sudra. Unclean habits,dishonesty,stealing, atheism,quarrelsome,lust,anger,gratifying the senses are activi-ties and characteristics of an outcaste, or antyaja.The scrip-tures recommend that a persons caste be ascertained from his nature and activities and not merely on the basis of his birth--- though this has become the practice now a days.

A person's nature determines his work psychology , preferences and ultimately his work expertise. These natures, which were just now enumerated are what prompts a person's mentality and activi-ty. With many, their nature is from their birth; however some acquire it through association. Association begins at birth, so the nature is moulded from the birth. It does not mean that birth is the only cause and reason for performing karma.There are a variety of reasons and causes , so the scriptures point out that eligibility must be ascertained from one's nature and character-istics.

Cuda-- What is tattvik-sraddha ?

V.B-- Simple guileless faith in the Supreme Lord and sincere devotional service to him prompted by it, is known as sraddha, or faith. False faith in the Lord develops in an impious person's heart when he observes only the external aspects or rituals of worship. He uses this mask of religiosity to pursue with pride and greed his cherished material goals. This is known as atattvi-ka-sraddha (unscriptural sraddha). Many previous acaryas and sages have pronounced that tattvika-sraddha means sincere faith in the scriptures.Tattvika-sraddha confers eligibility to perform bhakti on a sincere candidate.

Cuda-- Some persons have developed faith in the scriptures but lack a noble nature, are they fit candidates for `bhakti'?

V.B-- The type of nature, or svabhava is certainly a deciding factor for eligibility to karma, but definitely not applicable to bhakti. Deliberate on the following verses from the Srimad Bhaga-vatam|-"Jata-sraddho mat kathasu nirvvinnah sarva-

karmasuveda duhkha-atmakan kaman parityage' pyanisvarah.

Tato bhajeta mam pritam sraddhalu-drdha-niscayah
Jusamandsca tan kaman duhkhodarkansca garhayan.
Proktena bhakti-yogena bhajato ma'sakrnmuneh.
Kama hrdayya nasyanti sarve mayi hrdis thite.
Bhidyate hrdaya granthis-chidyante sarva-samsayah.
Ksiyante casya karmani mayi drste' khilatmani.
Yat karmabhir-yat-tapasa jnana-vairagya-tas-ca yat.
yogena dana-dharmena sreyobhir-itarair-api.
Sarvam mad-bhakti-yogena mad-bhakto labhate' njasa.
Svargapavargam mad-dhama kathancid yadi vanchati.

(SB.11/20/27-30,32,33).

By hearing topics of Krishna consciousness in saintly company people develop a taste for spirituality and loose interest in material activities. They commence chanting the holy name with firm faith. Unable to sometimes stamp out old bad habits and unwanted desires they strongly condemn these detrimental traits in themselves and helplessly continue to wallow in them for sometime. By engaging in My devotional service, quickly the heart is cleansed of lusty desires. And when they enthrone Me (the Supreme Lord) in their hearts all imperfections are removed. Immediately the knot of material attachment that ensnares the heart is cut asunder, every doubt becomes dispelled and the yearning for fruitive activities is quelled. This is the eternal truth. Whatever reward results from performing tapasya (austeri-ty), jnana-vairagya (knowledge and renunciation), dana (charity) and any other auspicious and pious deeds can be received more facilely and quickly by My devotee engaged in devotional service to Me.

Cuda-- What if I do not accept the Srimad Bhagavatam ?

V.B-- I have simply presented the conclusion of all scriptures. Scripture is one. If you do not accept the Bhagavatam the other scriptures will harass you. I do not need to refer to many scrip-tures, simply consider what the Gita, a universally honoured text, has to say. In fact the verse quoted by you at the onset of this debate is a matrix containing valuable teachings |-

"Api cet suduracaro bhajate mam ananya-bhak
sadhur-eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah
ksipram bhavati dharmatma sasvacchantim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati
mam hi partha vyapasritya ye'pi syuh papayonayah
striyo vaisyas-tatha sudras-te'pi yanti param gatim.

(BG.9/30-32)

[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. He quickly becomes righteous and attains lasting peace. O son of Kunti, declare it boldly that my devotee never perishes.

O son of Prtha, those who take shelter in Me, though they be of lower birth-- women, vaisyas (merchants) as well as sudras (worker) can approach the supreme destination].

The purport of this text is that a devotee who engages in devotional service, hearing topics of Krishna consciousness, chanting the Lord's name, singing His glories with single-mindedness (ananya-bhak) even if he is addicted to many abominable, illicit activities which are against the scriptural injunctions he must be considered a sadhu (saintly soul). Because he is on the righteous path--- he is situated in devotional service.

There are three processes mentioned in the scriptures: karmakanda (fruitive activities within the varnasrama system), jnana-kanda (empirical philosophy and renunciation), and bhakti (devotional service constituting hearing narrations about the Supreme Lord in saintly association and chanting His name with sincere faith). Sometimes these three methods can be channelised into one application known as 'yoga', or union with the Supreme, at which time they become generally termed as either karmayoga, jnana-yoga or bhakti-yoga (depending on the stress and slant of the practice). When any one of these forms of yoga is practiced singly their acolytes are called karmayogi, jnanayogi and bhakti-yogi. A bhakti-yogi is the best of the three because when bhakti-yoga is practiced separately by itself it is able to reward the yogi with unlimited benediction. You can understand this point from the following verse in the Gita, which is cited here as the conclusion of the first of the triad of six chapters

"Yoginam api sarvesam mad gatena-antara-atmana
sraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa me yukta-tamo mata"
(BG.6/47).

[And of all yogis, 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].

It is imperative to understand the sense in the verse-- 'Ksipram bhavati dharmatma'. One who is sincerely engaged in devotional service will have the worst of his character flaws quickly rectified. Religiosity meekly follows bhakti everywhere. The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the source of religion and He allows Himself to be easily conquered by 'bhakti'. Maya that enslaves the jiva, is immediately dissipated when the Supreme Lord is invited to occupy the throne in his heart, no other method is effective. As soon as he becomes a devotee religious fervour suffuses his heart. When lust is uprooted peace and tranquility enter the heart. Hence the Lord boldly declares that His devotees will never be vanquished.

A karmi and a jnani are vulnerable; it is possible they may fall into bad association while practicing their individual disciplines, but the Lord's devotees never succumb to the ills of evil company solely because of the omnipotent association of the Supreme Lord.

Therefore the devotee can never be destroyed. A devotee may be born in a lowly family of sinners or in the noble brahmana caste, the supreme destination is in his grip.

Cuda-- It appears to me that whatever rites and rituals have been prescribed by the scriptures to the jiva on the basis of his birth is more than satisfactory. I was born in a brahmana family. By regularly performing my sandhya, vandana etc. I am sure to acquire knowledge and finally attain mukti, or liberation, this is a tangible truth to me. But I cannot comprehend how sraddha appears.

I have come across instructions in the Gita and Bhagavatam about how 'bhakti' is begotten from sraddha. Kindly explain to me how jiva can endeavour to possess that sraddha.

V.B-- Sraddha is an integral part of jiva's eternal, inherent nature. Jiva's inclination towards karma in the varnasrama set up is a product of his temporary, material nature. This fact is substantiated in the scriptures. For example: " Yada vai sraddadha-tyatha manute nasraddadhanmanute sraddadh deva manute vijijnasasitavyeti sraddham bhagavo vijijnaasa iti. (Chandogya Up.7/19/1).

["Sanat-kumara said--- when a person develops sraddha, or respect for that which is to be known he makes the effort to know it. Only those with sraddha can know it others without sraddha can-not. Therefore, O Narada ! first there must be sraddha, so it is essential to learn what is sraddha. Narada replied--- my dear Lord, I earnestly desire to inform myself fully about sraddha."].

Some commentators have explained that sraddha means faith in the words of the vedas and the guru. This explanation is acceptable but not really clear. In our 'sampradaya' the word sraddha carries the following definition: " sraddha tvanyopaya-varjam bhak-ty-unmukhi-eitta-vrtti-visesah" (Amnaya-sutra 57).

[" Sraddha is that propensity in man which strives for bhakti and rejects the vehicles of karma,jnana etc to reach it "].

By constantly hearing about the Supreme Lord in saintly association man's consciousness reaches a certain elevation. When he realises that karma, jnana,yoga etc cannot offer jiva eternal benediction (the Absolute truth), and that there is no other option for the jiva save taking the shelter of Lord Hari's lotus feet with singleminded devotion, only then can it be said that he has developed sraddha and faith in the words of the scriptures and guru. Sraddha is outlined in the following words of Amnaya-sutra 58:- 'Sa ca saranapatti-laksana'. Meaning that the different indications of surrender are the external symptoms of sraddha. And surrender, or saranapatti is described in this way:

"Anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanamraksisyat-iti visva-so goptrtve varanam tathaatma-niksepa-karanye sadh-vidha sarana-gatih" (Haribhakti Vilasa 11/417).

[The six divisions of surrender are the acceptance of those things favourable to devotional service, the rejection of unfavourable things, the conviction that Krsna will give protection, the acceptance of the Lord as one's guardian or master, full self-surrender and humility].

A devotee must take the vow to perform works which are favourable to unalloyed devotional service and reject anything that is unfavourable. He must be convinced that the Supreme Lord alone is his protector and maintainer and nothing positive can come from endeavouring for jnana, yoga etc. He must develop a sense of complete dependance on the Lord thinking that solely on his own efforts he is incapable of succeeding in anything, not even in maintaining himself, therefore since the Lord is taking care of him he will serve Him appropriately. He must offer himself whole-sale to the Lord knowing that he is ignorant of his own spiritual identity, he is the Lord's property and his actions are implemen-tations of the lord's desires. He must develop the sense of humility making him feel poverty-stricken, meek and lowly. Thus the state of consciousness that is evoked when the heart becomes infused with this vow,faith,dependence,self-surrender and humili-ty is designated as sraddha. In whichever person this sraddha is evinced becomes the fit canddidate to execute bhakti. For the eternally liberated, pure jiva soul,it is the initial step to-wards perfection. Since it is the fundamental nuance of jiva's innate nature it is therefore his eternal nature. All other variations of jiva's nature is temporary, or naimittika.

Cuda-- Thank you, I have grasped it. You have still omitted the subject of what evokes sraddha. If sat-karma, or pious deeds is the seed that later sprout out as sraddha then my argument re-mains uncontested. Because,if sat-karma and prescribed duties are not properly executed within the varnasvama system then sraddha cannot manifest. Thus, since the yavanas (muslims) do not have the possibility to perform sat karma, how can they become suit-able candidates for practicing bhakti ?

V.B.-- Yes ! sraddha is born of sukrti (righteous activities). This quote available in the Brhan-naradiya Purana provides the required proof :-

" bhaktistu bhagavad-bhaktena parijayatesat-sanga prapyate pumb-hih sukrtaih purva-sancitaih. (The translation to this sloke is available in the 3rd chapter of this book).

Sukrti is of two kinds --- nitya and naimittika. Sukrti which leads to sat-sanga and bhakti is nitya sukrti; and sukrti which results in material enjoyment and impersonal liberation is nai-mittika sukrti. Sukrti is differentiated on the basis of results ; if the result is eternal sukrti is eternal, or nitya sukrti and if the result is evanescent sukrti is temporal. Bhukti, or sense gratification is fleeting hence

naimittika. Many people are under the mistaken belief that mukti (liberation) is eternal. The reason being that they lack knowledge on this subject. The soul is pure, eternal and ever dynamic. The cause of jiva's enslavement is his intimate intercourse with maya or matter.

Thus mukti, or liberation is defined as the complete nullification of this enslavement. The act of release from bondage is not eternal. With release, liberation comes into immediate effect; and the striving ceases --- no more a topic of discussion. The removal of the cause is, in other words, liberation. Therefore mukti is dependant on cause and effect and so it is transitory. Whereas attachment to the lotus feet of the Supreme Lord Hari, is endless. It is eternal --- hence in a spiritual sense no part or limb of this process of surrender can be termed as temporary or naimittika. That process of bhakti which claims to generate mukti and then finally ceases to be, is at best naimittika karma. While 'bhakti' which is present before mukti is attained, during mukti is being attained and remains forever after mukti is attained, is quite different from the 'bhakti' described before; it is an absolute eternal principle and it is jiva's eternal and inherent religion. Mukti is simply a by-product of this bhakti. I offer this quote from Mundaka Upanisad :-

"pariksyā-lokaṁ karma-citaṁ brahmaṇo nirveda-mayānastyakṛtāḥ kṛtānāṁ vijñānārtham sa gurur-eva-abhigacchet samit-panih srotṛiyam brahma-niṣṭham (Mund up.1/2/12).

^A brahmana must realise the temporary nature of the results of fruitive action, or karma, that the cherished eternal absolute truth, which lies beyond the principle of karma, is unattainable through karma, hence he must denounce karma. In order to obtain the cherished object, he must attach himself to the process of the science of devotion (knowledge coupled with pure loving devotion). In which case, he must humbly approach, with a gift, a bonafide spiritual master who is well versed in the conclusion of Vedas and is realised in the science of Krishna consciousness, Surrender at his feet with mind, body and words.

Karma, jnana, yoga etc are all in the category of naimittika sukṛti. Associating with saintly persons and performing devotion-al acts are nitya sukṛti. He who has executed nitya sukṛti in many lives will acquire sraddha. Naimittika sukṛti offers many other results but cannot evoke sraddha towards unalloyed bhakti.

Cuda-- Please explain what is association of pure devotees, or sat-sanga and devotional activities, and from what type of sukṛti do these activities stem ?

V.B.-- To discuss and hear Krishna conscious topics from pure devotees and to serve them is known as sat-sanga, or bhakti-sanga. The pure devotees of the Lord perform congregational chanting of the holy name in towns and villages. A person who participates in these spiritual activities or any other similar activities is performing devotional activities like cleansing the Lord's temple, offering lamp to the Tulasi plant, observing the different spiritual festivals connected to the

Supreme Lord and so on. If somehow these devotional activities are not participated with pure sraddha but accidentally or even cursorily, they result in sukrti that fosters devotion to the Supreme Lord. When this sukrti accumulates into a driving force over many lifetimes it brings one on the stage of acquiring sraddha towards sadhu-sanga and towards pure bhakti. We must admit that everything is capable of garnering its own energy. All devotional activities are endowed with generating bhakti. If executed with sraddha the results are marvellous but even when done with disinterest or disregard one accrues piety in the form of sukrti as is pointed out in the Mahabharat Prabhas-khanda:---

"madhura-madhuram-etan-mangalam mangalanam sakala-nigama-balli-sat-phalam
cit-svarupamsakrd-api parigitam sraddhaya helaya va bhrgu-vara naramatram
tarayet krsna-nama".

[The chanting of the holy name is the most beneficial of all spiritual and pious activities. It is more relishable than the sweetest honey. It is the transcendental fruit of all the sruti scriptures (Veda). O best of the Bhargavas ! if any person chants Krsna's name offenselessly even once, be it with sraddha or with derisive disregard, the holy name immediately offers him liberation].

Thus all sukrti which enhances ones devotion to the Lord is nitya-sukrti. It is this form of sukrti when patiently seasoned brings one to sadhu-sanga and ananyabhakti. Deliberate and heinous malfeasance in performing naimittika karma accords the culprit a birth in a muslim (yavana) family while nitya-sukrti ensures development of sraddha towards unalloyed devotion (ananya-bhakti). Why should this come as a surprise ?

Cuda :- Our opinion is , that if bhakti - posaka sukrti (sukrti that fosters bhakti) really exists then it is only a result of some other type of sukrti . The yavana does not possess this other type of sukrti -- hence the bhakti - posaka sukrti is beyond his reach .

V.B. :- One should not think in these terms . Nitya - sukrti and naimittika sukrti are independent from each other -- not connected . In the Purana we find the story of the sinful hunter who unknowingly , by force of circumstance, fasted and stayed up the night of siva - ratri thus performing siva - vrata (vows). He attained devotion to Lord Hari as a result of nitya - sukrti .Because Lord Siva is a very elevated Vaisnava , -- ` Vaisnavanam yatha sambhuh (S.B.12/13/16) [Sambhu is amongst the best of Vaisnavas] as is substantiated by the scriptures , hence observing a vow in his honour favours one with Hari - bhakti .

Cuda :- Are you trying to put across that nitya - sukrti can happen by chance , under force of circumstances ?

V.B. :-- Everything occurs by force of circumstance . This is true even in the path ` karma ' . When jiva got entangled in the cycle of karma for the first time , it happened all so suddenly -- by sheer force of circumstances is it not ? Although

the mimamsa philosophers (one of the six schools of vedic philosophy) have described karma as being eternal factually karma is not sourceless --- it has a source also. Jiva's rejection of God and his turning away from Him is the root cause of his cruxifixion to the windmill of karma. Similarly nitya-sukrti also appears to be a freak of chance. The Svetasvatara Upanisad states:

"Samane vrkse puruso nimaagno hyanisaya socati muhyamanahjustam yada pasyaty-anyamisamasya mahimanameti vitasokah" (Svet.4/7).

[Although the two birds are in the same tree, the eating bird (jiva) is fully engrossed with anxiety and moroseness as the enjoyers of the fruits of the tree. But if in some way or other he turns his face to his friend who is the Lord (Supersoul) and knows His glories (by the mercy of guru), at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxiety.] Sri Bhagavatam states :

"bhavapa vargau bhramato yada bhavejjanasya tarhyacyuta-sat samagamahsatsangamo yarhi tadaiva sadgatau paravarese tvayi jayate matih" (SB 10/51/53).

[O Acyuta ! (one who eternally remains fixed in his original identity) jiva is eternally enthralled in the continuous cycle of birth and death. By the mercy of the Lord when the time for his release from this vicious cycle comes,he attains first the asso-ciation of saintly persons. Right from that moment he develops attachment to Your lotus-feet. You are the Lord of both the material and spiritual worlds and the shelter of the saintly souls.]

Again in Srimad Bhagavataam:

"satam prasangan mama virya-samvido bhavanti hrt-karma rasayanah kathahtaj-josanad asv apavarga-vartamani sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramisyati" (SB3/25/25).

[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 be-comes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begins].

Cuda-- Then according to your understanding there is no distinc-tion between one practicing vedic culture, or an arya, and a yavana?

V.B-- In general there are two differences --- spiritual and material. Between an arya and a yavana there are no spiritual differences but only mundane differences.

Cuda-- Why must you always come up with lofty vedic circumlocu-tion ? What may be the mundane distinctions between the arya and yavana.

V.B.-- Social intercourse in day to day material life is known as mundane dealings. In a materialistic society the yavana is con-sidered an untouchable --- this is a

mundane distinction. Because of his low birth arya refuse water or food from his hands.

Cuda-- If so, then please clearly define how there is spiritual parity between an arya and a yavana ?

VB.-- When the scriptures declare : `bhrguvara nara-matram taray-et krsna-nama' [O Bhrgu ! the holy name of Krsna can liberate any human being] then it means that all human beings , including the yavanas , are equal in regards to attaining spiritual goals. Those bereft of nitya-sukrti can be denominated as `biped ani-mals' because they have no faith in the holy name of Krsna. Thus, although they are born as human beings they are devoid of human-ity , implying that their inhuman or animalistic nature is pre-dominant . It is written in the Mahabharat :

"mahaprasade govinde nama -brahmani vaisnavesvalpa - punya - vatam rajan visvaso naiva - jayate " .

[Persons with meagre sukrti , or piety cannot develop faith in mahaprasada , or the spiritual remanents of the lord , in the Diety of Lord Govinda , the Supreme Personality of Godhead , in the transcendental name of the lord and in the Vaisnavas .]

Nitya - sukrti is equivalent to immense piety that can purify the jiva . Naimittika sukrti is of meagre piety and cannot evoke sraddha for spiritual objects . Mahaprasada , Lord Krsna (Diety) , His holy name and the pure Vaisnava devotee are the four transcendental and spiritual manifestations in this material world .

Cuda :- (with a short laugh) what a speech that was ! It is pure vaisnava fanaticism ! How can a little rice , dal , vegeta-bles and so on become transcendental . I am convinced that noth-ing is impossible for you vaisnavas to believe in .

Vaisnavadasa :- Whatever you may do please do not attempt to criticise or blaspheme the vaisnavas -- this is my humble request . After all in a debate one must adhere to the topic at hand , not indulge in Vaisnava - ninda . There is no object in this material world superior to mahaprasada because it invokes the spiritual nature in man and dissipates the mundane. Hence the Isopanisad declares :

" isavasyam idam sarvam yat kinca jagatyam jagattena tyaktena bhunjitha ma grdhah kasya svid dhanam " . (Iso . 1)

[Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord (is interwoven into the Lord's existence and manifest His consciousness) . One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself (in a mood of yukta - vairagya) which are set aside as his quote , and one must not accept other things , knowing well to whom they belong '.]

Everything in this world is connected with the Supreme Lord through His energies . If one develops the vision that everything is related to the spiritual nature then he does not differentiate between what is external or material . He stops trying to enjoy , or exploit it . Jivas whose consciousness are directed inwards , towards spirituality , should accept their daily requirements to maintain their body in this world in a mood that everything is the Lord's prasada , or mercy . In that way they will never become degraded . In fact this will help them progress spiritual-ly . This is known as ` mahaprasada ' . It is truly a great mis-fortune that you cannot cultivate a relish for such a wonderful thing .

Cuda :- Please leave all that a side . Let us remain on the subject . How are you supposed to behave with the yavanas ?

Vaisnavadasa :- As long as a person remains a yavana we are apathetic towards him . But when the yavana becomes a Vaisnava on the strength of his nitya - sukrti then we do not refer to him further as a ` yavana ' . The scriptures state :

" sudram va bhagavad - bhaktam nisadam svapacam tathaviksyate jati - samanyat sa yati narakam dhruvam " .(Padm Puran) .

[` A devotee of the Supreme Lord may be born in a sudra family (last of the four varnas) , or lower as a vyadh or even in a dog - eating candala family , but anyone who thinks that they are designa ted according to their birth then such a person will certainly be doomed to hell ' .]

Again :

" na me priyascaturvedi mad - bhaktah svapacah priyahtasmai deyam tato grahyam sa ca pujoyo yatha hy - aham ' (Itihasa samuccaya) .

[` If a brahmana well - versed in the four vedas , or caturvedi ,is not a devotee , he is not dear to Me , but if a person , though he is born in a candala family , is a devotee then he is very dear to Me . Whatever offering has to be made must be made to him with proper faith ; his remanents must be accepted by all , knowing him to be worthy of everyone's worship just as I am] .

Cuda :- I understand , can a grhastha vaisnava (householder) offer the hand of his daughter in marriage to yavana - vaisnava , and can he in turn accept the hand in marriage of a yavana vaisnava's daughter ?

Vaisnavadasa :-- In a materialistic society a yavana remains a yavana to the world until his death . But in spiritual life when a yavana attains bhakti , or devotional service he is no longer a yavana . The ten prescribed duties (dasavidha - karma) are smarta activities (adherents of the sankhya scriptures) . Vivaha , or marriage is one of them . Hence if the grhastha Vaisnava is an arya , i.e. belonging to one of the four varnas (castes) then he should marry into his own Varna . Because ,

although the varnasrama dharma is a part of naimittika dharma , for the purpose of a proper household life he should follow its principles .

It is not true that one becomes a Vaisnava simply by discarding the social etiquettes of Varnasrama dharma . For a Vaisnava , anything that is favourable to the path of bhakti , becomes his duty . Only when a person develops disgust and detachment to varnasrama dharma is he eligible to disassociate himself from it . He must then reject the Varnasrama system entirely .

When the Varnasrama dharma poses a detriment to a devotee's yavana family may also easily renounce the yavana devotional service (bhajana) he may unhesitatingly denounce it . A sincere devotee born in a society if it is injurious to his spiritual life . If both the renunciators -- of Varnasrama dharma and of Yavana society are Vaisnavas then where is the distinction ? Both have rejected the materialistic social norms . In the matter of spiritual pursuit they are brothers . But this is not the case with the grhastha - Vaisnava . Society and its norms are hindrances on the path of bhajana , or devotional service , yet till one becomes worthy of disowning it he should not do so . Gradually when he spontaneously develops attachment to norms and things that are beneficial to his spiritual activities then he forgoes his dependence on social etiquettes . For example : " ajnayaiva gunan dosan mayadistan - api svakan dharman santyajya yah sarvan mam bhajet sa ca sattama " . (S.B. 11/11/32)

[The supreme lord said -- those who intelligently analyse the good and bad of the religious instructions I have laid down in the scriptures and accordingly reject them and continue to sincerely execute devotional service are truly very advanced devotees '.]

The Gita says :

" Sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vrajaaham tvam sarva papebhyo moksaisyami ma sucah " .(B.G. 18/66)

[^ Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me . I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction . Do not fear '.]

Else where the Srimad Bhagavatam states .

" yada yasyanugrhnati bhagavan atma - bhavita hsa jahati matim loke vede ca parinisthitam " . (S.B. 4/29/46)

[^ When a person is fully engaged in devotional service , he is favoured 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 '].

Cuda :- If a yavana sincerely embraces Vaisnavism , will you sit together with him and eat ?

Vaisnavadasa :- Impartial , detached Vaisnavas can sit with them and honour mahaprasadam . But grhastha - Vaisnavas cannot sit together with them and eat etc , yet there are no restriction regarding worshipping the Lord or honouring prasadam together -- in fact they are duty - bound to do so .

Cuda :- Then why are the yavana - vaisnavas prohibited from touching deity paraphernalia in a Vaisnavas deity room ?

V.B. :- It is offensive to call a Vaisnava ` yavana ' if he is born in a yavana family . Every single Vaisnava has the right to serve the Supreme Lord Krsna . If a grhastha - vaisnava in serving the Deity acts contrary to the precepts of Varnasrama dharma , he is found guilty of transgressing social etiquettes . Deity worship is not recommended for detachment . They serve the Divine couple , Sri Radha and Her beloved Krsna , in meditation .

Cuda :- I have made a note of it . Now please tell me what you think of the brahmanas ?

V.B. :- There are two types of brahmanas -- by qualification and by birth only . The brahmana by qualification are close to being Vaisnavas hence they are always to be respected . Where as a brahmana by birth is regarded only in a mundane society . The Vaisnavas are also respectful towards them . The scriptures comment on this subject in this manner :(S.B. 7/9/10)

" viprad dvi - sad - guna yutad aravinda - nabha - padaravinda - vimukhat svapacam varisthamanye tad - arpita - mano - vacanehi-tartha punati sa kulam natu bhurimanah " . (S.B. 7/9/10)

[` If abrahmana has all twelve of the brahminical qualifications (as they are stated in the book called Sanat - sujata) 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 dog - eater but who has dedicated everything -- mind , words , activities , wealth and life -- to the Supreme Lord . Such a devotee is better than such a brahmana because the devotee can purify his whole family , where as the so - called brahmana in a position of false prestige cannot purify even himself ' .]

Cuda :- The lower borns like Sudras are not allowed to study the vedas . Can a sudra who has become a vaisnava scrutinise the vedas ?

Vaisnavadasa :- A person may come from any varna , if he is a pure vaisnava he becomes a transcendental brahmana . The veda is divided into two sections : that which propounds the inconsequen-tial philosophy of karma , and that which exhorts the absolute truth . Mundane brahmanas have access to only the former section of the vedas -- on karma and so on , while the transcendental brahmanas are fit candidates for the latter section -- the abso-lute truth . A pure vaisnava's background is immaterial , he is worthy of studying and teaching the essence -- the

absolute truth from the vedas . This is substantiated in the Brhadaranyaka Upanisad :

" tameva dhiro vijnaya prajnam kurvvita brahmanah ". (4/4/21) Br. Arup

[An intelligent , equipoised person who has realised brahman must endeavour to know the Supreme Absolute Truth , the Personal-ity of Godhead and surrender unto Him with loving devotion '.]

Again in the same upanisad elsewhere it states :

" yo va etad - aksaram gargya - viditvasmal- lokat praiti sa krpanahatha ya etad - aksaram gargi viditvasmal - lokat praiti sa brahmanah ". (Br. A 3/8/10)
[O Gargi ! those who pass away from this mortal world without the knowledge of the infallible Supreme Personality of Godhead are very impious , lowly destitutes -- a terrible miser ; and those who have realised the the transcendently situated Supreme Lord exit from this material world as brahmanas '.]

As regards the mundane brahmanas Manu has this to comment

" yo ' nadhitya dvijo vedam - anyatra kurute sramamsa jivanneva sudratvam - asu gacchati sanvayah ". (ManuSam . 2/168)

[That twice -born brahmana (dvija) who after receiving the sacred thread does not immerse himself in the study of the vedas but busies himself with less important texts and subject matters will very soon in this life time along with his family acquire the lowly qualities of a sudra '.]

The vedas have clearly defined the characteristics of a deserving candidate who can approach the essence of the vedas :

" yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deve tatha gurautasyaite kathita hyarthah prakasante mahatmanah ". (Sveta . Up . 6/23)

[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 purport of the word ` para - bhakti ' is pure unalloyed devotion . I do not wish to delve deeper into this topic , if needed you can research further . In a nutshell : those who have developed sincere faith , or sraddha in the process of pure devotional surrender are suitable candidates to scrutinise the highest truth -- the essence of the vedas . As for the great souls who have been crowned with pure love of Godhead , they are the exemplary propounder of this absolute knowledge -- the con-clusion of the vedas .

Cuda :- Have you already arrived at this conclusion that the second section of the

vedas that propounds the absolute truth only espouses vaisnava religions teachings and no other theology?

Vaisnavadasa :- There is but only one religion without prurality , and is designated as nitya - dharma , or the eternal religion which is also called the vaisnava religion . The different religious instructions of naimittika dharma (karma , jnana , yoga etc .) are like the ascending steps on a ladder , which is vais-nava dharma . The Supreme Lord Himself declares in the Srimad Bhagavatam : " Kalena nasta pralaya vaniyam veda - samjnita mayadhu brahmane prokta dharma yasyam mad - atmakah " . (S.B. 11/14/8)

[^ The Supreme Lord said -- O Uddhava ! those instructions that propound the eternal religion which inspires attachment to Me is compiled in the vedas . Due to the ravages of time (pralaya) they seem to be lost ; I again instruct Brahma at the beginning of creation with the same knowledge of the vedas] .

The Katho upanisad states :

" sarve veda yat padmananti -- tathe padam samgrahena vravim " . (Ka. Up. 1/2/15 & 1/3/9)

" tad - visnoh param padam ' etc .

[^ The Personality , or the Supreme position the entire vedic literature primarily describes , is in short that of Lord Visnu ' .]

At this point in the discussion Devi Vidyaratna's , and his friends ' faces were looking pinched and dry . The teacher's enthusiasm seem to flag . It was already five in the afternoon . The unanimous decision of the congregation was to halt the debate . The brahmana pundits got up from their seats and took leave from the vaisnavas . They unhesitatingly praised the depth of Vaisnavadasa Babaji's erudition . The vaisnavas dispersed to their individual dwellings loudly glorifying the holy name of the Lord .

Chapter 7

Nitya - dharma, or Eternal Religion and Sansara, or Material Life

The ancient township of Saptagrama , having predominantly a large mercantile community , is situated on the bank of the holy river Sarasvati. For hundreds of years many thousand gold traders and jewellers made their homes there . Since the time of Sri Uddhara-na Datta this trading society took to congregational chanting of the holy name with deep sincerity by Lord Nityananda's mercy . A certain trader

named Candidasa Banik refused to join in the congregational chanting fearing that it might increase his ex-penses . He had Perreted away a large wealth by being a miserly . His wife , Damayanti Devi , also infected with her husbands parsimonious mentality never entertained guests nor served the vaisnavas . The couple expanded their family to four sons and two daughters early in their marriage . They gradually married off the daughters and kept aside immense savings for the sons . In a household which is not visited by vaisnavas , its family members , especially the progenies , easily loose their charitable dispo-sition . As the children grew older they become selfish , they were so greedy for their parents wealth that they wished them dead . The parent's sorrow and pain knew no end .

Slowly they found suitable brides for their sons and launched them into household life . The daughter - in - laws , due to their close association with their husbands also took to their self - centred ways and desired their parent - in - laws's quick demise. The son's became capable of handling business independ-ently and now managed all transactions in the shop . They gradu-ally divided their father's wealth among themselves .

One day Candidasa called his family members together . He said -- ` look , I was able to save all this money for you by being very thirfty . I was never extravagant in regards to my own comports , eating or dressing nicely . Your mother was the same way . Now we are approaching old age , it is your duty towards us to care for , and serve us . But I notice that you are not looking after us properly , this is causing us pain and suffering . I have secret-ed away a fair amount of money and this I will give to the one who is a good son to me " .

The son's and their wives listened to their father's monotonous decision that their a going parents should be sent off far mono-logue mutely and then dispersed and clandestinely met some where else . Here they came to the firm away and their hidden treasure be confiscated and shared . Because the father may donate this money to someone underserving out of sentimentality . They were convinced that the treasure was buried in a secret chamber in their bedroom and that their decision was a sensible one .

Hari carana was the eldest son . He approached his father one morning and said -- ` Father , why don't you and our beloved mother once visit the holy pilgrimage of Navadvipa dhama and fulfill the purpose of your human birth . I have heard that in kaliyuga no other pilgrimage is more auspicious than a visit to this Navadvipa dhama . The journey to Navadvipa is quite inexpen-sive ; if you cannot travel on foot then a passenger - boat can be easily hired for a tuppense . There's even a Vaisnava lady who wants to accompany you " .

Candidasa carried this proposal to his wife for consultation . Damayanti Devi was overcome with joy . They became convinced that the father's talk had positive effect on their sons . So they planned together . In fact they were not that incapacitated that they could not walk to Navadvipa if required . Their route to Navadvipa would pass through Kalna and Santipur .They consulted the religious

almanac , picked an auspicious day and started on food and began to eat . Just then a traveller from their their pilgrimage . They arrived in Kalna the next day . They found a guest house , cooked their home town walked in . He recognised them and broke the news to them that their sons had forced open their safe , looted and shared their secret savings . And now they were not anymore welcome back to their own house .

The news of loss of money , delivered a terrible blow to them . They fell into dismal , grey meloncholi . Food lay half - eaten and forgotten ; tears of self - pity soaked their frail frames . Meanwhile their companion , the lady vaisnavas tried to console them with sensible spiritual advice , she said -- ` do not be so attached to home and hearth . Come let us go to Navadvipa and become mendicants , build a small hut and beg food for substi-nence . Such a life is better than to go back to those who you did so much for and who now became evil and inimical to you " .

Candidasa and his wife , still in a shocked condition after hearing the atrocious behaviour of their sons and daughters - in - law , kept repeating -- ` I willnot return to them , better I die ' . They stayed in Kalna in a vaisnavas house for a couple of days and then after visiting Santipura and its holy sites moved on to Navadvipa . They had a relative living in Mayapura where they put up for few days . Then they visited first the Saptapalli village in Navadvipa and then Saptapalli settlement in Kuliyagram situated on the opposite bank of the Ganga. After travelling for sometime they began to feel home - sick , affec-tion for their sons and family welled up in their hearts .

Candidasa said -- ` come let us return to our Saptagrama , is it possible that our own sons will not show us any affection ? Their vaisnavi (lady vaisnava) companion quickly retorted -- ` have you no shame ? This time they will definitely murder you ! '

These words had a sobering affect on them , knowing that she was speaking the fear some truth . He turned to her and said -- ` my dear respected lady , you have made us wise to reality , you may please return to your home ; we will remain here and find a proper spiritual guide . Taking instructions from him we will live our life humbly from begging ' .

The vaisnavi left them to return to her home . The mercantile couple abandoned all hopes of returning home and plunged them-selves into the task of building a small dwelling in the village of Kulia on a property owned by Chaykari Cattopadhyaya . They went around soliciting help from the village gentry and one is exonerated of all one's previous offences . Therefore it is known constructed their hut and began to live in it . Kuliyagrama is a holy place , It is common knowledge from the past that by resid-ing there as aparadha - bhanjana pat , or the place of absolving one's offences .

One day Candidasa told his wife - ` O mother of Hari ! is it not high time you

stopped talking and thinking about our children ? We must have committed many sinful activities to have taken birth in a family of merchants . Due to our surrounding we were stingy and never hospitable to guests nor to any vaisnava saints . Now here if I can earn some money I will try to be enerous and enter-tain sadhus hospitable thus ensuring a better birth next life . i have decided to open a grocery store . I will borrow some money from the landlords and start the business ' .

A few days later Candidasa opened a small shop . Soon he began profiting from the sales , so after satisfying their hunger and need they were feeding at least one guest everyday . Candidasa now saw an end to his days of struggle .

Candidasa had had some previous education . So he spent his leisure in the shop reading a book called ` Sri Krsna - Vijaya 'by Sri Gunaraja Khan . In this way , for six months he conducted business fairly and hosted guests daily . By then the residents of Kuligagrama became acquainted with Candidasa's background and looked upto him with new respect .

Yadavadasa , a grhastha vaisnava , or householder vaisnava was also living in that village . Everyday he held a public reading of the famous biographical work on Lord Caitanya's pastimes called the ` Caitanya - Bhagavat ' . Candidasa would sometimes attend it . Yadavadasa and his wife had dedicated their lives in serving the vaisnavas . Candidasa and his wife became inspired to follow their example , so they also began to serve vaisnavas .

One day Candidasa enquired from Yadavadasa the meaning of samsara , or material existence . Yadavadasa informed that on the other side of the river Ganga lay the island of Godrumadvipa which sheltered many knowledgeable vaisnavas . They should go there and place this question to them . In fact he himself went there sometimes to educate himself , because presently the vaisnava scholars of Godrumadvipa are much more learned in the scriptures the news that the brahmana panditas than the brahmana panditas . received a good thrashing in a scriptural debate at the hands of Sri Vaisnavadasa Babaji had spread everywhere like wild fire . Thus Candidasa's question would definitely be answered properly by them .

Next day Yadavadasa and Candidasa decided to cross the Ganga .Damayanti Devi , who was regularly serving the Vaisnavas , and had become less miserly ; said -- ` I would like to accompany you to Godrumadvipa .

Yadavadasa replied -- ` none of the vaisnavas there are grhasthas , they are mostly renounced vaisnavas who have left their homes . I am worried that if you come they may be disturbed " .

Damayanti insisted -- ` I will remain at a respectable distance and offer my obeisances to them . I am not going to enter inside their kunjja (shady opening) . I am just an old woman , I am positive they cannot resent my being there .

Yadavadasa replied - ` it is not customary for a woman to go there , better for you to remain in another place close by and on our way back we can return together '.

It was three in the afternoon when they alighted from the boat and proceeded towards Pradyumna - kunjya . Damayanti Devi offered her dandavats from the entrance of the kunjya and went away at a distance to sit under a shady old banyan tree . Yadavadasa and Candidasa entered the kunjya and offered their dandavats with sincere devotion to the assembly of vaisnavas seated on the Madhavi - malati mandapa platform .

Sri Paramhansa Babaji was sitting there surrounded by Vaisnavada-sa Babaji , Lahiri Mahasaya , Anantadasa Babaji and others . Yadavadasa and Candidasa came near and quietly sat down next to them .

Anantadasa Babaji questioned -- ` who is this new person ? In reply Yadavadasa explained the background and reason for their being there . Anantadasa Babaji spoke out with a touch of humour -- ` A yes ! this is called samsara ! One who has understood what is samsara is intelligent , and he who is swirling in the whirl-pool of samsara is pitiable " .

Candidasa's consciousness was gradually becoming purified . Nitya - sukrti unfailingly brings benedictions . Serving vaisnavas , reading vaisnava literature , hearing spiritual topics are all nitya - sukrti . By performing these the heart becomes cleansed and faith in pure devotional service is easily evoked . This was Candidasa's present Condition . As he now heard Anantadasa Babaji speak his heart softened and he enquired -- ` my humble prayer to you is that kindly enlighten me about the true nature of samsara, Anantadasa Babaji -- ` Candidasa , your question is somewhat grave . I would rather wish that sri Paramhansa Babaji or Vaisna-vadasa Babaji reply .

Paramhansa Babaji -- Equal to the gravity of this question is Aanatadasa Babaji's capacity to tackle it . Today we will receive spiritual instructions from him ' .

A.B. :- Now that I have the assemblies approval to speak , I will most certainly say everything within my knowledge . At the very outset I meditate on the lotus - feet of my gurudeva Srila Pradyumna Brahmachari , who is an eternal associate of the Supreme Lord and beg from his blessings .

There are two distinctive conditions of the jiva -- liberated and entangled in material life , or samsara . The jiva who is a pure devotee of Krsna and has never come under the sway of maya , or he who has transcended this material nature by Lord Krsna's mercy , are liberated souls and they are in a liberated condition .

One who has denied his relationship to Krsna , or is turned away from Him and is eternally in the clutches of maya is in samsara ,or entangled material condition . The liberated jiva is tran-scendental and service to Krsna is his life's engagement . He is not situated in material nature , but is an eternal resident of some spiritual

abode : either Goloka or Vaikuntha , or Vrndavana and so on . There are unlimited liberated souls . The number of the materially entangled souls are as endlessly numerous . Because they have rejected Krsna , Krsna's shadow potency maya , or illusory energy has imprisoned them with the three qualities of material nature namely -- sattva , rajah and tamah (goodness , passion and ignorance) . Due to different intensities and combinations of these three gunas do we find variety in jiva's material condition . These variations are evident in jiva's physiognomy , mentality , habits , geographical situations , speed of movement etc . After entering this mundane plane jiva acquired a new identity .

In his pure state the jiva's self - cognition was -- I am an eternal servant of Krsna ' . But now he perceives himself in so many roles : as a human being , or a demigod , an animal , a king , a brahmana , a candala , a sick man , a hungry man , an insulted person , a benefactor , a husband , a wife , a son , an enemy , a friend , a scholar , handsome , rich , poor , happy , sad , courageous , weak and so on endlessly . This is known as egoism , or false pride . There is another energy called ` mamata ' , or attachment . This makes jiva identify himself with material objects , persons and concepts such as my house , my possessions , my body , my caste , my race , my strength , my looks , my qualities , my education , my renunciation , my knowledge , my achievements , my wealth , my servants etc. etc . So this massive intricate net woven by the concepts of ` me ' and ` mine ' is in one word ` samsara ' .

Yadavadasa :- In jiva's conditioned , or imprisoned existence ` me ' and ` mine ' are very much present . But do they remain in his liberated state ?

A.B. :- In the liberated condition these concepts of ` me ' and ` mine ' become spiritualised and perfect . Jiva identifies himself with his pure self , in the way Lord Krsna has created him. Even in that liberated condition there are innumerable ` me's or I's . As Krsna's servitor one is confronted with many varieties of spiritual mellows , or cit rasa. The numerous ingredients that comprise rasa inspire a sense of wanting to be a possessor , hence the concept of ` mine ' comes in .

Yadavadasa :- Then why is it a mistake to have such a wide range of ` me ' and ` mine ' in the conditioned state ?

AB :- The mistake is -- in the pure state , ` me ' and ` mine ' are absolute realities -- they have factual existence ; but in samsara all varieties of ` me ' and ` mine ' are artificially imposed , meaning that for the jiva they do not represent the true self , instead they are false identifications . All such identities in samsara are temporary , artificial and bequeather of transient sorrows and joys .

Yadavadasa :- Is material ` samsara ' a falsity ?

AB :- This material world is not false , but by Lord Krsna's will it is factual . Once jiva enters this mundane nature right away his self - perceptions of ` me ' and ` mine ' in relation to this world begins and this is false . Those who misrepresent that this world is false are the mayavadi speculators , due to which they are

offenders .

Yadavadasa :- Why do we pursue after this false identification ?

AB :- Jiva is an infinitesimal spiritual spark . He was initial-ly situated on the borderline between the material world and the spiritual nature . From this location , those jivas who did not forget their relationship to Lord Krsna became fortified with spiritual energy and were attracted to the spiritual realm. Thus they entered Lord Krsna's transcendental abodes and became en-grossed in His service , as his eternal associates experiencing divine ecstasy .

While those who coveted to enjoy the material world seperately from Krsna and rejected Him were automatically dragged down by maya and cast into the prison of samsara . Since then jiva lost his true identity and became overtaken by false pride thinking of himself as the lord of all he surveys and other such misconcep-tions .

Yadavadasa :- Inspite of our attempte why do we fail to awaken our real original identity ?

AB :- Human endeavours can be divided into two categories : appropriate and inappropriate . If appropriate endeavours are made it will definitely expunge our false pride . How can you expect positive results from inappropriate endeavours ?

Yadavadasa :- Kindly enumerate the inappropriate endeavours .

AB :- To follow the `karmakanda' method , thinking it will cleanse the consciousness and enlighten him with the nondual brahman realisation . This in turn will eradicate ` maya ' , -- this is inappropriate endeavour . Another example is to try through the eight - fold yoga system , known as astanga - yoga , to became transcendental -- this is almost impossible . In this manner there are many inappropriate endeavours .

Yadavadasa :- Why are these attempts considered inappropriate ?

AB :- Inappropriate , because to reach the target through these endeavours is very difficult and improbable . The only way to liberate ourselves from this condition is to try and invoke the mercy of the Supreme Lord who we oftended to begin with , and due to which we were forced into this illusion . In this way we can earn back our original spiritual identity .

Yadavadasa :- What is then called appropriate endeavours ?

AB :- Sadhu - sanga , or associating with saintly persons , and by surrendering , or prapatti . Sadhu - sanga has been described in the Srimad Bhagavatam as follows :

" ata atyantikam kseman prcchamo bhavato ' naghahsamsare ' smin ksanardho ' pi sat sangah sevadhir - nrnam " .(SB 11/2/30)

[` O sinless rsis ! direct perception of the Supreme Lord is very rarely attained , therefore I ask you what is of utmost benefit to humanity ? Half a moment of association with saintly souls in this samsara can fulfil all desires .']

And prapatti is described in the Bhagavad Gita :-

" daivi hy esa gunamayi mama maya duratyayamam eva ye prapadyante mayam etam tarantite " (B G 7/14)

[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 '] .

Candidasas : My lord ! I am unable to grasp the full import of your words . This much I have understood that we , the spirit souls were originally pure , but by forgetting Krsna we have fallen into maya's clutches ; and this has made us prisoners in this world . If we receive the mercy of Krsna we can find release otherwise we remain in this conditioned state .

AB :- Very true , and now begin to strengthen your faith in this truth . Your teacher Yadavadasa is able to comprehend this knowl-edge . You can educate yourself gradually from him . Srila Jaga-dananda Pandita , an intimate and prominent associate of Lord Caitanya has written in his book ` Sri Prema - Vivarta ' the following lives :-

" The living entities are infinitesimal parts of the Supreme Absolute Truth , and Lord Krsna is that Supreme Absolute Person-ality , transcendental and effulgent . When the living entities realise that Lord Krsna is the eternal and absolute controller , they engage in his loving devotional service .

When the living entity desires to enjoy separately from Krsna , the illusory potency of the Lord . Maya , immediately grabs the soul in her clutches . Being maya's captive , he becomes bewil-dered and acts like someone who has been possessed by a witch .

The jiva soul , forgetful of his constitutional position as the eternal servant of Krsna , perfect and pure , becomes a slave from one body to another .

He goes through many births , sometimes born as a king , some-times as an ordinary citizen , sometimes as a brahmana and some-times as a sudra . Sometimes he is suffering , and sometimes he is happy . Sometimes he is born as an insect , and sometimes he goes to heaven . Then sometimes he has to come down to this earth again , and sometimes he has to go to hell . Sometimes he is born as ademi-god , sometimes as a demon , sometimes the master and at other times the

servant .

Transmigrating from birth to birth in this material universe , if by chance the living entity comes in contact with a saintly person he becomes immediately knowledgeable of his true identity as pure spirit soul , an eternal servant of Krsna . Enlightened by this knowledge , he does not want material entanglement any longer , and laments : " Alas ! why have I served this illusory material energy for so long " ? He bitterly regrets and cries out , `` Krsna ! My Lord , I am your eternal servant . Ever since I left the shelter of your lotus - feet my life has been completely devastated . "

Lord Krsna is so merciful that if anyone importunes Him earnestly , He immediately releases the jiva from material entanglement . When the jiva breaks away from mayas captivating spell and strives toward reaching Lord Krsna by rendering devotional serv-ice , he regains the supreme shelter of the Lord's lotus - feet . Lord Krsna fortifies him with His transcendental , internal potency , and this overbearing power of the Lord's spiritual potchey weakens maya's influence on the living entity .

The only desireable goal is to be able to chant the holy name of the Lord in the association of pure and saintly devotees . This is the best and only way to conquer nescience " . (P.V. CHAP 6)

Yadavadasa :- Revered master , you just mentioned sadhu - sanga, but sadhus , or saintly persons are also present in this samsara and being harrassed by it . How can they offer salvation to others ?

AB :- Indeed , the sadhus are living in samsara , but the sad-hu's samsara and the samsara of the jiva's who are captivated by maya are quite distinct from each other . Externally both the samsara appear the same but internally they are poles apart . The sadhus have been living in this world since time immemorial , unfortunately the gross materialistic men cannot recognise them and so saintly association has become uncommon .

Jivas under maya's sway , can be broadly divided into two sec-tions . A group of them are engrossed in the insignificant sensu-al pleasures and are inordinately infatuated with samsara ; while the other seeks for greater enjoyment in the subtle , mental plane after realising that maya is madequate to offer it . Thus the jivas living in samsara are of two kinds : viveka - sunya , or without discrimination and viveka - yukta , or endowed with the power of discrimination . Scholars commonly refer to them as visayi (gross materialists) and mumuksu (salvationists) . Here the term `mumuksu' must not be misinterpreted to mean a person striving for knowledge of the undifferentiated brahmana , or nirbheda - brahmana . The vedas have delineated `mumuksu'as someone , who after being incinerated in the material conflagara-tion searches for the so thing escape in self - realisation . The sanskrit word `mumuksu' means desiring for liberation , so when the mumuksus or salvations cast aside the desire for liberation and engage in serving the lord they are actually performing pure bhakti . The scriptures do not urge anyone to give up liberation as his goal . As soon as the mumuksu person is enlightened with the

knowledge of Krsna and of the jive he is automatically liber-ated . For example Srimad Bhagavatam says :

" rajobhih sama - sankhyatah parthivair iha jantavahtesam ye kecanehante sreys vai manujadayah prayo mumuksavas tesam kecanai-va dvijottamamumuksunam sahasresu kascin mucyeta sidhyatimuktanam api siddhanam narayanah - parayanahsudurlabhah prasantatma kotisv api maha - mune ." (S.B. 6 /14 / 3 - 5)

[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 .

O best of the brahmanas , Sukadeva Goswami , out of many persons who follow religious principles , only a few desire liberation from thus material world . Among many thousands who desire liber-ation , only one may actually achieve liberation , giving up his 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.

O great sage , among many millions who are liberated and perfect in knowledge of liberation ,only one may become a devotee of Lord Narayana , or Krsna . Such devotees , who are fully peaceful , are extremely rare ".]

Thus if a devotee of Lord Narayana is extremely rare then a devotee of Krsna is even more exceptional . Those who have at-tained the liberated state after nullifying the noisome must mumuksu , or desire for liberation , become Krsna's devotees .

He must remain in samsara as long as his tabernacle exists but his samsara is diametrically different to the visayi's , or gross materialists samsara . Krsna's devotee has two kinds of exist-ences.

Yadavadasa :- From your explanation I gathered there are four different states for the viveka - yukta persons. The association with devotees of which of these categories can be called as sadhu - sanga ?

AB :- Viveka - yukta , mumksu , mukta ,(or liberated , or siddha) and bhakta , or devotee, are the four different states of a viveki person . For the visayi nondevotee association with viveka - yukta and mumuksu is beneficial . The mukta person can be divided into two sections : one who is eager for rasa , or spiritual mellows and one who is arrogant of his mayavadi , monistic liberation . The association of the former mukta person is certainly advantageous . The mukta mayavadi is an offender , his association is proscribed for all . This is the verdict of the Srimad Bhagavatam :

" ye' nye' ravindaksa vimukta - maninas tvayy asta - bhavad avisuddha - buddhayaharuhya krechena param padam tatah patanty adho ' nadrta - yusmad - anghrayah (S.B. 10/2/32) .

[`O lotus - eyed one ; those who think they are liberated in this life but are without devotional service to You are of impure intelligence . Although they accept severe austerities and pen-ances and rise to the spiritual position , to impersonal Brahman realisation , they fall down again because they neglect to worship Your lotus - feet .']

The fourth kind is the Lord's devotee who is of two types : those inclined towards aisarya , or opulence laced with awe and rever-ence and those who are inclined towards madhurya , or the conjugal mellow . The association of devotees is the most edifying in all respects for everyone . And especially the association of the madhurya - para devotee ; if one takes shelter of him, pure devo-tional mellow , or rasa appears in the heart .

Yadavadasa :- Earlier on you said that Krsna's devotees are found in two kinds of situations , can you iterate them in detail so dull persons like me can properly understand ?

AB :- Devotees are found in two types of situations :-- in the grha known as grhastha - bhakta , or house holder devotee and outside the grha known as grha - tyagi - bhakta, or devotees who have renounced the householder life.

Yadavadasa :- Kindly describe in full what is the grhastha - bhakta's relationship to this samsara .

AB :- A person who builds a house and lives in it is not neces-sarily a grhastha , or house - holder . He must accept a wife , legal markage and move into a house , such is meant a household . When a devotee is found so situated , he is a grhastha - bhakta. The conditioned soul exploits this material nature through the five portals of knowledge - gathering senses . With his eyes he sees form and colour . Hears sounds through his ears . Smells with his nose, tastes with his tongue and feels and touches with his skin . With these five senses he probes this world and devel-ops attachment for it . The more he is attracted to matter the further he distances himself from the sweet Lord of the heart , Krsna . This is known as the enchanting external phantasmagoria of samsara . Those who are thus submerged in samsara are called visayi .

When the Lord's devotees are situated in the household life they do not abandon themselves wantonly to carnal cravings like the visayi . His wedded wife is a maid - servant of Krsna . Their sons and daughters are Krsna's servitors . His eyes seek fulfil-ment in seeing the Lord's Deity - form and other paraphernalia connected to Krsna . His ears yearn to be satisfied by hearing Krsna - conscious topics about Krsna and his devotees . He exults in smelling the fragrance of tulasi leaves and buds , scent and flowers offered to Krsna . His tongue relishes uttering the holy name and the delicious food offered to Krsna . He experiences divine ecstasy from touching the vaisnavas feet . His ambitions and hopes , activities , desires , hospitality , worshipping demigods are all carried out as a part of his main spiritual pursuits, --- rendering devotional service to Krsna .

His entire life is a joyous festival comprising of being compassionate to all living entities , chanting Krsna's name and serving the vaisnava . To enjoy material pleasures without attachment is solely possible for the Lord's devotees in the household life . For the jivas in Kaliyuga it is best to become grhastha - bhaktas . There is no fear of falling down and full spiritual advancement is definitely achievable .

Many highly knowledgeable and self - realised spiritual preceptors were among the grhastha - vaisnavas . As far as the hereditary Goswamis are concerned , if their descendants become pure vaisnavas they are then also grhastha - bhaktas whose association is most beneficial to humanity . Yadavadasa :- Grhastha - vaisnavas have to be under the regulations of the smartas (karma - kandi brahmanas) otherwise they face problems in society . Under these circumstances how can they cultivate pure devotional service ?

AB :- It is a fact that grhastha - vaisnavas have to conform to certain social conventions like vivaha (vedic marriage) of sons and daughters , or sraddh (offering oblations to departed parents) and so on . But fruitive activities are not required to be performed by them . You see, to maintain and care for the body one has to admit dependence on the extraneous , this is true even for those who claim to be detached . When a person is sick and in pain he must take medicines , procure food and eat when hungry , arrange for clothings against the chill and build a roof against sun and rain ,etc . Such necessities are normal for the embodied soul and he is dependent on them . The real meaning of being detached is to factually reduce this dependence , because as long as the body is present it is impossible to be totally detached . So , as much as one is detached it is to his advantage and conducive to devotional surrender .

If a person is able to dovetail all his activities , just mentioned , in Krsna's service , these imperfections are rectified . For example a person should not marry with the express intention of expanding his dynasty or ostentatiously worshipping Prajapati (demigod of progenies) rather he should think that he is accepting Krsna's - maidservant as his life's partner to establish a Krsna - conscious family . Such resolutions are favourable to devotional service . Materialistic relatives , Priests and others may proffer their advice , but ultimately a person accrues the result of his own vows and resolutions .

A grhastha - bhakta will observe sraddh by giving Krsna - prasadam to the departed soul as oblations (pinda), feed and offer charity to vaisnava brahmanas , this is spiritually beneficial to him . When bhakti , or devotional ceremonies are included in the smarta rituals then the negative , fruitive results are extracted out from karma . By performing vaisnava activities , which are a part of the process of pure devotional service , there is no hindrance on the path of bhakti . Social dealings should be conducted with detachment and dispassionately ; while spiritual activities must be executed in saintly company . Then all these performances are pruned of their imperfections . Just observe , that the majority of Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu's eternal associates (parsada) are grhastha - bhaktas .

Since the dawn of history many devotees who were saintly kings (rajarsi) , demi-gods and philosophers were grhastha - bhaktas . You must understand that grhastha - bhaktas are universally worshipable .

Yadavadasa :- If the grhastha - bhaktas are held in such high esteem and are heir to the treasure of the most sublime aspects of Krsna - prema then why do some of them become renunciants or graha - tyagi ?

AB :- A very few among the grhastha - bhaktas become suitable candidates for a life of a renunciant , or grha - tyagi , and their association is extremely rare .

Yadavadasa :- What qualifications are required to become a fit candidate for becoming a grha - tyagi ?

AB :- Human beings have two propensities : extrovert and intro-vert ; in vedic terms they are known as parak (turned away) and pratyak (higher aspiration) . The pure spirit soul has forgotten his original identity and presumptuously assume the gross materi-al body and the subtle mind to be the eternal soul . His mind through the instruments of his senses, develop attraction and attachment to the phenomenal world . This is called the extrovert propensity , or bahirmukha - pravrtti . When this process is reversed -- i.e. from matter to the mind through the senses and on to the soul , then the consciousness flowing inwards is then termed antarmukha - pravrtti , or introvert propensity . As long as the extrovert propensity is predominant one must imperatively dovetail all his proclivities , without offences , in Krsna - consciousness , on the strength of saintly association . In the secure shelter of the bhakti process the bahir - mukha pravrtti will swiftly shrink back and change direction towards the inter-nal . When the propensity turns totally inwards , or antarmukha , the grhastha bhakta earns the eligibility to be a grha - tyagi , or renunciant . If a grhastha renounces the household situation prematurely there is every possibility of failure . The household situation is , for the jiva , a school where he educates himself and learns the knowledge of the self. Once his education is over he can leave the school .

Yadavadasa :- What are the symptoms that indicate a devotee has acquired eligibility to be grha - tyagi ?

AB :- He must be completely free from the desire to associate with women . He is very merciful to all living creatures , handles money and matter with apathy , accumulates just enough food and clothing in preparation for times of want , he has pure love for Krsna , avoids the company of gross materialists , is unconcerned about either praise or insult , is least interested in ostentatious show , he is equipoised and dispassionate in life or death . The scriptures have described these symptoms in the following verses from the Srimad Bhagavatam :

" sarva - bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad - bhavam atmanahbhutani bhagavaty atmany esa bhagavatottamah " .(S.B. 11/2/45)

[A person advanced in devotional service sees within every thing the soul of souls , the Supreme Personality of Godhead , Sri Krsna . 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 '.]

" may yananyena bhavena bhaktim kurvanti ye drdhammat krte tyakta - karmanas tyakta - svajana - bandhavah ".(S.B. 3/25/22)

[Such a sadhu engages in staunch devotionaal 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 '.]

" visrjati hrdayam na yasya saksad - dharir avasabhihito'pya-ghaugha - nasahpranaya - rasanaya dhrtanghri - padmah sa bhavati bhagavarata - pradhana uktaah ".(S.B. 11/2/55)

[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 and chant about Him inattentively . This is because the rope of love always binds the Lord to stay within the devotee's hearts. Such devotees should be accepted as most elevated '.]

When these symptoms mainfest in a grhastha - bhakta he becomes incapable of performing ` karma ', or fruitive labour .Naturally he leaves the household and turns a grha - tyagi . But such elevated and detached saints are extremely expectional . If anyone in his life time can find the association of such a holy person he is truly fortunate .

Yadavadasa :- I presently noticed a trend that some young per-sons leave home and receive spiritual initiation , construct a small temple and start Deity - worship . But after sometime they fall into the bad company of women . Ofcourse , they continue to chant japa and some how maintain their little setup by begging . Would you categories them as detached or as grhastha - bhaktas ?

AB :- You have included many points together , so I will answer them one by one . The criterion is not the age , old or young . A grhastha - bhakta may deserve to become grha - tyagi at an early age due to a combination of his spiritual advancement and purifi-cation in his previous birth and further ennhancement of them in the present one. Sukdeva Goswami became eligible from the moment of his birth. Utmost attention must be given to determine that this worthness is not acquired through artificial austerities. Genuine renunciation may come at an early age , that it is not detrimental .

Yadavadasa :- What are the differences between genuine detach-ment and artificial renunciation ?

AB :- Genuine detachment is without vacillation , a resolve never broken . False renunciation is a consequence of a desire for a position of respect , material cunning and a cheating mentality . Some persons take to false renunciation with the intention that they will win respect from the genuinely detached devotees . All

this is inane and extremely harmful . As soon as such a person leaves home and family, the symptoms of detachment also disappear and instead he becomes haunted with moral aberrations .

Yadavadasa :- Is it essential for a grha - tyagi bhakta to change his dress ?

AB :- When all attachments for household life is completely uprooted then the detached devotee can stay anywhere , in the forest or in the house , such an elevated saint purifies the whole world. Sometimes , some of them want themselves to be seen as bhiksus (saints who live from begging) and so they go around dressed in simple loin - cloths (kaupina) carrying a kantha (a coverlet sown together from used and worn clothings). At the time when they take the vows of kaupina and kantha ' they do it in the presence of other grha - tyagi bhuktas to fortify their resolve . This is the method for receiving a renunciants , or mendicants garb , know as vesa admitting him into a life of bhiksa (begging) .How can there be any objections regarding accepting `vesa ' in this manner?

Yadavadasa :- What is the necessity to be recognised as a bhik-su, by one's kaupina and kantha ?

AB :- Once a devotee is seen by the world with kaupina and kantha and that he has entered the life of bhiksa, his relatives and family members will disown him easily and he too, in turn , will reject any thought of going back home . A natural attraction for detachment as well as a repulsion for pedestrian company will possess him . The experienced grha - tyagi devotee with a seasoned sense of detachment may not require a change of dress but for some ,receiving `vesa ' does help . Elevated devotees who display the following characteristics need not accept `vesa ' -- " sa jahati matim loke vede ca parinisthitam "(S.B.4/29/46) meaning ` at such a time , the awakened devotee (who has received the Lord's causeless mercy) gives up all material activities and ritualistic performances mentioned in the vedas ". Their only concern is, the real need of humanity .

Yadavadasa :- Who can give the vesa ?

AB :- One should receive the `vesa ' from a grha- tyagi bhakta. A grhastha - bhakta has not experienced the life of a renunciant , hence he must not give `vesa ' to anybody . Because it is written in the scriptures --- ` apariksy - upadistam yat loka - nasaya tad - bhavet ' (Br. Vaivarta Purana) .

[` Without first practicing spiritual life one should not advice others , this will create chaos in society ' .]

Yadavadasa :- What are the points a guru must consider . When he initiates a who initiates a devotee with the `vesa ' , ?

AB :- The first point the guru must consider is whether the disciple is competent . Has he , as a grhastha - bhakta , been able to attain brahmical qualities like equanimity , sense control and so on by practicing devotional service to Krsna ? Is

he totally free from sex - desire ? Has he uprooted the material cravings for wealth and luxurious living ? The guru will have the disciple stay with him for sometime to test him properly . When he is convinced of his disciples eligibility , he will then initiate him into taking `vesa ' , but not before that . The guru will surely fall - down if he initiates an undeserving disciple .

Yadavadasa :- Now I understand that receiving `bheka ' , or `vesa ' is not a facile matter , but extremely difficult . In fact it is the unqualified gurus who have made this `bheka ' a mere meaningless ritual , a farce . Unfortunately this is only the beginning , I wonder where all this will end ' ?

AB :- In order to protect the sanctity of this process Lord Caitanya chastised Chota Haridas for a minor deviation . Those who claim to be followers of my Lord , Sriman Mahaprabhu must always remember this incident with Chota Haridas .

Yadavadasa :- Is it an authorised process to receive `bheka ' , construct a temple and begin deity worship ?

AB :- No, a competent devotee after receiving `vesa ' enters into a mendicant life , which means everyday he must go out and maintain himself by begging . He will not entangle himself in temple work and other such superfluous display . He will live in a hut in solitude , or in a grhastha's temple . He must not utilise moneys for his needs or anything else . He will simply use all his time and energy to chant Krsna's name without of-fences .

Yadavadasa :- Then what nomenclature can be given to those who after leaving home are constructing their own temple and living in it as if it were a household ?

AB :- They are called vantasi , or those who eat their own vomit . They are eating what they have regurgitated .

Yadavadasa :- Is he no longer a vaisnava ?

AB :- When his actions are contrary to scriptural injunctions and oppose the principles of the vaisnava religion, why should we seek his association ? He has deviated from the path of pure devotion and adopted deceit and caprice . What vaisnava qualities are still left in him ?

Yadavadasa :- How can we say that he has forsaken the vaisnava religion if he continues to chant the holy name ?

AB :- Chanting the holy name and nama - aparadha , or offences against the holy name are two different entities . Where ever you see sinfulactivities being committed on the strength of chanting it is a nama - aparadha . you must run far away from nama - aparadha .

Yadavadasa :- Can we call his samsara , a Krsna - conscious samsara , or not ?

AB :- Certainly not ! A Krsna conscious life is not tainted by deceit , it is filled with simplicity and honesty -- absent of offences .

Yadavadasa :- Then he must be inferior to a grhastha - bhakta ?

AB :- When he is not even a devotee then there cannot be a comparison with any kind of devotee .

Yadavadasa :- How can he be saved ?

AB :- He must first give up his offensive ways . Then he must chant incessantly till tears of remorse bring him back to the vaisnava fold .

Yadavadasa :- Respected Babaji , the grhastha - bhaktas follow the varnasrama system ; but is it possible for a grhastha to become a vaisnava without following it ?

AB :- If only you knew how magnanimous the vaisnava religion is ! It is also known as -- 'jaiva - dharma', the religion for all living entities . Every human being has the right to follow vaisnava religion . Those born in the lowest statuses of humanity known as 'antyaja ' can embrace vaisnava - dharma and live as grhastha - bhaktas although they are outside the varnasrama society . Another example is a sannyasi (the highest spiritual order in the Varnasrama system) who breaks his sannyasa vows and falls down . But later by associating with saintly persons is again reinstated in pure devotional service and can live as a grhastha - bhakta ; he is also an outcaste of the varnasrama society . Those who are ostracised from the varnasrama society due to their unlawful actions , and their progenies may take up the process of pure bhakti by associating with sadhus then they can become grhastha - bhaktas , but still they have no status in the varnasrama society . Therefore there are two types of grhas-tha - bhaktas : varnasrama dharma - yukta , or within the varnas-rama divisions and varnasrama - dharma - rahita , or outside the varnasrama standings .

Yadavadasa :- Who is the better of the two ?

AB :- The one who has developed the maximum devotion is natural-ly the best . As for who are bereft of devotion , the materialis-tic society will adjudge those who are within the varnasrama society as being the better of the two , because at least they have a locus standi in society. While the others are derelicts -the antyajas . But by spiritual considerations both are the same , they are both degraded because they are without devotion .

Yadavadasa :- Can a grhastha wear a grha - tyagis dress ?

AB :- No ,but if he does it he is indicted on two counts :- for deceiving himself and the world . Grhastha wearing a kaupina and carrying kantha etc. is an act that ridicules and insults the grha - tyagi bhakta who is formally initiated into bhiksha .

Yadavadasa :- Respected Babaji , is there an authorised scrip-tural procedure for

receiving ` bheka ' , or ` vesa ' ?

AB :- It has not been clearly outlined . A human being from any caste can embrace the vaisnava - dharma . But , according to the scripture , only a brahmana can accept the sannyasa order , no other . In the Srimad Bhagavatam , Sri Narada Muni first de-scribes the characteristics of the different varnas , or social orders ,and then goes on to say :

" yasya yal laksanam proktam pumso varnabhivyanjakamyad anyatrapi drsyeta tat tenaiva vinirdiset " .(S.B.7/11/35)

[` If one shows the symptoms of being a brahmana , ksatriya , vaisya or sudra , as described above , even if he has appeared in a different class ,he should be accepted according to those symptoms of classification ' .]

Thus on the strength of this scriptural statement the practice of giving sannyasa to persons having brahminical qualities , al-though born in lower social orders , or varnas , had started . Therefore if all these given conditions are met with then such a practice is certainly to be accepted as authorised by the scrip-tures . Ofcourse this is applicable only in spiritual matter -- not applicable nor acceptable by social conventions .

Yadavadasa :- Dear Candidasa,have your questions been answered ?

Candidasa :- From these wonderful, spiritual teachings of the most respected Babaji Maharaja I was able to assimilate the following .Jiva , having forgotten that he is an eternal servant of Lord Krsna , accepted the material tabernacle and by the influence of the three material modes he is trying to exploit this world . In return for it he is rewarded with pain and enjoy-ment . In his attempt to enjoy the results of his actions he is forced to accept birth , disease , old age and finally death . He goes through many lives , sometimes with a high birth , sometimes low , but each time his soul is covered over by new , false identities and egos . His fragile , mortal body is goaded into protecting itself from the ravages of hunger , thirst etc. He has to suffer in many ways due to an imbalanced distribution and availability of essential commodities . His body is under con-stant siege from the various distresses . The insufferable quar-rels and disputes with wife and children are sometimes driving him to take the horrible recourse in suicide .

He is forced by greed for money to commit so many sinful activi-ties ending up being punished by the law , becoming the pariah of society and bringing upon himself untold misery .

Theres no respite from anxiety and lamentation brought about by either death in the family , loss of wealth , attacks by rogues etc . Even in old age, sorrows accompany him when family members neglect his needs , phlegmatic conditions trouble him and the body begins to gradually disintegrate : After death, the nine month sojourn in the mother's womb is a moment to moment, harrow-ing and excruciating experience . Inspite of all this and on top of it lust , anger , greed ,

illusion , madness and hate , or envy smothers the conscience into obscurity . This is material samsara . Now I have properly grasped the purport of the word samsara . I repeatedly fall at the feet of all the assembled Babaji's . The vaisnavas are the real gurus of this world . Today , by their mercy , I have gained the knowledge of samsara .

The entire assembly of vaisnavas burst out loudly uttering the Lord's name and praised Anantadas Babaji for his perceptive spiritual analysis . More vaisnavas joined their group and Lahiri Mahasaya began to sing a own composition . The meaning of this ` Kirtana ' , or song is :

`` There is no end to jiva's suffering after falling into the dark well of samsara . But if he associates with saintly souls and turns to the Supreme Lord in surrender then he puts a stop to his distress .

This material life is being consumed by a conflagration , where all material endeavours are like fuel to this fire . When the incineraated jiva takes up chanting the holy name of Krsna with-out offences the flames are put out by the merciful rain .

I , Kalidasa, consider those who have taken shelter at the lotus - feet of Sri Nityananda as my only safe sanctuary in this life " .

Candidasa was extremely moved by the words of this song and he began to dance along with it . At the end he fell like a stick at the feet of the Babajis . He sanctified himself by applying the dust from their feet and began to roll on the ground and cry in ineffable joy . The assembled vaisnavas who witnessed this agreed that Candidasa was very fortunate .

After a while Yadavadasa said softly to Candidasa -- ` Come let us return , we must cross over ' .

Candidasa replied humourously -- ` If you take me across I will certainly accompany you ' .

They offered their dandavats in Pradyumna - kunj and came out of the gate . Here they saw Damayanti offering prostrated obeisances to all the vaisnavas . She was saying -- ` Alas ! why was I born as a woman . If I were a man I could unhesitatingly go inside the kunj and behold the lotus - feet of the vaisnava saint and offered my dandavat thus fulfil the purpose of this human life . My wish is that birth after birth I may serve the vaisnavas in Navadvipa .

Yadavadasa said -- ` O mother ! this Godruma - dhama is extremely holy . As soon as one enters it he is rewarded with pure bhakti . In Godruma our beloved Lord Sacinandana, Nimai played about -- this was the village of the cowherds men , or gopa - palli . Knowing the glories of this place Srila Prabhodananda Saraswati Goswami has prayed --

" na loka - vedodita - marga - bhedaiah avisya samklisyate re vimudhahhathena sarvam parihrtya gaude sri godrume parnakutim kurudhvam '. (Sri - navadvipa - sataka 36)

[O foolish jiva ! by taking shelter of society and the vedas you have tried out so many religious paths , but they have only brought you distress . Now renounce these uncertain methods and immediately go to Godruma , build yourself a thatched hut and live in it '.]

The three of them returned to Kuliyagram after crossing the Ganga . A wonderful transformation took place in Candidasa and his wife Damayanti from that day . They began exhibiting vaisnava qualities and mood . It appeared that material life could not touch them any longer . All their time was taken up in serving the vaisnavas , chanting the holy name and doing acts of mercy to all living beings . How wonderful was this newly turned Vaisnava couple ! what immense potency is there in a vaisnava's mercy ! Hallowed be the holy name of Krsna ! All glories to the sacred land of Navadvipa !

Chapter 8

Nitya - dharma, or the Eternal Religion and Vyavahara, or social Customs

One day the resident vaisnavas from Godruma , visited the vaisnavas living in the sylvan woods skirting the south - eastern embankment of the Gora lake . They had just taken prasadam (food offered to the lord) ,at noon and were sitting together in the secluded kunjia . Lahiri Mahasaya sang the following song and evoked in the vaisnavas spiritual emotions of Vraja , or vraja - bhava --

" Our Lord Gauranga has performed so many transcendental pastimes here . With Advaita Acarya and other associates .He danced splen-didly in these verdant groves. Once while the sankritana was in progress . He jumped into the lake and vanquished the demon Kaliya living in these waters . Thus the Lord liberated the Kaliya snake just as little Lord Krsna had done the same , many years ago in Vraja "

After the song was over a discussion began over the oneness of Gaura - lila with Krsna - lila . Just then a few vaisnavas from Badagachi arrived . First they offered dandavats to the Gora lake and then to the vaisnavas . The host vaisnavas heartily received them and had them seated comfortably . An ancient banyan tree stood tall in the secluded kunjia like a silent sentinel . The vaisnavas had built a concrete circular platform around its base . The tree was affectionately named ` Nityananda - vata ' , because Lord Nityananda was very fond of sitting under it .

The vaisnavas now sat under it and discussed spiritual matters . Among the

visiting vaisnavas from Badagachi was a young and inquisitive vaisnava . He respectfully interjected -- ` I would like to have permission to ask this vaisnavas assembly a question ; kindly pacify my questing mind '. Haridas Babaji , a resident of this secluded kunja , was a very serious scholar . At an advanced age of nearly hundred , he seldom left the kunja ; when at all , then only to Pradyumna kunja , to meet Paramhamsadasa Babaji . He was amongst a select few who had actually seen Lord Nityananda sitting in the shade of the banyan tree . Over the years he had singlemindedly nourished the desire to breathe his last at the site . And now he spoke up saying -- ` sir ! We have Sri Paramhamsa Babaji here heading up this assembly , so you should not have any worries regarding an answer to your question ' .

The young vaisnava from Badagachi presented his question -- " Vaisnava religion , or vaisnava - dharma is nitya - dharma -- i.e. eternal ; I am desirous to learn in detail the ideal conduct of a vaisnava especially towards others " ?

Haridas Babaji glanced in Vaisnavadasa Babaji's direction and indicated -- ` My dear Vaisnavadasa , a good vaisnava and scholar such as yourself is rarely found in Bengal , especially nowadays ; hence it is apt that you reply this question . You have associated with Srila Pradhodananda Sarasvati and received spiritual instructions from Srila Paramhamsa Babaji . You are very fortunate and a recipient of Lord Caitanya's mercy ' .

Vaisnavadasa Babaji humbly replied -- ` Revered Babaji , you have seen Lord Nityananda , Lord Balaram's direct expansion , face to face ; you have also associated with many spiritual stalwarts and instructed many devotees in the devotional sciences , therefore please shower mercy on us today and educate us ' .

The rest of the vaisnavas enthusiastically joined in to request Haridas Babaji to speak . Babaji Maharaja , finding no way out of it , agreed to their proposition . He first offered dandavats to Lord Nityananda under the banyan tree and began his dissertation .

Haridas Babaji said -- ` I offer my respects to all the jivas , knowing them to be Krsna's servitor . ` Where as some accept Him others not , yet everyone is His servant (Caitanya Caritamrta Adi 6/85) , this statement of a great saint is always held in my high esteem . There is one class of people who do not accept their subservient position to God , although inherently all jivas are Krsna's servant . Another group humbly accepts this eternal truth . Thus there are two kinds of men in this world : Krsna - bahira - mukha (those who deny Krsna as God) and Krsna - unmukha (those who accept Krsna as Supreme) . The majority of people in the world are Krsna - bahira - mukha . Among them many reject any form of religion so there is little to discuss about them ; just that they have no sense of moral obligations . Self - aggrandisement is their only aim in life . Where as those who are religious accept moral responsibilities . The great vaisnava sage Manu has this to say about them :

" dhrtih ksama damo ' steyam sancam - indriya - nigrahadhir - vidya - satyam -

krodho dasakam dharma - laksanam ". (Manusm . 6/92)

[The ten characteristics of religion are : dhrtih (contentment) , ksama (forgiveness : not to revenge a wrong) , dama (self - control : when the mind remains incontrol inspite of allure-ments) , asteya (honesty) , sauca (cleanliness) indriya - nigraha (withdrawing the senses from sense - objects) , dhiih (scriptural knowledge) , vidya (education : knowledge of the soul) satyam (truthfulness : always aware of reality) , akrodha (freedom from anger : to not become angered inspite of a cause)'.]

Of these dhrtih , dama , sauca , indriya - nigraha , dhiih and vidya are the six characteristics declared to be one's duties directed toward the self ; while ksama , asteya , satyam , and akrodha are the four obligations one has toward the others . The duty of worshipping the Supreme Lord , Hari ,is not clearly delin-eated in any one of these ten . These ten characteristics have been enunciated for the purpose of following religious principles . Indeed , it cannot be said that human life becomes pure and perfect by only developing these characteristics ;in Visnu - dharmottara it is explained : " jivitam visnu - bhaktasya varam panca - dinani ca na kalpa - sahasrani bhakti - hinasya kesave " .

[If a devotee of Lord Visnu stays in this world for even five days it is a blessing to humanity . But if a non - devotee , one who has no devotion to the Supreme Lord Krsna , lives in the world for hundreds of aeons , it will not benefit humanity , in fact it will usher misfortunes '.]

A person who is not a devotee of Krsna cannot be labelled a human being . Minus devotion, men are but biped animals -- not humans . The same is the verdict of Srimad Bhagavatam : `` sva - vid - varahostra - kharaih samstutah purusah pasuhna yat - karna - pathopeto jatu nama gadagrajah " . (S.B. 2/3/19)

[Men who are dogs , hogs , camels and asses praise those men who never listen to the transcendental pastimes of Lord Sri Krsna , the deliverer from evils] .

Anyhow , the present enquiry is not about the duties and respon-sibilities of these persons mentioned above . The discussion is regarding a devotee's conduct in general .

Those who have embraced this path of ` bhakti ' are divided into three sections , -- kanistha (neophyte) , madhyama (intermedi-ate) , and uttama (best , most elevated) . The first of these types is described in the Srimad Bhagavatam in the following verse :

" arcayam eva haraye pujam yah sraddhayehatena tad - bhaktesu canyesu sa bhaktah prakrtah smrtah . (S.B. 11/2/47)

[A prakrta , or materialistic devotee does not purposefully study the sastra 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 worship the Deity . He is to be considered on the material platform , although he is trying to advance in devotion-al service . Such a person is a bhakta - praya (neophyte devotee) , or bhaktabhasa , for he is a little enlightened by the vais-nava philosophy '].

One who is worshipping the Deity of the Lord with faith but does not respect the other created creatures of the Lord nor worships and serves with devotion the His devotees is a prakṛta - bhakta . It has been already established that śraddha , or proper faith is the seed of devotion . To worship the Lord's Deity with śraddha is certainly bhakti , but without worshipping and serving the Lord's devotee , one cannot execute suddha - bhakti , or pure devotion . This position can be described as being , at best , a step inside the portals of the realm of bhakti . The scriptures say :

" yasyatma - buddhiḥ kunape tri - dhatuke , sva - dhīḥ kalatradi-su bhauma idyadhihyat - tirtha - buddhiḥ salile na karhicij janesv abhijnesu sa eva gokharah " .
(S.B. 10/84/13)

[` A human being who identifies this body made of three elements with his self , who considers the by - products of the body to be his kinsmen , who considers his land of birth as worshipable ,and who goes to pilgrimage simply to take bath in holy rivers rather than meet , worship , serve men of transcendental knowledge , or sadhus is to be considered an ass among the cows -- extremely foolish '].

The purport is that without worshipping the Lord's deity , one's devotion cannot begin . He becomes argumentative, making the heart dry and hardened and the goal of devotion becomes obfuscat-ed. What is required is that transcendental understanding has to be incorporated in deity worship . In this world , the jiva is a transcendental , or spiritual entity . And among the jiva the lord's devotee , -- the Kṛṣṇa - bhaktas are pure spiritual enti-ties . Both Kṛṣṇa and the ` bhakta ' are pure spiritual beings . In order to comprehend these two transcendental beings , first a good knowledge of the relationship between matter , jiva and Kṛṣṇa (sambandha - jnana) is imperative . Thus if deity worship is to be conducted together with sambandha - jnana then deity worship and bhakta - seva , or service to the devotee must occur simultaneously . Where there is a perfect marriage of śraddha with transcendental understanding , it is called satriya śraddha ' , or śraddha based on proper scriptural conclusions . But deity worship , bereft of a clear concept of sambandha - jnana , is conducted out on the level of mechanical śraddha . Hence we deduce that although this is at the initial stage of bhakti it is certainly not pure bhakti . This group of devotees have been described in the scriptures like this :

" grhita - viṣṇu - dikṣako viṣṇupuja - paro narahvaisnavo ' bhīhito ' bhijñairitaro ' smad - Vaiṣṇavaḥ " .

[` One who has been initiated with scripturally authorised viṣṇu - mantra and is worshipping the Deity of Lord Viṣṇu , is consid-ered by the scholars as a ` vaiṣṇava ' , others are all non - vaiṣṇavas '.]

Those who have received initiation from hereditary ` gurus ', or kula - gurus and those inspired by seeing others worshipping the deity, felt sentimentally attracted by it, thus accepted initiation in Visnu - mantra with superficial and mechanical sraddha and began to worship the Deity of Lord Visnu, are kanistha vaisnavas , or neophyte devotees ,not in the category of pure devotion . They are on the level of shadow - devotion , or chaya - bhakti . Their's is not the pratibimba -bhakti , or the reflection of bhakti . Because that would make them serious offenders on the path of bhakti due to the absence of vaisnava qualities . A person gets elevated to chaya - bhakti due to immense good fortune . Because following this course promotes them to madhyama - vaisnava and uttam vaisnava platforms respectively .

However , it is certain that these persons are not pure devotees . They worship the Deity with sentimental faith and relate with society inspired by the ten religious characteristics mentioned earlier . The scriptural injunctions that direct a devotee's conduct are not meant for the kanisthas . They cannot discriminate between a devotee and a non - devotee . We have this instruction for the madhyama - vaisnavas in Srimad Bhagavatam :

" isvare tad adhinesu balisesu dvisatsucaprema - maitri - krpo-peksha yah karoti sa madhyamah (S.B.11/2/46) .

[An intermediate , second class devotee has love for the Supreme Personality of Godhead , is friendly to all devotees and is very merciful to neophytes and ignorant people . The intermediate devotee avoids the company of those who are envious of devotional service ' .]

The nature and standard of devotional behaviour being enumerated in this verse is a part of nityadharmā , or the eternal religion . It does not address naimittika , ritualistic, or the mundane social behaviour patterns . In the life of a vaisnava this is ideal conduct, other etiquettes , not contrary to these , can be adopted when necessary .

The madhyama vaisnava's conduct is directed toward four persons : the Supreme Lord , His surrendered devotee , the ignorant materialist and the devotee - hater . He directs his love to the Supreme Lord, his friendship to devotees , compassion to the ignorant and apathy towards , the envious .

Let us discuss first the point regarding his love for the Supreme Lord . Here the Supreme Lord implies Lord Krsna , Lord of all the Lords . And ` prema ', or love means pure devotion -- suddha bhakti. This is how the scripture - ` Bhakti - rasamrta - sindhu ' defines ` suddha - bhakti ':

" anyabhilasitam - sunyam jnana - karmady - anavrtamanukulyena krsnanusilanam bhaktir uttama " . (Br.s. Purva 1)

[One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord . Krsna, favourably and without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation . That is called pure devotional service ']

The bhakti symptoms just described is available to the madhyama - adhikari vaisnava through the process of sadhana up to the level of bhava and finally in the blossoming of `prema`, or love of Godhead . But this bhakti (anyabhilasita - sunyam etc ') is not yet accesible , to the kanistha adhikari vaisnava who is simply on the platform of worshiping the lord's Deity - form with srad-dha . The kanistha does not experience such exalted devotional mood or bhava .

And when these devotional symptoms one day appear in his heart he is promoted to the intermediate level of a madhyama adhikari vaisnava and is then counted as a real vaisnava . But as long as they are not present he continues to be a kanistha adhikari , a neophyte who is a shadow vaisnava . Pure devotional service to Krsna means `prema`, or love of Godhead . The word `favourably` (anukulyena) means that which is condusive to Krsna - prema ; this includes maitri , krpa aand upeksha (friendship , mercy and apathy) . -- All these three are the hallmarks of a madhyam - adhikari vaisnava .

Now , onto the topic of the madhyama vaisnava being friendly to the Lord's surrendered devotees . By surrendered devotees are meant those who are blessed by suddha - bhakti , or pure devotion . The Kanistha vaisnava is not on the platform of suddha - bhakti ;he does he serve and satisfy the pure devotees . Therefore maitri , or friendship can only be extended the madhyama and uttama vaisnavas respectively . In the Caitanya Caritamrta Lords Caitanya describes the different characteristics of kanis-tha , madhyama and uttama vaisnavas during a question and answer session with the vaisnavas of Kulingrama .

Those vaisnava qualities were inferring to the madhyama and uttama vaisnavas mentioned earlier -- None of the descriptions fit the kanistha vaisnavas who is solely engaged in deity wor-ship . The pure name of the lord does not manifest on the tongue of a kanistha vaisnava .His chanting is on the level of chaya - namabhasa or the shadow name . Lord Caitanya instructed the madhyama vaisnava grhastha to serve three types of vaisnavas : one who chants once the holy name purely , one who constantly chants the pure name , and one whose presence inspires others to spontaneously chant the holy name . These three types of vaisnavas alone are worthy of his worship . One who chants the shadow name is not eligible to receive the madhyama grhastha's service , he is instructed to serve only those who chant the pure name of Krsna .

Service to vaisnavas has been categorised according to the dif-ferent levels of vaisnavas . The meaning of the word `maitri` or friendship, encompasses :- association , discussion , and service . Immediately upon seeing a pure devotee one must greet him and offer respects, affectionately extend full hospitality , discuss Krsna conscious topics with him , and attend to all his needs , in this way serve him properly . The devotees must be extremely cautions not to envy a pure devotee . He should not be criticised even inadvertently and not shown irreverence , he must not be physical disregarded due to some deformities or ailments .

The third topic is , showing mercy to the ignorant . The word ` balisa ' implies an ignorant person without spiritual knowledge , an idiot or a fool etc. A gross materialist who is uneducated , has no interest in the mayavadi philosophy , has not developed hate or envy towards the path of bhakti or towards the devotees , but whose false ego and strong material attachments did not allow him to cultivate sraddha to the Supreme Lord , is a ` balisa ' . A scholar who has failed to nurture faith and belief in the Supreme Lord is also a ` balisa ' . A kanistha - adhikari is a neophyte and a materialistic devotee (prakrta) ; he is at the door way of bhakti , but lacks of proper grasp of sambandha - jnana, thus depriving him of suddha - bhakti . As long as this condition persists he is also known as a ` balisa ' . Ofcourse , when he acquires knowledge of sambandha - tattva , and in the association of pure devotees commences to chant the pure name of Krsna , his ignorance (balisatva) is dissipated and he is elevated to the level of a madhyama vaisnava . These are some of the different kinds of ` balisa ' ; and it is very essential that the madhyama - vaisnavas show mercy to them .

The madhyama vaisnava must deal graciously with the ` balisa ' as he would with an honoured guest . But this is not enough ; to show real mercy to the ` balisa ' he must ensure that they devel-op sraddha in pure devotional service and taste for chanting .

The ignorant are uneducated in the teachings of the scriptures , and so they are susceptible to fall down into the lures of bad company .The madhyama vaisnava being compassionate , offers them his own association and instructs them about the scriptures and about the glories of the holy name .

A diseased person cannot treat himself . He has to be doctored . Just as a sick patient's angry and frustrated outbursts are excusable , the ` balisa ' , an or ignorant person's misdemeanours are also to be forgiven - that indeed , is an act of mercy .

The ignorant person is clouded with misconceptions such as : -- he belives in karma - kanda (ritualistic performances) , some-times he is drawn towards speculative knowledge , worships the lord's deity with ulterior motives , has faith in the yoga proc-ess , is apathetic to associating with pure vaisnavas which is actually beneficial for him , is attached to the rules and regu-lations of varnasrama -- and so on . Therefore by administering his association , compassion and spiritual instructions the madhyama vaisnava can extirpate the kanistha's wrong views and promote him to the level of madhyama - adhikari pure devotee .

Once a person begins to worship the Supreme Lord's deity , it is understood that he has sown the seed of good fortune and that he is free from corrupt ideologies . And because of it he possesses a touch of sraddha . Where as a person who worships the deity indoctrinated with the mayavadi philosophy has not the slightest sraddha for the lord's deity -- he is an offender . Hence the expression ` sraddhayehate ' (with sraddha) has been used in the Srimad Bhagavatam to describe the kanistha - vaisnava . The mayavada philosopher's heart is contaminated by the false conclu-sion that the Supreme , Absolute Brahman , or Parabrahman is formless , and hence His worshipable deity form is made from

imagination . How deep is their sraddha ', or faith in the deity form even according to their tenets ? Therefore there is a distinct difference between the mayavadi's deity worship and even the very neophyte kanistha adhikari's deity worship . If for no other vaisnava characteristic , then it is for the quality of being free from the abomination of mayavada doctrine that the kanistha adhikari has been awarded the status of a prakrta - vaisnava , or a neophyte materialistic vaisnava . On the strength of this miniscule vaisnava quality and with the mercy of a pure devotee he is certain to rise to the perfectional stage in devo-tional service .However the madhyama - adhikari pure devotee's genuine mercy towards the kanistha vaisnava is indispensable to his progress . Soon his deity worship and chanting will become purified of their tainted shadowy nature (chaya - abhasatva) and acquire a transcendental characteristic .

We come to the fourth topic : neglecting and avoiding those who are envious . First we must define an envious person and how many types they are . Envy is a human trait , also known as hate . This heinous propensity is exactly on the opposite end of the pole from `prema ', or divine love . The Supreme Lord alone is the sole recipient of `prema ' . Antipathy towards the Lord is known as `dvesa ', or envy , hate .

There are five kinds of `dvesa ':

1. To not have faith in God .
2. To think that the Supreme Lord is a product of His own karma .
3. To not believe in the transcendental form of the Lord .
4. To not accept the jiva's position of being eternally subservi-ent to the Lord .
5. To be merciless .

Persons who are polluted by dvesa can never attain pure devotion . they do not possess even the slight tinge of pure devotion a kanistha - adhikari owns due to his deity worship . These five `dvesas ' may be found in persons overtly attached to matter . The third and fourth kinds of `dvesa ' are sometimes accompanied by a propensity for suicidal renunciation , often found in mayavadi sannyasis . How should the devotees deal with such envious persons ? It is recommended to avoid their company .

`Upeksha ', or to avoid , does not necessarily mean that one has to put a stop to normal human exchanges . Nor does it imply that when an envious person is in danger or in distress succour to ameliorate his agony should not be proffered . A grhastha - vaisnava has to interact with so many different persons in the course of life . Through matrimony he acquires many new acquaint-ances : while shopping , in business , taking care of family matters in property deals , sickness , maintances etc ., in all these matters and more , normal human dealings are an ongoing

process . So how , in one final stroke , all simple interactions with the envious lot can be curtailed ? This is not the meaning of 'upeksa', or avoidance . One should terminate all spiritual relationships with the atheists but not social exchanges . As a result of karma , or resultant actions from previous birth some family members may be 'dvesis' or envious persons , should they be then ostracized ? No , that is not the solution . Social exchanges are a part of human behaviour , so the envious persons should be dealt with , but without having a deep involvement and involving relationship with them . But do not engage them in spiritual affairs where a serious commitment is mandatory . Spiritual association means to interact on a for spiritual platform , discuss transcendental topics , serve and assist each other to progress spiritually . Thus to deny anyone such spiritu-al association means to avoid him .

An envious person will immediately interrupt or argue when he hears instructions on , or glorifications of , pure devotion , so it is not advantageous to either party . Therefore , instead of coming at loggerheads with them in futile debate restrict your relationship to simple social dealings , nothing more . You may retort saying why the envious person cannot be treated like a 'balisa', or ignorant and helped by being shown mercy . To this I say that let alone benefiting them , this will cause more harm than . One must aid them but with great discretion .

The madhyama- adhikari pure vaisnava must take care to conduct himself properly in these four ways . Any slackness in cultivat-ing them will tantamount to a greivous fault , he will fall down from his position of realisation , or adhikara . Thus it is said in the Srimad Bhagavatam :

'' sve sve ' dhikare ya nistha sa gunah parikirtitahviparjayaas-tu dosah syadubhayoresa nirnayah ''.(S.B. 11/21/2)

[` To be firmly fixed in one's adhikara , or eligibility and realisation has been adjudged as real qualifications and anything to the contrary is a serious disqualification . This are the definition of qualifications and disqualifications '].

The madhyama pure vaisnava must execute his responsibilities according to scriptural guidance , i.e. to love the Supreme Lord , be friends of devotees , show mercy to the ignorant and avoid the envious . The depth of his friendship with a devotee will be decided on the intensity of his bhakti . Similarly the degree of compassion will depend on the ignorant person's ignorance and simplicity of heart . So also in the case of the envious person ,communications level with him will depend on how hateful is . The madhyama should act on the spiritual platform as advised . His social dealings conducted with simplicity should also come under the purview of spiritual norms .

At this juncture in Babaji's talk , Nityananda dasa from Badagachi enquired -- ` How must a uttama adhikari Vaisnava conduct himself '?

Haridasa Babaji responded -- ` my dear brother ! you have asked a question so please hear me out . I am old , my memory is waning ; I have to finish what I have

decided to speak ".

Haridasa Babaji was a strict and straight forward devotee . He does not look at others fault but he has a ready retort for unjustified remarks . After this there was pin - drop silence . Haridasa Babaji again offered obeisances to ` Nityananda - vata ' tree and resumed his dissertation :---- ` when the madhyama - adhikari vaisnava's ' spiritual sentiment of ` prema ' matures he becomes elevated to the platform of uttama - adhikari vaisnava . The characteristics of a uttama Vaisnava is mentioned in Srimad Bhagavatam :

" sarva - bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad - bhavam atmanahbhutani bhagavaty atmany esa bhagavatottamah " . (S.B. 11/2/45)

[` A person advanced in devotional service sees within everything the soul of souls , the Supreme Personality of Godhead , Sri Krsna - 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 ?]

The devotee , who perceives the Supreme Lord's love for all the living entities and also perceives the entire creation's love for the Supreme Lord in the form of the eternal relationship between them , is a first class devotee , or a uttama vaisnava . Besides ` prema ' he does not experience any other sentiments ; and sometimes when other emotions surface they are to be understood as being different transformation of ` prema ' only . Take the example of Srila Sukadeva Goswami . He was a uttama vaisnava but he described Kamsa as a ` bhoja - pamsula ' etc ., or the sinner or excreta of the bhoja dynasty . But such a mood displays a variation of ` prema ' ; it is guanine ` prema ' and not ` dvesa ' , or hate . When pure love of Godhead , or suddha - prema be-comes the life and soul of the devotee , he is then known as ` bhagavatottama ' . On this platform , there are no distinctions in behaviour like prema , maitri , krpa or upeksha ; all his dealings are on the level ` prema ' . The ` uttama bhagavat ' does not dis-criminate between uttama , madhyama and kanistha vaisnavas re-spectively , nor does he distinguish between a vaisnava and a non - vaisnava . This elevated consciousness is extremely exceptional .

Do you notice something unique ? The kanistha vaisnava does not serve the vaisnavas and the uttama vaisnava does not discriminate between a vaisnava and a non - vaisnava . Serving and respecting the vaisnavas is the sole prerogative of madhyama - vaisnavas . The madhyama vaisnava will serve the three categories of vaisna-vas namely -- those chanting Krsna's name purely even once , those who continuously chant the holy name purely and whose presence inspires others to chant purely . To each of the categories i.e. vaisnava , vaisnavatara and vaisnavatama (good Vaisnava , better Vaisnava and best Vaisnava) he must serve them according to their station --this is madhyama's duty . Only the uttama vaisna-va does not consider or analyse whether a vaisnava is good or medium before he interacts with him . If a madhyama thinks in these terms he is committing an offence .

Lord Caitanya had indicated these truths in His discussions with the Kulingrama brahmanas . All His instructions on this topic are more important to the madhyama than the vedas . What is sruti, or the vedas ? The Supreme Lord's orders are the veda ". With these words Haridas Babaji paused and fell silent . The vaisnava from Badagachi, Nityananadadasa Babaji turned to Haridasa Babaji with folded hands and asked -- ` may I ask my question now " ? Babaji replied -- ` by all means " .

The sprightly young Babaji , Nityanadadasa enquired -- ` respect-ed Babaji Maharaja in which of the categories of vaisnavas would you consider me in ? Am I a kanistha vaisnava or a madhyama vaisnava ? I am certainly not a uttama vaisnava .

Haridasa Babaji laughed lightly and replied -- ` my dear brother , you have received the name Nityananadadasa (on initiation) so nothing is remiss to make you an uttama vaisnava . My Nitai (Lord Nityananada Prabhu) is exceedingly magnanimous ! He dis-tributed ` prema ', or love of Godhead inspite of being attacked and beaten ! What more is left to be desired if one can glorify His name and become His servitor ?

Nityananadadasa :- I earnestly desire to know my real position .

H.B. :- Then say everything about yourself ! If Lord Nitai wishes that I speak , then you will certainly have your answer .

N.D. :- I was born in a low class family living in a small village on the bank of Padmavati . I entered family life , taking a wife at an early age . I never took to immoral ways . When my wife died I developed a mood of detachment from all affairs . I had seen a few renounced vaisnavas in Badagachi who were very well respected . Seeking that same respect , and because of the strong nudge provided by the temporary mood of renunciation due to the wife's demise , I went to Badagachi and received ` bheka ' initiation .

After some time my mind was besieged by immoral thoughts . For-tunaately , for me , I had the association of a good vaisnava devotee -- who now is in Vraja . He kept me by his side and gave me marvelous instructions which purified my consiousness . Now I do not feel the urge to deviate and I have developed a taste for chanting one lakh nama . I have become enlightened that the holy name and the Supreme Lord , the possessor of the name , are non - different and that They are both transcendental . I observe ekadasi vows according to the scriptures and diligently offer water and lamp to Tulasidevi daily . During kirtanas , I join other vaisnavas and feel stirrings of exultations . I am eagre for vaisnava caranamrta , or the nectarean foot - bath water . I study devotional literatures (Caitanya - Bhagavata , Caitanya caritamrta etc) , have no desire to eat well and live comfortably . Mundane prattle annoys me . When I see other elevated vaisnavas feeling ecstasy I get inspired with over whelming emotions and I roll on the ground . I do it mostly out of hanker-ing for name and respect . So , now kindly tell me my

position and how must I behave .

Haridasa Babaji laughed and turned to Vaisnavadasa Babaji and interjected -- ` Let us hear from you , what is Nityananadadasa Babaji's position ?

V.B. :- From what I just heard , I would say that he has left behind the kanistha level and come to the madhyama platform .

H.B. :- That is my opinion too .

N.B. :- That was very good for me to know from realised souls , mahatmas such as your goodselves , my real standing in the vais-nava community . Kindly bestow your grace upon me so that I may quickly advance in spiritual understanding and come to the plat-form of uttama - adhikari .

V.B. :- At the time of your taking ` bheka ' you were tainted with the desire for ` pratistha ',i.e. respect and position , you artificially assumed a status without being worthy of it and hence you were on the brink of a spiritual set back . All that is history , now by the mercy of vaisnavas your spiritual life is more steady .

N.B. :- Some slight yearning for adulation and recognition , or pratistha still lingers on in me . I harbour the wish that by shedding tears and displaying ` bhava ' , or spiritual emotions . I can to impress everyone and win their respect .

H.B. :- Diligently endeavour to curb this desire otherwise it will drain your devotional reserves . If this occurs you will slide down to the level of kanistha . Even if a vaisnava is rid of lust , greed , anger etc . the desire for ` pratistha ' is alarmingly detrimental to spiritual progress and does not care to easily relegate its stranglehold on him . And especially cchaya - bhava - abhasa , or the shadow spiritual emotions should be categorically ; rejected while nurturing, even a drop of real ` bhava ' or spiritual emotion, is in all respects , much more beneficial .

Nityananda Babaji fell at Haridasa Babaji's feet , begging for his mercy . He smeared his foot - dust over himself . Haridasa Babaji immediately reciprocated by firmly embracing Nityananda Babaji and then made him sit down . A pure vaisnava's physical contact is so amazing that uncontrollable tears trickled from Nityananda Babaji's eyes . Holding straw between his teeth (a symptom of extreme humility) he said -- " I am so low and wretched , I am a fallen soul ! " . Haridasa Babaji moved by his humility again embraced him as tears streaked down his quivering cheeks . What glorious spiritual sentiments ! Nityananda Babaji felt the fulfilment of his life . When , after a while exulta-tions subsided Nityanandadasa , now looking upto Haridasa Babaji as his guru , enquired --

N.B. :- What are the principle and subordinate devotional symp-toms of a kanistha vaisnava ?

H.B. :- The two principle symptoms are -- the kanistha vaisnava believes in the Supreme Lord's eternal spiritual form and he worships the Lord's deity with faith .

While hearing , chanting , remembering offering prayers etc . the nine devotional limbs and all other spiritual activities are subordinate symptoms .

N.B. :- One is not a vaisnava unless he believes in the Supreme Lord's eternal spiritual form , or nitya - svarupa and unless he does not worship the Deity with proper rules and regulation . That these two are the principle symptoms has been well under-stood by me . But it is difficult for me to reason out the subor-dinate symptoms .

H.B. :- The kanistha vaisnava cannot perceive the science of pure devotion . Hearing , chanting etc . are limbs of pure devo-tional service ; since he is unable to realise the transcendental and real nature of pure devotion such devotional activities like hearing and chanting does not capture the prime position in his spiritual practices , but remain as secondary performances .Another reason why they are secondary is because these activities are performed by the kanistha under the influ-ence of the three material modes -- sattva , rajah , tamah . When hearing , chanting etc . are executed outside the scope of the three material modes only then do they become the limbs of pure devotional service , and at this stage the vaisnava acquires the madhyama level .

N.B. :- The kanistha vaisnava is infected with desire for karma , jnana , mystic powers etc. -- in other words with ` anyabhila-sa ' , then how can he be recognised as a devotee ?

H.B. :- Bhakti sprouts out of sraddha . One who develops sraddha becomes eligible for executing pure devotion . It can be said with conviction that such a person is at the portals of pure bhakti . Sraddha means faith , since the kanistha adhikari has developed faith and belief in the transcendental form of the Supreme Lord he automatically becomes worthy of devotional serv-ice .

N.B. :- When can he attain ` bhakti ' ?

H.B. :- As and when his desire for karma , jnana etc. is extir-pated ; has given up all other aspirations save for executing ananya - bhakti , or unalloyed devotional service ; has realised the difference between hospitality to guests and service to vaisnavas , and thus is inspired to serve the devotee knowing that this is favourable devotional service . The kanistha adhi-kari at this juncture becomes a pure devotee on the level of madhyama - adhikari .

N.B. :-- Suddha - bhakti develops with sambandha - jnana ; therefore , at which point did the kanistha cultivate sambandha - jnana to allow him to practice pure devotion ?

H.B. :- When he has uprooted the poisonous ivy of mayavada philosophy , both sambandha jnana and suddha bhakti blossom simultaneously .

N.B. :- What is the time period for such developments ?

H.B. :- It all depends on the strength of his `sukrti', or piety ; stronger the sukrti , swifter is the progress .

N.B. :- What is the first impact of sukrti - vala , or the strength of sukrti ?

H.B. :- It brings him in contact with sadhus , or sadhu - sanga .

N.B. :- What is the gradual consequence of sadhu - sanga ?

H.B. :- The Srimad Bhagavatam states :

" satam prasangan - mama virya - samvido bhavanti hrt - karna rasayanah
kathahtajjosanad - asvapavarga - vartmani sraddha - rati - bhaktir - anukramisyati .
(S.B. 3/25/25) (In the associa-tion of pure devotees , discussion of the pastimes
and activities of the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very pleasing and satis-
fying to the ear and the heart . By cultivating such knowledge one gradually
becomes advanced on the path of liberation , and there after he is freed , and his
attraction becomes fixed . Then real devotion and devotional service begin) .

N.B. :- What leads to sadhu - sanga ?

H.B. :- I have already explained earlier that sukrti encourages sadhu - sanga . Again
the Bhagavat says :

" bhavapavargo bhramato yada bhavejjanasya tarhyaecyuta - satsa-
maagamahsatsangamo yarhi tadaiva sadgatan paravarese tvayi jayate rati . (S.B.
10/51/53) (For trranslation see Ch. 6)

N.B. :- If the kanistha devotee has developed an inclination for deity worship due
to his association with sadhus then why do we say that he does not serve the
vaisnavas ?

H.B. :- The kanistha finds sadhu - sanga by incident , and due to sadhu - sanga
develops faith in the Supreme Lord's deity form . What is imperative is that both
deity worship and service to vaisnavas are conducted side by side . As long as
sraddha has not reached to this level it is not fullgrown , hence the eligi-bility to
execute unalloyed devotion is not yet born .

N.B. :- What are the gradual levels of elevation of a kanistha ?

H.B. :- He has faith in the deity but is still contaminated with anyabhilasita and
other such mundane desires . He regularly worships the deity . Perchance if sadhus
visit his place of worship he hospitably attends to them as he would any other
guest . He observes their conduct and activities , he hears their discussions on
scriptures -- in this way he sees and hears . This opens his eyes to detect defects in
himself and tries to rectify them . whenever they visit him . Gradually , he begins to
appre-ciate their character and personality . The harmful desires for karma,jnana

etc. steadily decline . The more his heart becomes purified ` anyabhilasita ' decreases . He gains valuable knowl-edge of the scriptures by listening to the sadhu's esoteric discussions and elaborations on Krsna's extraordinary pastimes. He deeply thinks about the supra - mundane , transcendental nature of the Supreme Lord , of the holy name , of the different limbs of devotional service and so on ; thus carefully enchancing his knowledge of his original spiritual self and of sambandha - tattva . When this realisation attains maturity he is promoted to the madhyama level at which time actual sadhu - sanga and sadhu - seva develops . He does not treat the sadhu like any ordinary guest but serves him reverentially as a guru .

N.B. :- Many kanistha vaisnavas do not advance in spiritual life , what are the reasons for it ?

H.B. :- If there is a strong influence on him of envious , or dvesi association then soon the kanistha loses his kanistha vaisnava position and grows aattached to karma and jnana . In some cases there is neither progress nor actual fall down from the kanistha level .

N.B. :- In which cases do such phenomenon occur ?

H.B. :- Where both sadhu - sanga and dvesi - sanga weild equal influence , there is no progress or regression .

N.B. :- When is progress absolutely ensured ?

H.B. :- With the strong influence of sadhu - sanga and a weak impact of dvesi - sanga , quick progress is certain .

N.B. :- What is the kanistha - adhikari's attachment to papa , or sinful activities and punya , or pious deeds ?

H.B. :- Initially it is at par with the fruitive workers , or karmi , jnani etc . but the more he progresses in devotional service these inclinations for papa and punya diminish -- till finally his proclivity to satisfy the Supreme Lord rises to such a degree that it totally destroys all these negative aspects .

N.B. :- My dear master , I have understood the subject of kanis-tha - vaisnava ; and now kindly illuminate me on the principle symptoms of a madhyama - vaisnava .

H.B. :- The madhyama's principle symptoms are : he has single -minded devotion towards Krsna ; he regards devotees as he would himself and as a dear friend , is very attached to them , re-spects them and worships them as personifications of holy pil-grimages ; he is compassionate to the ignorant and innocent ; he avoids mixing with envious persons . His main activities are : he executes abhidheya - sadhana bhakti , or regulative practical devotional service with sambandha - jnana, or knowledge of the relationship between Krsna , jiva and matter with the singular goal of attaining prayojana , or prime necessity -- which is perfection in loving

devotional service , or prema . In general this implies that he chants hears etc. without offences and associates with sadhus purely .

N.B. :- What are the secondary symptoms of this level ?

H.B. :- Going through the motions of material life is the sec-ondary symptom . The madhyama adhikari's life is fully dependent on Krsna's wishes and is so arranged as to execute devotional service favourably .

N.B. :- Does he still commit papa and aparadha ?

H.B. :- In the early stages that tendency is there but it also gradually disappears. Just like when grinding grains , in the beginning there are granules but gradually they are pulverised into a fine powder and are no more . His sole aim in life is to practice yukta - variragya , or detachment through application , not by rejection .

N.B. :- Is he , even slightly , desiring for karma , jnana , or anyabhilasa ?

H.B. :- In the beginning there may be fractional residues of these desires but ultimately they are destroyed . These may , in the course of devotional service sometimes, very rarely, rear their heads , but in due time they also vanish .

N.B. :- Does he have the wish to live ? if so , why ?

H.B. :- He desires to live only to season and purify his devo-tional service . He has no yearning to live or to attain libera-tion .

N.B. :- Why does he not desire for death ? What is the pleasure in staying on in this material body ? Only after death can he , by Krsna's mercy , become situated in his original spiritual self ?

H.B. :- All his aspirations are obedient to Krsna's will , he does not have any wish seperate from Krsna's . He has realised that all events in his life occur on the express wish of Krsna and he is surrendered to it . He has no independent demands or needs .

N.B. :- So far I have grasped the different symptoms of a mad-hyama - adhikari , pray tell me now if the uttama vaisnava level has any secondary symptoms ?

H.B. :- All his physical routines are the secondary symptoms. Even these activities are to such a degree dictated by his transcendental love for Krsna that they cannot be discerned seperately as secondary symptoms .

N.B. :- Dear master , a kanistha does not leave home , or become a grha - tyagi ; a madhyama - vaisnava can be both a grhastha and grha - tyagi ; but can an uttama - vaisnava be a grhastha ?

H.B. :- These different situations come about naturally as one advances in spiritual realisation . It is not that through becoming a grhastha or a grha - tyagi that he attains a particular platform of realisation . An uttama - vaisnava can be a grhastha -- in Vraja all the grhastha - devotees are uttama - adhikari's . Many of our Lord Caitanya's associates were uttama - adhikari grhastha -- Srila Ramananda Raya is a brilliant example .

N.B. :- Master , how should the uttama - adhikari grhastha and a madhyama - adhikari grha - tyagi behave with each other ?

H.B. :- The devotee who is a lower adhikari , or on lower level of realisation must offer dandavats to the superior adhikari . This rule applies only to the madhyama - adhikari and not to the uttama - vaisnava because the uttama adhikari does not expect any respect from anyone ; he perceives the Supreme Lord's presence in all living beings .

N.B. :- Is it the duty of vaisnavas to assemble in a large gathering and feast by honouring prasadam and thus celebrate , or have a mahotsava ?

H.B. :- By any coincidence, many vaisnavas gather in one place and a madhyama - adhikari grhastha desires to serve them by offering Prasadam . To this there can be no objections by any spiritual consideration ; but much fanfare in such vaisnava seva is detrimental because the mode of passion begins to dominate . The vaisnavas must be served prasadam with care and affection , this is the vaisnavas duty and it manifests real love and respect for the vaisnavas . On such occasions only the pure devotees should be invited and satisfied .

N.B. :- In Badagachi , where I came from , a certain group of people call themselves vaisnava - santana , or children of vais-navas . The kanistha - adhikari grhasthas invite and feed them claiming they are doing vaisnava - seva ; how would you consider such an act ?

H.B. :- Have these vaisnava - santanas attained suddha - bhakti ?

N.B. :- I do not see any symptoms of pure devotion in them . They profess that they are vaisnavas and some of them even wear kaupina , or loin cloth .

H.B. :- It is difficult for me to say why such practices are becoming prevalent . This is undesirable ; I assume that because a kanistha is unable to distinguish a real vaisnava, that such malpractices are happening .

N.B. :- Are the vaisnava - santanas to be respected in a particular manner ?

H.B. :- A vaisnava alone must be revered ; if the vaisnava - santanas are pure devotees then they must be worshiped according to their different grades of devotion .

N.B. :- What if these vaisnava - santanas are ordinary social beings ?

H.B. :- Then consider them according to their station as members of society . Do not worship and serve them as vaisnavas . Always remember Mahaprabhu's instruction :

ॐ hr̥nad api sunicena taror - api sahisnunaamanina manadena kirta-niya sada harih
". (Sr. Siksastaka 3)

[One must chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind , thinking oneself to be lower than a straw in the street , devoid of all sense of false prestige and more tolerant than a tree , in such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly] .

One must not expect any respect for himself and offer due respect to others .

A vaisnava must be hononred properly . A non - vaisnava must also be offered the respect due to a human being . The worthiness to chant the holy name cannot develop without being respectful to other living entities .

N.B. :- How can one not expect any honour ?

H.B. :- Give up false prestige , thinking -- ॐ I am a brahman I am rich , I am a scholar , I am a vaisnava , I am a renunciant etc . One must never dream of even secretly demanding any respect immaterial of position . I must always think of myself as very meek , poor , humble , lower than the grass .

N.B. :- From this I can gather that without becoming humble and compassionate no one can be a vaisnava .

H.B. :- You are very correct .

N.B. :- Does it imply that bhakti is dependent on humility and compassion ?

H.B. :- Bhakti is impartial . Bhakti is self - illuminating , beautiful , an embellishment extra- ordinaire , and does not lack in any of the good qualities . Humility and compassion , there-fore , are not seperate ornaments but comprise an integral part of bhakti . At a certain level of realisation the devotee feels -- ॐ I am Krsna's servant , without any material possessions . Krsna is everything to me ' --- here the mood of devotion is simultaneously reflecting humility . The feeling of intense longing for Krsna, is in one word, bhakti . Other living beings are all servants of Krsna , thus affection and affinity for the jivas , based on this realisation , is daya , or compassion . Which means that daya is also an inseperable part of bhakti . Latent within daya and dainya , or humility lies ksama , or forgiveness . An example of Ksama is : the devotee thinks -- ॐ I am poor and helpless , can I arrogate as a judge of others and meet out punishments ' ? When this feeling is tempered with daya , ksama appears in the heart . Ksama, or forgiveness is also mixed within bhakti .

Lord Krsna is the absolute truth , jiva is an eternal truth , jivas subserviency to

Krsna is also an eternal truth . Materially entangled jiva's sojourn in this mundane plane is an undeniable truth . Therefore bhakti is also an eternal truth and reality because bhakti is perfectly defined as the eternal subservient mood of jiva toward Krsna . Truth , humility, compassion and forgiveness are different aspects of bhakti .

N.B. :- How should the vaisnavas act towards followers of other religions ?

H.B. :- The Srimad Bhagavatam declares : (SB. 1/2/26)

" narayana - kalah santah bhajanti hyanasuyavah " . Meaning , saintly persons, who are peaceful and free from fault - finding tendencies , worship the Supreme Lord Narayanand his parts and partial expansions .

Vaisnava religion is the only authentic religion . All other religions that exist in the world as well as those which will be propagated in the future factually comprise the different levels of vasinava religion or are aberrations of the vaisnava theology . When the other religion compliments any level of Vaisnavism the devotee should respect it aaccordingly . In case the religion is an abserration then the devotee must be tolerant and compassionate towards its followers and explain to them about the devotional science . Devotees must never hate and show intem-perance toward other religious practices . It is certain that when someone's auspicious moment arrives he will embrace vaisna-vism and become a pure devotee .

N.B. :- Is it a devotee's duty to propagate Vaisnavism ?

H.B. :- He must do it in every possible way . My lord , Maha-prabhu has given everyone this responsibility of preaching . In Caitanya Caritamrta we find :

" naca gao bhakta - sange kara samkirtanakrsna - nama upadesi ' tara sarbajana " .(My dear child , continue chanting , dancing and performing sankirtana in association with devotees . Further more , go out and preach the value of chanting Krsna - nama , for by this process you will be able to deliver all fallen souls .)

" ataeva mali ajna dila sabakare yanha tanha prema - phala deha yare tare " .(C.C Adi 7/92 , 9/36) (Therefore I order every man within this universe to accept this Krsna consciousness movement and distribute it everywhere) .

Always remember that before you disclose the glories of the holy name to an undeserving person first transform him to become an eligible candidate ; never instruct about the holy name to an envious person . In dealing with envious persons do not speak harshly or hurtingly which may hinder missionary work " .

Haridasa Babaji's words had a ineffable impact on Nityanandadasa . He began to roll on the ground in ecstasy . The Vaisnavas raised their voices and chanted . Hari ! Hari ! , and offered dandavats to Haridas Babaji and returned to their own places .

Chapter 9

Nityadharm or Eternal Religion Material

Almost four years have gone by since Lahiri mahasaya came to Godruma Vaisnavan association has had a purifying effect on him Now he chaunts continuously while performing his daily chorus. Sparse clothing covers his lean frame, and he has given up using any footwear ---even the simple wooden clogs . He has overcome the false pride of his high caste to such an extent that now whenever he sees a vaisnava he offers dandavats. With utmost humility he takes that foot dust on his head . If anyone refuses he is undererred and uses gentle force to achieve his goal . He searches out for the pure vaisnavas prasadam left overs and eagerly eats them.

Time to time his sons visit him with an idea to try and bring him back but observing his attitude and actions they hasi-tily return without as much as mentioning it. Lahiri Mahasaya now looks like a Babaji who has already received 'bheka' . After due analysis of the vaisnava philosophy he had diligently ab-sorbed from the Godruma Vaisnava's daily discussions he concluded that internal detachment was more essential than donning the garb of a renunciant , or receiving 'bheka' . He tried to emulate the lofty level of Sanatana Goswami's mood of frugal living . He cut a dhoti into four pieces and used them to minimise his material needs . The brahmana's sacred thread was still wound around his neck . When his sons attempted to offer him money he refused and explained `I will not take money from a materialistic person' . Once Candranatha , the elder son, brought large sum of money and said that it was a contribution for vaisnava festivals . Lahiri Mahasayas declined recalling in his mind the unique character of Srila Raghunathadasa Goswami .

One day Paramahamsadasa Babaji said to him----"Lahari Mahasaya '.I see that you have rid yourself of all unvaisnava habits . We have received 'bheka' initiation but I fell that we can learn a lot about vairagya, or reminciation from you. Now the only thing backing to complete your transformaiion is a vaisnava name "

Lahiri Mahasaya replied---- "sir, you are my parama-guru, or my guru's guru, you are free to decide as you wish".

Babaji Maharaja said---- you are from Santipura, hence I think the name Advaitadasa is appropriate". Lahiri Mahasaya fell to the ground in humanity to receive his new name. And so from that day everyone addressed him as Advaitadasa. Even his little cottage was renamed as 'Advaita kutira'. Advaitadasa had a childhood friend named Digambara Cattopadhyaya. This friend had accumulated large wealth and high position by holding important posts in the Muslim government. After retirement he returned to his village Ambika and euquired about the wheneaborts of his friend Kalidasa Lahiri. Fimally he found out that his friend had reniunnced home and family and was presently residing in Godruma under the name of Adveritadasa, spending has dayo is chaunting the holy name.

Digambara Catopadhyaya was a sakto (worslipe of sakti, or evergy, the female counterpart) fanatic. He could not stand to heert the name of vaisnavism, and covered his ears. When ut was uttered so. When he heard about his dear

friends'present condi-tion he called out to his servant 'Hey Bamanadasa. immedialey arrange a boat.I went to dash off to Navadripa posthaste,and save my friend,Kalidasa from this and returned to his master with a fully prepared boat set for the journey.

Digambara Cattopadhyaya was a shrevid customer.He was a pandita of the fantra scriptures and well versed in the muslim culture.The muslim manulauis,or religions scholars offen accepted defeat on persions and Arabic languages in his hands.If a brahma-na panditaever crossed his patu he left them tongue lied in the topic of tautra .In cities like delhi .Lucknow etc he was famous.He had also managed to utilige his leisure and write a book titled ' Tantra-Samgraha '.In many if his commeutaries on different verses his impressive erudition shines through.

When Digambara hurriedly stepped into the boat he was clutrhing a copy of Tantra-samhita in his hand.In two hours the boat touched the landing plauks in Godrumadhama.He picked out an intelligent man,property instoucted him on what to say,sent him off to Adveritadsa as his messenger and patiently waited in the boat .

Advaitadasa,sat in his cottage and was chaunting quietly.Dagambaras messeug arrved and paid his respects Adverita-dasa enquired --- " Who are you and what brings you have ?" The messenger replied ----'I have been sent by Sir Digambara Catto-padhyaya.He enquires whether you,Sir kalidasa Lahiri,remember him or not ?

Advaitadasa was curions ,he asked----'where is Digambara? He is my childhood friend,how can I forget him ? Has he embrased vaisnavisma ? The messenger replied here ? "He is sitting in the boat,and I do not know if he is a vaisnava." Advaitadasa quickly enquired" Why is he not coming here ? At this point the messenger took persion and left.

Two hourws later Digamubara, accompanied boy a for gentleman, arrived at Adverita-kutira.Digambara is a very broadminded and open person.When he saw his old friend he was extremely pleased.He pushed to meet Adveritadasa, and as he enveloped him in his arms he broke out into a song he had com-posed.

"(O dear Kali) Who can fathom, dear mother ,your pastimes on earth sometimes as purusa ,sometimes as prakrta,and sometimes you are absorbed in the battlefield.

As Brahma you create and as destructor you are siva As Visnu dear mother, you maintain the whole universe As krsna you are playing the flute through the forests of vrindavana Again you are Gauranga immersing Navadaipa with the sound of Samkirtana."

Advaitadasa warmly welcomed him ---'welcome dear brother come and sit down "Digaurbara sat down with bringing eyes , reciprocating with the right sentiments of friendship and affec-tion.He burust out saying ---- 'Dear brother Kalidasa, What is to become of me ? you have embraced the path of renunciation and rejected the demigods as well as religion. I have come from Punjab with great expectations. Back home I found,all our child-hood friends have passed away. Remember Girisa, Kheda, Pesa Pagla, Ise Pagla , Dhana Maira, Kanti Bhattacharya ----well all of them are gone. Just you and I are left. I was hopefull to find you in Santipura. I thought that we couldpass the rest of our life meeting each other ---- one day you come to my house.the next day I go across the Ganga to your place. Immeage ourselves in music, shidyng tantra and so on. But alas ladyluck has

forsaken me. And just look at you ! You are like the ox-dung ---- cannot be used for cleacting the house not in any religious ceremonis not like the cow-dung. Can you please explain to me what you have done to yourself ?

Adveritadasa calmly considered the situation knowing that this was a difficult test. He had to get away from this unwanted association. He said---- Digambara ! do you still remem-ber our little game we played with a wooden stick and small piece of oval-shaped wood ? How we founed ourselves suddenly under that ancient tamarind free ? Digambara Ofcourse,I remember ! Its was near Gautidasa Panditas house. Gaura and Nitai had sat under the same tree.

Advaitadasa At that time, my friend, you told me not to touches the tree because Auntie saci's son Nimai had sat under it, and so its touch makes one a remuniciant.

DC I recall everything vividhy. In fact, I know your weakness for vaisnavas. I had warned you at the time that you may fall into Gaurauga's trap.

AD Well ! you always knew I was in that diocc-tion. Then I was almost falling into the trap and now I am trapped.

DC Take hold of my hand and lift yourself out of it. It is not good to ocu trapped.

AD My friend, this trap is wonderful. I pray to remain forcer is it. Why don't you just try it ?

DC I've had enough experience in the beginning it seems to be pleasurabel but ultimately it gives you nothing.

AD The net which has trapped you, do you think it in the end it will give you happiness ? Do it make that mistake.

DC See ! We are seekers of absoluts knowledge It is yogful for us now and later. You are thinking that you are happy now but we do not consider this as happiness ----and in the end, there will be no end to your misery. I am confounded as to why people become Vaisnavas. Just mark now we relish our food of meat, fish etc, We wear fancy clothes ----this is enjoyment. We are more civilised material science, while you are demied this pleasure. In the end, there is no release for you.

AD Why do you say that there is no rease for us ?

DC If anyone rejects Devi, the mother of liberation, there why only you, even lord Brahma,Visnu or Siva cannot be liberated. The mother of liberation is the orginal poteucy, or adya sakti. She has created Brahama, VismI and siva and is main-taining, Them everyone has to re-enter the egg-shaped womb from where allcreation come. Did you ever worship mother that she is going shower mercy on you ?

AD Is mother of liberation a spinitual being or a meterial object ?

DC She us Independeutly will full and the persouification of spinitual evergy. Purusa, or the Supreme Male us created by her wish.

AD What us purusa, and what is prakrti, or the female moity.

DC Vaisnavas spend their time in bhajana, or derotional serv-ice, chanting etc. Only, but are benef of philosopical knowledge. Purusa and prakrti are like the chickpea---- although they have seperate ideulities infact they are one. When the outside skin is removed they are two, but when the skin covers the pen it is one. The purusa is a spinitual and conscious entity, while prakrti is material. And the undirided or undifferentiated condition of purusa and prakri is brahman.

AD The mother you speak of, is she prakrti or is she purusa ? DC Sometimes she is purusa and sometimes prakrti.

AD You said that both purusa and prakrti are one inside the skin covering, now who is your mother of the two and who is the father ? DC You are challenging me with philosophical problems ; Well, we know how to tackle that too. Factually mother is prakrti and father is the spiritual conscious being.

AD Who are you ?

DC ---- ' pasa badth bhavajjivah pasa mukra sadasivah' When the soul is covered over by maya, or illusion, he is jiva ; when he is liberated from maya's influence he is Siva.

AD You are purusa, and mother is prakrti. As long as I am in illusion, or in a conditioned state she is my mother. When I am liberated she becomes my wife.

AD I have understood your philosophy, and I have no doubts regarding it. But tell me where did you learn all this?

DC My friend I am not wearing blinders like you, only interested in vaisnava and again vaisnava. I have associated with many sannyasis, brahamacarins, mystic tantric yogis and so on. I have also intensively studied the tantra scriptures before I could acquire this knowledge. If you wish, I can school you and prepare you.

AD (Thought of himself - What a terrifying dilemma !) Can you explain what is civilization and what is material science ?

DC To converse well in sophisticated society ,to dress in a manner that please others, to eat food which is not disgusting others --- you follow none of this mannerisms.

AD Can you elaborate on this a little more ?

DC You do not mingle in societies outside your own. Your behaviour in general is very unsocial. The Vaisnavas have not yet learnt what it is to entertain people with sweet humour. Whenever they meet anyone they blandly tell him to chant God's name. Why is it so ? Are there no other civilised topics to discuss ? Your dress turns people away and they refuse to offer you a seat in any kind of social event. A tuft of mane flying tangled at the back of the head, a basketful of tulsi beads having around the neck, dressed or undressed in underwear this is the appearance. And all you eat is spinach and celery. The Vaisnavas have no culture.

AD (Advaitadasa thought to himself- If I provoke a quarrel, he would get angry and leave, that is best !)- Does sophistication help one in his life ?

DC I must admit that there is no gain in next life. But how can society advance minus culture ? Once society progresses then one can take care of his next life.

AD My friend, if you promise not to be angry , I like to say something.

DC You are my childhood companion, I can offer my life for you, and I cannot tolerate a few words from you ? We are endeared by sophistication , Even if we are irked, our words remain sweet. The more you learn to mask your feelings you advance in culture.

AD Human life is short. There are numerous disturbances in it. Therefore within this limited time it is imperative that we serve the supreme lord Hari, with unmotivated simplicity. Culture and sophistication is merely an exercise in self-deception. We know that sophistry is synonymous with culture. As far as human being remains in the path of truthfulness his life is honest and simple. When he deviates it with falsehood he becomes shy, deceitful and engages in unscrupulous dealings. He hides his crookedness behind a facade of sweet words and wants to

become more sophisticated. Culture and sophistication cannot be considered as good human characteristics but truthfulness and simplicity are. The contemporary definition of culture is, it is a method of masking mischievous internal motives. However the real meaning of 'Culture' is the worthiness to participate in an august assembly-- in other words it means simple decency. You are gradually perverting the meaning of culture to signify deceit, Thus culture in its pristine state shorn of all immorality is available among the vaisnavas. While culture tainted by sinful ways, is appreciated by the nonvaisnavas.

The way you described culture has nothing in common with jiva's nityadharmas, or eternal religious principles. Fineries to please others then the prostitute is certainly more cultured than you are. The real purpose of wearing clothes is that it covers the body- the clothing, must of course be clean and not smell foul. Food must be pure and healthy. But you insist that it should be palatable, regardless if it is pure or not. Alcohol, meat etc are impure, therefore to consume them is not being cultured but acting sinfully. Today's definition of culture is actually the culture of kaliyuga.

DC Have you completely forgotten the 'Badsahi' culture (etiquettes of muslims palace courts)? See how the people sit grace-fully at the muslim king's court dressed foppishly and conversing with each other according to etiquette?

AD All that is social mundane dealing. What can anyone lose without them? My friend, I think your long years of service with the muslims has made you biased towards their culture. Factually, a sinless life is a cultured life. As I said before progress in the kaliyuga culture increases with the acceleration of the sinful activities. It is simply an noisome disease.

DC Just mark the mentality of the modern educated man. He postulates that the contemporary culture mirrors humanity; a person who is not cultured cannot be considered as human being. The present understanding of decency is that men and women will dress in fashionable clothes and cover up their internal monstrosities.

AD It is up to you to ponder over things and decide whether this philosophy of life is good or bad. I notice that your modern educated men are shrewd and shy men keeping abreast with changing times. They have gone in favour of this sophisticated culture because they use it as a muscle to hide their bad upbringing and degradation. What intelligent person gains anything from their society and culture. The high pedestal of the shrewd man's culture is protected by them with futile debates and physical strength.

DC Some people opine that knowledge in this world is expanding and in tandem with it culture is augmented. If this trend should continue this earth will become a heaven.

AD These are hallucinations of an opium eater. And those who believe this fantasy are glorified fools. But one who proselytises others on this view are even more amazing specimens.

Knowledge is of two varieties: Paramarthika, or spiritual and Lankika, or material. I do not perceive anywhere that spiritual knowledge is expanding. In fact, I see mostly that spiritual knowledge is being perverted and misinterpreted. But material knowledge has every scope of expansion. After all is there any eternal relationship between jiva and material knowledge? With the escalation of material knowledge man's attention has been drawn to a variety of phenomena. This actually has ebbd man's interest towards the origin of all knowledge ---- the

absolute truth. I admit that with the increase of material knowledge shallow, sophisticated culture is on the rise. And this is a bad omen for the Jiva, leading to the path of destruction.

DC Why is it the path of destruction ?

AD I reiterate myself -- this human life is short. So like the wayfarer in the inn, jiva must prepare for spiritual realisation in this span. It is foolish to waste time in trying to better the arrangements in the inn during one's sojourn. When more and more time has been spent in pursuit of material knowledge, there will be no time left for spiritual malisation. My understanding says that whatever is required to maintain this body and live a simple life to that extent we must use material knowledge. There is absolutely no need of excess material knowledge and its concomitant, the sophisticated culture. How long will all this external material gaudiness and shine last ?

DC Now I have landed into the clutches of a strange renunciant ! Are you saying that this human society is of no use ?

AD That depends on the type of society. If it is a vaisnava society there is a tremendous benefit from it. What you derive out of a non-vaisnava society, meaning a materialistic society, is not at all beneficial to the jiva. Well let us leave this topic for a moment. Tell me what is material science?

DC Material science, or natural science is found in the tantra scriptures in many different streams. Whatever knowledge, systems and beauty are exhibited in this material nature constitute material science. For example the art of warfare, or dhanura-vidya, ayurveda, or a system of medical science, jyotira-vidya, or astrology etc. are all different aspects of the material science. To revert back to philosophy, we already discussed that prakriti is the adya-shakti, or the original source of energy. She has given birth to and manifest this material cosmos. Through her own potency she has introduced variegatedness into it. The many aspects of her energy are each a different stream of knowledge. But acquiring this knowledge of material science one can exonerate himself from sins one has committed against adya-sakti, the mother of liberation. Unfortunately for the Vaisnavas, they do not research this science. We attain liberation through mastering this knowledge. And see, how deeply some of the great western thinkers, like Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, the famous muslim scholar Hakim etc, have probed into this science and written rhymes.

AD You just made a comment that the vaisnavas do not care about scientific knowledge - I disagree. The pure spiritual knowledge that vaisnavas study is extremely scientific. We find in Srimad Bhagavatam in one of the catuh-sloka the following quote : " Janam me paramam guhyam yad-vijnana-samanvitam

Sarahasyam tadanganca grhan gaditam maya " (SB 2/9/30)

Before the material creation took place lord Brahma, the creator was worshipping and meditating on the supreme lord. The lord was pleased with Brahma and instructed him in the pure vaisnava religion. The lord had said that the supreme absolute knowledge about himself is very scientific; and he has going to reveal to Brahma all the branches of this esoteric science, so he must appropriately prepare himself to receive it.

My friend Digambara there are two kinds of knowledge. Human being acquire material knowledge through his sense organs. These material senses are impure, hence they are unusable for perceiving spiritual objects. Their singular limited

use is to the conditioned soul for maintaining himself. Knowledge, or science delves into the actual spiritual truth is known as pure spiritual knowledge, or suddhajnana. This knowledge is eternal and it forms the basis of the vaisnava's devotional service and worship. Material knowledge is diametrically opposed in all respects to suddhajnana and has no connection with it.

You said that material knowledge above is a science, that is not correct. According to you, when you separate material knowledge of ayurveda etc. from Suddhajnana, you arrive at science. But, the truth is that Suddhajnana, which possesses the anti symptoms of material knowledge is real science. Knowledge of the existence of any object, is also known as science. Realisation of the spiritual object is knowledge. And the process of exposing and eliminating this profane material knowledge and establishing the preminence of suddhajnana is known as science, or vijñana. 'Vastu', or real existence one, but due to the variation in its perception there are separate identities of jñana, or knowledge and vijñana or science. You call material knowledge as science; whereas the vaisnava say that establishing the real position of material knowledge in the right perspective is science. The vaisnava analysis is - ---- Dhanuravada, Auraveda, Jyotiraveda, Chemistry etc. are all material knowledge and they do not have a permanent relationship with jiva. Therefore, they are in consequential in regards to five eternal religion, or Hityadharmas. Vaisnava say, those who are ardently strive to advance in material knowledge according to their individual material propensities are known as Karma-kandis (engrossed in the Karma-kanda rituals of the vedas). Vaisnava do not criticize them because by endeavouring for progress in mundane natures they indirectly and even slightly assist the vaisnavas in their efforts in understanding the prime efficacy of spiritual realisation. You attached to the materialists insignificant mundane knowledge the misnomer - material science; well, what harm can that do? It is puerile to quarrel over names and designation. DC Suppose material knowledge had not advanced to what it is now, how would you subsist and perform your Bhajan? This indicates, that you must also toil to improve your material knowledge.

AD Persons endeavour in whatever field according to their individual propensities. But the Supreme controller, personality of Godhead, distributes the results of those actions among the worthy.

DC Where do propensities come from?

AD Habits and preferences forged out of previous actions later participate into proficiencies. The depth of a person's material knowledge is the barometer that gauges the extent of his material engrossment. In turn it makes him an expert in expressing mundane art forms, also and an outcome of material culture. And at the end whatever they create, if suitable, are then gratefully utilised by Vaisnavas as paraphernalia in the Lord's service. The Vaisnava, however, did not have to expend any energy in the creation of the end products.

A carpenter makes furniture for a living and the altar he makes is used by the Grehastha Vaisnava to mount his home deity on. The bees, following their instinct, or propensity busily collect pollen and produce honey, which is then offered to the Lord. Not everyone in this world endeavours for their highest good, or spiritual elevation. Different activities are prompted by different propensities.

Human propensities are numerous, like high, low and so on. Degraded persons perform many activities resulting from mean propensities and they offend

accompany the activities of noble professions. In this manner the wheel of human life turns sheltering in itself in numerable divisions and department. All the materialistic men, in spite of executing works which are inspired by their mundane professions, successfully assist the Vaisnava in expressing their spiritual professions. Yet they are unaware that their efforts benefit the Vaisnavas. Bewitched by the illusory potency, 'Maya' of Lord Vishnu they perform this multifarious mundane activities only to be later utilised by Vaisnavas and so the entire world, in the sense is the Vaisnava unbeating servants.

DC What is Lord Vishnu's 'Maya'?

AD In Markandeya Purana, in the section known as Candi-mahatmya, the personalities describes with the words: 'Jogmaya Hareh Saktiryaya Sammohitam Jagat' etc. is Lord Vishnu Maya Sakti.

DC Then who is that personalities I known as 'Ma Nistarini'?

AD The same as Lord Vishnu's maya.

DC (Opens a hand written manuscripts on Tantra) here, read! My mother is addressed as Caitanya-rupini (embodying spiritual consciousness) Icchamayi (fully independent), Trigunatita (transcendental to the material modes) and Trigunadharina (the controller of the material modes). The one you call as Lord Vishnu 'Maya', is not beyond the scope of three material modes of nature, then how can you equate her with my mother? I can see plainly that in regards to this topics you Vaisnava are fanatical and I strongly detest it.

AD My dear brother Digambaram, please do not get upset; You have come to see me and we are meeting after a long interval, I would like you to be content and happy. Why do you wrongly summarise that the appellation 'Vishnu Maya' is in some ways demeaning? Lord Vishnu is the embodiment of absolute spiritual consciousness, the supreme lord of all lords---everything else is his energy. Energy is not an object or thing; energy is the inherent characteristic of an object. It will be philosophically wrong to describe energy as the source, or fountainhead of everything. Energy has no separate existence without an object, or subject. An absolute spiritual subject, or object must first be established.

In the Vedanta commentaries it is said, that- "Sakti-Saktimatorabhedah", meaning that sakti, or energy is not an independent entity; the saktiman - purusa, or the supreme Being is the possessor and source of all energy. Energy is His intrinsic nature and subservient to His desires. Therefore it is not fallacious to describe energy as Caitanya-rupini, icchamayi, or trigunatita as long as energy maintains herself through her actions as working under the orders of the supreme personality, in which case she can also be described as being nondifferent from the Energetic, or saktiman purusa.

Ichha, or desire, or will and 'caitanya', or consciousness are attributes of the supreme purusa. Sakti does not possess 'iccha'---she works under the direction, or will of the purusa. For example you are endowed with the potency or 'sakti' to walk and move about, this energy or sakti is set in motion if and when you desire. The phrase---'sakti walks' would automatically imply that the Energetic purusa is walking: this is a figure of speech, a particular manner of speaking the supreme personality of Godhead possesses one singular energy: in transcendental spiritual activities she is known as cit-sakti and in material matters she is described as acit-sakti, or maya. The Vedas have said--- 'parasya-saktir-vividhaiva sruyate "----" The supreme Brahman's absolute energies are multifarious in nature." What you

earlier referred to as Ingunadhariri sakti is in fact mundane energy. Material creation and annihilation is a part of her activity. The puranas and Tantras define this energy as Visnumaya, mahamaya, maya etc. Allegorically, she mothers Brahma, Visnu and Mahesvra (the trinity); stays the tearsome demons sumbha and Nisumbha and performs other similar activities as recorded in the scriptures.

The gives are are forced to remain her captives as long as they are engrossed in matter. But when they are enlightened with the transcendental knowledge of their true, spiritual identities they sever maya's shackles and win freedom; only to acknowledge subserviency to the lord's spiritual potency--- cit-sakti, and eternally experience supra-mundane ecstasy.

DC Are you, or are you not, under any particular energy?

AD Yes, we are give sakti, or marginal energy. We have absconded maya's influence and taken shelter of cit-sakti's control.

DC That makes you saktas, or worshippers of sakti, too.

AD Yes, ofcourse ! vaisnavas are the real saktas. We are under the patronage of Sri Radhika, the embodiment of cit-sakti. We worship Krsna but in her loving guardianship hence who can claim to be more authentic saktas than us . We do not notice any differences between a sakta and a vaisnavas. As for those who worship only maya sakti without first taking complete shelter of cit-sakti, they are admittedly saktas but not vaisnavas, hence they are gross materialists. Duradevi has made the following statement recorded in the Narada-purana : 'tava vaksasi rad-ha'ham rase vrndavane vane' ---- means ' In my original form as cit-svarupa, or the embodiment of spiritual potency, I, as Sri Radhika, the internal energy, or antaranga-sakti, residing in the forests of Vrndavanadhama, embellish your divine bosom'. Durgadevi's words unequivocally announce that sakti, or energy is not numerous ; sakti is one singular potency--as Sri Radhika she is cit-svarupa (original form of spiritual potency) and mundane sakti maya, is jada-svarupa (embodiment of material energy). Thus Visnu maya in her pure state, bereft of the three material modes is cit-sakti, or spiritual potency and in her contaminated condition, or when she is under the sway of the three material modes, she is jada-sakti (mundane energy, maya).

DC Earlier you mentioned that you are jiva-sakti please elaborate.

AD In the Bhagavad Gita. The supreme Lord says---

"bhumir apo'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhir eva ca ahankara itiyam me bhinna prakrtir astadha apareyam it as tv anyam prakrtim viddhi me param jiva bhutam maha -baho yayedam dharyate jagat (BG 7/4-5) Earth, water, fire, air, ether, mind, intelligence and false ego altogether these eight comprise my separated material energies. Besides this inferior nature, Omighty 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'.

Digambar, do you know the glorious position of the Bhagavad Gita ? It is the essence of all scriptures and offers the final conclusion to every debate. Thus we can conclude from this statement that besides this material energy exists the living entity, which is different in constitution from it. The jiva-sakti, or living entity is another of the supreme lord's energies, which the sages call as tathastha sakti, or marginal potency. It is superior to the material energy and inferior to the cit-sakti. Hence the living entity, in any form, is Lord Krsna's energy.

DC Kalidasa, have you ever seen the Bhagavad Gita ?

AD Yes, in facts, I read it long ago

DC What standard of philosophical truth is in it ?

AD My dear brother, a person endlessly praises the sweet taste of molasses as long as he has not tasted pure crystal sugar.

DC Look, I think this is bigotry on your part. Devi bhagavat and Devi-gita are appreciated throughout the world only you and your lot does not even like to hear the mention of these two books.

AD Have you read the Devi-gita ?

DC There is as person for me to lie, as! I have not read it, but at one time I tried to copy them both and failed to procure them.

AD A book you have not read, how can you comment on whether its good or bad ? Tell me who is a bigot---you or me

DC I must admit that I was always a bit a traitor of you. you were. even in those early days, a garrulous person. And now after becoming a Vaisnava you seem to have honed your wit to sharpness. Whatever I say you strongly refute it.

AD Honestly speaking I am a wretched fool, but after proper research I have concluded that outside the vaisnava religion there are no pure religions ethics. All through life you have opposed the vaisnava religion, and in this way brought ill upon yourself.

DC (Getting slightly angry) oh yes ofcourse ! you can say that ! I am deeply involved in religious worship and discipline, and you claim that I have been wasting my time ? Here see for yourself ----this book 'Thntra --Sangraha ' is a result of hard labour.

You blindly denounce culture and science and try to haunt your vaisnava philosophy and practice, how can I be responsible for this ? Come, let us find out what the learned and cultured circle adjudge--- Who is superior, you or me ?

AD (Thinks that it is better to be rid of bad company). All said and done, tell me what will your culture and this material science do for you when you die ?

DC Kalidasa, shame on you ! Is there anything after death ? As long as you are living try to win acclaim in cultured society and enjoy your senses to the maximum. At the end, when death approaches mother Nistarini will place you in the appropriate situation. Just before death in imminent why tolerate the present distresses ? Where will you be when the body made up of five elements dissolves into the five gross elements of material nature ? This material existence is maya ! both mahamaya (mundane energy) and yogamaya (spiritual energy). She can offer you pleasures for the present and certain liberation after death. Sakti is the ultimate, There is nothing beyond it ; you are born out of sakti and in sakti will you again return. Begin by serving sakti. Behold the power of sakti in material science ! Diligently improve your yogic strength, in the end there is nothing but the unmanifest sakti. Where did you manufacture the phantasmagoria about this person you call caitanya ? By believing in these stories you are forced to experience hardships in the present and who can say what you will gain more than us after death ? What business do you have with a divine male factor, or purusa ? Simply surrender to sakti, you can merge into her and eternally exist in her.

AD Dear friend, I see that you are captivated by the material energy. And supposing there is a caitanya purusa (supreme person-ality, caitanya), Then what is your future ? Alright tell me what is happiness ? Answer Satisfaction and peace of mind is real happiness. I have rejected all material pleasures and am

experiencing this real happiness. And if there is anything beyond this, that is also for me to have. Where as you are not at all peaceful and contented. The more you seek carnal pleasures the thirst for it increases. You never really understood what real happiness is. One day histing for pleasures of the flesh, you certainly plunge deep into an open of grief.

DC We shall see what happens to me, but first why have you ostoacised yourself from the soptisficated, cultured melieu. ?

AD I have not discasded the cultured society, in fact that is what I have gained, and now I am busy trying to avoid the uncul-tured lot.

DC What di you mean by uncultured ?

AD Please do not get angry and patiently hear me out the timed Btiagavatam says :
"yavat te mayaya sprsta bhramama iha karmabhih tavad bhagavat-prasanganam sangah syan no bhava bhava " (BB 4/30/33)

Dear Lord, as long as we have to remain with in this materical world due to our material contanuation and wander from one type of body to another and from one planet to another, we cannot have the association of your pure devicies, so we pray that we may association with those who are engaged in discussing your pas-times. We pray for this benediction life after life, in different boding froms and on different planets.

Again in the seventh can to it is stated :

" asadbhin saha sangastn na kartavyah kadacana yasmat sarvartha- hanih syad adhah patasea jayate" Never associate with otheristic persons, sense enjoyes and salvationists, because their company bring about a loss in all spiritual values and goals and the final distraction. Sage katyayana says as recorded in Hari-bhakti-vilasa: "Varam huta-bahajvala panjarantarvvyva vasthi-tih na sauri-cinta -vimukha-jana-samvasa-vaissam" (H.b.v. 10/224)

Beter I burn in a blaging pyre or remain forever caged rather than experience the experience the excruciation of having to associate with person who is innical to kiswa conscionsness. Further the Bhagavaytam declares:

" Satyam sancam daya mannam buddhih srir hrir yasa ksama samo damo bhagas ceti yat-sangad yati sanksayam. tesv asantesu mudhesu khaditatmasv asaolhusu sangam na kuruac chocyesu yosit-krida-mrgesu ca (SB 3/32/33-34)

He becomes devided of toughness, clearliness, mercy, gravity, spiritual intelligence, shyness, austerity, fame, forgiveness, control of the mind, control of the senses, fortune and all such opportunities. One should not associate with a coarse fool who is benefit of the knowledge of self-ralisation and who is no more then a dancing dog in the hands of a woman ??)

In the Garuda Purana we find :

" antam gato " pi vedanam sarva - sastra -artha - vedyapi yona sarve svare bhakatastan vidyat purusa -adhamam (Gar.purva-231/13)

Allothough a person maybe well -versed inthe vedas and is knowledgeable in all the suriptunes, if he is not a devotee of the supreme lord visnu he is considered to be the lowest of human beings.

In the bhagavatam :

"prayascittani cirnani narayana - paranmukham na nispananti rajendra sura - kumbham ivapogah " (8B6/1/18)

My dear king, as a pot containing liquor cannot be purified even if washet in the waters of many rivers, nonderotees cannot be purified by processes of atonement

even if they perform them very well."

And in the Skanda Purana it says :

"hanti nindati vai dvesthi vaisnavan-na-abhinandati krudhyate yati no harsam darsane patanani sat "

The six courses of degradatum and falldown are : to strike a vaisnava , to criticise him , to hate him , to not welcome or greet him on sight , to show angry at him and to not be happy on seeing him.

So you see Digambara , it is most mauspiuous for the jiva to associate with such spiritually desfitually persons.

What is the benifit of such destricable company ?

DC just imagive , I came to meet a 'deseut gentleman'! But mistead,we have become the coarse and uncouth social crippless !just as well ! kindly stay here and associate with your 'pure' vaisnavas , I am returning to my home .

AD (thinks ---- finally ! but now I must speak a few sweet pooting words) Return home you must but you are my childhood friend I am seeing after a long time . I do not feet like letting you go . You have so kindly come to see me , with you not stay a little while longer and take prasadam with us .

DC Brother Calidasa , you know that cannot digebt any outside food , besides I eat only 'havisya' (sacrificial food) and I ate already before I came here . I was very glad nideed to see you ; I will come again when I can find some leisure , I cannot sperd the night here because I must perform certain practices handed to me by guru . So I take your leave now .

AD come , I will accompanny you to your boat .

DC No,no ! Its alright , you continue with your work, I have a few persons along with me."

With these parting words Digambara starting walking away at a brisk pace humming to himself a song about mother Kali. Advaita-dase quietly retraced his way back to his kutira. He sat down peacefully and began to chant the holy name.

Chapter 10 The Eternal Religion and History

Sri Harihara Bhattacharya, a teacher and resident of Agradvipa, suddenly assailed by a nagging doubt one day. He approached many persons and discussed with them about his doubt but it persisted; in fact it exacerbated the frustation he felt in his heart. So he came to the village of Arkatila and questioned the learned schol-ar of logic, Sri Caturbhuj - "Dear Sir, can you please tell me how ancient is this Vaisnava religion ?"

Sri Harihara Bhattacharya was initiated into the Vaisnava order nad performed daily worship of Krsna in his home. Whereas Sri Caturbhuj persevered twenty assiduous years studying logic philosophy and atlast developed an attitude of aloofness towards religion. He was apathetic to religious wranglings and debates; only during his sakti-worship did he, at times show signs of devotion. Therefore his first reaction to Harihara's question was, he thought-"Harihara is already biased about his Vaisnava religion, now he wants to drag me into a philosophical laba-

rynthe; better to circumvent this affront; so he said to Harihara - "Dear Harihara, your question surprises me. you have stided till the level of' muktipada '(liberation by merging into the supreme)so you should be well aware that in the hyaya.seripeure or rhetorics.there is not a single mention of the vaisnava philosophy. Hence I ask you why harass me with your question ?

Harihara said---- sir,I have received vaisanava initiation in accordance with age old family traditions. I never had any doubts about the vaisnava religion.But recently I heard that the famous debater from vikrampura, sri Tarka cudamani, has set out, it seems, to uproot the vaisnava religion. He travels extensively and preacbes strongly against the vaisnava ethis and in this manner he fills his coffer. In one such gathering.With a predomi-nantly sakta audience, he had remarked that the vaisnava religion was very contemporary and the it lacked philosopical essence only the people from lower castes became vaisnavas but the high class gentry turned up thernoses he said.

Initialey I was pained to learn that a scholar of his stature would utter such a banatities. But I, revertheless pondered over what he had said and arrived at certain points. Prior to lord caitanya's advent. Vaisnava religion was never practiceel in Bengal. The majourity were fallowers of sakti cult. And, although a few like also took initiation in the vaisnava-mautra, ,most of them aspired for Brahman realisation and preoccupied themselves with atteining liberation. The sakti worshipers, also known as pauca upasata (woshippers of the five deities) mostly acquiest-ed with this standard of vaisnavism. The vaisnava religion has deficiutely undergone changes and has taken a new form ever since the opearance of lord caitauya. The veisnavas now close their cars to words and though like 'brahman' 'mukti' (liberation even I cannot fathour how they construe the pholosoplacy of bhakti, or devotion. The attitude of these modern vaisnavas are that the blind must find another porce. Thus I come to question : is this vaisnava religion, we find today, existing since the dawn of civilijation or has it arisea after the advent of lord caitauya : Sri caturbhujamalised that hariharas stand was not of a famalie vaisnava, and immediately his face lit up.He said--- ' Harihara , I support your views. The porsent upsurge of this hedgeling vaisnava religions is ritiridating, one cannot openly speak out ageinst it. Remember this is Kaliynge,one must be very cantion. Many rich gentlemen have become highly influnced by caitauryas philisophy and joined their ranks. They are extremely disrepect-ful towards us and even consider us their enemies. I dare sat that soon they will put us out of business. Traders, and members of other business communities have started to hold dissertations and discussions on the sriptunes, certainly a cause for consfer-nation for the brahamana class. Mind you, since long the brahama-nas had expertly arranged certain social norms in such a fashion that it exclusively favoured them to study and teach the scrip-tures, barring every other caste. Even their immediate subordi-nate caste, the kayastha's, are afraid to cheut the veelic mautra beginning with the sound om.Everyone simply accepted our authori-ty and followed as we instructed. And now ! they are converting to vaisnavism and right away start debarting and analysing the pholosophy. our immage and position is indeed being tarmished. Ever since Nimas pandit entered the scence the brahminical reli-gions is gradually become obsoleseert. My dear Harihara. the pardita yon just mentioned ---Tarka crdamaui has defiuately said the right thing, be it out of groced for money or otherwise. These irascible vaisnavas ! their words

really ink me. They are now propagating this garbage that saukaracarya compiled the mayavada literature, according to them a totally false connection, on the direct behest of the supreme lord. Whereas they say that the vaisnava religion is eternal and is in existence since time immemorial. Not even a century has gone by that this religion took birth and now, suddenly it is beginningless. How does that saying go? --- the boot is in the wrong leg well, let them scream as much they want, Navaduipa is not the same nice place as before, it has deteriorated ----especially in the area of Gadiga-cha. Some vaisnavas are living there and they act as if the world belongs to them. A few of them are very learned scholars and their preaching is causing chaos among the common folks, they are destroying our land. They are discouraging people against the eternal mayavadi philosophy and the worship of deities and goddesses, soon this religion's culture and practices will disappear. Do you not see the definite decline in elaborate performances of sraddha, or offering oblations to departed souls and other such brahminical observances; how will the officiating priests maintain their duties? Harihara replied --- 'Well sir, is there no solution or repressal to this situation? There are still a few famous learned panditas in mayapura. Across the Ganga in kulia village are several scholars of smriti hyaya. How if we collectively lay siege on Gadigachia?

Cudamani reflected - ' Yes, that is possible ! but only if there is unity among them. Generally, they are a divided lot, they distrust each other. I have heard that a small group of brahmanas took Kisna-Cudamani to Gadigachia and challenged the Vaisnavas in a philosophical debate. They returned vanquished to their individual tolas (private sanskrit schools) and dreamed up stories to tell to salvage their reputations.

Harihara said - ' Respected Sir, you are our teacher and an instructor to numerous pedagogues. Many have learned the art of wordplay and evasion in arguments from reading your commentaries on Logic. You must go and once and for all defeat those vaisnava panditas. Prove to them that their Vaisnava religion is contemporary and lacks authorisation of the Vedas. Only then will our flag of pancopasana, which for so long has received widespread patronage, keep on fluttering'.

Sri Caturabhuja Nyayaratna did never externally display the nagging fear in his mind. He thought that where even Kisna-Cudamani and others were, humbled might also be his Waterloo. Thus, he said "Harihara, I will go disguised, and you will become the teacher. You start the debate and set the assembly ablaze with blistering arguments". Harihara, bristling with confidence retorted "I am fully prepared to follow your instructions. The coming Monday we will cross the Ganga in the name of 'Bom Maha-deva' and go there.

The days fled past for Harihara till the takeful Monday Hari-hara, Kamalakanta, Sadasiva - the teachers trio collected Sri Caturabhuja from Arkatila and crossed the Ganga. It was three thirty when they stomped into Pradyamna- Kunja grove, much like the famed Durvasa Muni and sat down on the Madhavi- mandapa platform, announcing their arrival big loudly uttering 'haribol ! haribol ! Sri Advaitadasa Babaji quietly appeared, welcomed them graciously and made them sit

comfortably on straw mats. He enquired - "How can I help you please ?

Harihara spoke up saying - "We have come to discuss with the vaisnavas on certain subjects".

Advaitadasa Babaji quickly said - "the vaisnavas here shy away from arguments, but if you have sincere queries then it is well. The other day a few scholars come pretending to be genuine seekers, but began to bombard us with a barrage of verbiage. In the end they have to retreat broken hearted, nursing a battered pride. So, let me ask Sri Paramahansadasa Babaji for his permission". He disappeared into Babaji Maharaja's cottage.

Advaitadasa returned shortly and went about spreading out the sitting mats. Sri Paramahansa Babaji entered, offered his prostrated obeisances first to the tulasi plant and then to the visitors and sat down. Hands folded, he asked the guests - "kindly say, how may we serve you ?

Pandita Caturabhujā said - "We have couple of questions we would like answered". Immediately, Paramahansa Babaji paged for Sri Vaisnavadasa Babaji. He came, took stock of the situation and sat down quietly. When everyone was properly settled Caturabhujā asked - "Is the Vaisnava religion modern or is it primordial ?"

Paramahansa Babaji's imperceptible, urging nod gave Vaisnavadasa Babaji the signal and so he said - "The all-auspicious Vaisnava religion is ever-existent and eternal".

Caturabhujā Nyayaratna - "That implies, Vaisnava religion is of two kinds. One kind professes that brahman is formless. The nirakara or formless cannot be worshipped. So they construct an imaginary form, and by worshipping it they purify the consciousness. When the consciousness is purified they realise the impersonal brahman. They worship the mythical image of Radha and Krishna, of Rama or Nrsimha and gradually become enlightened with knowledge of brahman. Hence those who worship the duty form of Visnu and meditate on a specific Vishnu-mantra with this consciousness introduce themselves to the followers of Pancopasana' as Vaisnavas.

The other kind of Vaisnava religion asserts that Lord Visnu, Krsna, Rama and so on possess eternal personal forms. Thus worship and meditation with this understanding on their lordships individual mantras and Deity forms lead to absolute, eternal knowledge and the acquisition of divine mercy. According to this philosophy the impersonal concept is called mayavada or illusory; therefore the propounder of impersonation Sri Sankaracarya was deluded. Now out of these two, which is the ever-existent and eternal Vaisnava religion ?"

Vaisnavadasa Babaji : The one you mentioned lost is the real Vaisnava religion. It is ever existent. While the other you spoke of first was Vaisnavism in name sake only, actually it is the opposite of the real Vaisnava religion. It is non-permanent and borrows greatly from the monistic concept of the mayavada school.

C.N. Everything is quite clear to me. According to you Vaisnava religion is Caitanyadeva's philosophy. Real Vaisnava religion does not constitute of simply worshipping Sri Radha Krsna, or Rama or Nrsimha and so on. To worship Sri Radha and Sri Krshna in the method prescribed by Caitanya Mahaprabhu is the true Vaisnava religion. Alright, so be it, but then how can you asserverate that his brand of Vaisnavism is Sanatana, or ever Existent ?

V.B. This religious philosophy has been extant since the erea-tion of Jiva. Mundane history is silent about the time of Jiva's comming into being. Thus it is fair to conclude that Jiva is primordial and man's real religion - Vaisnavism is also primeval.

Lord Brahma is the first created Jiva. As soon as Lord Brahma appeared the first Vediehymns of knowledge, which is the basis of vaisnava religion, become manifest. This momentary occurence has been reconrded in the famous four verses of the Bhagavatam known as the 'Catuslok'. The Mundaka Upanisad states "brahma devanam prathamah sambahuva visvasya karta bhuvanasya gopta sa brahma-vidyam sarva-vidya pratistham atharvaya jyastha-putraya praha (Mun.up 1/1/1)

Lord Brahma, the creator and protector of this universe, appeared prior to any other creature (from the lotus spronting out of Supreme Lord's navel). He initiated his eldest son Atharva in the Science of the absolute truth known as prahma-vidya - it is the repository of all branches of knowledge.

This is what the Rgveda Samhita says : "tad-visnoh paraman padam sada pasyanti surayah; divida caksurtatam" (Re.Sam. 1/22/20)

The supreme destination or the spiritual abode of Lord Visnu is resplendently self-manifest as brightly as the sun. It is being seen and worshipped since time immenurial by the denirgods, or vaisnava saints.

Also the Kathopanisad declares :

"Visnor-yat paramam padam"

Lord Visnu's lotus feet is the ultimate and best shelter

Further, in the Svetasvatara Upanisad is found the following "evam as deo bhagavan varenyo yoni-svabhavanadhitisthatyekah" (Sve.Up 5/4)

There is but one supreme lod the absolute Godhead who is the primal cause of all causes; like the sun that disperses brilliant days to drive away darkness but rewains ever so resplendent, the supreme Godhead also maintains his supreme divinity in all cir-cumstances.

In another instance, the Taittriya Upanisad states :P "satyam jnanam anantam

brahma; yoveda-ninitam guhayam parame vyoman so'snute sarvan kaman saha
brahmana vipascita" (Tr.Up. 2/1/2)

The supreme absolute brahman is the embodiment of cternality and spirituality and he is transcendental to the perview of material time place and senses. One who is relised in the pruth that the supreme brahman is sincertaneously situated in the spiritual sky and in the Jiva's heart he is sublimely connected with him, the supersonal, in loving relationship, fulfilling the jivas spiritu-al desires.

V.B. The devotional mood of eternal surrender is totally absent in this so-called mayavada vaisnavism. As regards attaining knowledge, one factually becomes enlightened about his spiritual identity that he is brahman. However the Kathopanisad instructs:

"nayamatma pravacanena labhya na bahuna srutena yamevaise vrnute tena
labhyas-tasyaisa atma vivr nute tanum svam" (Kat.up. 1/2/23)

The knowledge of the supreme absolute truth the supersonal cannot be acquired through endless debates, sharp intellect or erudi-tion. When jiva soul turns to the supreme lord in a serving mood and bego for his mercy, the lord as supersonal reciprocates and reveals himself to him.

The process of devotional surrender is the only religion. When the supreme brahman is satisfied and showers his mercy on the dartee he can directly see the supreme lord's eternal, transcen-dental form. However, this divine form cannot be perceived through brahman relisation. This one, unequivocal declaration from the vedas establishes the vedic banafide of the pure vaisna-va religion. The vaisnavism propogated bylord caitanya is fully supported bythe entire vedic literatures. There can be no doubt regarding this.

C.N. Are there any refernce in the vedic scriptures to show that the essence and ultimate goal of religion is pure devotion to Krsna and not the attainment of brahman ?

V.B. "rase vai sah" (Taih.Ah: 2/7/1) 'That supreme absolute truth is the embodiment of all spiritual relationships". Again we find this statement - "Syamacchabalam prapadye, sabalacchayamam pra-padye' (Cha.up.8/13/1) - 'supreme lord Krsna's multiprious ener-gies are known as 'sabala'. Through the process of surrendering to Krsna K find the shelter of hladivi-sakti (Lord's pleasure giving profency) which is the quietessence of all his energies. In the divine sanctuary of 'hladini' I attain pure devotion to lord Krsna "Syamasundara".

There are numerous vedic statements asserverating that devotion to Krsna is the ultimate aim of religion.

C.N. Is Krsna's name mentioned anywhere in the vedas?

V.B. Does the word 'syama' not directly imply to Krsna? Also in the (Rg-Veda 1/22/164/31) it is described.

"apasyam gopamanipadyamanama"

I saw a cowherd boy 'gopal', Krsna, who is infillible.

These descriptions in the vedas are of the yong boy Krsna

C.N. All these descriptions are allusions and one has to stretch the meaning.

V.B. If you scrutinize the vedic scripture you will discover that vedic statements on all matters are written in this strain. Therefore we should accept the purports on the vedas given to us by the sages.

C.N. Now please tell me the history of vaisnava religion.

V.B. I already mentioned that vaisnavism began with man. Lord Brahma is the first vaisnava. Lord siva is vaisnava. All the demigods and early progenitors are vaisnavas. Lord Brahma's mental progeny, Narada Rsi is vaisnava. Now do you understand whether the vaisnava religion is in existence since creation? The truth is that all the jivas are not beyond the influence of the three material modes. To the extent jiva's nature is free from the material qualities, he is to that level a vaisnava.

Mahabharate, Ramayana and the Purna scriptures comprise the history of the arjans. All these texts describe in general the superiority of the vaisnavism as a religion. When the demigod, humans and demous are described seperately we are introduced to such personalities as prahlades bhruva and so on. History is all about famous peers besides them, there were so many other vaisnavas, contemporaries of dhruva and prahlada, who are not mentioned anywhere. Dhruva Mani's so Prahlad are grandsons of Kassapa Muni, a prajapati, or progenitor. They are our earliest of ancestors. Thus the pure religion of vaisnavism was existing since the dawn of history. As history marched towards us, innumerable wise sages, thinkers, the royal races of the sun and the moon dynasty lit up the firmament of chronicles, they were all devotees of Lord Visnu.

The previous three ages of satya, Treta and Dvapara are blessed with an abundance of such saintly souls as recorded in his history. In the present age of Kaliyuga, Southern India bore illustrious spiritual sons - Sri Ramanuja, Sri Madhvacarya and Sri Visnusvami and from the Western India came Sri Nimbarkacarya who individually inspired many millions to embrace the pure path of vaisnavism. I think, that by their mercy, more than half the Indians were able to transcend this greivous of material rescience and attain the lotus-feet of the supreme personality at Godhead. And in Bengal and Orissa, the lord of my heart, - Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, delivered so many fallen and wretched souls. Tell me, ever after reading and hearing all these facts, you still do not realise the super excellence of vaisnava religion?

C.N. Of course I do, but how can you designate prahlad as a Vaisnava?

V.B. A proper analysis of the scripture is required. Prahlad rejected Sandamarka, his tutors's teachings to him on the mayava-da philosophy of brahman realisation, and opted to chant the supreme lord's holy name understanding it to be the essence of all spiritual activities. Hence there is no doubt that Prahcade was pure vaisnava devortee. The real point is that, only an unbiased and assessment of the scriptures willlead to correct comprehension of the scriptural conclusions.

C.N. Irf we assume that the vaisnava religion is ever existent, then what was caintemya Mahaprabhu's unique contribution that gives him such special honour and status?

V.B. The vaisnava religion is like a lotus flower which gradvally blosions out with the passage of time. First came the bud showly the bud become largest. Then it opened its petals in a breath taking bloom and spreacl tis programme all around. At the time of Brahmas birth knowledge of the supreme absolute, mundane science, devotional service and prema in the from of tender buds of vais-navism were capsuled in the four verses of the Bhagavatam known as the catur-sloka. When prahlada arrived the buds lorgened. Gradually, at the advent of Badaraya, Vedavyasa the buds opened out and when the acquytas of vaisnavism appeared the lotus of vaisriavism spread opend its petals into a flower with the decert of lord Caitanya Mahaprasu the flower unfurled into full bloom and diffused its heady scent for the eager nostrils of the entire universe.

Lord Caitanya disseninated the process of chaunting the holy name the means to actiere preame. It is the most esoteric of theologi-cal sciences of the vaisnava religion. This He did for the high-est benefit of human sociely. Had anyone previonsly, ever re-cealed or prospagated this process of congregational chaunting of God's divive name although it is the par excellence spiritual tocasure ? This knowledge was always present and available in the scriptnnes. But never was it preached in a manner that made it comprehensive to the humansociety to inspire them to induct it into their lives and transtate it into action. Great wonder ! Tell me, before lord caitauyas incarnation was this repository at divine rectar ever distributed with such joyous abamdom ?

C.N. Well, if singing and chaunting is that efficacious then why is it not propular in the pandita circle?

V.B. In the age of Kali the meaning of the word 'pandita' has become perverted. The scriptures define that the word 'panda' means bright and acute intellect, and one who prossesses 'panda' is a 'pandita'. But presently a pandita is someone who can aim-lessly juggle words in the excuse of discussing logic and rheto-ric, or one who pretends to explain the treatise of smrti-scriptures solely writes the view to entertain his audience. How can you expect that such so called 'panditas' are capable of realising the profound inports of the religious science or even make others understand it?

A sincere and objective scrutiny of all the scriptures will certainly lead to the conviction that logic rhetoric etc. are not the essence or goad. Those who are expert in self-deception and deluding the public are infact 'panditas' of Kaliynga. All so-called pandita circles are simply engrossed in soplism and word jugglery. Subjects like; the ultimate human destination, purpose of life, eternal relationships between man, God and his energies the prime necessity of humanity and the means to acquire it etc are never discussed. Only when the topic of truth and absolute reality is brought into focus can we expect the knowledge about prema and Kirtana to become familiar amongst people.

C.N. I aduit there are hardly any good panditas. But tell me why the upper class brahmanas have not take up the vaisnava religion? The brahmanical caste is a saltvik, group in the mode of good-ness. They are generally inclined toward the path of truth and noble deeds, yet why are they mostly autagonistic to vaisnavism?

V.B. You have questioned me and so I am completed to respond. We vaisnavas are not given to pick faults in others. Sri, if you are not hurt or do not become enraged and you are sincere about learning the truth then I am prepared to answer your lost ques-tion.

C.N. Actually, studing the scriptures has made us very much in favour of upholding qualities like moderation, self-controle, to terance etc. Therefore, it is not difficult for us to hear you out. Please offer us a lucid explanation and I willcertainly take to heart good spiritual mistructions.

V.B. Please note that Sri Ramanuja, Madhvacarya, Visnusirami and Nimbarkacarya were all brahmanas by birth. They cach had manuy thousands of disciples who were brahmanas. Our lord Caitanya of Bengal was a Vedic brahmana. Lord Nityananda was a high caste radiya brahmana. Sri Advaita Prabhu was also a barendra brahmana. Even the gosvanris and mahantas, the associates of lord Caita-maya, were mostly from the brahmana class. An impressive number of brahmana stalwarts have joined the ranks of vaisnava preachers to disseminate this pure religion world wide. Yet how can you claim that higher caste brahmanas do not admire vaisnavism?

We know that mostly all the high born brahman hold vaisnavism in esteem. But some, due to bad hereditary traits, depraved company and wrong unbinging are hostile towards the vaisnava faith. Of course, this atitude certainly does not give a correct account of their brahmana birth - it reflects their misfortune and degrada-tion.

The scriptures hold the view that in Kuliynga in particular, qualified brahmanas are scarce. This select few are the vaisna-vas. From the instant a brahmana is initiated into the gayatri mantra - personification in mother veda (a lady devotee of lord visnu) he is fatually embracing the vaisnava faith being initiat-ed bya vaisnava mantra. But because of the ill influence of deteriorating times he accepted reinitiation by unvedic methods and rejected his vaisnava faith. However, the

small number of vaisnava boahmanas must not lead you to draw wrong conclusions.

C.N. But why do I find that a majority of vaisnavas are from the lower castes?

V.B. Of this there is no doubt. Most of these lower caste persons readily accept their meek and stricken position thus evoking the compassion of vaisnavas. No one can become a vaisnava without first receiving the mercy of vaisnavas. A person cannot become humble if he is intoxicated with caste position lineage, wealth etc ; it is improbable for such persons to attract the mercy of vaisnavas.

C.N. I think I have heard enough on this topic. I see that you are gradually leading the conversation to the subject of disparaging scriptural quotes on the brahmanas of Kaliyuga. I feel extremely disheartened when I hear quotes like :- "raksasah kalim-asritya jayante brahma-yonisu" (Varaha Purana)

The raksasas, or demons will seek out the shelter of Kaliyuga and take birth in brahmana families.

Hence I want to go on to other topics. So Sankaracharya, a fathomless ocean of knowledge?

V.B. I am surprised to hear this. We regard Sri Sankaracharya as an incarnation of Lord Siva. Caitanya Mahaprabhu has mistooked us to honour him as an 'acarya' - a great spiritual stalwart. We simply reject the philosophy of mayavada preached by him. This mayavada philosophy is not rooted in the vedas; it is merely a disguised form of Buddhism. In order to keep the demons and atheists deluded in ignorance the supreme lord instructed Sankaracharya to pervert the philosophy of the vedas and gita, and propagate monism. How can we fault the 'acarya' on this account and censure him ?

Lord Buddha was also an incarnation of the supreme Lord. He widely broadcast a philosophy which went against the vedic tenets. Does any civilized person castigate him for it? You may say that such actions of the supreme lord and lord siva are contrived because of being discriminatory. In reply I say that the supreme lord is the well wishing universal father and lord siva is his chief executive, they are omniscient and all auspicious. They can never make the mistake of being prejudiced. The human beings being insignificantly small cannot gauge the profundity of their works and so they end up berating the lord and his devotees.

A knowledgeable person must not make loose comments like - "this act of providence was not appropriate. He should have done this or that". Human beings cannot hazard opinions on topics outside the jurisdiction of his limited intellect. The supreme controller alone knows the urgency of keeping atheists imprisoned in mayavadi thought. We, the humans, have no way of knowing the expediency of the reason of us being created and later at the time of total annihilation, or mahapralaya of our extinction. All this is a part of the supreme lord's divine pastimes. The lord's devotees simply relish hearing about the lord's pastimes; they never quarrel or disagree about it.

C.N But how do you say that the mayavada philosophy is in contra-position to the ethics of the vedas vedanta and Gita ?

V.N After a proper scrutiny of the upanisads and vedanti formulas can you pinpoint those verses or aphorisms that support the mayavada theory ? I will shed appropriate light on their meanings. Some hint of mayavada thought can be initially detected in certain vedic verses, but again, if the verse is seen in its entirety, in its full context to the whole then even that conclusion with quickly evaporate.

C.N Fraudulently speaking I have not studied upanisad or Vedanta sastra. But I am well prepared on any discussion on logic or rhetoric. I am conversant in sophistry and dialectics. I have browsed through the Gita but do not possess a fair grasp of its imports ; therefore I admit defeat. Oh yes ! there is another matter I like to know from you because I am sure a pandita of your stature will be able to make me understand it. Why do the vaisnavas honour only Visnu prasada (food offered to lord visnu) but disrespect 'prasada' offered to the demigods and goddesses?

V.B. First of all, I am certainly not a pandita; I am a very ignorant man. You must understand that whatever I speak is on the strength of my guru srila Paramahansa Babaji's mercy. Scriptures are a vast, unlimited ocean; no single person could possibly study it entirely. Srila 'gurudeva' has churned this ocean and given me its essence, which I have received with knowing that it is approved by all the scripture.

Now the answer to your question is - the vaisnavas do not disregard prasada offered to demigods and goddesses. Lord Krsna is the only and uncontested supreme personality of Godhead. All demigods and goddesses are his devotees, solely owned by him. Therefore vaisnavas always honour the remnants of devotees, not deride it.

Devotion to the supreme lord is enhanced by accepting devotee's remnants or prasada. There are in fact two more excellent devotional objects besides devotee's remnant - devotee's foot-dust and his foot-bath water also known as *caranmrita* (nectar from the feet). The main point is, let the mayavadi worship any demigod, or offer him foodstuff, because his consciousness is polluted by monism the demigods reject his worship and offering. I can table a myriad quotes from numerous scriptures in support of this point if you so require.

In short, mayavadis worship only demigods. If one accepts demigod-prasada offered by mayavadis his devotion is impaired and he offends mother devotion, or bhaktidevi. When a vaisnava offers to the demigods or goddesses Krsna prasadam, or the supreme lord's remnants, they jubilantly receive it and dance with joy. In turn, when a vaisnava accepts it he immediately experiences exultation.

See, now the overpowering strength of scriptural injunctions. It is mentioned in the yoga-sastra or yoga scripture, that a yoga practitioner must not take the remnants of demigod. This does not imply that a yogi or practicing yogi must disrespect demigod-prasada. Solitary meditation is improved if a yogi abstains from eating prasada. Similarly, in the path of devotional service, a devotee must

accept prasadam offered only the supreme lord, not of any other demigod or goddesses. Otherwise it hinders progress in pure devotional service. This does not indicate a show of disregard to demigod-prasada. In fact it helps in the devotees advancement in individual spiritual pursuits recommended in the scriptures.

C.N. Much obliged ! I have understood this point. Now please tell me why are you opposed to animal sacrifice which is endorsed by the scriptures ?

V.B. According to the purport of the scriptures animal sacrifice is not prescribed. The following except from a verse in the vadas denounces killing of animals - "ma himsyat-sarvani bhutani? Till the time a person's nature is controlled by the modes of ignorance and passion (tamas and rajas_) he remains engrossed in sex life, meat-eating and taking intoxicants. The vedas do not subscribe to these undesirable acts. The real import of the vedas is, that as long as human beings do not elevate themselves to the level of sattva-guna, or mode of goodness, which means that they are unable to forego sex, non-vegetarian food and addiction; then, to help them curb these base instincts of sex they may marry, of non-vegetarian diet they may eat only sacrificial animals and in specific religious rituals they may drink wine. Gradually these checks, acting as deterrents, will fully free them from these activities. This is the actual vedic understanding. The vedas never advise killing of animals. For example the Srimad Bhagavatam States :

"loke vyavayamisa-madya-sevanityastu jantorna hitatra-codana vyavasthitistesu vivaha yajna-suragrahairasu-nivrttiristha".

[People of the world are generally attached to carnal pleasures, flesh eating and addiction. The scriptures do not encourage these activities nor does it advise their performance. In order to contain them, the rituals of marriage, special yagnas, or sacrifices for eating meat and drinking wine are instituted. The real purport of the vedas then recommends total renunciation of these acts.]

The vaisnavas are of the opinion that if a tamasic or rajasic person desires to act in such irresponsible manner let him do so. But a Sattvika person must refrain from these acts. See another quote from Srimad Bhagavatam where Narada Muni is instructing.

"ahastani sahanam apadani catus-padam
phalguni tatra mahatam jiv jivasya jivanam"

[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 subsistence of the strong, and the general rule holds that one living being is food for another.]

Once again, in Manu smiti we find:

"pravrttiresa bhutanam nivrttistu mahaphala"(MS.5/56)

[(The natural propensity of human beings is toward sensual enjoyments, meat eating and intoxications) yet by discarding these propensities a person gains wonderful fortunes].

CN Very well! But what about sraddha ceremony or offering of oblations to forefathers which helps repay a man's debt to his father, why are the vaisnavas not in favour of such ceremonies?

VB Vaisnavas are not fastidious about karmis, or fruitive workers, performing sraddha ceremony. But this is what Srimad Bhagavatam has to say in this context.

"devarsi bhutapta-nrnam pitnam na kinkaro nayam rni ca rajan(SB 11/5/41)
sarvatmana yah saranam saranyam gato mukundam parihrtya kartam"
[one who has given up all material duties and taken full shelter at the lotus feet of
Mukunda, who gives shelter to all, is not indebted to the demigods, great sages,
ordinary living beings, relatives, friends, mankind or even one's forefathers who
have passed away']

Therefore, a devotee, who has surrendered his life to the supreme lord, is not
required to perform sraddha ceremony in the karmakanda process (fruitive ritual)
in order to repay the fore-fathers debts. He is advised to simply worship the
supreme lord and offer him 'bhog' or foodstuff. This 'bhog' is converted to
'prasada' is then partaken by the family members.

CN When does a person become eligible to perform sraddha in this manner?

VB From the day a person develops faith and respect for chanting the holy name
and for hearing topics related to Krishna consciousness he becomes a Vaishnava who
acquires this worthiness. The Srimad Bhagavatam comments :

"tavat karmani kurvita na nirvidyeta yavata

mat-katha-sravanadau va sraddha yavan na jayate (SB 11/20/9)

[Material responsibilities and fruitive rituals remain necessities to a person as long
as he has not developed apathy towards the cultivation of knowledge; or to a
devotee who has not evolved faith and appreciation for hearing topics describing
my pastimes and so on.]

CN I am truly happy for this chance to speak with you. I have heard very subtle
and wise analysis of topics from you which convinces me that you are a fine
scholar. Indeed, it has evoked my faith in Vaishnavism. This has given me immense
pleasure. Well, my dear Hainhara! what need for further debate? These Vaishnavas
possess vast knowledge, they are champions on scriptural debates. Whatever we
may have to say in order to protect our hereditary business, it is an irrefutable fact
that a brilliant and super-excellent scholar and Vaishnava such as Nimai Pandita was
never, nor will ever be born in Bengal, may in the entire India.

Now let us depart to our homes across the holy Ganga. The day is coming to an
end".

Caburbhya Nyayaratna stood up with his associates, sang out 'Haribol! Haribol!
and began to walk away. The Vaishnavas were jubilant, they chanted 'jai
sacinaudana! jai sacinandava (all glory to the son of mother Saci, Nimai) and
broke out in a state-like dance.

Chapter 11 Eternal Religion and Idol Worship

On the western bank of Ganga the peaceful hamlet of Pahada-pura in Kulia
basked in its recently acquired glory. It was situated within the Navadvipa circle,
on the island of Koladvipa. During Lord Caitanya's era, the renowned Sri
Madhavadasa Cattopadhyaya (alias Cha'kadi Catto) resided here and enjoyed
sufficient respect and good reputation. Srila Vamsivadananda Thakura was his
son. Srila Vamsivadananda became an eminent personality with immense

influence. All this was possible by Lord Caitanya's grace. Because he was the incarnation of Lord Krishna's flute (vamsi) everyone called him Prabhu Vamsivadananda.

Srila Vamsivadananda was highly honoured for another reason: he was very much favoured by Sri Visnu Priyadevi, Lord Caitanya's wife. After Visnupriya devi's disappearance Vamsivadananda transferred the deities she personally worshipped from Sri Mayapura to Kulia Pahadapura and continued the worship. His descendants were fortunate to receive Mother Jahnadevi's blessings and association. They shifted residence to Sri Baghnepada. But before they left Kulia they arranged for the deity worship to be continued by vaishnavas from Malancapura and thus Visnupriyadevi's deities remained in the temple in Pahadapura.

The original town of Navadvipa was on the eastern bank of Ganga. Kulia, on the west, consisted of several notable hamlets of which cinadanga was one. A certain devotee from the Cinadanga merchant community once organised a spiritual fair on the premises of the Kulia Pahadapura temple. Many boahmana panditas and all vaishnavas from within a thirty-two mile radius were sent invitations to this festival.

The festival day saw a teeming mass of vaishnavas pouring into Kulia from all around. Anantadasa Babaji and others came from Nrsimtapalli; Goracandadasa Babaji and his group from Mayapura; Narayana dasa babaji with his associates from Vilvapuskarini; the famous Narahardasa led his group from Sri Modaduma; Sri Parama-hansa, desa Babaji, Vaisnavadasa Babaji and so on from Sri Godruma; Sri Sacinandanadasa with his group from Samudragadh and many hundreds of vaishnavas began to arrive.

The vaishnavas looked resplendent with tilaka markings on the forehead, struds of tulasi bead around the neck, on different parts of the upper exposed limbs and forehead names of Lord Gaitanya and Lord Nityananda were drawn with fingers and stood out in luminescent white. Everyone carried a beadbag in their right hand of which it hung from the neck. Many chanted loudly the mahamantra:

'hare Krsna hare krsna krsna hare hare
hare rama hare rama rara rama hare hare"

Gay groups of singing vaishnavas vringled in the crowd playing kartals (cymbals) marking time to sweet bhajans that describe Lord Gauranga's pastimes. Some devotees lifted up their arms and danced chanting:- Sri Gosnacaitanya prabhu uityananda Sri advaita gadadhara Srivasa adi Gavra bhakta vinda'. Many vaishnavas expressed their ineffable joy in silent, unrestrained tears and moments of horripilation all over their bodies. Some of them cried out in sublime anguish saying in between sobs: 'Oh my dearest Lord Gauranga! when will my eyes behold four divine pastimes eternally manifest in Navadvipa. The Mrdanga-playing devotees electrifying rhythm pulsated like the heartbeats of a dynamic serpentine creature come alive.

The people of Kulia, especially the Ganra-nagari cult (they believed the Lord Caitanya appeared in Krishna's mood of a debonair who ravished young damsels) were amazed at the seeing the wonderful and genuine ecstatic symptoms exhibited by the pure vaishnavas. Thus the moving mass surged forward and arrived at Lord Gauranga's temple hall. The businessman devotee rushed out to meet them wrapping a stole around his neck as was customary for the host when welcoming

honoured guests. He fell at the vaisnava feet, rolled on the ground and expressed his heartfelt gratitude and humility. He ushered them into the hall and they gradually settled down.

Immediately came a group of men who started to garland the vaisnavas with Prasadi-mala or flower garlands which had been offered to the lord. The lead singers began the invocatory songs to lord Ganranger. The sublime songs narrating Ganranga's nectaran pastimes touched the vaisnava hearts and they felt divine exaltations. When the ecstasy had reached a new height there came the temple gateman and informed the temple authorities of the arrival of a new group of guests who were waiting on the outer, reception area. The newcomers, he explained, were led by the chief mollah (muslim priest) of Saika-Pargana himself and he requested for an audience with a few vaisnava pauditas.

The temple priests passed on the mollah's invitation to the visiting vaisnava Babajis. The news spread fast. A murmur of disappointment arose at this untimely intrusion into an exhilarating concert. Sri Kisanadasa Balaji of Sri Madhyadvipa enquired about the mollah's intention. One of the temple officials went, met the mollah and returned. He said ---"the respected mollah desires to have a spiritual discussion with the vaisnava scholars. He said that he was considered by the entire muslim community to be their most eminent religious scholar and he was dedicated to disseminating his muslim religion. But he was not in the least autogouistic to other religions. He was held in high regard even by the crown in Delhi. He solicits the opportunity to exchange scriptural these with a few learned vaisnavas. He feels, in the longrun it could bring laurels to this pure religion of vaisnavism".

A few vaisnavas responded quickly realising that a talk with the mollah provided a golden chance to broadcast vaisnavism. They consulted among themselves and decided to send a representation of four vaisnavas pandifers: Goracandadasa Babaji of Sri Mayapura, Vaisnavadasa Babaji of Godruma, Premadasa Babaji of Janhunanagara and Kalipavanadasa Babaji of Campahatta. They will start the discussion with the mollah while the other vaisnavas continue the kirtava when the invocation prayers come to an end the rest devotees will go and hear the theological elaborations. The four selected Babajis arose glorifying the names of lord Ganranga and Nityananda Prabhu and left the assembly reading towards the outer reception area where the mollah with his group awaited them.

The outfield was a large area cooled by the shades of a huge peepul tree. Seeing the Vaisnavas walking towards them the mollah priests stood up as did his followers, as a mark of respect and graciously welcomed them. The vaisnavas reciprocated their sincere greetings by prostrating themselves before the visitors. Vaisnavas understand that all creatures are krsna's servitor become the Supreme Godhead resides in every living beings' heart in the form of supersoul; so it was to that supreme soul the vaisnavas now offered their obeisances. They sat down facing their respected muslim guests.

The scene was indeed extraordinary. On one side sat fifty muslim scholars, finely attired with white flowing beards. Several yards behind them a few nicely decorated horses stood tied to the post. On the opposite side sat four self-realised saints with placid humility. Behind them, the open expanse was fast filling up with inquisitive hindus. Pandita Goracandadasa Babaji addressed the muslim scholars in his unquavering voice: 'I wonder if we are knowledgeable enough to

answer your profound enquiries.'

Mollah Badriddin saheb spoke up saying: "Dear brthrm! histo-ry shows that Hindus worship many damigods and goddesses since the dawn of time. We read in our holy book, the koran shaifa, that God, or Allah is one, not many. He is formless and impersonal. To sculpt this image and worship it is a greivous sin. To erodicate this doubt I have enquired from many brahmana pauditas. They all agree that Allah is mirakara, or impersonal. But they say that it is impossible to think on an impersonal being, so an imaginary form of Allah must be made and then it becomes easy to meditate on, and worship him in that form. We are not satisfied with this answer.

The Koran states that an invented image of Allah is the work of a saitan, and we call it 'byut'. Byut worship is absolutely forbidden-such worship for from pleasing Allah brings down his wrath. We have heard that the original propagator of your religion, Sri Gaitanya deva, has pruned out the discrepancies in the Hindu religion. Yet he too supports 'byut-patash', or idol worship. Therefore we have come here to ask the vaisnavas that inspite of delving so deep into the scripture why have you not given up idol worship?

The Vaisnava panditas were inwardly answered by the mollah sahebs expressed cogitations. Aloud, they requested Goracanda Babaji to reply, who quickly accepted this responsibility.

Goracanda dasa Babaji said ---"The Great one you call Allah is known to us as Bhagavan. The Supreme Being is one and of the same absolute nature. The sacred texts of koran and purana have designated him by other names according to the differences of language and country. The truth is, that which ever nomenclature of the Supreme Godhead describes him best, is naturally most preferred. It is for this reason why we opt for the name 'bhag-avan' above the others like Allah, Brahman, Paramatma and so on.

Allah means the One Being who is the greatest above everyone or everything. Unsurpassable greatness cannot be considered to be the absolute, supreme personality. The characteristic with the highest degree of wonder and uniqueness takes precedence. Unsur-possable greatness definitely posseses a certain amount of this uniqueness and wonder ; but its convense charactetristic is extremely subttte hance it also displays some uniqueness and wonder. Therefore the name "Allah" cannot claim absolute monopoly on unqueness and wonder. The designation 'bhagavan' devotes in one expression the eutire supreme of uniqueness and wonder the human thought can possibly conjure. Absolute opotence, one of the synotins if bhagavan ; includes the final extremities of magnitude the second character-istic of bhagavan is omnipotency. Impossibility is the limination of the human mind, but not for the inconceivable potency of the lord. By the powers of his inconceivable omnipotency the lord is simultaneously nirakara, or impersonal and sakara, or personal. To say that the lord is only nirakara, or impersonal is impinging upon this inconceivabled omuipotence though this inconceivable omulipotence He maintests his eternal deity form to the devotees.

Allah, Brahaman and paramatman are worshipped sotely as niraka-ra, or impersonal, and hence it reduces their uniqueness and mystical wonder. Bhagavan is perennaially are auspicious and all famous. Thus his pastimes and activities are immortal and nectar-ean. Bhagavan is the most beautiful form with their spiritual

vision.

Bhagavan possesses unlimited knowledge. This implies that He is absolutely immaculate, perfect and complete; the embodiment of transcendence, the spiritual object unapproachable by matter. His beautiful eternal form of the deity is the embodiment of spirituality; it is beyond matter ! Although the lord, Bhagavan is the supreme controller of the entire creation yet he remains fully independent and unentangled, or aloof from everything. Thus I have enumerated the six symptoms of Bhagavan.

The supreme lord, Bhagavan, has two potencies, or manifestations: aisvarya, or opulence and madhurya, or sweetness. The madhurya of the lord is the supreme well-wisher of the living entities. In this manifestation he comes to us as the dearest lord of the heart Lord Krishna, or lord Caitanya. We do not consider the term 'byut-parasta', or forbidden idol worship a pejorative when used to describe the worship of a fictitious form of the supreme lord. In the Vaishnava religion we worship the supreme lord's eternal form of the deity (which is absolutely spiritual). Therefore this method of deity worship followed by us cannot be defined as 'byut-parasta', or satanic idol worship.

The proscription of byut-parasta promulgated in a certain text does not make it an absolutely correct law. Everything depends on the intensity of faith and attachment of the worshiper. As much as the worshiper is divorced from the forces of 'matter' or matter, his worship of the deity is to that degree transcendental and pure. For example you are the high priest, or mullah --- a learned scholar, your heart is free from the influence of 'matter', but can that be said of your novice disciples? Are their hearts devoid of intimate contact with 'matter'? The level of their attachment to 'matter' reflects on their worship and meditation. They offer loud lip service to the nirakara form but within their thoughts dredge in 'matter' or matter.

The pure method of worshipping the supreme lord's transcendental deity form cannot be converted into a free-for-all social event. This can be performed only by persons who are transcendental, who can overcome the influences of matter. I earnestly entreat you to give this subject a deep thought.

Mullah Saheb --- I have seriously considered your points and I can say that the six absolute excellences the nomenclature 'bhagavan', or supreme lord possesses are likewise mentioned in our Koran in describing Allah, Therefore let us not dissect the name of 'Allah' - Allah is Bhagavan.

Goracauda B Very well then ! you accept that the supreme being possesses divine beauty. This means you affirm the fact that beyond this material creation exist a spiritual World where the supreme lord is the embodiment of beauty this very form of sublime exquisiteness is the transcendental form of the deity we worship.

M.S Our holy Koran also states that the supreme being possesses an absolute spiritual body; hence there is no room for repudiation. But when one tries to make an image of that absolute transcendental form of Allah or bhagavan it becomes a material replica. And this we call 'byut'. Worshipping 'byut' is not the same as worshipping the supreme lord. Now kindly explain your view point on this subject.

GB The Vaishnava scriptures espouse the worship of the pure and transcendental deity form of the supreme personality of Godhead. The elevated devotees are not permitted to worship material objects. The Srimod Bhagavatam states:

"yasyatma-buddhih kuinape trdhatuke svadhih kalatradisu bhauma ijjadhih yat-tirtha buddhih salile na karhieij-janbesu-abhijnesu sa eva go-kharah (SB 10/84/13) [The person who considers the body made up of three material elements as the self spiritual, his wife family and relatives as his dearest kin, his birthplace and objects made from earth as worshipable and goes to pilgrimage only to take bath in the rivers but at the same time, does not consider the lords pure devotee as spiritual as his dearest kin, as worshipable and as the personification of all pilgrimages is are ass among the cows ---a stone headed dunce].

Further, in the Bhagavad Gita we find ---"bhutani yauti bhuteja'etc. which means that those who worship ghosts and spir-its will take birth among such beings. These statements clarify indicate that worshipping of material objects or ghost and hob-goblins is strongly censured. But one fact must be noted, human beings acquire varying degrees of eligibility in spiritual activ-ities dependent upon their level of knowledge and purification. He who is realised in pure transcendence is alone worthy of wor-shipping the transcendental spiritual deity form of the supreme godhead. Conversely the differing degrees of lack of knowledge and purity devotes the level of transcendental consciousness.

A neophyte at the bottom of the gradation scale of eligibil-ity is unable to perceive transcendence. So, when he even medi-tates on the lord in his mind, the image of the lord he construes within is evidently endowed with mundane qualities and is a fabricated form. To extrapolate Divinity on to a earther form or idol is identical to meditating in the mind on an image created with material consciousness. Therefore in the case of such a neophyte idol is identical to meditating in the mind on an image created with material consciousness. Therefore in the case of such a neophyte idol worship is beneficial. In fact, the absence or prohibition of idol worship for the general, ignorant mass is indeed induspicious for them. When the ordinary unearned people somehow become inspired to approach the Supreme Lord and at that moment they do not find a deity form of the lord they feel cha-grined and hopeless.

Those religious which have no provision for deity worship, their simple followers by accident of birth and beginners who have little or no understanding of that particular faith become overtly materialistic and even grow aversion towards the Supreme Lord. Therefore, deity worship is the foundation of man's reli-gion.

The highly elevated, unalloyed devotees of the lord perceive the beautiful form of the supreme lord by dint of their pure consciousness and perfect realisation. They constantly meditate on and worship, this sublime and transcendental form of the lord. They see in their mind's eye with hearts saturated with loving devotion. Gradually when after long meditation the devotee's consciousness expands to take note of the material world, at that juncture this transcendental, divine form of the lord is externally manifest by the devotees due to his feelings of com-compassion for the world. Thus by the arrangement and instruction of the pure devotee, who is forever guided by the lord himself. the deity form which is an exact replica of the form of the lord that he personally exhibits in the heart of his pure devotee, makes a permanent appearance and is the non-different representative of the supreme lord.

To the self-realised uttama-adhikary, or advanced devotee, the lord's Deity is always a transcendental personal form, a direct manifestation of the lord. The madhyama-adhikary, or intermediate pure devotee, perceives the deity in his

mind, a form the lord accepts such as one of the eight authorised forms, and the prakṛta-bhakta or neophyte, a materialistic devotee, sees the deity first a stone idol or any other material thing, then gradually as his consciousness and intelligence is cleared he worships the deity with a spiritual understanding. Thus we see that deity worship is essential and beneficial to devotee in all categories. Worshipping an imagined or concocted idol of god as the supreme lord is strongly denounced.

The Deity image of the eternal form of the supreme personality of Godhead is all-auspicious. The Vaiṣṇava faith has therefore recommended and established deity worship for all the three levels of devotees namely, *uttama*, *madhyama* and *kanīṣṭha*. There is no mistake in this process. In fact by this arrangement human beings benefit at every step, ushering in for them sublime sanctity. This is substantiated in the *Srīmad Bhagavatam*:---

"yathā yathātmāparimriyate'san mat-punya-gaṭha-sravanābhīdharyaiḥ tathā tathā paśyati vastu sukṣmāṁ cakṣur-yathāiva-anjanāsamprayuktam (SB 11/14/26)
[Medicated salve when applied on the eye helps one see even the finest of objects. Similarly when the jīva's heart is purged of impurities by hearing and discussing transcendental topics about me (the supreme Godhead) he perceives the most esoteric knowledge (about my original, spiritual form and the purport of my pastimes)]

Jīva soul's mind is enshrouded by the material energy. The living entity is therefore incapacitated to either strive towards self-realisation or even to serve the supreme lord. Through the devotional process of hearing and chanting the soul gains in spiritual strength which concomitantly weakens the material energy's grip on him. As the material influence on him decreases, in tandem the soul's original nature comes into brighter focus, and the direct perception of the real spiritual self and his activities becomes more distinct. Some thinkers term it as ---to discard objectives unrelated to the self or soul and endeavour to realise the 'that' or the self. This sort of word jugglery is called dry empirical parroting.

Whence does the captive give and acquire the strength to abrogate the unreal, the illusion on his own? Can a prisoner be set free from the jail merely by deriving freedom? The true purpose of punishment in jail is that the offender reforms himself. Jīva soul by nature is an eternal servant of God and forgetting this truth is his cardinal offence. The jīva may initially become enmeshed in material life by the insurmountable pressure of *māyā*. But if somehow he cultivates, even slightly, an interest in spiritual activities he can soon perceive the transcendental form of the deity. The devotional process of hearing and chanting begins and his original nature (as eternal servant of God) grows firm and steady. Augmentation of this growth proportionately enlightens him on his true spiritual identity. Therefore the singular recourse open to the absolute novice, or neophyte is to serve the deity and to hear and chant about his glories. This then is the prime reason why our spiritual authorities have established the process of devotional service to the Deity. MS Is it not better to meditate in the mind (on the supreme being) than to model a mundane idol from an imagined form?

GB Both are the same. The mind though subtle, is a part of the mundane. Anything which is a product of the mind is inert, the mind can think of only matter. For example, when we say: brahman is all pervasive, it does not imply that we are able to fathom the quality of its ubiquity; the mortal mind grasps at the

closet similarity---the limitless sky. Again, if an ordinary person was to say: "I am thinking about brahman", inevitably his perception of brahman will be limited by time and space ---both mundane. If meditation in the mind cannot break the bonds of material influence of time and space and reach beyond, then how can it perceive transcendence? Simply by rejecting an idol of earth, water etc. but creating a mental image of God subservient to the conditions of space and time is indeed a fictitious God. All these forms of worship are idolatry---paganism[Not a single element in matter exists which can act as a vehicle to bring us in contact with any level of spiritualism. That indispensable element is bhava, or faith and feeling for the Supreme personality of Godhead. It exists singularly in the living articles, the five. Hearing and chanting the Supreme lord's holynome and his pastimes and worshipping his deity provides jiva the inspiration to steady and strengthen his 'bhava'. And at a specific juncture it becomes 'bhakti'. The Supreme Godhead's spiritual form is revealed solely through the process of pure devotional service. This is an impossible task for the methods of karma or jnana.

MS Matter is distinct from God. It is proclaimed that Satan has introduced idol-worship just to enslave the jiva in material existence. Therefore in my opinion it is better to avoid idol-worship.

GB God is one and unsurpassable. Every thing in the entire cosmic creation is fathered by him and is subordinate to his will. Therefore, whatever is utilised in worshipping him, can satisfy him. In fact, none of the objects and persons a jiva worships, can in any way, make him jealous or envious. He is the supreme benefactor and well-wisher of everyone. If there is a satan, there he does not possess the power to act against God's will; he can be only another jiva, subservient to him. However, according to our understanding such a leviathan being does not exist. Nothing can occur in this world contrary to God's plan. Not is it possible for anyone to be independent of God's control.

Now the question can be raised as to how was sin created. This is our answer. Jiva is God's servant. Acknowledging this truth is called jnana or vidya, but forgetfulness of it is known as avidya or nescience. For whatever reasons, certain jivas act in avidya thus they sow the seeds of sin in their hearts. However, the eternal associates of the Supreme Lord, or the nityapar-sada jiva do not have these seeds of sin implanted in their hearts.

It is imperative to look into the idea of satan. What is of utmost importance is to properly comprehend of the Supreme lord's Deity form sheds its mundane misunderstanding. This gradual ascension of the spiritual consciousness is extremely beneficial to humanity, Whereas religious thoughts which are inferior to the Vedic theology reject the practice of Deity worship. Just study probe this matter and you will know exactly how few could attain that transcendental. Sublime consciousness. They mispend their time in fusion rhetoric which often turns minatory. When will they turn their attention towards devotion to the supreme lord?

MS To perform Deity worship with proper devotion and divine consciousness can be acceptable as being without aberrations. But how can worship of dogs, cats, snakes, even of a promiscuous man, be permissible and be considered as a devotional process? Our divine prophet has specifically castigated such byut-parasta.

GB Human beings by nature are grateful to God. They may wallow in abomination

and immorality, yet on rare occasions they believe in a Supreme being as the ultimate controller of everything and bow in awe to the mighty and inexplicable wonders that occur in the world. The ignorant and the simpleton generally revere the river, sun, mountain, giant and powerful beasts etc. prodded by gratitude to God. They confide their inner thoughts and feelings in these objects and surrender to them. The supra-mundane and divine process of devotion to God and this type of worshipping of objects and spirits is irreconcilably different. Yet the ignorant's acknowledgement of God and his grateful responsiveness to him inevitably gives him much pious benefits.

A little deliberation on this topic will prove that these simpletons cannot be blamed. To worship meditate or offer namaj prayers to the all-pervasive, impersonal features of God benefit of pure and transcendental spirituality. Where then the distinction between them and the worshippers of cat etc? Our view is that enhancing one's spiritual consciousness towards the Supreme and discussing topics related to theistic thoughts, by using any method, is absolutely crucial. If they are ridiculed and repudiated then the singular portal to gradual elevation is forever closed.

Those who are opinionated and look themselves into fanatical sects and cults are diverted to lofty idealism and objectivity. They began to deride and rail at anyone who does not follow their methodology in religious practices. This is a serious aberration.

MS Do you want to imply that everything is God and all types of worship to any object tantamounts to worshipping God. To worship something sinful is also worshipping God? To revere immortal proclivities is equivalent to devotion to God? Is God pleased with all these?

GB We do not designate everything or anyone as God. The supreme personality of Godhead is distinct from all the rest. All that exists is created by God and is under his divine sovereignty. Everything is connected to the Supreme Godhead. And based on this relationship it is every one's prerogative to enquire about God. Repeated and sincere enquiry about anything leads to ultimate success, according to the Vedic aphorism known as 'jign-asa asvadhana-avadhi'. Therefore enquire about the Supreme Lord will one day result in realising the transcendence.

You are a very learned scholar of theology. So kindly consider this points with a noble and open mind. We are poor and simple vaisnavas. We are not keen to participate in marathon debates. If we have your permission we can return to hear the chaitanya- mangal-gita (songs glorify the pastimes of Lord Caitanya). Mollah Saheb's reaction regarding the discussion was not discernible in his demeanour. He sat placidly for a short time and said 'I am pleased with your analysis and explanations. I will come back another time and ask more questions. It is late now. I desire to return to my home'.

Mollah Saheb walked at the head of his small band of followers, towards their patiently waiting horses. They mounted and rode off. The vaisnavas chanted the Lord's name in jubilant chorus and rejoined the main body of vaisnavas engrossed in kirtana.

Chapter 12

The Eternal Religion And Sadhana, Or Practice

Sri Navadip-mndl (consisting of nine islands) is the fore-most of ll the numerous pilgrimges in the universe. Like Sri Vindavan dhama Navadvip mandala is also spread out over thirty two square miles area. The mandala is compared to an octo-petalled lotus flower. Its seed-vessel represents the Island of Antardvipa. In the centre of the island is Mayapura. North of Sri Mayapura lies the island of Simantadvipa, where a temple dedicat-ed to Sri Simantini-devi stood impressively. The Bilva-puskarihi lake languished on the northern side of the temple and the Brah-mana-puskarini lake on the southern side. The adjoining areas with the lakes was properly known as Simulia.

Simulia village was turns located on the northern periphery of Navadvipa-mandala. At the time of lord Caitanya this hamlet was the home of many erudite scholars. Sri Nilambara Cakravarti, sacimatas'father, was a resident of Simulia. Close to his house lived a vedic brahmana named Sri Brajanath Bhattacharjya. He attended the village sanskrita 'tole' school located on the banks of Vilva-puskarin lake. In short time he achieved mastery over the philosophy of logic and rhetoric. Famous and respected pandi-tas from all aroud and as far as Madhadvipa. Purvasthati, Kuliya etc.were intimidated by Sri Brajanatha's novel arguments and rhetories.

In public debates and large gatherings of panditas Brajanath Nyayapancahis innovative and piercing arguments were like micendiary arrows demolishing every point made by them. From among these panditas a specially malicious one envious of Braja-nath's brilliance decided to murder him.He wanted to do this by using certain tantric miles. He went to the smasna, or the burn-ing place of dead bodies, in Rudradvipa and began his sinister incantations continuously, calling forth the black powers of death.

The night of the dark moon lay still around and suspended the smasama. At midnight the brahmana tantric invoked his wor-shipable and chosea goddess Kati and entreated her saying---"Dear Mother! Ia Kaliyuga you are the only deity worthy of worship. People say you are propitiated easily with few incentations of mautra, and readily offer boons. O noble, foruvidable goddess! your humble servant has undertaken grueling pains for many days now and chanted your mautras. Kindly show me your mercyt just this once. Devi, I know I am riddled with wrongs; but you are my mother, please overlook and excuse them. And now, kindly show yourself to me."

In this manner the incautations numbled on, the unsuspecting and Brajanath's life hung in the balance. Soon the powers of this mantra began to manifest. The sky became overcast, the winds howled and thunder shattered the eardrums Momentary lightning flashes pierced the ceric pall and revealed ghastly forms of ghosts and demons avalaucting upon him. He was at first mortaly afraid but pulled himself together with powers of reasoning and steered his nerves. He pleaded----"O Dear Mother! kindly do not delay any further."

Just then an ethercal voice from the sky echoed the words---'Give up your worries. Brajanath will soon discontinue his thetorical debates. He will renounce this path and become silent. You no longer will have to face him as an opponent. Calm yourself and return home". The divine prophery thrilled him. He repeatedly geniflexed before the image of Lord Siva, the lord of tantric vites, and returned

home with a sprightly gait.

At twenty one, Brajanath Nyayapananana was crowned as the unconquerable regent of debate and scholasticism. He voraciously read Sri Gangesa Upadhyaya's complete works. He picked out many fallacies in Kanabhatta's *siromani* book---'Didhiti', and started writing his own, independent purports. Material life had no attraction for him, and he did not think about it. He had never heard of the ultimate spiritual destination: pure devotion to the supreme lord. Word jugglery, semantics, rhetoric, sophism, planning out new counter arguments etc. filled his world. He thought about them while eating, sleeping walking and so on.

One evening, sitting on the bank of the Ganga, Brajanatha was in deep contemplation about sage Gantam's enumeration of the sixteen elements. Of the *myaya*, or logic philosophy. Suddenly a young student of philosophy came up to him and enquired - "Dear Sir, Panchananaji, are you familiar with Nimai Pandita's aphorism that repudiates the theory of 'paramanu' or atom?"

Brajanatha's immediate response shot out like a lion's - "Who is this Nimai Pandita? Are you referring to Sri Jagannath Misra's son? You tell me about his subtle arguments".

The student replied - 'Not so long ago, herein Navadvipa, an extraordinary personality called Nimai Pandita had composed a myriad novel aphorisms of logic and rhetoric. He succeeded in unsettling the famous Kanabhatta Siromani with them. Nimai Pandita ruled the roost among the stalwart scholars as their undisputed lord in logic, rhetoric, philosophy etc. In spite of such a commendable command over the subject we were contemptuous of it. In fact he was derisive of the entire material existence. He had embraced the renounced order of mendicant and had roamed far and wide propagating the holy name of God, Hari. The present day vaishnavas worship him as the supreme Brahman, Absolute personality of Godhead, Lord Sri Gaura Hari, and chant his mantra. Sri Panchananaji, kindly go through his compositions of aphorisms and see what you think of them".

Impressed and his curiosity aroused by hearing unreserved eulogy of Nimai Pandita's aphorisms, Brajanatha explored into it and very soon came up with a few of Nimai Pandita's aphorisms from different scholarly sources. Human nature is such that whatever subject a person is interested in and has respect for, he automatically venerates the pre-eminent pedagogues of those subjects. Of course, if those teachers happen to be living, for a variety of reasons, they fail to command sufficient regard. Whereas late, past preceptor's works are held in high esteem. Thus it was only natural for Brajanath to develop deep deference for Nimai Pandita's aphorisms after he had delved into them.

Brajanath experienced Nimai Pandita's absence acutely. He thus expressed. "Nimai Pandita! If only I had been there when you were present I could have perhaps gained a lot of knowledge from you. Dear Nimai Pandita! Kindly enthrone yourself in my heart. Truly you must be the Absolute Supreme Brahman, otherwise could such extraordinary rhetorical aphorisms be thought out by your intellect? Your

are indeed the 'golden avatara', Lord Gaura Hari; your philosophy and profound insight has given vision to persons blinded by ignorance. Ignorance is darkness, blackness; your brilliant golden hue as Lord Gauranga or Gaura has dissipated it. You are the supreme lord Hari because you are able to steal (haran) everyone's heart. In truth I have lost my heart to your wonderful aphorisms".

In this manner Brajanatha's feelings were gathering momentum within his heart. At times he was afflicted of temporary insanity due to this and he carried out aloud - " Hey Nimai Pandita! O Gaura Hari! Please be merciful to me. When will I be capable of composing aphorisms such as your. With a little grace from you, I am sure to make big strides in my nyaya philosophy studies and gain immense power".

Brajanatha pondered over in his mind that those who worship lord Gaura Hari were perhaps attracted to him because of his mastery over nyaya philosophy, exactly as he was. It would be interesting to know what books on nyaya were available with his followers. Brajanatha now desired to seek the company of lord Gauranga's disciples.

Repeated utterances of the supreme lord's transcendental name like 'Nimai Pandita', 'Gaura Hari' embroidered with the yearning to associate with his devotees were acts of immense sukrti, or piety which were ready to bear immediate fruits. One afternoon when he sat down for his lunch he asked his Grandmother who was serving him his meal - "Grandmother, have you seen Gaura Hari?" On hearing lord Gauranga's name her mind reeled back to her early life.

She replied - 'Ah yes! Will I ever again behold that exquisite golden form? Who can continue to live in family life once having seen that divine figure? When he performed congregational chanting of the holy name here in Navadvipa the birds, beasts, free - everyone stood in shinned silence. Everytime I remember his mood while singing teams well up and overwhelm me".

Brajanatha pressed on - "Granny, do you know any stories about him?"

Grandmother, now full of enthusiasm, said - "Indeed I do ! When-ever Nimai visited his maternal uncle's house with his mother, Saci Ma, the elderly ladies of our family would cook spinach for him because he was very fond of any variety of spinach. He always expressed his appreciation with praises for the good taste."

Just then, Brajanatha's mother appeared from the kitchen and served steaming spinach on his plate. Taking note of the coincidence, Brajanatha said - 'Here again is the famous Nyaya philosopher, Nimai Pandita's beloved spinach preparation'. He then ate it with extra relish.

Brajanatha, who was so far oblivious of man's spiritual evolution towards perfection, became increasingly attached in various ways to Nimai Pandita encouraged on, on the basis of nyaya philosophy. He grew infatuated with Nimai, any mention of his name exalted him. If a beggar came soliciting in Nimai's name

chanting 'Jai Sacinandama!' Brajanatha gave him added attention and alrms. Occasionally he visited the vaisnava babajis of Mayapur to hear more about Nimai Pandita and showed keen interest especially in his scholastic conquests.

Several months went by in this manner, a transformation was positively noticeable in Brajanathas prior to this change his fancy was captured by anything to do with Nimai Pandita but only in connection with nyaya. Now everything relating to Nimai Pandi-ta arrested his attention and honed his affection for him. Braja-natha was loosing interest in nyaya. The 'nyay pholosopher Nimai' personality figure in his heart was exorcised and 'bhakta Nimai', or the pure devotee Nimai image replaced it. The sould of the 'khola drum'and the cymbal exhilarated him and his heart song and danced to thei ecstatic rhythm. He respectfully offered obei-sances in his mind on seeing pure vaisnava devotees. He wor-shipped Nivadvipa as the revered land of lord Gauranga's birth.

Nrajanath had become gentle and devoted. His rival panditas saw that he had calmed down to the extent that they would nolonger be nettled nby the fierce arrows of thetoretical and semantic urgu-ments from him. The tantric brahmana silently thought his wor-shipable deity for intervening and to incapacitate Brajanatha, - now he was safe once more.

One day Brajanatha sat in solitute and soliloquised - 'If a great nyaya philosopher of the stature of Nimai Pandita could turn his back on nyaya and take up 'bhakli', or devotional service then why can we not do the same? My entire life I was caught in the vortee of nyaya sophism and never cared for God or devotional service, hence was a stronger to spiritual life and lord Gauran-ga's name. 'Nyaya' took complete control of my life, so much so that it stole my eating, sleeping, thinking etc. But now things have reverred themselfe, I have forgotten about 'nyaya' and only think of Gauranga.

When I see the vaisnavas dancing my mind is enchanted by it. Yet, how can I forget that I am the forch bearer of a prominent vedic brahmana family, which is aristocratic and well respected. I admire the vaisnavas demeanour but I think I should not join them. Best is, for me to worship lord Gauranga in the quite of my heart. The countenances of the vaisnavas living in Khola-bhanga-danga in Mayapura and Vairagi-danga exhilarates me, and especial-ly Sri Raghunathadasa Babaji has a maguetic effect on me. I feel like staying with him permanently and become his pupil to study the devotional scriptures.

The Vedas declare : (Br.Ar. 4/5/6)

" atmava are drastavuahsrotavyu mantavya nididhyasitavyah"

O maitreyi ! always hear baout, think about, meditate on and see objects related to the supreme personality of Godhead, supersonl lord Hari.

In this verse, the word ' mautavyh', when analaysed on the basis of myaya philosophy advicies the pursuit of brahman realisation ; but the word 'srotavyah' implies at striving for a goal that goes beyond it. A clear signaling of the limitation of brahman reali-sation. I have spent too long in contentions and empirical speculations and how I am fined of it, I went to simply take shelter of lord Gaura Hari's

lotus feet. Without delay I must go and meet sri Raghunatna dasa babaji,

The setting sun ignited the western sky in orange hues. A south-erly breeze stirred up the tired foliage. Flocks of birds flew in formation, homeward bound. A few stars became gradually visible through the evening nebula. At this moment the vaisnavas of Srivasa - angana temple in Mayapura started the evening arati and Kirtana. Brajanatha arrived at the temple and went directly to the Kholabhangadanga area within the temple complex and sat on the circular raised platform that surrounded the bakula tree. The evening kirtana soothed his heart.

At the end of the kirtana and arati the vaisnavas began to assemble under the bakula tree coming in twos and threes. The elderly Raghunatha dasa Babaji walked slowly over to the bakula tree uttering aloud 'glory to Sacinandana, glory to Nityananda Prabhu, to Srila Rupa and Srila Sanatana, all glory to Dasa Gosvami Prabhu'. As he approached the platform and sat down all the vaisnavas offered him obeisances. Brajanatha could not resist the urge and so he also, like the others, prostrated himself in reverence before the aged vaisnava.

Babaji looked down at Brajanatha's expressive face and embraced him and made him sit near him. He asked Brajanatha - "Who are you, my son?"

Brajanatha replied - "I am a seeker of true knowledge, I desire to learn from you".

A vaisnava sitting close to them knew about Brajanatha. He spoke up saying - "he is Brajanatha Nyayapanchana. He is the most learned pandita of nyaya in Navadvipa. Of late he has developed some faith in sacinandana, Gaura Hari".

The aged Raghunatha dasa Babaji turned to Brajanatha and said with humility - 'You are a learned pandita, and I am a poor wretched fool; you are a resident of this holiest of land, the birthplace of my beloved lord sacinandana. We are dependent on your mercy. What instruction and knowledge can I impart to you? Kindly be gracious and teach us about your lord Gauranga and in this way satiate our parched hearts yearning for the lecture of Gaura Hari's partines".

The other vaisnavas began to disperse and went about their own callings. Only Raghunathadasa Babaji and Brajanatha remained, seated under the Bakula tree. Brajanatha said - "respected holiness Babaji, by birth we are brahmanas and on top of it we are proud of our pedantry. High birth, education etc has made us insolent and so we look down upon the world with snobbish disdain. We do not know how to respect spiritual preceptors and saintly persons. It is beyond me how and by what good fortune I have learned to admire and respect your activities and characteristics. I have a few queries, kindly answer them. I have not come to challenge, but to submit and become enlightened.

So please tell me what is sadhya-sadhana for jiva, or the means and the goal for the living entity? As a student of nyaya philosophy my conclusion after scrutinizing the scriptures was that jiva is constitutionally eternally different from the supreme lord. The supreme controller's mercy is the sole cause of jiva's attuning

final liberation. The means employed to obtain the lord's mercy is sadhana. The ultimate reward or goal realised through or sadhana, the means, is called sadhya. I have on numerous occasions questioned the nyaya scriptures bluntly. So kindly communicate to me your understanding of this concept".

Sri Raghunatha dasa Babaji was a noble-minded and generous saint. He had lived a long time in Sri Radha-kunda as a pupil of the illustrious Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. Every afternoon he was in the small audience listernign to the transcendental pastimes of lord Gauranga as narrated by Dasa Gosvami himself. Somethimes, it happened that while discussing an esoteric point Raghunatha dasa Babaji and Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami would be impeded by doubts, they would then go to Srila Dasa Gosvami to clarify it. Around this time in Gaura-mandala, Raghunatha dasa Babaji was indeed the most learned scholar. The rectarean discussions between him and Premadasa Babaji of Godruma on the topic of divine love is well know.

Brajanatha's question evoked immediate response in Babaji Mahara-ja and with great pleasure he began to speak - "my dear Sri Nyayapancanana, any person who enquires about Sadhana and Sadhya after studying the nyaya treatise is truly a fortunate soul. Because the prime purpose of nyaya scriptures is to analyse and compile equitable facts. Whereas those who study nyaya philosophy to become pugilistic argumentators have unfortunately succeeded in acquiring its negative result. Their efforts are misapplied and their lives are an exercise in futility.

The truth which is realised through sadhana, or proper applica-tion is in fact sadhya - the ultimate goal. Concomitantly, the method pressed into use for attaining sadhya, or the ultimate truth is sadhana. The jiva soul, trapped by maya, sees the sadhya object differently - each according to his proclivity and degree of realisation. But factually sadhya is one, not numerous. However, due to the variations the conditioned jivas predilection and experience sadhya has been divided into three types: bhakti (sense enjoyment), mukti (salvation) and bhakti (devotional service).

Persons who are engrossed in materialistic activities and are solely yearning for carnal pleasures consider bhakti as their Sadhya, or life's goal. The Veda's scriptures are compared to touchstone gems which fulfil all desires: with whatever motive man turns to the scriptures, he has his wants satisfied by receiving its sanction. The section known as Karma-kanda of the Veda promulgates 'bhukti' as the sadhya for that level of materialistic person. The entire gamut of physical pleasures in againable and tabarnercle of his body, especially craves for the delights of the flesh. In fact, the material creation came into existence to facilitate man enjoy to senses.

The sensual enjoyments a man experience from birth till death is known as aihika-suktra, or worldly pleasures. After death, with the change of situation, the enjoyment that comes his way is called amutrika-sukha. Amutrika sukha is of many kind : in the heavenly abodes of lord Indra one sees the dancing of apsaras,

the beautiful courtesans; drinks a note the nectar-drink of immortality; smells the fragrances of the celestial folower garden of Nandana-kanana; beholds the splendour of Indrapuri palace and its landscapes; listening to the scintillating singing and music of the gandharavas; cohabiting with the celestial damsels called vidyadhari and so on are the pleasures of Indra's paradise.

Descriptions of sensual delights in higher planetary systems like Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka and Brahmanaloka are very scanty. On earth, or bhurloka sense enjoyment is on an extremely gross level. The higher one ascends to the different celestial realms the carnal pleasures and their objects become increasingly subtle. That is the only distinction, but factually all varieties of voluptuousness in among of the planets are amply hedonistic. None of these planets can offer transcendental bliss, but only a shadow of eternal happiness that is experienced in the mental state by the subtle body as an ephemeral exultation. Thus these mental and physical forms of titillations comprise 'bhukti'.

Caught in the intricate maze of karuric reactions the activities of a person trying to enjoy the pleasures of the flesh is his means or sadhana to fulfil his wishes. The Vedas state :

"svarga-kamo' svamedham yajets" (Yajur 2/5/5)

person desirous of enjoying the hedonistic mores of the heavenly planets must perform asvamedha-sacrifice.

There are many other activities recommended in the scriptures that cater to man's carnal cravings such as : agnistoma visvade-va-bali, istapurta, darsa-purnamasi etc. For the person with the enjoying spirit sense gratification is his sadhya, or goal. However, there is a smaller population who feel plagued and punished by the nurseries of material existence. They consider the fourteen planetary systems that comprise material creation and is the arena for sensual pleasures, as insignificant; hence they desire to break free from it. In their opinion liberation, or mukti alone is the sadhya. 'Bhukhi', to them, is enthrallment. They say that bhukti sadhan is for them that are incapable of curbing the hedonistic proclivity, and that they should seek solace and appearance in karma-kanda scripture. But principle scriptures like the Bhagavad Gita says :

"te tam bhuktva svarga-lokam visalam ksine punye martya-lokam visanti etc." (BG 9/21)

When they have thus enjoyed heavenly sense pleasure, they return to this mortal planet again.

It is unequivocally stated in this verse that 'bhukti', or sense pleasure are not permanent - it is transitory. That which is destined to be depleted is indeed mundane and not spiritual. Man's sadhana, or real responsibility is his pursuit of the permanent. Mukti, or liberation is eternal, hence for the salvationist it is unquestionably man's sadhya or ultimate perfection. Towards achieving this end

the four sadhanas, or the means like vairagya, or renunciation which are enumerated is the real sadha-na. The jnana-kannda section of the veda has thus postulated the sadhya-sadhana theory in the following manner.

The touchstone-gem like veda provides appropriate arrangements and the platform for activities for the jiva, suitable to his level of consciousness. If after attaining liberation, they say, jiva still maintains his identity and existence then mukti cannot be the ultimate sadhya, or goad. For this reason the jnana-kanda followers extend the limits of liberation only till nirvana, or merging into brahman. The truth is that jiva is eternal, so such an option as nirvana is impossible for him. The svetassvatara Upanisad states :

"nityo nityanam cetanas-cetananam" (Sv.Up 6/13)

He, the supreme Brahman is eternal among all eternal beings and he is the supreme conscious being among all conscious beings.

Vedic verses, such as these firmly confirm jiva's eternity. An eternal being cannot forgo his identity, nor terminate his existence as in nirvana. Those who subscribe to the opinion that even after liberation jiva very much maintains his identity and existence or satta, reject the proposition that 'bhukti' and or 'mu-kti' are the ultimate sadhya. Both these sadhya, or goals are false.

Man's every activity consists of among other ingredients, both sadhya and sadhana. Whatever working goals he sets himself to do is sadhya and the means employed to achieve it is sadhana. A little pondering over this matter will show that the concepts of sadhya and sadhana are interconnected like a chain. What at this moment is sadhya, or goal later becomes the sadhana or means for achieving the next successive goal. At the end of this chain the last link is sadhya and this ultimate sadhya has never to proceed or lead to another sadhana. And beyond this systematic arrangement of links joined together to form a chain reaction known as the sadhya and sadhana thesis, lies the scientific system of devotional service, or bhakti.

Bhakti, therefore, is the highest and the absolute sadhya, because bhakti is jiva's original, constitutional and eternal predilection. Man's every action is each a link in the chain of Sadhya and sadhana law. Many of these links together in the chain gradually form a chapter of that of Karma, or fruitive work. This is followed by another set of links bonded in succession to compose the jnana chapter, or the empirical knowledge chapter. And the bhakti chapter begins at the termination of jnana chapter.

The chapter of karma posits that bhaktu is the prime purpose of life; jnana chapter upholds mukti; bhakti postulates prema-bhakti, or loving devotional service to the supreme personality of Godhead. After a thorough investigation into what is jiva's perfected state of being the irrefutable conclusion drawn is that bhakti is both sadhya and sadhana. In the case of Karma and Jnana, sadhya and sadhana are irrelevant, meaning it acquires a suspended, in between status; not a permanent or

ultimate concept.

Brajanatha: Why is bhakti not accorded the pinnacle of position as a spiritual science in the entire devic auralogy as is apparent from these famous and pre-eminent aphorisms of the scrutis and upanisads :-

"kena kam pasyeta" (Brh.Ar. 4/5/15 and 2/4/24)

Who will perceive whom with the help of what?

"aham brahmasmi" (Brh.Ar. 1/4/10)

I am jiva soul, am of the same nature as brahman.

"prajnanam brahman" (Ait.Up 1/5/3)

Prajna, or esoteric knowledge (Premabhakti or divine love) is transcendental, steeped in the supreme, mundane nature of brahman.

"tattvamasi svetaketo" (Chand. Up 6/8/7)

O Svetaketa, you belong to him.

Raghunatha dasa Babaji: I already explained earlier that there are different sadhya, or goal corresponding to the varieties of human predisposition. As long as the yearning for bhukti stays alive in a person, he disacknowledges the very existence of mukti. For such persons there sufficient supportive statements in scriptures like this one:

"aksayyam ha vai caturmasya-yajinah (Apastamba srouta sutra 2/1/1)

A person desiring to be elevated to the paradise of assaya must properly observe catur-masya vows.

Does this then imply that the desire for 'mukti' is reprehensible? Simply because the Karmis, of fruitive workers are unable to find any clue of 'mukti' in the vedas should it be concluded that the vedas are silent about mukti? A few karmis, or fruitive worker sages have advised the willing and capable to take up 'karma' and the to inept to cultivate vairagya, or renunciation. These misinstructions were comprised to assist the reoplytes develop commitment towards responsibilities of each according to his level of consciousness.

It is unproductive for the jiva if he shies from his level of consciousness. By performing duties and activities in consonance with his level he gradually and comfortably ascends to the next higher consciousness. Thus the vedas do not repudiate these instructions of arrangement because criticism will confuse the people and coerce them into degradation. everyone who has attained perfection went through the discipline of this gradual process of elevation

The karma-kanda section copiously praises karma and its performance, but repains from admitting to the superiority of knowledge of mukti over karma. In the jnana-kanda chapter of the vedas knowledge of mukti has been placed on a high pedestal as described by the verses quoted above. Therefore jnana is superior to karma and likewise bhakti outranks jnana. Statements like 'tattvam asi', 'aham brahmasmi' etc. enjoin brahman liberation or nirvana, urging the liberation seeker to fully pledge himself to pursue nirvana. In this there is merit and nothing negative; yet this does not make nirvana the ultimate perfection. The vedic conclusion asserts that bhakti, or devotional service is the sadhana and premabhakti, or love of Godhead, is the highest sadhya.

Braj: Is it possible that the pre-eminent aphorisms of the vedas will present the false sadhya and sadhana concept?

Rd.B: Those vedic aphorisms you term as pre-eminent, are they in truth super excellent and are they preponderate over other dedic testimonies? No - where is such an opinion upheld? The preceptors of the path of jnana have named these statements as mahavakya, or great sayings, or pre-eminent aphorisms etc., for the sole purpose of lending weight and prominence to their philosophy. Factually the 'pranava', or the seed-sound vibration 'om' is mahavakya, all the rest are provincial.

It would not be a mistake to say that every statement of the Vedas is a mahavakya. But to discriminate and designate one Vedic aphorism as a mahavakya, or profound saying and the other as samanya-vakya, or as unimportant is mental speculation. This show of bigoted provincialism is an offence against the Vedas. The Vedas praise the Karma-Kanda, mukti and lengthily describes endearingly many such diluted version of the sadhya and sadhana concept. When the final analysis is drawn up, all arbitrations are harmonised in the ultimate conclusion. The Vedas isn't considered to be a mother cow and lord krsna, son of Nanda Maharaja, as the milkman milks her; the following statement made by him as an absolute conclusion is in this manner.

"tapasvibyo' dhiko yogi jnanibhyo' pi mato' dhikah karmibhyas cadhiko yogi tasmad yogi bhavarjuna yoginam api sarvesam mad-gatenantaratmana sraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa me yuktatama matah (B.G. 6/46-47)

A yogi is greater than the ascetic, greater than the empiricist and greater than the fruitive worker. Therefore, O Arjuna, in all circumstances be a yogi.

And of all yogis, he who always abodes 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.

The Svetasvatara Upanisad declares:

"yasya deve para bhaktir yatha deve tatha gurau tasyaite kathita hy arthah prakasante mahatmanah (Svet. 6/23)

Only unto those great great souls who have implicit faith in both the lord and the spiritual master are all the imports of the vedic knowledge automatically revealed.

In Gopala-tapani

"bhaktirasya bhajanam tadihamutropadhinairasyenamusmin manasah kalpanam"

Devotional service to the supreme lord Govinda is real bhajana. By curbing the desire for sense enjoyment in this life, as well as the next and by absorbing the consciousness purely in krsna, the supreme Brahman, with love, is in fact, devotional service, which is unmotivated, complete surrendered.

Elsewhere it says:

"atmanam eva priyam-upasita" (Br. 1/4/8)

One must worship the 'atma' (the supreme atma, personality of Godhead, knowing him to be someone very near and dear.

In the Brhad Arnyaka: (Br.A. 4/5/6)

"atma va are drastavyah srotavyo mantavyo nididhyasitavyah" (Br.A. 4/5/6)

O Maitreyi! Always hear and think about, meditate up and see objects related to the supreme personality of Godhead, supersound lord Hari.

Any per who scrutinises these Vedic postulations will automati-cally draw the obvious conclusion: the path of bhaloti is the real sadhana.

Br. The karmakanada recommends that the practitioner worship with faith the supreme controller, Rewarder of results of actions. In jnan-kanda, there are four methods of sadhana of which one in-cludes 'bhakti' that strives at satisfying lord Hari, the supreme Godhead - 'haritosana'. If 'bhakti' aims at perpetuating 'bhukti (sense gratification) and mukti (salvation) then how does it uphold its claim of being the goad, or sadhya? It is natural to assume that bhakti, first acting as the sadhana, or means, offers bhukti and mukti, and thereafter looses its utility and is hence abandoned; kindly shed light on this topic.

R.B. It is absolutely correct that in the Karma Kanda method 'bhakti' is used as a means to obtain fruitive results and in jnana-kanda, 'bhakti' offers mukti. One fact is clearly under-stood that no goals or results can be achieved if the supreme lord is not satisfied. The lord is the fountainhead of all ener-gies. Whatever be the amount of energy that is found in jiva or in matter, it is merely a fractional display of the supreme lord's potency.

Karma, nor jnana is able to satisfy the supreme lord. But applied as a part of the bhakti process, they offer specific results. The paths of karma and jnan can

harbor a mere hint of bhakti, or bhakti-abhasa; this bhakti-abhasa is not suddha-bhakti, or pure devotion, but its faint presence only which delivers fruitive results. Bhakti-abhasa is of two varieties: Suddha-bhakti-abhasa (a hint of pure devotion) and viddha-bhakti-abhasa (distorted hint of devotion). We will discuss Suddha-bhakti-abhasa later.

Viddha-bhakti-abhasa is further subdivided into three sections: karma-viddha-bhakti-abhasa (hint of devotion distorted by fruitive action), jnana-viddha-bhakti-abhasa (hint of devotion distorted by empirical knowledge) and jnana-karma-viddha-bhakti-abhasa (hint of devotion distorted by both empirical knowledge and fruitive action). A yajna, or fire sacrifice, during which invocations like, - "O Lord Indra! O Sun God! Kindly grant me the results of this yajna" and so on, are bhakti-abhasa performances, which constitute karma-viddha-bhakti-abhasa. Some spiritual authorities have termed this as karma-misra-bhakti (devotion mixed with fruitive desire); still others have called it aropa-siddha-bhakti (perfection through artificial interpolation of devotion).

Outbursts in an emotional state, like: "O Jadunandana (Krsna)! I turn to you, driven by fears of the fierce material existence. I am constantly chanting your holy names 'Ware Krsna'; kindly deliver me, give me mukti, or liberation", or : "O supreme controller, you are the Brahman, I have fallen into this deep well of illusion or maya, pray pick me up and allow me to merge with you"; are examples of jnana-viddha-bhakti-abhasa. The spiritual authorities have termed this as jnana-misra-bhakti (devotion mixed with empirical knowledge) and it is also another aropa-siddha-bhakti.

All such devotional attitudes are very distinct from pure devotional service, or suddha-bhakti. The bhakti described by these words of the Gita emanated from the mouth of the supreme lord is pure devotion or suddha-bhakti: " Sraddhavan bhajate yo mam" - 'he who worships Me with great faith and renders transcendental loving service unto Me' This suddha bhakti is our sadhana, or means to achieve perfection and in the perfected stage pure devotion is transformed to prema, or love of Godhead. The two paths of Karma and jnana described (sense gratification) and mukti (salvation) respectively. They do not constitute the means that leads jiva to his highest eternal perfection".

At this point in the question-answer session Brajanathee seemed to have run out of any further queries. He thought to himself, that it was more beneficial for him to cogitate on these profound and subtle subjects rather than think up tricky arguments of rhetorics. Especially that Babaji Maharaj was so proficient on these topics, serious spiritual searchings will be properly dealt with and knowledge to be gained. It was late in the night and he should be returning home. Aloud he said - "Respected Babaji Maharaja, I have learnt such wonderful truths from you today. I would very much like to visit you time and time and receive instructions and knowledge from you. You are a vastly learned scholar, so please be compassionate toward me. I have just one more question, kindly tell me the answer, and then I will leave. - Has Lord Gauranga, compiled his instructions in any book? I would like to procure a copy".

R.B. Lor caintanya Mahaprabhu has not personally penned down any of his instructions. His followers, however, have written volumes on his order. The lord has left behind eight verses, known as the 'siksastaka', as a token for the living entities. The devotees cherish them as a string of priceless gems. They contain all his instructions - in a capsuled, recondite state. The advanced devotees have probed deep into these esoteric truths and mined out ten original truths. Enclosed, in these ten truths are the fine analyses of Sambandha - abhidheya-prayojana (the philosophy of eternal relationships, the most direct method of attaining it and ascertaining the prime necessity of life) which contains within it the philosophy of sadhya and sadhana in the form of aphorisms. It is best for you to first comprehend these truths".

Brajanatha replied - "As you desire, Tomorrow night I will come and learn from you the ten truths, known as dasa-mula-siksa. You are now my siksa-guru, or instructing spiritual master, I offer my prostrated obeisances to you".

Babaji Maharaja firmly embraced Brajanatha and said - "my dear son, you have sanctified the brahmana class, come tomorrow and bring joy to my heart".

Chapter 13

Eternal Religion and Sambandh, Abhidheya and Prayojana (Part I)

Brajanatha arrived next evening and sat down on the platform below the bakula tree facing the Srivasa Angana temple. The eldering Babaji Maharaja has developed a paternal affection for Brajanatha. He was, in fact, waiting for Brajanatha to arrive, and several times his thoughts strayed towards the outside in expectancy. When he heard Brajanatha come, he quickly came out and greeted Brajanatha with an affectionate hug. He steered Brajanatha to his personal bhajana-kutira (meditation shack) off on to the side of the courtyard, surrounded by jasmine trees and invited him to sit down. Brajanatha reached down and touched Babaji's feet and took the footdust and smeared it on his head; he felt greatly elated. Submissively he said - "Respected Babaji, kindly instruct me on the dasa-mula tenets, which capsule the essence of Lord Nimai Caitanya's teachings".

The religious patriarch's heart exulted hearing the younger man's words that revealed his profound quest. He replied "my son, I will impart to you the philosophy of dasa-mula you are a scholar, ponder over the philosophy contained in the following verse and understand its relevance :-

"amnyah praha tattvam harim-ihā paramam sarva-saktim rasabdhim tad-bhinna-amsa-amsa-ca jivan prakrti-kavalitan tad-vimuktamsa-ca bhavat bhedabhedā-prakasam sakalam-api hareh sadhanam suddh-bhaktim sadhyam tat-pritam-eva-ity-upadisati janan gaurachandrah svayam sah"

"The supreme personality of Godhead, lord Gaurachandra, has personally given the ten doctives of dasa-mula to the faithful jiva. The first of these is pramana-tattva (principle of evi-dence) and the other nine are pramana-tattva(principle of the knowable) principles which can be proven or where praman can be applied is known as prameya. And the principles by which the 'prameya' can be authoritatively substantiated is known as pramana". This verse describes the ten doctrines in precis.

The forthcoming verse cited below is considered as the first verse of the dasa-mula doctrines. The next seven verses (second to the eighth) following it, delineates on the sambandha tattva, or the principle of eternal relationship between God. His multi-faceted energies and jiva. The ninth verse discusses the abhidheya-tattva, or the principle of absolute compulsory spiritual duties. The tenth and final verse establishes the prayojana-tattva, or the principle of indispensable exigency.

The meaning of the following ten verses in short is: the knowledge of the vedas received in guru-parampara system (disciplic succession) is amnaya, or most authoritatively exhaustive. The vedas smrti scriptures like srimad bhagavatam, the directly perceivable truths propounded in these scriptures are pramana, or evidences. These evidences establish the following: Lord Hari is the supreme Absolute Truth. He is omnipotent, He is the shoreless ocean of unlimited relations; both the liberated and conditioned spirit souls comprise His separated energy; the conditioned jiva is infected by maya and the liberated jiva is free from maya; matter and spirit, every-thing is a manifestation of Lord Hari's inconceivable potency which is simultaneously same and different; bhakti is the only means, or sadhana and Love of Godhead, Krsna is the singular goal, or Sadhya".

Attentively hearing these explanations, Brajanatha commented - "respected Babaji, I do not have any questions at this point. After I have listened to the elaborations on the first verse I will present before you whatever requires clarification".

Babaji Maharaja replied - "that is a good idea. Now hear the first verse:

"svatah-siddho vedo hari-dayita vedhah-prabhrtitah pramanam satpraptam pramiti visayayan tannava-vidhan tatha pratyaksadi-pramiti-sahitam sadhayati nah na yuktistarkakha pravisati tatha sakti-rahita (Dasa-mula 1)

Means: the vedas which lord brahma and his disciplic succession received by supreme lord Hari's mercy is self-perfected. This absolutely authoritative and exhaustive knowledge with the help of its emulative and directly perceivable truths establish the nine principles of prameya-tattva. Debatable logic and aphorisms are incapable of addressing the inconceivable spiritual subject matter.

Brajanatha: Is there any proof in the vedas of a disciplic chain starting from lord Brahma?

Babaji: Yes, there is proof. Munduka Upanisada states:

"brahma devanam prathamah sambabhuva visvasya karta bhuvanasya gopta sa
brahma-vidyam sarva-vidya-pratistham atharvaya jyestha-putraya praha"
(M.Up.1/1/1)

Lord Brahma, the creator and protector of this universe, appeared prior to any other creature (from the lotus sprouting out of the supreme lord's navel). He initiated his eldest son Atharva in the science of the Absolute Truth, known as brahma-vidya, - it is the repository of all branches of knowledge.

In the same text again we find:

"yenaksaram purusam veda satyam provaca tam tattvato brahma-vidya"

The spiritual science, or brahma-vidya (knowledge coupled with loving devotion to the supreme lord), which reveals the infallible supreme truth as directly perceivable, was instructed to disciples by a bonafide spiritual master well-versed in the philosophy of Krsna consciousness.

Brajanatha : Is there any evidence anywhere that the rsis have extracted the essence from the vedas and compiled it in the smrti scriptures?

R.B. The crest jewel of all scriptures - srimad Bhagavatam states:

"katena nasta pralaye vaniyam veda-samjnita mayadan brahmane prokta dharamo
yasyam madatmakah." "tena prokta ca putraya manave purvajaya sa." etc. (SB
11/14/3-4)

The supreme lord said - O Udhava! those instructions that propound the eternal religion, which instill attachment to Me, is compiled in the vedas. Due to the ravages of time (pralaya) they seem to be lost; I again instruct Brahma at the beginning of creation with this same knowledge of the vedas.

Lord Brahma instructed his son Manu, on the doctrines of the veda. Later Manu passed on this knowledge to Bhrgu and the others of the group of seven rsis, known as the sapta-rsis.

Br.: What was the reason of starting a disciples succession?

RB: There are many in this world who are misled into the perverted path of mayavadi philosophy. If a disciples succession or a society of devotees, who are uncorrupted by the scourge of mayavadi views, is not existing then sat-sanga, or saint association, will be a rarity. The Padma-Purna reiterates :

"sampradaya-vihina ye mantraste viphalata matah sri-brahma-rudra-sanaka
vaisnavah kritipavanah"

Diksa-mantra received from acaryas coming in the line of bonafide disciplie succession has full spiritual potency, others are impotent and cannot given any spiritual benefit. There are four bonafide sampradayas: Sri (Ramanuja), brahma (madhva), rudra (Visnu Swami) and catuhsana, or sanka and others (Nimbarka). These four vaisnava-sampradayas are the liberators of this world.

Of these, the brahma-sampradaya is the oldest. This unbroken chain of successive spritual receptors still continues, to date. The full proof process of guru-parampara sampradaya, or the spiritual system of guru and disciple succession, ensures that the knowledge and words of all the poime scriptures of Yore, such as the Vedas vedangan and vedanta remain complete and as it is, without interpolation or change. Hence all the vedic mantras contained in the literatures of bonafide sampradayas are undou-bledly authentic. The system of sampradaya is imperative. Since time immemorial this system of sampradaya has remained a dynamic force among the saintly souls.

Br. Is the sampradaya chain completely linked - an unbroken live of acaryas ?

RB Names of the most prominent acaryas who appeared at intervals have been recorded in an authoratative list.

Br. I am very keen to hear the names of acaryas in Lord Brahma's sampradaya.

RB : Then listen :

"paravyamesvarasyasicchisyo brayhma jagat-patih tasya sisys narado'bhud-vyatasastyapa sisyatam suko vyasasya sisyatvam prapto jnanavarodhanat vyasallabdha-krsnadikso madhvacarya mahayasah tasya sisyo narahariustacchisyo madhavo dvijah aksobhyostasya sisyo'bhuttacchisyo jayatirthakah tasya sisys jnanasindhustasya sisyo mahanidhih vidyanidhistasya sisyo rajendrastasya sevakah jayadharma munistasya sisyo yadgana-madhyotah srimadvisnupuri yastu 'bhaktiratnavali' krtih jayadharmasya sisyo' bhud brahman-yah purusottamah vyasatirthastasya sisyo yascakre'visnu-samhitam' srimallaksmipatistasya sisyo bhakti-rasasrayah tasya sisyo madha-vendro yaddharmas' yam pravarttitah".

Lord of the spiritual planets of vaikuntha, the supreme Godnead. Narayamas disciple was Brahma, the creator of this world. His disciple was Narada an Vyasadeva accepted initiation to become Narada's disciple. To arrest the propagation of (empirical) knowledge Sukadeva Gosvami become Vyasadeva's disciple. The illustrious Madhracarya took initiation from Vyasadeva in the science of Krsna consciousness. Narahari was Madhvacerya's disci-ple and Madhava Vipra Narahari's disciple. Aksobhya become Madha-va Vipra's disciple. Aksobhya's disciple was Jayatirtha. Jayatir-tha's disciple was Jnansindhu and his disciple was Mahanidhi whose devotee disciple was Rajendra. Jayadharma Muni became Rajhendra's disciple. Among his many followers Visnu Puri accept-ed discipleship of Jayadharma Muni. Visnu Puri wrote the famous book 'Bhakti-ratnavali'. Jayadharmas disciple was Purusottama whose disciple was Vyasatirtha. Vyasatirtha composed the teatise known as 'Visnu-samhitam'. His disciple Laksmipati was an

embodi-ment of devotional rasa. Madhavendra Puri was his disciple. The science of pure devotional service was propagated by Srila Madha-vendra Puri.

Br. : In the first dasa-mula sloka., the veda is declared as the only pramana, or evidence. Pratyaksa-pramana, or evidence from direct perception has been relegated to be a subordinate pramana of the veda. However, in the philosophical schools of nyaya (rhetorics), snkhya (empiries) etc. there are a lrger number of pramanas. Even the followers of puranas have enumerated atleast eight pramanas: pratyaksa (direct), anumana (inference), upamana (anology), sabda (sound), aitihya (tradition), anupaladhi (imper-ceivable), arthapatti (derivative), and sambhava (Probability). Why are there conflictive views on this point? And if pratyaksa and anumana are not acknowledged as principal pramanas how is knowledge to be communicated and perceived? Kindly make me under-stand this point.

RB: Pratyaksa etc. are sentient pramanas, entirely dependent on sense perceptions. Jiva's senses are imperfect due to four innate short-comings: 'bhrama' (illusion), pramada (madness, inadver-tance) vipralipsa (cheating propensity) and and karanapataba (inadequate senses). Therefore how can the knowledgte or infomation communicated through these imprefect senses be accurate and authntic ? Whereas the grcat spritual preceptors and wise sages steeped in deep meditation have received the absolutely perfect knowledge in the form of the vedas reveated to them by the omnip-olent and fully independent supreme Godhead, who personally appeared in their hearts. Hence this knowledge can be accepted, without consternation, as flawless.

Br : Please explain to me indetail the four human failinqs you just mentioned.

RB : Jivas inadequate sense organs have fallacious perceptions of matter when they come into contact with it; and the misconcep-tions arising from it is known as 'bhrama . For example, the eye mistakes a mirage in a desertm for water. Jiva's mundane uitelli-gence is limited by nature. When he attempts to probe the unlim-ited he arrives at erroneous conclusins, this is called pramada. For example, to enquire or try to assess the extent of the su-preme lord's dominion, with an imelligence reinde in by the mundance concepts of time and space. Vipralipsa means doubts. The senses are imperfect, and often wrong decisions are made based on informations received from them - this is the definition of Karana-pataba.

Br: Does it mean that evidences such as pratyaksa etc. do not have any relevance?

RB: In this material plane, what relates to cultivation of empir-ical knowledge, what other means, except for pratyaksa etc. can be employed, or are available? But in matters of the spiritual world, they are impotent. The vedas are the only evidence which quality on transcendental tropics. If knowledge, which is ac-quired through the evidences of pratyaksa etc., is in consonance with the perfect teachings of the vedas, then we are duty-bound to emtrace them. Therefore the self-perfected vedas, supported by the subordinate pratyaksa evidences is the only true evidence.

r. Scriptures such as Bhagavad-Gita, Srimad Bhagavatam and so on, are they not

true evidences?

RB : Bhagavada Gita was spoken directly by the supreme lord Krsna and so it may be called the Gitopanisad, hence it is also the veda. The dasa-mula doctrine was also spoken by the supreme lord - lord caitanya, that makes it the veda. The essence of the vast veda is compiled in Sri mad Bhagavatam - it is the paragon of all evidences. And as long as the teachings of the other smrti scriptures are in pursuance of the vedic tenets, they too are pramana. The tantra scriptures are of three categories: Sattvika, rajasika and tamasika (mode of goodness, passion and ignorance). Tantra treatises like the pancaratra are sattvik. Since the sanskrit root-- tan means to diffuse and the the sattvike tantras propagate the vecondite vedic truths., they are also accepted as pramana.

Br: The vedas comprise of a myriad of texts. Which of these are bonafide and which not? Kindly tell me.

RB: With the passage of time many unscrupulous men have interpolated chapters, sections and mantras into the vedas. A vedic text may be discovered somewhere, but that does not mean all parts of the book are authentic. Through the ages, whatever texts and literatures have been authenticated by the 'acaryas' (spiritual preceptors) of a bonafide sampradaya, is veda. Sections and even entire literatures which have been rejected by these authorities are unacceptable to us.

Br: which vedic literatures have been accepted by the acaryas?

RB: There are eleven upanisads which are known as sattvik: Isa, Kena, Katha, Prasana, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chandogya, Brhadaranyaka and Svetasvatara. A few Tapanis which are extremely helpful in matters of Deity worship and so on are included and they are : Gopalopanisad, Nrsimha-tapani etc. Also bonafide are corollary literatures of RK. Sam, Yajuh and Atharva Veda: they are dissertations on the Vedas, like: Brahmana, Mandala etc. All these scriptures are authorised by the acaryas and hence they are known as pramanas authenticated by the liberated souls.

Br: What is the proof that logic or rhetoric has no jurisdiction in the realm of spirituality?

RB : I place these following quotes from the scriptures, hear them:

"naisa tarkena matirapaneya" (Katha up. 1/2/9)

O Naciketa! Now you have attained the transcendental consciousness of self knowledge; do not squander it through dry empirical debates. This is an outstanding quote from the veda. Further proof:

"tarkapratisthanat" (Brahma-sutra 2/1/11)

Contentious rhetorics and empirical logic is unable to extract the correct

conclusions from the scriptures. The conclusions established through logic and argument today by one scholar is sure to be refuted and dismembered the next day. Hence logic and rhetoric have been disqualified". Here is a sampling from the Vedanta-sutra on the topic. And again :

"acintyah khalu ye bhava na tams-tarkena yojayet prakrtibhyah param yac ca tadacintyasya Laksanam" (Bhisma-Parva 5/22)

That which is beyond the material nature, or outside the parameter of sense perception is the inconceivable, absolute truth. Therefore why attempt for the impossible and endeavour to approach it through empirical arguments? This verse from the Mahabharata measures the short leach of logic.

The grand master in the science of devotion, srila Rupa Gosvanis, a stalwart in spiritual arbitration writes in this monumental devotional work Bhakti-rasamrtasindhu.

"svalpati rucireva syat bhakti-tattvabodhika yuktistu kevala naiva yadasya apratisthata" (Brs. Purva 1/32)

We learn from the sabda-pramana of the srimad Bhagavatam and other texts that ruci, or attraction and faith in the supreme lord is born out of many lifetimes of pure and pious deeds. Even a minute amount of such ruci produces the subtle sense of perception for the transcendental science of devotion. But merely by employing dry speculative intellect the philosophy of bhakti remains incomprehensible; because logic has no locus standi.

Truth cannot be irrefutably ascertained by mundane logic. An ancient adage lends support to this view:

"yatnenapadito'pyarthah kusalairanumatrbhih abhiyuktatarainra-nyairanyathaivopapadyate" (Brs. Purva 1/33)

An expert logician or rhetorician cleverly formulates a theory through argument and logic. But a more proficient logician demolishes it easily".

This may happen to you. Therefore logic and mundane rationale are untrustworthy.

Br: Respected Babaji Maharaja. I have poorly understood how the vedas are the self-perfected pramana. The logicians uselessly contest the authority of the vedic philosophy kindly tell me the second sloka of the dasa-mula doctrines.

RB: "haristvekam tattvam vidhi-siva suresa pranamitah yadevedam brahma prakrti rahitam tattvanumahan paratma tasyamso jagadanuga-to visvajanakah sa vai radha-kanto nava-jalad-kantiscidudayah (Dasa-Mula 2)

Supreme lord Hari, the one, absolute truth, is worshiped by lord Brahma, lord

Siva, Lord Indra and so on. Brahman, is impotent and impersonal - is simply the bodily effulgence of Lord Hari. The super soul, or pramatma, who is the universal controller and omnipresent through out the creation, is merely the partial expansion of lord Hari. And this supreme personality Hari is our dearest Lord, the most beloved of Srimati Radhika, the embodiment of spiritual ecstasy with a complexion that flouts the beauty of fresh monsoon clouds".

Br: The upanisads have declared that Brahman is transcendental to this material nature and is the highest absolute thouth. So kindly explain to me what arguments lord Gaurahari, caitanya put forward to establish that brahman is Lord Hari's bodily instre.

RB: Lord Hari, is the supreme personality of Godhead. The follow-ing statement from the Visnu Purana emmerates the qualifications of Divinity :

"aisvaryasya samagrasya viryasyd yasasah sriyah jnan-vairagyayoscaivd sannam bhaga itinagana" (Vis.Pu. 6/5/84)

One who possesses in absolute degree all these six divine and inconcievable excellences namely,; opulence, power, fame, beauty, knowledge and renunciation, is the supreme personality of God-head.

These six qualities are inseperable connected with the possessor, like the body and it limbs. But which is the body? And which are the limbs? Body means that which possesses the limbs; for example the tree is the body and the branches, twigs, leaves etc. are its limbs. The human physique is the body and the hands and legs are its limbs. Thus in whom these six qualities are reposed as limbs, is the body, or the possessor. The quality of beauty of the supreme Lord's transcendental form is the 'body' and all the other qualities are the limbs.

Opulence, power and fame are the three main limbs'. Knowledge and renunciation are emanaytions, like effulgences coming out from the quality of fame because they are the qualities of another quality (fame). The inpersonal concept is both knowledge and remunciation, and is identity of brahman. Therefore, brahman is the brilliance of the entire creation (and of the supreme Lord's transcendental form). Brahman being immutable, inactive, incorpo-real and impersonal, is himself not the perfect absolute source - he is just the subordinate principle of the supreme lord. The light of the fire is not the accomplished or dynamic principle source - it is solely dependent on the fire for its existances.

Br: On numerous occasions where there are descriptions of the impersonal brahman in the vedas, it is often followed by the words- 'Om Santih, Santih. Harih, Om'. This sentence declares that lord Hari is the supreme divide principle; the question is, who is Hari, reffered to here?

RB: Hari is the transcendental couple, Sri Radha and Sri Krsna, who are eternally engaged in their amorous spiritual pashives.

Br: Later I would like to delve deeper into this topic. Now kindly tell me how is Paramatma, or supersoul, the Universal Progenitor, a partial expansion of the supreme Godhead?

RB: The supreme Lord conducts the work of creation of this material cosmos through the agency of two of his potential - opulence and power. He then enters his creation in the form of Visnu, His partial expansion. Although He is present as a partial expansion, in fact He remains the complete whole in our respects, as is substantiated in the Brhadaranyaka up.

"purnam-adah purnam-idam purnat purnam-udacyate purnasya purnam-adaaya purnam-eva-avasisyate (Br.arn.up 5/1)

The 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 a complete whole. Whatever is produced of the complete whole is also complete by itself. And because He is the complete whole, even though so many complete units emanate from Him, He remains the complete balance.

Therefore Lord Visnu, who pervades this material world, is the Supreme Father and the supersoul. He manifests Himself in three forms: Karanodaka Visnu, Ksirodaka Visnu and Garbhodaka Visnu. The limitless whatever expanse that separates the spiritual world from the material universe is known as the Karana-Samudra, or the causal ocean. It is also called the Viroja. The form of Visnu situated in this ocean is the Karanodaka Visnu, or Lord Mahavisnu. He lies in causal ocean and glances at maya, His energy, and brings into existence the material world. Numerous references, to this fact are found in the scriptures; here are a few:

"mayadhyaksena prakrteh suyate sa-caracaram" (BG. 9/10)

This material nature is working under My (Krsna) direction, O son of Kunti, and it is producing all moving and nonmoving beings.

"sa aikshata" (Aitr. Up. 1/1)

The Supreme Personality (Visnu had glanced (upon it).

"sa iman lokan asrjata" (Aitr. Up. 1/1/2)

The supreme Atma, supersoul glanced upon His own energy and created all moving and nonmoving beings.

Lord Mahavisnu's potency, that manifests in His glance and which impregnates and pervades material nature, is personified in the form of Garbhodaka Visnu. The entire mass of conditioned jivas, or living entities who are infinitesimal parts and parcels of Mahavisnu are also produced by His transcendental glance. Garbhodakay Visnu then accepts the miniscule size of a thumb and even smaller and enters the heart of every living being, as the paramatma, or supersoul. Paramatma is

Ksirodaka Visnu - a partial expansion of Garbhodakay Visnu. Both the jiva soul and paramatma, known also as Hiranya-garbha, reside simultaneously in the living entities heart like two birds on the same branch of a tree. The bird representing paramatma rewards fruits of labour and the bird jiva is the enjoyer of those fruits or results of formative actions. This is confirmed in the scriptures:

"dva suparna sayuja sakhaya" (Svet.Up. 4/6)

In the Bhagavad Gita :

"yad yad vibhutam sattvam srimad urjitam eva va tad tad eva-gaccha tvam
mama tejo'nsa-sambhavam athava bahunaitena kim jnate-na tavarjuna
vistobhyahim idam krtsnam ekamsena sthito jagat (BG. 10/41-42)

Know that all beautiful, glorious, and mighty creations spring from but a spark of dry splendour.

But what need is there, Arjuna, for all this detailed knowledge? With a single fragment of Myself I pervade and support this entire universe."

So, the supreme personality of Godhead's partial expansion, the paramatma, manifests Himself in the material universe and the universal affairs as the universal Father and Maintainer, with a fragment of His energy.

Br: Thank you, I have understood that Brahma is Lord Hari's bodily instre and paramatma is Lord Hari's partial expansion. Now kindly show me scriptural evidences that says Lord Hari is Krsna.

B: The supreme Lord always manifests His two spiritual moods simultaneously - aisvarya (opulence, includes awe and reverence) and madhurya (amorous sweetness). In His aisvarya manifestation He is Lord Narayana, Lord of the Vaikuntha spiritual planets, and the fountain head of Mahavisnu expansion. In His madhurya mood He is Lord Krsna. Lord Krsna embodies the highest perfection of madhurya - in fact, the intensity of madhurya manifest in Him thoroughly obfuscates, with its divine sweetness, any trace of aisvarya. In principles of philosophy, Lord Narayana and Lord Krsna are the same.

But in the transcendental realm of rasa (spiritual loving exchanges) Lord Krsna is the repository of all rasas. He is the delectable fruit of rasa that is most relishable of all spiritual truths. The scriptures abound in verses describing it; the Rk Veda states :

"apasyam gopamanipadhyamanma ca para ca pathibhisca rantam sa dadhrich; sa visucirvasana avarivarti bhuvanesvantah" (Rk 1/22/16431)

I beheld a young lad of cowherdmen stock; He is infallible and indestructible. He moves mysteriously sometimes coming very near and again go faraway. He dresses in silks of riotous hues and in many fineries and clothes. In this manner He

sometimes appears and sometime disappears - this is His transcendental pastime.

In Chandogya Upanishad we come across this verse :

"syamacchabalam prapadye sabalacchyamam prapadye" (Ch.Up. 8/13/1)

Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa's multifarious energies are known as sabala. Through the process of surrendering to Kṛṣṇa I find the shelter of hlāḍīni-sakti (Lord's pleasure giving potency) which is the quintessence of all His energies. In the divine sanctuary of hlāḍīni I attain pure loving devotion to Lord Kṛṣṇa, Syamasundara. (Sabala also means gaura, or golden. In that sense syama, Kṛṣṇa bhajana leads to gaura caitanya, and gaura bhajana leads to syama, Kṛṣṇa).

This verse, in actuality, describes the spiritual activity of liberated souls.

The śrīmad Bhagavatam says:

"ete cāmsa-kalāḥ pumsaḥ kṛṣṇastu bhagavan svayam" (SB 1/3/28)

All the incarnations are either plenary portions or parts of the plenary portion of the Lord, but Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme personality of Godhead.

And in the Bhagavad Gītā, Kṛṣṇa states:

"mattah parataram nanyat kincid asti dhananjaya" (BG 7/7)

O conqueror of wealth (Arjuna), there is no truth superior to Me."

Gopala-tapani : (Purva 21)

"eko vasi sarvagah kṛṣṇa idya eko'pi san bahudha yo'vabhati"

Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the only supreme personality who can bring every being under His sway. He is the Absolute Brahman, omnipresent and without a second - The divine object of everyone's worship. Although He is single, yet by the power of His inconceivable potency He manifests Himself in a myriad of forms, and performs variegated pastimes.

Br: Śrī Kṛṣṇa possesses madhyamakara (normal human appearance) - how then can He be sarvagah (goes everywhere)? If we accept the fact that He has a form, it automatically presupposes that He is restricted to one place. This brings to surface several discrepancies: it confiscates His potency of being omnipresent or all-pervasive; He is forced under the subjugation of the three material modes; and it impinges on His absolute freedom. How can this problem be sorted out ?

RB: My son, you have allowed yourself to be trapped by mundane logic and thinking. And so doubts cloud your mind. So long the intelligence is caged in by the three material modes it cannot perceive pure goodness (suddha-sattva); yet in

attempting to do so it merely interpolates gross dimensions on the suddha-sattva. And finally constructs a material picture. Intimidated by this overbearing and confounding cocoon of his material mind he seeks escape in the impersonal concept of brahman. This closing the doors of perception to realise the supreme Absolute Truth (Paramatattva).

When we understand that the supreme Lord's human like physique (madhyamakara) is completely spiritual (cinmaya) then the discrepancies mentioned by you are done away with. Formless (nirakara), immutable (nirvakara), inactive (niskriya) and so on are opposite concepts of material qualities. In a way they may be considered also as qualities. Juxtaposed to them are excellences such as bright and bearing face; eyes like lotus petal; the cooling sanctuary of His lotus-feet; exquisite and graceful limbs and so on. They describe and spiritual form that is in pure goodness (suddh-sattva). These the madhyamakara human form of Krsna is the embodiment of both kinds of characteristics.

In Narada pancaratra we come across this statement.

"nirddosa-guna-vigraha atmantra niscetanatmaka-sarira gunaisca hinah ananda-matra karapadamukhodaradih sarvatra ca svagata-bheda vivarjjitatama"

The purport of this verse is : Lord Krsna's form is eternal, full of knowledge and bliss (sat-cit-ananda vigraha). It is not tainted by any material qualities nor does it have the slightest in common with matter. It is outside the touch of time, place and circumstances. He is present in full, everywhere, all at the same time. He is indivisible and the embodiment of nondual knowledge. In the material universe, cosmic space is immeasurable but mundane. By its nature, the human tabernacle (madhyamakara) can never be omnipresent (sarvagah).

The nature of existence in the spiritual world is transcendental and without fear. Hence one of the characteristics of Lord Krsna's transcendental form, which is human in appearance (madhya-makara), in the spiritual world is omnipresence. And unlike the material forms (madhyamakara) Lord Krsna's spiritual body, is even in this mundane plane, is omnipresent. This is the inconceivable mystic potency of the Lord's sac-cit-ananda form.

Can this same mystic potency be exhibited by Him in His manifestation as the all-pervasive brahman? Material nature is obedient to the confines of time place and circumstance. When he (or brahman, that object) who by his nature is outside the scope of time (kala) is equated with the all-encompassing and limitless material space, what extraordinary quality does he display? The Chandagya Upanisad states that Lord Krsna's eternal abode Vraja is known as brahma-pura - it is absolute and fully transcendental. It is endowed with unlimited spiritual variegatedness. Everything is dynamic and spiritual there, such as the paraphernalia, earth, water, and the elements, river, trees, sky, sun moon, stars and so on. Material discrepancies are totally absent, it is cent percent infused with divine bliss.

My son! In fact, this place of Mayapura and Navadvipa you reside in, is transcendental. But since you have woven a grosser net of maya, or illusion that covers your perception, you are unable to realise transcendence. When your spiritual vision manifests by the mercy of saintly souls you are able to see this holy land as it really is. You will see that Mayapur, Navadvipa and so on are transcendental realness, and only then is your stay here realised as residence in Vraja.

Who has taught you to think that whatever or whoever possesses the material shape (madhyamakara) that it is blemished by mundane qualities? Your mundane consciousness is aberrated by superstition and anxiety and hence you are unable to realise the spiritual purity of the Lord's transcendental form, as because it resembles in toto the human physique.

Br: Respected Babaji, considering that the Deity, form, bodily lustre, paraphernalias of pastimes, male and female associates, home, woods, love-gooves and so on of Sri Radha and Sri Krsna are all supra-mundane then the intelligent persons should not have any doubts regarding this. The question is when, in which country, the Deities, or incarnations of the supreme lord manifest His transcendental abode and pastimes?

RB: For the all-powerful supreme Lord Sri Krsna nothing is impossible. He always engrossed in performing extraordinary activities; He is self-willed, totally independent and omnipotent. If He so desires, He can easily manifest His transcendental deity form, incarnations and the holy abode (dhama) within this material universe. How can anyone doubt this?

Br: True, that if the supreme Lord wishes to manifest His self-manifesting form, He easily does it. The doubt that creeps in is, when the people see His manifestations, they see the transcendental abode as a part of the material topography; His spiritual form and deity form as mortal, mutable bodies; His esoteric, supra-mundane pastimes as ordinary dealings, - what is the reason for this? If Krsna has bestowed His blessings upon you to perceive all this, then why has He excluded the others from developing transcendental vision?

RB : Lord Krsna is the proprietor of unlimited transcendental qualities. Bhaktavatsalya, or loving protectiveness towards His devotees is one of them. The Lord rewards His pure devotees with the ability of transcendental vision to behold His self-manifesting spiritual form through the agency of His Wadini-sakti, or the pleasure-giving potency. To the devotees, His pastimes are absolutely transcendental and spiritually glorious. The non-devotees' senses are mundane due to their offensive and atheistic mentality hence they cannot perceive the distinction between the supreme lord's supra-mundane activities and ordinary historical events.

Br: Did He (Krsna) not descend to this material world out of compassion for the general populace?

RB: The Lord's descent into the material universe is a benediction for everyone. The pure devotees view this pastime of descent as pure transcendental activity; the non-devotees, however, do not consider this as such. These sceptics see this as a combination of the mystic with the phenomenal. Yet in spite of their warped vision they accrue pious results from it, sheerly by the inconceivable potency of the pure spirit in action. As such sukrti, or pious results begin to swell, the individuals gradually gain faith (sraddha) in the process of unalloyed devotional service to Krsna. So the supreme Lord's incarnation pastimes are always beneficial to humanity at large.

Br: Why did the vedas not clearly describe everywhere about Lord Krsna's pastimes?

RB: The vedas have indeed repeatedly sang hymns through-out glorifying Lord Krsna's pastimes. In some places they hold centre stage at other times they are not so prominent. The direct meaning (abhidha-vrtti) of a word or phrase is the principle meaning. For example, in the phrase: "syamacchabalam prapadye...." (I take shelter of Lord Krsna, Syama's multifarious energies known as 'sabala'); and towards the end section of chandogya Upanisad where it explains about the eternality of rasa (devotional taste) as well as how the liberated devotees serve Lord Krsna according to their intensity of rasa, the direct meanings describe devotional surrender.

A word's or phrase's indirect inference is its secondary meaning (Laksana-vrtti). The treatise of Jaynavalkya, Gargi and Maitreyi begins with toned down, indirect inferences (Laksana-vrtti) to Krsna's qualities. In the end of the message, the narratives prominently describe and establish the superiority of these selfsame qualities, earlier dealt with in generalities.

The vedas, in certain sections has chosen the direct method (anvaya-paddhati) to broadcast the eternal pastimes of the supreme lord and in many places has reverted to indirect or inferential method (vyatireka-paddhati) and glorified brahman (the impersonal, all-pervasive aspect of the Supreme Personality of Godhead) and paramatma (supersoul). The fact is that the vedic scriptures are sworn to propagate the supreme excellences of Lord Krsna.

Br: Revered Babaji! I have no further doubts that Lord Sri Hari is the supreme absolute truth. But what is the position of other worshipable personages such as Lord Brahma, Lord Siva, Indra, Surya, Ganesa and other demigods?

The brahmanas believe that Lord Siva is the highest concept of brahman. I, being born in the brahmana caste, have heard from my childhood this opinion and have been repeating the same. Kindly explain the recondite truth interred in these differing views.

RB: Please pay proper attention as I delineate the different grades of qualities inherent in the following personalities: the ordinary jivas, the worshipable demigods and goddesses and the supreme lord. Lord Krsna's excellences sets the

standard according to which the others standards are fixed. The following verses' purport unequivocally establishes this fact :

"ayam neta suramyangah sarva-sallaksananvitah rucirastejasa yukto baliyan-vayasanvitah vividhadbhuta bhasavti satyavakyah priyamva-dah vavadukah supandityo buddiman pratibhanvitah vidaghascaturo daksah Krtajna sudrdhavratah desa-dala-supatrajnah sastracaksuh surirvasi sthiro dantah ksamasilo gambhiro dhrtiman samah vadanyo dharmikah surah karuno manyamanakrt daksino vinayi hriman sarana-gata-palakah sukhi bhakta-suhrt prema-vasyah sarvasubhankara pratapi kirtiman rakta-lokah sadhusamasrayah nariganamanohari sarvaradhyah samrddhiman viriyanisvarsasceti gunastasyanukirtti-tah samudra iva pancasaddurvigaha harerami jivesvete vasanto'pi bindu-bindutaya kracit paripurnataya bhanti tatraiva purusottame atha pancaguna ye syuramsena girisadisua sada svrupasampraptah sarvajno nityanatunah saccidananda-sandrangah sarva-siddhinisevi-tah athocyante gunah panca ye laksmisadivartinah avicintyamaha-saktih koti brahmandavigraha avataravalibijam hatarigatidayakah atmaramaganakarsityami krsne kiladbhuta sarvadbhuta camatkara-lila-kallola-varidhih atulya-madhura-prema-mandita priyamandalah trijaganmanasakarsi murali-kala-kujitah asamanoraddha-rupa-sri vismapita-caracarah lilapremna priyadhikam madhurye venurupayoh ityasadharanam proktam govindasya catustayam" (Brs.Da.Vah 1st Wave 11-12/14-18)

The divine actor Krsna is the repository of all good qualities. He is endowed with at least fifty excellences. 1) delightful limbs 2) all the auspicious physical signs 3) Beautiful 4) extremely courage 5) powerful physique 6) ever youthful looks 7) the expertism languages especially in the alien tongues 8) truthfulness 9) the art of charming conversation 10) eloquence (speech which sounds sweet to the audience embellished with ornamentations) 11) erudition 12) intellect 13) exceptional talent 14) humour and brilliant wit 15) cunning 16) expertise in all spheres 17) grate-fulness 18) firm determination 19) complete knowledge of time place and circumstances 20) scriptural insight 21) purity 22) mastery of over the senses 23) equipoise 24) temperateness 25) a forgiving heart 26) gravity 27) patience 28) sense of equality 29) magnanimity 30) religiosity 31) heroism 32) compassion 33) humility 34) simplicity, generosity 35) meekness 36) bashfulness 37) protectiveness towards those who surrender to him 38) happiness 39) friendly love for His devotees 40) being conquered by love 41) the ability to give joy to others 42) majesty and prowess 43) fame 44) attractiveness - to become everyone's object of love 45) partiality towards the pious 46) charm to enchant the women 47) unequalled glory that makes Him the object of everyone's worship 48) unsurpassable splendour 49) superiority over everyone and in everything 50) unlimited opulence.

These fifty qualities are also present in the jivas but in minute quantities, unlike in Krsna where they are displayed in

great amplitude. Beside these fifty, Krsna and all His Visnu expansions are the proprietors of five super-excellent characteristics which flourish in them in absolute degree but are partially exhibited in Lord Siva alone. 1) always situated

in His su-preme position and indentity 2) omni-science 3) evergreen fresh-ness 4) His transcendental form is the embodiment of eternality, absolute knowledge and absolute blics 5) mastery over all the mysytic powers.

Another five excellences are manifest in Lord Narayana and other Visnu incarnations in varying degrees, however they are present in Lord Krsna in complete perfection, but are totally absent in Lord Siva and all the other Jivas. 1) Inconceivable potencies 2) unlimited universal form 3) fountain head source of incarnations 4) ability to offer liberation to enemies slain by them 5) all-attractiveness which gives full pleasure to the atmarama (self-satisfied) saints.

Over and above these sixty excellences and additional four quali-fications are reposed in Krsna alone. Note even in Lord Narayana and other Visnu-tattva's are they manifest - what to speak of jivas. 1) Performing pastimes which are innumerable like the ocean waves and are most wonderful and unique. 2) displayijnhg incomperable amorous exchanges on the platform of conjugal love with the (vraja) damsels who always surround him (krsna) and exhibit the highest form of divine love. 3) playing the flute so expertly as to enchant the entire creation 4) unparalleled beauty and grace that keeps everyone authralled.

With inclusion of these last four qualities Lord Krsna is the treasure trove of sixty four super excellent charasteristics. These last four qualities are superior to all the other catego-ries such as those available to : ordinary jivas; Siva and the demigods and gooesses; Lord Narayana and the Visnu-tattvas and Lord Govind-tattvas and Lord Govinda Krsna, Himself.

This sixty-four divice excellences are eternally reposed in Krsna. The last four are exclusive to Krsna, not even his vilasa expansions ca display them. Minus this dour, the other sixty reside in full brilliance in Lord Narayana. And minus the last nine qualities the rest fifty five are exhibited in Lord Siva and the demigods in partial degress. The first fifty qualities glimmer in the ordinary living entities.

Lord Siva, Brahma, Surya, Ganesa and Indra are especially empow-ered by the supreme lord with qualities that able them to govern the affairs of the material universe, hence they are empowered incurnations of the Lord. But their real position and original identity is an eternal servant of Lord Krsna. Many individuals have attained pure devotional service to Lord Krsna by their mercy. They are also worshipable deities by jivas who are on that level of their spiritual progress. However, it is recommended to worship them as parts and parcel of the supreme lord. If they want they can mercifully grant the jiva pure devotion to lord Krsna and such a jiva becomes glorious fit to be worshiped by all.

Lord Siva, the best of the demigods has acquired the unique position which makes him non-different from the supreme lord himself simply lord. For this very reason, the sympathisors of the mayavadi philosophy, consider Lord Jiva on equal terms with the supreme Brahman.

Chapter 14

Eternal Religion and Sambandha, Abhidheya and Prayojana (Part II)

Brajanatha spent the whole of next day ruminating on what the elderly Babaji had spoken the previous night. This provided him with immense pleasure. He kept on thinking how Lord Caitanya's instructions were extraordinary. With every word his heart was innundated with divine nectar. The more he listened to Babaji speak his thirst for nectar increased. The philosophy was very consistent and coherent and had every reason to prove themselves that they were based on nonafide scripture. He felt disturbed to think why the brahmana society caluminate such elevated theories. He feared that the philosophical aberrations that have growed their way into their caste's scriptural understanding stems from their blatant partiality toward mayavadi thought.

Such thoughts whirled around in Brajanatha's mind as he picked his way to Raghunathadasa Babaji's Kutira. He offered obeisances to the sanctified dwelling of their elevated vaisnava and went inside a fel prostrated before him in humble submission. Babaji Maharaji glowed with joy and engulted him with an affectionate hug and made him sit near him. Brajanatha was simply besides himself with eager anticipation.

He said - "Dear master, I am auriouly waiting to hear the third of then verses or dasa-mula-sloka, kindly tell me it deeper significance".

Babaji Maharaja was thrilled; ecstasy showed creatly in his expression and in the horripilations opearing all over his body. He started to recite the verse :

"parakhyayah sakteraprthagapi sa sve mahimani sthito jivakhyam
svamacidabhihitam tam tripadikam svatantreechasaktim sakalavisaye preranaparah
vikaradyaih sunyah parama puraso'yam vijayate"

The supreme lord is non-different (inseparable) form His incon-ceivable, absolute potencies and yet His is totally independent. He eternally embodies unlimited majestic grandeur. He always inspires His divine potencies, (Parasakti) consisting of jiva-sakti (jiva the marginal potency), cit-sakti (internal spiritual potency) and maya-sakti (external illusory potency), to engage in worthwhile activities. But He remains unaffected and the same, the highest absolute truth, eternally existent with full divini-ty, supreme personality of Godhead.

Br: The brahmana scholars opine that when the highest absolute truth (Paramattva) manifests himself as brahman. His divine potencies are unmanifest when he is the supreme controller (isvara) His potencies are manifest and dynamic. What is the vedic on this subject?

RB: The supreme absolute truth displays his potencies in all conditions. The vedas state - Svetasvatara upanisad :

"na tasya karyam karansca vidyate na tatsamascabhyadhikasca drsyate parasya saktir-viridhaiva srutyate svabhaviki jnan-bala-kriya ca" (Svet. 6/8)

The supreme lord never requires the assistance of material senses to accomplish His works because he does not possess a material body or material senses. His body is cent percent spiritual, therefore his physical presence is not limited like to material body. He can be simultaneously present with his beautiful form everywhere because he is omnipresent. At the same moment he is in Vindavana, his beauty blossoming in fresh youthfulness, dallying (with the damsels) in eternal pastimes. Nothing or no one is equal to him or greater than him because he is replete with inconceivable potency. Inconceivable, because the human intellect is unable to fathom it. Parasakti, or the supreme absolute potency is another designation for acintya-sakti (inconceivable potency). And although this inherent, internal acintya-sakti or para-sakti is one, it is nevertheless manifest in manifold manifestations, such as in jnan, or knowledge (cit or samvit) bala or power (sat or sandhini) and Kriya, or dynamic varied activities (ananda or hladi).

Cite sakti is described in the following verse :

"te dhyanyoganugata apasyan devatmasaktim svagunairniguddham yah karanam nikhilani tani kalatmayuktanyadhitistatyekah" (Svet.Up.1/3)

The sages who have realised the absolute truth, are absorbed in meditation (samadhi). In that state they deliberate upon the supreme Lord's transcendental qualities. With their own pure intellect they directly perceive the Lord's mystical and absolutely spiritual potencies. These potencies are non-different from the lord himself and they marshal and initiate the entire spectrum of universal cause and effects; control the jivas, the natural phenomena, time and activities.

In describing fiva-sakti the Svetasvatava Upanisad comments:

"ajamekam lohitasuklakrsnam vahvih prajah srjamaanam svarupah aja hyeko jusmano'nusete jahatyenam bhuktabhogamjo'nyah"(Svet up 4/5)
[Innumerable living entities are born coloured by the three modes of material nature- white(sattva), red (roja) and black (tama). Svarupah, or the Supreme lord's energy (unborn,eternal consort) who is non-different from Him,produces the jivas. One set of aja (ignorant, innocent jiva) worships the Supreme soul and the other set of aja (knowledge jiva) having enjoyed the material energy finally renounces it.]

The next verse is also from Svetasvatana upanisad about maya-sakti:

"Cchandamsi yajnah kratavo vratani bhutam bhavyam yacca veda vadanti ;asmanmayi srjate visvametat tasmimscanyo mayaya sanni-tyddhah"(Sup 4/9)
[The supreme lord, controller of maya,the illusory energy, has created this material universe with all its diversities such as the vedas, sacrificial rituals, religious observances, the past and the future (time) and so on. The vedas have recorded all this in every detail. The jiva is placed in this universe where he comes into contact with maya and is ensouled by her].

The term *parasya saktih* indicates that the supreme Absolute truth (*parama-tattva*) in his highest manifestation of Divinity displays an equally superlative potency. No authoritative text has anywhere described the *parama-tattva* as being impotent, under any condition. When the *Parama-tattva* exhibits his transcendently beautiful form. He is the supreme personality of Godhead and when he manifests his impersonal aspect he is *brahman*. This impersonal characteristic of the supreme absolute truth (*parama-tattva*) is after all a denouement of *para-sakti*, or highest inconceivable potency. Hence, *sakti*, or potency is most certainly present in the formless, unqualified *brahman*.

This supreme potency has been described in different places with different names such as *para-sakti*, *svarupa sakti*, *cit-sakti* and so on. Impotent *brahman* is a misnomer and a deception; it has been entirely fabricated from fiction by the *mayavadis*. The truth is that impersonal *brahman* is beyond the comprehension of *mayava-di* philosophers. The Vedas have defined *Savisesa* and *nirvisesa* (personal and impersonal) *brahman* in the following manner, in *Svetasvatara upanisad*. "Ya eko'varno bahudha saktiyogad varnanekan nihitartho dadhati." (Svet up 4/1).

[The Supreme lord is one, non dual absolute truth endowed with immense, unlimited potency equal only to him. Everything in this universe is a transformation of his divine potency. He has created everything through the medium of his potencies. He has given birth to the *brahmana-varna* (caste) being a *brahmana* himself. (Another version). Although he does not have any tinge of material qualities he gives birth to the material modes of nature through the agency of his multifarious potencies].

"ya eko jalavanisat isanibhih sarvallokanisata isanibhih" (Svet up 3/1).

[The one supreme lord, who is the controller of *maya jala* (a gossamer net of illusion) governs this material cosmos with his energies].
Now do you understand that the supreme absolute truth (*parama-tattva*) can never be benefited by his potencies; they are always self-manifest. These self-manifest potencies are eternally exhibited in three dimensions as is evident from this *upanisad* verse:

"sa visvakrd visvavidatmayonirjnah kalakalo guni sarvavid yah pradhanksetrajnapatigunesah samsaramoksasthitibandhahetuh" (Svet.up 6/16).

[The Supreme soul is the creator of this universe. He is omniscient (*sarvajna*), the source of himself (*atmayoni*), the awesome personification of time (*kalakals*), replete with all transcendental qualities (*gunni*), knows everyone (*sarvavid*), is the controller of *maya* (*pradhana*). The Regent of the universe (*ksetrapati*), Lord of the material modes (*gunas*) and is beyond their influence. He is the sole authority to keep the *jiva* chained to the wheel of *samsara* (of birth and death), to allocate his life-span and to reward him with liberation].

Thus it is easy to pick out from this verse the three aspects of *parasakti*- *pradhana* represents *mayasakti*, *kretrajna* represents *jiva sakti* and *ksetrajna-pati* means *cit-sakti*. Unmanifest and manifest potency relating to *brahman* status and supreme

personal-ity status respectively of the paramatattva, is a mental concoction of the mayavadi philosophers. Factually the supreme lord (parama-tattva) is at all times omnipotent (sarva-saktiman), the supreme Energetic. The Supreme personality of Godhead is the majestic embodiment and controller of his divine potencies and yet he is always the suprem anocrat-independent and self-willed (force to activate his potencies as he wishes).

Br: If the lord is always the proprietor of his potencies then he must be working by their directions. Then how can he be called independent and self-willed?

RB: This statement is cited from the vedanta ---'sakti-saktimatorabhedah'. The sruti scriptures explain the meaning of this text that the saktiman purnsa (the supreme energetic personality) is non-different from his sakti (energy, potency). Activities indicate sakti and the desire (iccha) to perform activities is evidence of saktiman. For example, creation, maintenance etc.of the material cosmos is the activity of mayasakti, that of the jivas is jiva-sakti and the spiritual world is of the cit-sakti,jiva-sakti and maya-sakti to perform their individual activities. He remains aloof, disentangled and unaffected from it all.

Br: If the Lord's actions are according to his own faculties then how can he remain unaffected and unchangeable? self-will supposes changeability.

RB: The word 'nirvikara'(unchangeable) in relation to the supreme means no material changes of transformation. Maya,or the material energy is but a shadow of the lord's svarupasakti, or internal spiritual potency. Activities carried out by maya-sakti are real (but relative) and not eternal. Transformations of maya-sakti are also not eternal therefore in the Supreme absolute truth (parama-tattva) they do not exist. The transformations (vikara) of iccha (desire and vilasa (pastimes) inherent in the parama-tattva are spiritual vasagatedness (cid-vaicitrya) or transcendental manifestations of divine love, there is not the slightest trace of imperfection in them. All these spiritual concepts are perfectly adjusted in the non-differentiated, absolute Godhead.

Out of his own prerogative, the suprem lord created this universe through the agency of his maya-sakti and still his original spiritual potency or identity (cit-svarupa) remains undivided and intact. Spritual variety (cit-vaicitrya) has no connection with maya. Those whose intellects are coloured by maya (ulutory energy) misinterpret descriptions of spiritual variety (cit-vaicitrya) as material is their narrations. Much like the jaundiced eyes which sees the world yellow; or the eyes diseased by cataract views the bright sun as being covered by clouds.

The purport of this is that maya-sakti is a mere shadow representations of cit-sakti. Therefore the variegatedness displayed in spiritual activities are perversely reflected in material diversities. On the superficial, external level both these appear to be the same but at the core they are diametrically opposite. Just as a human figure is near accurately reflected on the mirror at first glance but on closer inspection the limbs are on the wrong side, and so on. Similarly the variegateness displayed in the spiritual world appear on first glance to be the same as its material counterpart, but on subtle scrutiny the irreversible divide is distinctly discernible.

Maya-vaicitrya is the warped and corrupted reflection of cit-vaicitrya. Therefore descriptions of both these vaicitrya (vari-atedness) may be the same, but in substance they are of two conflicting natures. The Supreme lord who acts on his own fancies is free from the material transformations (maya-vikara), and he being the controller of maya-sakti steers her to perform his works.

Br.: To which category of krsna's sakti does srimati Radhika belong?

RB: Lord Krsna is the Supreme Energetic per excellence (purna saktiman) and Srimati Radhika is his suprem energy par excellence (purna-sakti), Srimati Radhika is also described as the absolute embodiment of the Lord's original divine energy (purna svarupa sakti) identical with him. For example musk is misperable from its aroma; fire from its heat; similarly in the matter of relish-ing the transcendental pastimes of Srimati Radhika and Lord Krsna, they are eternally distinct personalities but simultane-ously they are non-different. Three active potencies ---'cit-sakti, jiva-sakti and maya-sakti emanate from svarupa-sakti (original divine energy identical with krsna).

The other appellative of cit-sakti is antarnaga-sakti (internal spiritual potency) and another term for jiva-sakti is tathastha-sakti (marginal energy). The synonym for maya-sakti is 'bahira-nga-sakti (external energy). Although svarupa-sakti is one, she executes----activities through her three extensions. All the permanet characteristic symptoms inherent in svarupa-sakti are fully manifest in cit-sakti, minutely poesent in jiva-sakti and pervertedly reflected in maya-sakti. Svarupa-sakti possesses three further intrinsic qualities: Hladui (pleasure giving poten-cy), Saudhini (sustaining potency), and samvit (perceiving poten-cy). They have been described in the fourth verse of the dasa-mula siksa

"sa vai hladinyayah pranaya-vikrterhladana-ratah
tatha samvicchakti-prakatita-rahobhava-rasitah
taya srisandhinya krta-visadataddhama-nicaye
rasambhodhou nagno vraja-rasa-vilasi vijayate" (4th Dasa-mula)

[Svarupa-sakti possesses three properties - hladini, samuit and sandhini Hladinis, transformation into transcendental loving exchanges keeps Krsna captivated. The subline anormous desires flowing out of samvit-sakti fans Krisna's erotic humour. The sandhini sakti has manifest the spiritual realm of Vrndavanadhama - brilliant and pure. There the self-willed supreme lover of Vraja, Krsna remains immersed in the eternal nector of divine loving humour.]

The purport of this verse is extremely esoteric in nature. These three properties (hladini, samvit, saudhini) are dynamically displayed everywhere. Hladini is personified in Sreimati Radhika. She provides Krsna with complete, absolute spiritual blics. She is the most beloved of Krsna, and epitomises maha-bhava (the highest ecstatic moods that is able to tally receiprocate Krsna's loving advances and also invoke in him heights of erotic feel-ings) which keeps krsna spellbound. Even, then she expands herself (kaya-vyuha-svarupa) as the astasakhis (eight sakhi or female companions) each representing one of the eight 'bhavas' or loving spiritual

emotions. The four seva-bhava or the divine serving mood are represented by four categories of sakhis (female companions) : Priya-sakhi, narma-sakhi, prana-sakhi and parama-prestha-sakhi - all of them are also her expansions.

All these sakhis are eternally perfected female companions who are permanent residents of vraja in the spiritual world. Samvit-sakti (of svampa-sakti) arranges for the different relationships among the residents of vraja. Sandhini-sakti manifests the elements (earth, water etc.) the villages, forests, the Govardhan hill and other such arenas for transcendental pastimes. Saudhima also provides the various spiritual physical forms of lord krsna, Srimati Radhika and her sakhis, the cows, krsna's friends and all other paraphernalias for the pastimes.

Hladini, transformed into amorous plays, keeps krsna engrossed in sublime ecstasy. Samvit's manifestations of the myriads of mystical moods and relationships supplies krsna constant amusement leading to hectic participation. Krsna playing his flute to attract the gopis (damsels), taking the cows to graze, performing rasa-lila dance and so on, are examples of activities arranged by Samvit. Sandhini sustains and maintains the spiritual abode of Vraja where Krsna remains immersed in exchanging spiritual humours (rasas). Vraja is the most esoteric of krsna's dhama's for pastimes.

Br.: Dear master, you say that Saudhini, samvit and hladini are the three properties of Svarupa-sakti. Svarupa sakti's properties are slightly present in jiva sakti and pervertedly reflected in maya-sakti. I am very eager to learn how the three properties are creatively amalgamated in the two saktis.

RB: Just as a diminutive portion of Svarupa-sakhis present in jiva, similarly her three properties are also present in him eternally in modicum. Hladini is present in the jiva as perfect brahmananda, or the bliss of brahman (transcendence) ready to be realised at any time; Samvit is manifest to jiva as brahma-jnana (knowledge of undifferentiated Absolute truth) and, Saudhini as the minute spark of the supreme consciousness (anu-caitanya). This topic comes directly under the subject of jiva-tattva, where it is more comprehensively dealt with which we will later convert. Anyhow, these same properties when projected on to the material planes (maya-sakti) compute differently. Hladini is exhibited as gross mundane pleasures, Samvit as materialistic knowledge and saudhini as the fourteen planetary systems (material cocoon) and man's physical forms.

Br.: How can sakti be called inconceivable (acintya) if every activity she performs elicits her-splitting analysis before comprehension - involving the intellect.

RB: The individual points in this subject can be separately contemplated upon, but as a whole, with its esoteric relationships and subtle juxtapositions, it is all quite inconceivable to the human intellect. In this material plane conflicting and contradictory natures cannot coexist in one place or person, become contrasting natures destroy each other. Lord Krsna's sakti is so inconceivable that contrary emotions and natures in the spiritual world eternally exist harmoniously in pristine splendour.

Lord Krsna is simultaneously personal with a beautiful form and impersonal with an awe inspiring presence. He is both all-pervasive and embodied; inactive and dynamically creative; unborn and born of parents (Devaki and Vasudeva/Yasoda and Nanda); Supreme Godhead worshipped by all and a simple cowherd boy; omniscient and accepts an incarnation manifesting human emotions; with form and qualities but formless and unqualified; beyond sense perception and the personification of spiritual humour; unlimited and limited (in enacting his pastimes as incarnations); unattainable and far away yet very near (in the heart of everyone); immutable, apathetic yet shows consternation at the gopis' love, and so on. There are innumerable examples of how conflicting emotions sustain as well as accelerate transcendental pastimes of the lord; whether they are in regards to the lord's personality, his dhama or his associates and paraphernalia,---this is what makes his sakti inconceivable.

Br.: Do the vedas subscribe to this view?

RB: There ample support of this truth in the vedas, Svetesvatara up: "apanipado javano grahita pasyatyacaksuh sa srnotyakarnah (Svet.up 3/79) sa veti vedyam na ca tasyasti vetta tamahuragryam purusam mahantam"

[Although the supreme lord is without mortal hands and legs he is always in motion and receives every offering, which is to say that he possesses transcendental body with limbs. He can see without eyes and hear without ears because his senses and organs are all spiritual. He is the sole witness to every happening and the knower of all that is to be known but no one knows him or can grieve him as he is. The limited intellect of man cannot comprehend that he possesses a perfectly spiritual body with supra-mundane senses and so on. The knowers of the Absolute truth (brahma-jnani) glorify him as magnanimous and the fountainhead of all causes.]

Isopanisad :

"tad ejati tannaijati tad dure tad vantike
tad antarasya sarvasya tad u sarvasyasyta bahyatah"(Isa 5)

[The supreme lord walks and does not walk. He is far away, but he is very near as well. He is within everything, and again he is outside of everything].

"saparyagac chukram akayam avranam asnaviram suddham apapa vid-dham kavir manisi paribhuh svayambhur yathatathyato'rthan vyadad-hac chasvatibhyah samabhyah."

[Such a person (true knower of things) must know in fact the reals of all, who is unembodied, omniscient, beyond reproach, without veins, pure and uncontaminated, the self-sufficient philosopher who is awarding everyone's desire since time immemorial].

Br.: Is it mentioned anywhere in the vedas that the absolutely independent supreme lord spontaneously decides to descend to this earth as an incarnation?

RB: Yes, there are numerous instances in the vedas. In the talavakar (kena upanisad), the section where it records a discussion between uma and mahendra, it describes how Indra and the demigods become extremely arrogant after defeating the demons. They were even behaving proudly with each other. Unannounced and quite suddenly the supreme lord descended in wondrous glory and asked the demigods the reason for their being so proud. The lord then gave them a blade of grass and asked them to destroy it by their own powers. But to their complete amazement. Agni (god of fire) could not burn it, vayu (god of wind) failed to blow it away. None of the demigods succeeded in their given task. Immediately they recognised the overawing plan of the supreme lord and they were dazzled by the lord's exquisite beauty. The samskrita verse is:
"tasmai trnam nidadhavetaddaheeti.tadupapreyaya.
Sarvajavena tanna sasaka dagdhum. Sa tta eva vivavarte,
naitadasakam vijnatum yadetad yaksamit."(Kena up 3/6)

[The yaksa (supreme lord) placed a blade of grass before the god of fire (Agni) and asked him 'show me how you can burn this? Agni tried all possible means within his power but failed to burn it. He was ashamed and went back to the other demigods and said: 'I could not make out who this great personality is?']

The purport of this esoteric incident is that the supreme lord, who is described everywhere as captivately beautiful descends at will and on the spur of the moment to participate in pastimes with his jiva.

Br.: I have heard that the supreme lord is the endless source of rasas, or divine humours, where is it mentioned in the vedas?

RB: This unequivocal statement is cited from the Taittiriya upanisad:
"yadvaitat sukrtam raso vai sah rasam hyevayam labdhanandi bha-vati ko hyevanyat kah pranyat yadesa akasa anando na syat esa hyevanandayat"(Tait up vai. u.2/7)

[The one who has been described (in the previous verse) as the paragon of piety and merits is in truth parama-brahma (the supreme personality of Godhead) the embodiment of rasa (rasa svarupa). Only when jiva is able to attain him (rasa-svarupa) can he be truly happy. If parama-brahma would not be the unlimited repository of divine bliss then who could possibly sustain the universe? (Meaning, who other than the supreme lord?)].

Br.: But if he is really the rasa-svarupa, then why the gross materialists cannot see him?

RB: The conditioned souls (maya-baddha-jiva) are found in two states --- extroverted, (Parak) towards matter and introverted (pratyak) towards self and God. In the parak state jiva denies God (Krsna) and turns his back to him. Naturally he is deprived of beholding the lord's sublime splendour. Since his consciousness is extroverted, projected towards the material phenomenon, he sees

and thinks only matter. Situated in pratyak, jiva is averse to maya (materialistic activities) and is attracted to krsna, hence he is eligible to perceive krsna as the embodiment of all the spiritual humours (rasa-svarupa). The kathopanisad states the following :

"paranci khani vyatrat svayambhustasmat paran pasyati nantarat man kasciddhirah pratyagatmanamaiksadvrttacaksuramrtatvamichan" (Katho Up.2/1/1)

Svayambhu, Brahma has designed the jivas senses in such a way that they are naturally driven outwards on matter and hence the jiva's consioness is projected externally. This extrovest inclination desists him from seeing the paramatma (Supersoul)., supreme lord within him. A meagre handful of only dhiras (introspective sages), who out of an intense desire to obtain immortal nectar in the form of pure devotion to Radha and krsna, withdraw their senses from the external sence objects and projecting them inwards sees the supreme personality of Godhead who resides within.

Br: Kindly detineate in detail about the embodiment of spiritual humour (rasa-svarupa) as described in the vedas in the words 'rasa vai sah'.

RB: We come across this vase in the Gopala-tapani :

"gopavesam satpundarikanayanam meghabham vaidyutambaram dvidhujam maunamudradhyam vanamalinamisvaram" (Gop-Purva 13/1)

Behold that even youthful boy, Supreme personality of Godhead Krsna attired as a cowherd boy, with eyes like lotus petals, His complexion that of fresh monsoon clouds; His aura shines more dazzlingly than the lightning and He wears a brikiant, golden yellow dhoti dress. His two-handed form is exquisite, He is omniscient and a garland of wild-flowers adorns His chest (anyone who meditates on this wonderful form of the lord is immediately released from the shackles of samsara, or repeatewd birth and death).

Br: Al last I have grasped the truth that lord Krsna alone is the absolute embodiment of all round perfection, cternally situated in the spiritual realon, the omnipotent supreme shelter of all living entities, the personification and repository of every transcendental humour and relationship. He is unattainable to the brahma-jnanis (those who meditate on the Lord's impersonal as-pect) and only partially revealed as the paramatma, or supersoul, to the mystic yogis pursuing the path of eight told mystic per-fection (astanga yoga).

Impersould brahman is his bodily effulgence. He is the highest worshipable Deity, eternal and absolutely spiritual supreme personality; but a facile approach to obtain His is not available to me, as because He is transcendental to intellectional interrogation. What means can a man employ besides his intellect to research anything, be he high-born brahmana or a low-class canda-la? I feel that it is an extremely encumbering proposition to attract His mercy.

RB: Once again Kathopanisad supplies us the relevant passage:

"tamatmastham ye'nupasyanti dhirastesam santih sasvatinetaresam" (Katho 2/213)

Those learned persons who perceive the supreme lord, paramatma, residing in the heart can attain lasting happiness, not others.

Br: Yes, one obtains permanent peace and joy seeing the supreme lord within the heart. The question is how to see Him? That remains a mystery.

RB: The Kthopanisad states :

"nayamatma pravacanena labhyo, na medhaya, na bahuna srutena yamevaisa
vrnute tena labhyastasyaisa atma vivrnute tanum svam" (Katho 1/223)

The knowledge of the supreme absolute truth (supersoul) cannot be acquired through endless debates, sharp intellect or erudition. When jiva soul turns to the supreme lord in a serving mood and begs for His mercy, the Lord within reciprocates and reveals Himself to him.

And the Srimad Bhagavatam declares :

"athapi te deva padambujadvaya-prasadalesanugrhita eva hi janati tattvam
bhagavan-mahimno na canya eko'pi ciram vicinvan" (SB 10/14/28)

O Lord! any person who is favoured with even a minute particle of divine mercy (Krupa-prasada) from Your Lotus-feet is alone eligible to know in truth Your magnanimity in being the embodiment of eternality, absolute knowledge and bliss. Others may endeavour endlessly interpreting the scriptures or with intellectual jugglery to seek you, but they will never succeed.

Son my beloved Lord is very merciful. Dear Krsna is the most precious soul of all the souls; He cannot be attained merely by scrutinizing the scriptures or by elaborate deliberations on the philosophy. Nor will a clairvoyant and incisive intellect or being a guru with large following grow him with success. But one who lovingly accepts Lord Krsna as his very own to him the Lord showers his mercy and reveals his beatific form of transcendental majesty and eternality, absolute knowledge and bliss. This point will drive home when you ponder about the abhidhaya-fattva (best means to achieve the goal)

Br: Is there a mention in the vedas about Krsna-dhama, or the eternal abode of Krsna?

RB: There are many references to Krsna-dhama in the vedas; and it has been described by different names such as - paravyoma, samvyoma, brahmagopala-puri, gokula and so on. Take, for example this quote from Svetasvatara Upanisad :

"khaco'ksare parame vyoman yasmin deva dhiuvisve nisedhum yastan-na veda kimrca karisyati ya ittadvidusta ime samasate" (Svet.up. 4/8)

The supreme being (aksara as ascertained in the verses of the Rg veda resides in the spiritual sky known as paravyoma. All the demigods are dependent of this supreme personality of Godhead. Jivas, who do not know Him will gain nothing from studying the Vedas. Those who have realised Him (through devotional service) have been blessed with the greatest reward.

In the Mundaka Upanisad we find:

"divye brahmapure hyesa vyomnyatma pratisthitah" (Mund.up.2/2/7)

That supreme personality, whose magnanimity and majesty is famed in the entire creation, eternally resides in the transcendental realm of paravyoma.

The sruti purusabodhini states :

"gokulakhye mathuramandale dveparsve eandravali radhika ca"

In Gokula, a part of the mathura district in the spiritual sky, resides the supreme personality of Godhead with Srimati Radhika on one side and candravali on the other.

And from Gopala-Upanisad :

"tasam madhye saksat brahmagopala-puri hi"

The area of Brahmagopala-puri is a part of the transcendental abode of the supreme Lord.

Br: The tantric-brahmanas consider Lord Siva's sakti as adya-sakti, or the original energy - why is it so ?

RB: Lord Siva's potency is what is known as maya-sakti, or the illusory potency., Maya possesses the three material qualities (gunas) of sattva, raja and tama. Those brahmanas who are endowed with the quality of Sattva (goodness) worship maya, the mistress of the gunawith righteous sanctity. The rajasika brahmanas (with raja guna) worship maya in the mood of passionate righteousness and the tama-sika brahmanas (with tama gura) worship maya as the goddess of darkness, known as 'vidya', as a result of their ignorance.

In truth, maya is merely a transformation and a reflected image of the supreme Lord's sakti - she is not a separate or independent sakti. Maya is the cause of jiva's imprisonment and freedom. When jiva rejects Krsna, maya ensnares him in material existence and punishes him. When jiva devotes himself to serving Krsna, maya manifests her sattva guna (mode of goodness) and rewards him with knowledge about Krsna. Therefore jivas under the influence of maya's qualities

(gunas) are unable to perceive the absolute embodiment of divine potency (svarupa-sakti) and thus falsely attach the misnomer adya-sakti (original potency) to maya. In the clutches of maya, jiva is capable of elevating his consciousness only by pious deeds (sukrti) - without it he stagnates.

Br: In the system of devotional service of the mood of Gokula, Durgadevi is listed as an eternal associate of the Lord (Parsada) - who is this Durgadevi?

RB: She is known as yoga-maya (spiritual potency). She is the fountainhead of transformations of potencies as such she is an expansion of cit-sakti. Therefore when She is in the spiritual world she asserts her position as being non-difference from svarupa-sakti. The mundane manifestation, maya-sakti is a perverted reflection and transformation of yogamaya durgadevi. Hence this mayadevi (mundane Durgadevi) is a maid-servant of yogamaya Durgadevi. Durgadevi, the spiritual potency is the support and nourisher of Krsna's transcendental pastimes (Krsna lila-posana-sakti).

In this spiritual abode, the paramour mood (parakiya-bhava) the gopis exhibit in order to fuel Krsna's desire for amorous dalliances is, in fact, composed by yoga-maya. The purport of the Srimad Bhagavatam verse describing the rasa-lila pastime of Krsna is important to understand ('yogamayamupasritah' SB. 10/29/10, - means Lord Krsna decided to enact the rasa-lila pastimes under the supervision of His yogamaya potency). Svarupa-sakti undertakes many activities in the arena of transcendental pastimes (cid-vilasa), which are ostensibly performed unknowingly, but are factually not so. In order to... the rasa pastimes there seemingly unwitting acts are instigated by yogamaya. The details of this topic will be covered when the subject of rasa comes up later.

Br: Another question regarding the concept of 'dhama' keeps creeping into my mind, kindly set it to rest - why do the vaisnavas designate this Navadvipa as 'Sridhama'?

: Sri Navadvipa-dhama is spiritually on the same level as Vrndavana-dhama.

Mayapur is the most sacred place of all in the dhama. Gokula in Vraja is manifest in Sri Mayapur in Navadvipa. Sri Mayapura is the maha-yoga-pitha, (the eternal abode of Sri Radha and Sri Krsna surrounded by their eternal and intimate associates) in the Navadvipa dham. The Srimad Bhagavatam narrates that in Kaliyuga the supreme Lord's full incarnation makes a covered or incognito appearance ("cchanna Kala...." etc. SB. 7.9.38). Similarly, the same principle is applied to Navadvipa dhama - in Kaliyuga it is the covered dhama. No pilgrimage (tirtha) is superior to Mayapura in Kaliyuga. Anyone who understands the transcendental significance of Mayapura alone is eligible to reside in Vraja. However, in spite of the spiritual position and importance of Vraja and Navadvipa, to the extrovert, gross materialist they are inert and ordinary. Those who are extremely fortunate acquire transcendental vision and only they can see the dhama in all its spiritual splendour.

Br: Dear master I am eager to learn about the spiritual significance and identity of Navadvipa dhama.

RB: Goloka, Vrndavana and Svetadvipa constitute the inner sanctum of paravyomen, the spiritual sky. Goloka venues Krsna's svakiya-lila (conjugal pastimes with Srimati Radhika as husband and wife); Vrndavana is where Krsna enacts His parakiya-lila (conjugal pastimes with Srimati Radhika as a paramour);

Svetadvipa stages the remaining pastimes of Krsna. Spiritually the three abodes are at par with each other and so Navadvipa which is a direct manifestation of Svetadvipa, is still equal in every respect to Vrndavana. The residents of Navadvipa are immensely fortunate - they are Lord Caitanya's associates. As a result of uncountable pious deeds a person is promoted to reside in Navadvipa. Certain spiritual moods and emotions (rasa) were unexpressed in Vrndavana and they found expression in Navadvipa. Only when a person has understanding of that rasa will he be able to perceive it.

Br: How much area does Navadvipa dhama cover?

RB: Navadvipadhama is spread over thirty two square miles. It is in the form of an eight-petalled lotus flower. The eight petals are each an island (dvipa) and in the middle the seed-bed. Simantadvipa, Godrumadvipa, Madhyadvipa, Koladvipa, Rtadvipa, Janhadvipa, Modadrumadvipa and Rudradvipa are the eight islands which represent the eight-petals of the lotus. Antardvipa is in the middle, the seed-bed and Mayapura is at the centre of Antardvipa.

Navadvipadhama and especially Mayapura is so spiritually potent that anyone executing devotional service (sadhana) here will very soon be crowned with the highest success of attaining love of Godhead (Prema). The house of Jagannath Misra is the nucleus of Mayapura. It is the yoga-pitha and the eternal supremundana pastimes of Lord Gauranga are seen enacted here by the most fortunate souls.

Br: Are Lord Gauranga's lila the work of svarupa-sakti?

RB: The sakti that activates Krsna-lila is same in Gauranga lila. There is absolutely no difference between Lord Krsna and Lord Gauranga, Srila Svarupa Damodara Gosvami has written in his personal diary which is quoted in the Caitanya Caritamrita :

"radha-krsna-pranaya vikrtir hladini saktir asmat ektmanar api bhuvih pura dehabhedam gatan tau caitanyakhyam prakatam adhuna tad-dvayam caikyam aptam radha-bhava-dyuti-suralitam naumi krsna-svruvam" (C.C. Adi 1/5)

The loving affairs of Sri Radha and Krsna are transcendental manifestations of the Lord's internal pleasure-giving potency. Although Radha and Krsna are one in their identity, they separated themselves eternally. Now these two transcendental identities have again united in the form of Sri Krsna Caitanya. I bow down to Him,

who has manifested Himself with the sentiment and completion of Srimati Radharani although He is Krsna Himself.

Lord Krsna and Lord Caitanya are eternally manifest and present. It is impossible to conclude who comes first and who later. The statement that Lord Caitanya separated to become Radha and Krsna, and is now again united to become one as Lord Gauranga, means that both their appearances are eternal and always present, not that one is before the other. All the activities of the supreme absolute truth are supra-mundana and eternal. Any person considering anyone of these pastimes as irrelevant is indeed a heart-less cretin.

Br: Lord Gauranga is directly the supreme personality of Godhead; what is the method to worship Him?

RB: To worship Lord Gauranga with Gaura-mantra accrues the same result as worshipping Lord Krsna with Krsna-mantra. At the same time worshipping Gauranga with Krsna-mantra and vice versa are also identical. Only an ignorant illiterate and a disciple of Kaliyuga will try to find differences in this.

Br: How can a person find the bonafide mantra of the Lord's covered-incarnation (Prachanna avatara)?

RB: Those Pancaratra and agama scriptures which have plainly spoken about the proclaimed incarnations of the Lord have also mentioned the covered-incarnations, but in a concealed manner. Those with pure faith and uncomplicated mind can fathom the imports of their words.

Br: Does Lord Gauranga have a consort, and what is the method of their worship?

RB: Lord Gauranga is worshiped in two ways, each time separately with one of His two different consorts. In the sadhana-bhakti stage of arcana-marga. Deity worship of Gauranga and Visnupriya is on the level of awe and reverence, while in the spontaneous stage of bhajana Lord Gauranga and Gadadhara Prabhu are worshiped in raga-marga.

Br: To which category of Lord Gauranga's sakti does Visnupriya-devi belong?

RB: In general the devotees designate her as 'bhakti. But factually according to theological principles she is one on the one hand the essence of hladivi-sakti (pleasure-giving potency) on the other. She is the full manifestation of Samvit-sakti (perceiving potency). This means that she is embodiment of the potency of pure devotional service (bhakti svarupini) who advented to assist Lord Gauranga in propagating the holy name. Just as each of the nine islands of Navadvipa represent one of the nine types of devotional service (nava-vidha-bhakti), Visnupriyadevi embodies this nava-vidha-bhakti, and is the mistress of the process of pure devotional service.

Br: Master, then Visnupriyadevi may be addressed as Svarupa-sakti?

RB: Yes, most certainly. She is the essence of hladini-sakti combined with samvit-sakti - is that no sufficient sakti to make Her svarupa-sakti?

Br: Master I am keen to learn the process of Deity worship and in particular of Lord Gauranga's worship. But first I like to clear up a philosophical point. You explained earlier that eit-sakti, jiva-sakti and maya-sakti are emanations of Svrupa sakti. Again, you said that hladini, samvit and sandhini are the three proper-ties or propensities of Svarupa sakti. All activities of these three propensities (hladini, samvit, sandhini) that act upon the the three emanations (cit, jiva and maya) are in fact activities of the sakti. The spiritual world, spiritual body, spiritual relationshiups, spiritual pastimes and so on are manifestations of sakti. But Krsna being the source of energy - the Energetic (saktiman), how can H be identified?

RB: Yes may son, that is certainly a leviathan problem. It seems you plan to end the misery of this old man with your sharp arrows of tricky rhetorics. This simple question has an equally easy answer but to find the suitable candidate to comprehend it is difficult. Listen attentively while I answer your quiry.

Lord Krsna's name, form, qualities and pastimes convineingly evinces the power of sakti at play; but independent prerogative and tree willare not Her privilage - these are the exclusive franchises available to the supreme lord alone. Lord Krsna is self-willed and an antocrat; He is the master and shelter to sakti. Sakti, the female moiety of the lord is meant to be en-joyed and exploited by Him, the supreme enjoyer, Krsna. Sakti is dependent and subservient, while Krsna is independent and Her master. Sajkti completely envelops and surrounds the supreme lord and yet the lord's presence is constantly dynamic and perceived by all, in every such situation krsna asserts Himself as the supreme personality, Lord of sakti.

Jiva is able to perceive the supreme and independent lord only if he is in the shelter of sakti, complying to Her wishes. Therefore the conditioned sould cannot penetrate the covering of Sakti and directly meet the supreme lord. But when the surrendered devotee renders loving devotional service then he ingresses beyond sak-ti's covering and sees the lord face to face. Bhakti, or devo-tional service is purely saturated with sakti and hence is engen-dered a female. She is devoted to Krsna's svrupa-sakti. She provides indications to Krsna's supreme lordshiup as the sole malefactor and Enjoyer, and she experiences His visite delliances and dynamism.

Br: An unidentified and alien principle which can exist beyond the parameters of sakti is only possible for what the Upanisad's term as brahman.

RB: The brahman of the Upnisad is minus a will - desireless, whereas Krsna the supreme person who is transcends the Upnisad tenets is self-willed and dynamic. The two principles are very distinct from each other. Brahman is impersonal, without form; and Krsna, though sperate from His energies, is nevertheless personal, with a transcendental form. Because He possesses and divine personality, the prerogative to enjoy and exploit His envergies and autocratic liberty.

In truth, Krsna and His sakti are simultaneously different and non-different from Him. Krsna's sakti which reveals Krsna is also directly Krsna, Himself. Yet Krsna's hladini sakti, Srimati Radha, asserts Herself as Krsna's wife (separate identity). Lord Krsna is the worshipable Lord to be served by all, and Srimati Radhika, the supreme most sakti, is His maid-servant. The different self-identities are the distinctions in their principles.

Br: If Krsna's tree will and position as a male-enjoyer confirms His virile malehood, then what is Srimati Radhika's will?

RB: Srimati Radhika's will is always subordinate to Krsna's desire. She has no separate will or aspiration of Her own. Krsna alone is the master of His will, the desire to serve Krsna is obedient to His will and this is Radhika's desire. Srimati Radhika is full-fledged embodiment of Sakti, She is the original and primeval sakti (adya-sakti) Krsna is the Enjoyer, Lord and fountainhead of this sakti (adya-sakti)".

Raghunathadasa Babaji fell silent and because contemplative Brajanatha felt elated beyond words. He quickly stood up, offered his protracted obeisances and left to return to his residence in Bilvapuskarini village. A gradual but definite transformation took roots into Brajanatha's consciousness. The grandmother especially took note of it. So she got busy to find him a life-partner.

Brajanatha was least concerned about all these mundane happenings. Day and night he pondered deeply into the teachings of Babaji Maharaja. When he was able to properly assimilate the dictums and philosophy he would immediately return to Babaji Maharaja in srivasa angana for a further dose of esoteric essence and jubilantly hear every word.

END CHAPTER 14.

Chapter 15 Dissertation on the Principle of Jiva as Prameya

Today Brajanatha came earlier than usual to Srivasa-angana. The resident Babaji's and devotees of Godruma also decided to come to Srivasa-angana to participate in the evening worship (sandhya-arati) in the temple and so they had arrived with the setting sun. Sri Premadasa Pramhansa Babaji, Vaisnavadasa, Advaitadasa and so on were seated in the temple hall. Brajanatha was keenly observing the visiting vaisnavas from Godruma and thought to himself - 'they look so pure, I will be greatly benefited by their association'.

The Godruma vaisnavas likewise noticed the humble figure of Brajanatha, his face lit up with devotional fervour, so they blessed him wholeheartedly. They then left Srivasa-angana and headed south towards Godruma. Raghunathadasa Babaji saw that tears streamed down Brajanatha's cheeks unrestrained. The elderly Babaji, has

over the time, developed a tender caring love for the young acolyte. He asked Brajanatha - 'My son, why do you weep?'

Brajanatha turned to his master and replied softly - 'Master, your wonderful association and instructions have overwhelmed me. Material existence and family life seem vacuous and meaningless. I anxiously look forward to receive the shelter of Lord Gauran-ga's lotus-feet. My mind is feverish with one single question- who am I in truth and why have I take birth in this world?'

RB: Wonderful! Your question has sanctified my heart! when good fortune strikes a person, this is his first query. Wear, now the fifth verse of the dasa-mula-siksa and try to grasp its purport:

"sphulingah rddhagneriva cidanavo jivanicayah hareh suryasyaiva-parthagapitvad bhedovisayah vase maya yasya prakrtipatirevesvara iha sa jivo mukto'pi prakrtivasayogyati svagunatah" (D.n. 5)

Out of the flames fall innumerable little sparks; similarly from the rays of the transcendental sun. Lord Hari emanate millions of minute particles of light, the infinitesimal spirit soul - jiva. Jiva is non-different from the supreme Lord Hari and yet simulta-neously he is eternally distinct from the Lord. The eternal difference between the supreme Lord and jiva is that the lord is always the master and controller of maya-sakti, whereas jiva, even in his liberated state, is by his very nature vulnerable to come under maya's survey.

Br: That is an extra-ordinary philosophical conclusion. I am eager to learn the scriptural (Vedic) evidences supporting this view. For me, the supreme Lord's verdict is sufficient, but if I can bring a quote from, say the Upanisad, then the common man is bound to accept the truth of the Lord's words.

RB: There are numerous supporting slokas in the scriptures. I will quote a couple, so pay heed. In the Brahadaranyaka it is stated:

"yathagneh ksudra visphulinga vyuccarantij evamevasmatatmanah ** sarvani bhutani vyuccaranti" (Br. 2/2/20)

Just as innumerable sparks cascade out of the flame, similarly from Krsna, the universal soul (atma), emanates the jivas, who are His separated part and parcel.

In another section of the same text we find:

"tasya va etasya purusasya dve eva sthane bhavata idanca paraloka sthananca; sandhyam trtiyam svapanasthanam tasmin sandhye sthane tisthannete ubhe sthane pasyatidanca paraloka-sthananca" (Br had. 4/3/9)

The jiva has access to two places - this material world and the much sought-after spiritual realm. He is situated in a dream-like (svapanasthanam) third state, on the margin of these two worlds. From that middle position he is able to see both the

material and the spiritual worlds.

The following statement from the Brahadaranyaka describes the symptoms of jiva's marginal position:

"tad-yatha mahamatsya ubhe kule'nusancarati purvancaparancaivame-vayam purassa etavubha-vantavanusancarati svapnatance yuddhantan-ca" (Br.had. 4/3/18)

The symptoms of marginal existence is like a huge aquatic who is capable of living in both the eastern and western sides of the river at will; similarly the jiva could be situated in the waters of the causal ocean which lies between the material and spiritual worlds is able to reside in both the dream-like world of matter and the spiritual world of divine wakefulness.

Br: What is vedic understanding of marginal situation (tatostha).

RB: The meeting point or line of water and land is called tata where the water touches land is land, then where is tata or the margin Tata is merely the demarcation that separates water from land. Tata, is a very subtle state, it cannot be perceived through mundane vision. From this allegory take water as the spiritual world and earth as the material world, then the fine line that divides the two worlds is tata. Exactly at this subtle demarcation is jiva located.

The countless atomic particles that float in the sunrays give an inclining of jiva's position. To one direction jiva sees the spiritual universe and to the other he sees the phenomenal world created by Lord Brahma, the world maya or illusion. The supreme Lord's spiritual energies are unlimited and the maya-sakti is enormous; and right between the two are the innumerable jivas. The jivas are a product of Krsna's tatastha-sakti (marginal potency) and hence by nature jiva is marginal.

Br: What is a marginal nature ?

: Since jiva is located in the middle, with access to both directions, constitutionally he is susceptible to the controls of both energies. This condition is symptomatic of a marginal nature. The tata, or margin when moved by the force of the water commandeers land to make it its river-bed, similarly the hardness of land solidifies the margin converting it to land. When jiva looks towards Krsna his faith in Krsna increases and has a stronger foothold in the spiritual realms. But if he contemplates maya, the illusory energy then he turns his back to Krsna and becomes enmeshed in the net of maya - this is the characteristic of the marginal nature.

Br: Is there any presence of maya-sakti in jiva's constitutional structure?

RB: No, - jiva is a product of spiritual nature. But because he is infinitesimal in size he lacks sufficient spiritual strength which makes him vulnerable and so can be easily defeated by maya., Maya is totally absent in jiva's constitution.

Br: One of my teachers taught me that a spiritual fragment from brahman became engulfed by maya, and that is jiva. He gave the example of the sky; the sky is in fact the borderless ether, till it is captured within a boundary. It is the same way with jiva, jiva is by nature brahman, when he is covered over by maya he becomes jiva. What is exactly meant by this?

RB: This is simply the mayavadi view. How can maya even touch brahman, who is fully transcendental. And if you opine that brahman is a latent, unmanifest energy, still how can maya come close to it? Where is the question of maya being active when she is a latent, veiled energy. Brahman can never become deluded by maya's shroud of illusion. If you admit that brahman is endowed with supreme, transcendental energy, then how can maya, an insignificant energy compared to brahman, defeat the superior, spiritual energy and create jiva out of brahman?

Brahman is immeasurable. Then how can brahman be fragmented and filled up in pots like some subtle matter, gas? It is totally unacceptable that maya can influence brahman. Maya is absolutely uninvolved in jiva's creation process; in spite of jiva's minute size he is of superior nature.

Br: Another of my professors once explained that jiva is a reflection of brahman. Just as the sun is reflected on the water surface, brahman reflected on maya is seen as jiva. Does this make any sense to you?

RB: This is also mayavada talk. Brahman is boundless and without boundaries, how can the boundless be reflected off anything mundane? It goes against the vedic tenets to say the brahman can be measured - this philosophy is absurd and aberrant.

Br: Once an itinerant sannyasi visiting Navadvipa said in public lecture that there is no nomenclature called jiva; jiva is a product of illusion, once this illusion is removed, there is only the undivided, non-differentiated brahman - nothing else. What was his point?

RB: This is another typically illogical mayavadi argument.

According to the vedic dictum in the Chandogya Upanishad -

"ekamevaditiam" (Ch. 6/2/1)

In the very beginning, before creation, only that one eternal non-dual truth existed, was there anything besides brahman? So if brahman was the only one in existence, where did (bhrama) illusion come from? And secondly, who is under illusion? If the answer is that brahman is in illusion, then you degrade brahman from His transcendental position to something insignificant and shorn Him of His supra-mundane characteristic. Or if you argue that illusion (bhrama) is a separate entity then it contradicts the concept of nonduality or monism.

Br: I remember attending a debate in Navadvipa and a brahmana pandita tried to

establish the argument that jiva is the only reality in existence. Jiva creates everything in a dream-state and he experiences happiness and distress. When the dream cases he becomes brahman. Can you kindly explain this to me?

RB: This reeks of mayavadi thought. How can all this be accomplished and synthesised - from brahman-state to jiva-state in a dream...? By proffering analogies like - mayavadis will never succeed in establishing the concept of monism. Their arguments are shallow and attempt to mislead the jivas.

Br: So far I have understood that jiva's original identity is beyond maya's circle of influence. But maya is able to captivate jiva due to the nature of his constitution. My question is, did cit-sakti, or the Lord's internal spiritual potency create jiva endowing him with an intrinsic marginal nature?

RB: No. Cit-sakti is Krsna's full and absolute spiritual energy. Anything she creates is eternally perfect. Jiva is not an eternally perfected (nitya-siddha) being; through sadhana (the process of practical devotional service) he becomes perfected (sadhana-siddha) and experiences the same level of spiritual bliss as a nitya-siddha. The four classes of saktis of Srimati Radhika are Her nitya-siddha associates and are Her Kaya-vynha expansions, while Radhika is cit-sakti Herself (cit-sakti-svarupa).

The jivas are produced by Krsna's jiva-sakti, or marginal potency. Cit-sakti is Krsna full and complete potency (Purna-sakti), whereas jiva-sakti is Krsna incomplete and partial energy (apur-na-sakti). All full and absolute activities are transformations of the purna-sakti, and the infinitesimal spiritual having entities are the transformation of the apurna-sakti. Lord Krsna expands Himself taking up forms appropriate for presiding over the different manifestations of His Sakti. In the cit-sakti manifestation Lord Krsna presides over in His original form as Krsna and as Narayana the Lord of Vaikuntha. When presiding over jiva-sakti He expands as Lord Balaram, His vilasa-murti (expansion who assists Krsna in His pastimes). In maya-sakti He accepts the triplicate Visnu expansions of Karanodakasayi, Ksirodakasayi and Garbhodakasayi.

As Krsna, in Vraja, He brings into existence everything that is fully and wholly spiritual. As Balaram, He accepts the form of Ananta-sesa and generates the eight varieties of servitors, the eternally liberated associates of the supreme Lord Krsna (nitya-parsada), to execute the eight types of devotional service to Krsna. While in Vaikuntha, Lord Balaram expands as Sankarsana (Sesa) to generate eight varieties of nitya-parsadas of Lord Narayana to accomplish the eight kinds of service to Him. Lord Sankarsana further incarnates as Mahavisnu to preside over maya-sakti, then accepts the form of supersoul (paramatma) and generates the conditioned jivas, who are inclined towards maya.

As long as the conditioned souls do not receive the shelter of the Lord's internal spiritual potency, hladini-sakti, by His mercy alone, they are always prone to be subjugated by maya. In maya's captivity they are obedient to the dictates of the three modes of material nature (triguna). Hence the conclusion is that jiva-sakti gives birth to jiva - cit-sakti does not produce the jivas.

Br: I heard you say earlier that the spiritual world as well as the jivas are eternal; how is it possible for eternal entities to have birth, appearance or creation? If at a certain time they appear because they were nonexistent before it, how does that confer eternality upon them?

RB: Time and space as you experience in this material world is quite apart from time and space in the spiritual world. Material time is divided into three sections - past, present and future; but in the spiritual world time is an unfragmented continuum - it is perennially present there. All spiritual activities, and happenings in the transcendental realm are perceived in the present (vartamana) time. Whatever incident we describe is laced with, and rooted in mundane place and time factor. Therefore when we discuss spiritual subjects and say things like - jiva became later entangled in maya; the spiritual world was created; only cit-sakti plays the protagonist in jiva's creation and not maya and so on, our words are influenced by material time concept. Such conditioning in our captive status is very natural and inevitable. All discussions on jiva and transcendence cannot be divorced from mundane time concept and hence we must talk in terms of past, present and future.

When you are trying to understand the purport of this topic keep in mind that a person who is solely searching the pure essence will perceive and apply the concept of eternal continuous present time factor. Dear young man, you must be extremely cautious on this subject reject the unavoidable mundaneness of it and simply assimilate the spiritual thought.

Krsna's eternal servant jiva, having forgotten his real identity has become imprisoned by maya - This sentence is often repeated by the Vaisnavas. But everyone knows that in spite of jiva being an eternal entity is of two kinds - eternally conditioned (nitya-baddha_) and eternally liberated (nitya-mukta): This sort of statement is made because the ordinary human intellect is in the grips of illusion and he cannot comprehend transcendental matters. But the introspective sage perceives the spiritual truth in the quiet of his devotional meditation.

All our speeches are mundane, the more we talk the more is our speech being covered with contamination. But you will have to pick out from it the pure truth. There is no room for debate and argument as far as these topics are concerned. Because it is an exercise in futility to employ logic and rhetorics in spiritual subjects which are inconceivable concepts.

I am aware that you cannot immediately fathom the depths of this spiritual thought. As and when your devotional practice and spiritual attachment increases your power to discriminate between matter and spirit will be sharpened. Your body and its present activities are mundane, but in reality you are not mundane - you are an infinitesimal, spiritual entity. When you learn more about yourself. You will realise how much superior and different the nature of your real self is from the phenomenal world.

My telling you about your real self or you hearing and reading about it, will not bring you true gains. You must begin the process to chant the holy names of the Lord sincerely. Your spiritual identity will gradually become manifest. The perception of the spiritual world will begin to take discernible shape. Both mind and words are products of materialism - unfiring efforts cannot make it possible for them to even approach transcendental topics. Hence the Vedas, say :

"yato vaco nivartante aprapyā manasa saha" (Tai. Ah: 2/9)

From whom, the mind and words after searching, return unsuccessfully is Brahman.

My advice to you on this is that you do not approach anyone regarding this philosophy. Try to get a feel for it, you must realise it on your own. I have so far given you pointers and hints.

Br: You had said that jiva is like the spark of a flame, the atomic particle of the rays of the spiritual sun. What exactly is jiva's role according to these analogies?

RB: Kṛṣṇa is the conflagration or the self-illuminating spiritual sun. Everything which is in the burning flame or the flaming sun globe are fully spiritual. The rays emanating out of its source are the subservient expansions of svarūpa-sakti. The atomic particles comprising the rays are the living entities, jiva. Svarūpa sakti has manifested the sun planet and the activities that take place outside the globe are activities of the jiva-sakti, the partial expansion of svarūpa-sakti. Therefore any activities pertaining to the jivas is the action of jiva-sakti alone. According to this vedic statement - 'parasya saktirvidhaiva sruyate" (Svet. 6/8) cit-sakti is para-sakti, or the highest absolute potency. Outside of the spiritual realm and between the spiritual realm and the māyā cosmos, or the material creations lies the field of tata-sakti, where cit-sakti manifests Herself in Her partial expansion as the sunrays, or the jiva sakti, and generates the eternal jivas in the tatastha field.

Br: A fire, the sun, the burning sparks are all material inert objects. Why are these being used as analogies in describing spiritual topics?"

RB: I warned you earlier that using mundane words to explain transcendental topics produces the hazard of having to deal with unavoidable contaminations in concepts. One is forced to press into use mundane analogies of sun and spark and rays because of a lack of other possibilities. In truth Kṛṣṇa is a million and more times superior to the sun, the same is with His abode and His bodily instance. But in spite of it because of a close resemblance between them one may use such comparisons and analogies.

However, these examples help in conveying limited ideas and comparing specific qualities and not all the qualities in their entirety and in all their aspects. The sun's and sunray's beauty and their qualities of self-illumination and revelation of others act as good examples to show the absolute Truth's similar qualities. But the sun's and sunray's intrinsic qualities of burning things and being of gross matter are

not comparable to spiritual objects. When I compare milk with water. I'm trying to show the similarity of their liquid state and only that similarity is to be accepted, not that milk and water are exactly the same in all respects. Hence analogies assist in highlighting only the consanguinities of two things even having contrasting natures.

Br: On one side are the rays of the transcendental sun and on the other the atomic particles that float in them. These particles are non-different from the rays and yet, as you said, they are eternally different - how can this be possible?

RB: One of the characteristics of material nature is that objects produced from another object either remain attached with its source or separate completely from it. For example the egg produced by the bird is totally separated from its source. Whereas the finger-nails, hair etc keep growing on the human body and remain attached to their sources as long as they are not cut and clipped. However things are different in spiritual nature.

All emanations from the spiritual sun Krsna are simultaneously one and different. The sunrays and the ray particles are inseparable and same. Similarly jiva-sakti, which is compared to the sunrays, and the innumerable jivas, represented by the atomic ray particles, both of which are generated by Lord Krsna the transcendental sun, remain inseparably with Him, just as the sun and its rays and particles of light are all undividedly one. And though they are one, at the same time because the individual jivas acquire and exercise their minute independence they are eternally separate from Krsna. Hence the eternal truth is that Krsna and jiva are simultaneously one and different.

The panditas offer another example to drive home this point. The example being mundane is naturally provincial. A piece of gold jewelry made from a large block of gold is, in regards to the source material, same as the block; but in comparing their amount and size, it is different from the block. In spite of the inadequacy of this example one idea is unequivocally conveyed the transcendental sun, Krsna is non-different from His transcendental energy - both being spiritual entities; and He (Krsna) as the complete absolute Divinity, source of all energies is distinct in volume and status from His infinitesimal product. Therefore the analogy of ghatakasa and mahakasa (the pot and the sky) proffered by the mayavadis and monists in the spiritual context is not a well-balanced and appropriate one.

Br: Spirit and matter differ in their status and natures, so how can any analogy comparing them be reasonable?

RB: In material nature there are gradations of status which the rhetoricians or logicians (naiyayika) describe as eternal. Such status discrepancies do not exist between matter and spirit. Provisionally, we have discussed and established that spirit or transcendence is reality and matter is merely its reflection and transformation. The transformed object diversifies itself in several ways from the reality although many affinities between them remain. In a sleet rain, half of it is hail or snow, the rest is cold rain-water. Hail or snow is transformed water, and

acquires a dis-similar status from its source, but the snow and rain-water are consanguine on account of their coolness. In the case of hot water and cold water, they are both same in the quality of their liquid state but are opposed in the matter of temperature. Hence we can see that certain traits of the real object persists in its transformation.

This material world is a reflection and transformation of the spiritual world. There are certain characteristics in material nature which are similar to those of the spiritual world. Taking help of these similarities, spiritual subjects are discussed and analogies given. Another method is called the 'arundhati-darsana nyaya'. (Principle of logic which states that to see something remote and subtle help of a large and easily noticeable object near it must be taken to point it out). By comparing the gross characteristics of matter with its opposite nature, we can surmise the esoteric truths in spiritual nature. Which means characteristics which are contrary to the material nature are close to the spiritual truths.

Lord Krsna's pastimes are absolutely spiritual - it has no contamination of mundane characteristics. When these supra-mundane topics of Vraja from the Srimad Bhagavatam are discussed in assemblies, individuals in the audience receive different results each according to their level of spiritual consciousness. The gross materialist thinks that these narrations are stories as the fiction novels about ordinary heroes and heroines. The madhyama-adhikary (intermediate devotee) applies the arundhati-darsana principle and perceives the spiritual truth through mundane words and senses. He experiences sublime bliss because of his devotional mood and approach on this subject. This first class, unalloyed devotee (uttama-adhikary) become saturated in the sublime pastimes and relishes the pure, transcendental rasas.

What other means are there besides these principles of logic (nyaya) to instruct the jivas about the Absolute Truth? A subject matter which is ineffable, which the faculty of the mind and emotions cannot penetrate, how can the conditional soul realise it and bask in its illuminating glory? I do not discern an alternative approach to this topic other than by the succour provided by analogies and arundhati-darsana nyaya. The material nature is victimised either, only by different - this we have to accept.

Br: Where is the disparity between the supreme Lord and jiva?

RB: First I will enumerate the eternal similarities between God and man and later their eternal distinctions. The Supreme Lord is the embodiment of knowledge (jnana); symbol of omniscience; greatest counsellor, self-manifest highest Divinity; illuminating others; the knower of the fields of action (Ksetrajna) and self-willed. These self-same qualities are also present in the jivas but marginally. Whereas the Lord absolutely epitomises these characteristics because He is the proprietor of absolute supreme potency and jiva, due to his infinitesimal potency and diminutive size possesses these same characteristics in minuscule degree. Thus, although there exists a disparity in size and nature between the Lord and jiva, in respect of the qualities both possess there is close affinity.

The omniscient supreme Lord is the controller and master of Svarupa-sakti or cit-sakti, jiva-sakti and maya-sakti. Sakti, or all the potencies are His maid-servants ready to execute His bidding alone without, individual prerogative. The Lord's qualities are present in the jiva in atomic doses but jiva is still the slave of sakti.

In the teachings of dasa-mula, the word maya does not exclusively convey mundane-energy, maya (jada-maya) it very definitely addresses the Lord's svrupa-sakti, or the absolute internal potency yogamaya. According to etymology - 'miyate anaya iti maya' (that with which one can measure is maya) the Lord's energy or sakti which reveals Krsna in the spiritual world, to the jivas and in the material nature is known as maya. Krsna is the Lord of maya and jiva is her captive slave. The Svetasvatara Upanisad comments:

"yasmanmayi srjate visvametat; tasmimscanyo mayaya sanniruddhah mayantu prakrtim vidyanmayinantu mahesvaram tasyavayavabhutaistu vyaptam sarvamidam jagat" (Svet.Up 4/9-10)

The ingredients with which the supreme Godhead, Lord of maya creates this universe and into which maya's captive jiva enters is known as prakrti, or maya. The supreme Lord, controller of maya pervades the entire creation in His universal form.

According to his quote from the veda the word mayi refers to the Lord of maya, Krsna. The word 'prakrti' means the complete, absolute energy (sampurna-sakti). This pre-eminent superiority and absolute nature is the supreme Lord's Divine prerogative. Jiva does not possess these traits, not now in the conditioned state, and not even when he is liberated. The eternal distinction between jiva and bhagavan is stated in Brahma-sutra-"jagatvyapar varjjam prakaranadasannihitatvat" (Br-su 4/417) [translation : The work of creation, maintenance and governance of the entire material and spiritual worlds is possible only by the supreme Brahma and no other individuals can do it; the liberated jivas are able to conduct other works, but not his.

Taittiriya Upanisad's comment on this topic is :- "yato va imani bhutani jayante" - meaning the one who is the primal source of all living entities, the sustainer and at the time of total dissolution (pralaya) in whom everything enters, also refers to the supreme Brahman. Even with stretching the meanings of words, the jiva, liberated or otherwise, is not indicated anywhere in this verse. In entire sruti and Smrti and vedic scriptures supreme Lord Bhagavan alone has been accredited with controlling the universal affairs - never the jiva. Hypothetically if jiva would be entrusted with such immense power of creation etc. The humanity would be faced with the honorific predicament of polytheism. Hence it is to be clearly understood that even liberated souls are inadequate in matter of creation, maintenance and annihilation of the cosmic manifestation. This eternal discrepancy jiva has with the supreme Lord is always applicable to jiva, he can never circumvent it. So you realise that jiva is Krsna's eternal servitor is an important dictum (maha-vakya) or great saying - are not an imaginary story.

Br: If the eternal difference is perfect and conclusively proved, then when and how does the principle of sameness become active? Ultimately we will hereto accept the concept of nirvana, or merging with brahman?

RB: No my boy, that is emphatically not the case. Jiva is under all conditions non-different from the supreme Lord.

Br: But did you not say that they are inconceivably and simulta-neously one and different?

RB: On the basis of spiritual nature and qualities (cit-dharma) jiva is non-different from Krsna, but on the ground of spiritual identity (svarupa) they are eternally dissimilar: And although there is parity, the aspect of their eternal disparity is pre-eminent and conspicuous. For example, any valuable object suddenly acquired is claimed to be simultaneously both by Providential arrangement or by some unknown cause, not providential; in this case the reason of Providential generosity is more acceptable. Another example from the material world is the sky, it is an inert matter and has a source, but in spite of a source the sky is self-evident and needs no further introduction. The supreme Lord's eternal difference with the jiva in spite of similarities with him is still the Lord's real identity.

Br: So kindly tell me more about jiva's eternal nature.

RB: Jiva is an infinitesimal spiritual entity endowed with the merit of knowledge (jnana); possesses the identity of 'I'; is an enjoyer; is a counsellor and an intelligent conscious being. Jiva is the proprietor of an eternal identity which is extremely esoteric and subtle. The human body is made complete by the inclusion of its limbs, eyes, ears, nose etc.; similarly jiva's spiritual body is embellished with perfect symmetrical features, and this is his eternal form. When jiva becomes conditioned two false identities (upadhi) ensue his eternal, spiritual form. The first shroud is made up of his subtle, mental frame, the second is his gross physical body.

The upadhi of subtle body is indispensable to the jiva which he acquires from the moment of maya's captivity and remains with him till he becomes liberated (mukta). At the time of death jiva changes his old gross body for another, but not his subtle body. The subtle body carries over with it all the desires of a life time when leaves one body and passes on and enters jiva's new gross body after death. The details of jiva's changing his body and situational described in the Chandogya upanishad and Brahmasutra, it is known as pancagni-vidya, or five fiery substances (eitagni, vrstyagni, bhojanagni, rohanagni etc.)

The nature and proclivity of jiva in his new life and body is decided by his desires and samskaras (purificatory vows) of his previous life. He acquires his class and caste according to these also. His works and actions in the present life are prompted by his varnasramas (socio-religious order) and after death the same is repeated. Thus these are the two coverings of jiva's eternal spiritual identity -- The

gross and subtle bodies.

Br.: What is the difference between jiva's eternal form (nitya-sarira and subtle body (linga-sarira)?

RB: The eternal form is fully spiritual, faultless and jiva's real identity, which is, his true self or I. The subtle body is acquired by jiva at the time of material contact. It consists of three corrupt transformation of spiritual energy --- mind, intelligence and false ego.(mana, buddhi ,ahamkera).

Br.: Are mana, buddhi and ahankara material substances? If yes, then how are they merited with knowledge and action (jnana,kriya)

RB: The Bhagavad Gita declares :
"bhumir apo'nalo vayuh kham mano buddhir eva ca
ahankara ityam me bhinna prakrtir astadha
apareyam itas tv anyam prakrtim viddhi me param
jiva-Bhutam maha-baho yayedam dharyate jagat
etad yonini bhutani sarvani upadharaya
aham krtsnasya jagatah prabhavah pratayas tatha" (BG 7/4-6)

[Earth,water,fire,air,ether, mind,intelligence and false ego---altogether these eight comprise my separated material energies. Besides this inferior nature, omighty-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.

Of all that is material and all that is spiritual in this world, know for certain that I am both its origin and dissolution.]

According to this quotation from the Gitopanisad the Supreme personality of Godhead, master of all energies, possesses two natures: (Prakrti) superior spiritual (para) and material (apara). His para-prakrti is the jiva sakti and his apara-prakrti is the jada-sakti or maya-sakti. Jiva Sakti is the part and parcel of the supreme lord hence he is known as para, or superior. Maya-sakti is the external material energy and so she is called 'apara' or inferior. Jiva is distinct from apara sakti, maya. The inferior apara energy comprises of eight gross elements --- five gross elements plus the three subtle elements (mana, buddhi, ahankara) which in spite of being internal. They are nevertheless matter. And although they exhibit some form of knowledge (jnana) it is not transcendental but mundane.

The impressions the mind (mana) receives of the material world is coloured by material knowledge (visaya-jnana), this colouring is rooted in materialism and is not a transcendental adjustment. That which analyses the colouring - whether it is real or unreal is the intelligence (buddhi) which is mundane. Ultimately, that which acquiesces the material knowledge is false-ego (ahankara) which is also mundane, not supra-mundane. These three phenomena amalgamate to produce a mundane, second identity of jiva. This false identity is called the subtle form (linga-sarira)., The materially engrossed jiva's subtle and false identity of linga-sarira grows

so strong that it veils his spiritual identity of his eternal form.

The identity of jiva's eternal form (intya-svarupa) which is related to transcendental sun, Krishna as his integral part and parcel, is eternal---when jiva is liberated (mukta) he regains his original, eternal identity. As long as the eternal identity, remains under the wraps of linga-sarira jiva's identification with this material world will be more pronounced, concomitantly his spiritual identity will be non-assertive. Since jiva's subtle body is noumenal, his gross body covers, it and executes actions. The gross body separately develops its false identity in the form of varnashrama status. Mind, intelligence and false ego are indeed material, but because they interpret, though perversely, the proclivity of the real self (atma-vrthi) they arrogate being sources of knowledge.

Br.: Respected master I have understood that jiva's eternal form is spiritual and the spiritual limbs and features of are sublime and beautiful. In his conditioned state, his subtle material body veils this beautiful form and the gross material covering completely corrupts and perverts his original identity. I wonder if jiva in his emancipated condition (mukta-avastha) is fully flawless.

RB: The atomic part and parcel of God, jiva's spiritual form is certainly faultless but incomplete, due to his extremely diminutive size and vulnerability. The only visible weakness in this faultless condition is that in a close encounter with maya-sakti (illusory potency) his spiritual form is capable of become eclipsed and concealed. This is how Simad Bhagavatam describes it :

"ye'nye'ravindaksa vimukta-maninas tvayy asta-bhavad avisuddha-buddhayah aruhya kreehrena param padam tatah patanty adho'nadrta-yusmad-angtirayah (SB 10/2/32)

[O lotus-eyed one, those who think they are liberated in this life but do not render devotional service to you must be impure intelligence. Although they accept severe 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.]

Thus we see that however elevated a position a liberated soul may attain his incomplete constitution stays permanently with him---this is the definition of jiva-tatva. Thus the Vedas reiterate that Bhagavan is the lord of maya and jiva is in all situations susceptible to maya's subjugation.

Chapter 16

Vrajanath returned home pondering over the ten-point instructions he heard on 'jiva' principle. Lying in bed at night he probed deeply - "My queries regarding : who am I? has been answered. I realize now that I am but a spark of ray emanating from the transcendental Krishna sun. Although, I am minute in stature yet I am cognizant of my existence, possess knowledge of my true nature and realize that a drop of unlimited transcendental bliss is within my reach. I possess a spiritual

identity. Infinitesimal as I am, my spiritual form closely resembles Krsna's spiritual form. My present misfortune stems from the fact that this spiritual form is not manifest. My good fortune will ascend once I sincerely endeavour to bring out my spiritual form. It is imperative I understand why this pull of misfortune hangs over me. I will clarify this point with my guru tomorrow. "Sleep stealthily crept in at around 2 a.m. and overpowered Vrajanath.

In the wee hours of dawn Vrajanath dreamt he had given up material life and become a vaisnava. After waking up, he reflected unhurriedly that perhaps the Lord will help him come out of his material entanglement. He went and sat down on a raised platform in the courtyard meant for religious festivals. Just then a group of young students came and touched his feet offering him due respect. They addressed him saying - "We have learnt innumerable arguments on logic from you in the past. Our desire now is to be tutored on the famous book of logic "Nyaya Kusumanjali".

An unassuming Vrajanath replied - "I have packed all my books for good, just like the illustrious Nimai Pandita. I have resolved to take up another path. You should approach another teacher."

Same time as the students were making an exit Sri Caturbhuj Misra came up to Vrajanath's grandmother with a marriage proposal for Vrajanath. He explained to her - Sri Vijaynath Bhattacharya hails from aristocracy and his daughter is beautiful. Their family standards meet your requirements. The girl's father has no demands for dowry if Vrajanath accepts the proposal right away.

Having overheard this conversation Vrajanath thought - "what a dilemma! Here I am seriously considering leaving family and home, and along comes a marriage proposal and that, too, at a most unopportune moment".

This became a contentious issue. Knowing his mother, grandmother and the elder ladies of the family on one side and he alone on the other side defending his view point. The entire day was wasted in arguments. Evening descended quietly. Rain clouds announced their presence with deep rumblings and lightnings cutting off their loud rantings. A heavy downpour followed soon, making it impossible for Vrajanath to go to Mayapur that day. Starting early next day the differences on the marriage issue continued bespoiling Vrajanath's mood and appetite. Only after dark could Vrajanath get away from his house. He hurried to Babaji's little hut and fell flat on the ground offering obeisances to him. Revered Babaji said - "The rains must have kept you from coming last night, I am very happy that you come now."

Vrajanath burst out saying - "Dear master. I am suddenly faced with some serious problem which I would like to explain later. For now I request you to kindly clarify certain queries: for example 'jiva' is of pure spiritual substance. Then why does he have to descend into this degraded materialism?" A gentle smile appeared on Babaji's lips and he replied - "By his constitution (svarupa) 'jiva' is Krsna's surrendered servitor and he is meant to serve His eternally. The conditioned

souls, the 'jiva's, who are alienated from their innate nature or 'svarupa' are wallowing in self-aggrandisement, they have rejected Krsna, hence are being penalised by 'mayasakti' (the Lord's illusory energy) who binds them with chains in the form of the three material modes, namely ignorance, passion and goodness ('tamah, rajah, sattva'). Further 'she' (maya) enshrouds jiva's svarupa' with a gross and subtle body, and she imprisons him in the excruciating cycle of karmic reactions which at times heaves him to heaven or pushes him down to hell". "In Golok Vrndavan (for the service of Lord Krsna) Lord Balaram, and in Vaikuntha (for the service of Lord Narayan) Lord Sankarsa-na manifest unlimited 'nitya-parsada's, or eternal associates, who belong to the 'jiva' category. These 'nitya-parsada' are eternally engaged in serving their object of worship (the Supreme Godhead) imbued in 'rasa', or spiritual mellows. They are always situated in their original spiritual identity, remain constantly engrossed in seeking means to satisfy their Lordship, and they possess undiminishing enthusiasm and affection towards the Lord. They are always extremely potent being impregnated with the Lord's 'cit-sakti', or spiritual energy. They have no connection with 'maya', or the illusory energy, they are in fact oblivious of 'maya's very existence. This is because they are permanent residents of the spiritual world and 'maya' is just a faraway dream. They are fully absorbed in simply relishing the bliss of devotional service to their beloved Lord. Material joys and sorrows are totally alien to them, they are eternally liberated souls. 'Prema' or spiritual love is their life and soul and they do not even know that lamentation, death or fear actually exist."

"The infinitesimal 'jivas' emanating from Lord Mahavisnu's glance (laying in the causal ocean) impregnating 'maya-sakti' are countless in number. As they are maya's neighbours, these 'jivas' witness 'mayas' variegatedness. The symptoms of the general 'jivas' we earlier discussed are also present in these 'jivas', and because they are minuscule in stature and situated on the margin by constitution they look outwards both the material world and the spiritual sky. Their marginal condition make them vulnerable because till present they have not been strengthened with spiritual potency (cidbala) by the mercy of the Supreme Lord-their worshipable object. Those amongst them who desire to enjoy material nature (maya) become absorbed in matter and thus are eternally enthralled (nitya baddha) by her. While those who endeavour to serve the divine worshipable object (the Supreme Lord) on receiving His mercy are elevated to the spiritual world. Therefore, my son! We are in a most wretched state, having forgotten our devotion and service to Krsna we are held as 'maya's captives, and thus forfeited of our original transcendental status we are miserable".

Vrjanath - "Dear master! 'jiva' is the marginal potency (of the Lord) and is situated on the margin. Why then are some 'jiva' engrossed in material existence while others are elevated to the spiritual sky?"

Babaji - "Supreme Lord Krsna's transcendental qualities are also present in the 'jiva', but in a very minute degree. Lord Krsna's quality of free will is therefore innate in the 'jiva' constitution and is microscopic in content. When 'jiva' makes proper use of their independence he remains in connection with Krsna, but if he misutilizes it, he disassociates himself from the Lord and becomes attracted to exploit and

enjoy material nature. He develops the despicable quality of false pride, thinking - I am the enjoyer of all, I survey thus ignorance, illusion, great illusion, darkness, deep darkness - These five types ofnescience cloud the 'jivas' pure spiritual consciousness. The sole cause of 'jiva' becoming conditioned or liberated is whether he properly uses or misuses his minute independence".

Vrajanath - "Lord Krsna is unlimitedly merciful, yet why did He create the 'jivas' so weak? Because of his they become lured into subjugation by 'maya'."

Babaji - "What you say is true: Krsna is very munificent, but He is also extremely dynamic and always performing pastimes. With the view that 'jiva' can be an active partner to His various pastimes the Supreme Lord has made 'jiva' versatile and capable of rising from his humble position of being marginal to the soaring heights of 'maha-bhava', or the highest spiritual consciousness, which is endless and transcendental. To make 'jiva' strongly determined and enthusiastically willing to ascend to this divine position the lord has arranged for very gross and almost insurmountable obstacles on his path of progress. These hindrances are in the form of his falsely identifying himself with his body and intimately associating with matter. 'Jivas' who are moving down towards material entanglement are divorced from their spiritual identity, seeking only to satisfy their senses and gradually they distance themselves from the Supreme Lord. They become more and more depraved, but the infinitely compassionate Lord, along with His transcendental abode and eternal associates, descends to earth and appears before them in person to offer them the opportunity to be elevated to the highest spiritual destination. 'Jivas' who grab this opportunity to elevate themselves gradually raise to the transcendental realm and acquire the same position as an eternal associate of the Lord".

Vrajanath - "Why must 'jiva' suffer to enable the Supreme Lord perform His pastimes"?

Babaji - "For 'jiva' to possess and exercise his free will is indeed a special grace of God. Inert matter is without free will, hence is non-essential and vacuous. 'Jiva', on the other hand being able to assert his free will has attained the position of lordship over the material world.

Suffering and pleasure are different conditions of the mind. What we term as 'suffering', a person who is attached to his condition will define it as 'pleasure'. The final outcome of all material pleasure is pain. The materially engrossed person in the end accrues only misery. When his misery is exacerbated he begins to desire for discrimination leading to inquisitiveness and inquiry. With the attitude of submissive inquiry comes the need for saintly association, which blossoms into 'sradha', or faith. Faith installs him on the path to self-elevation. Therefore, suffering is ultimately a boon. Impure gold is purified by firing and repeated hammering. Similarly, when 'jiva' is contaminated by flagitious faculties to enjoy his senses and thus turns away from Krsna he needs to be purified by the fire and hammering of excruciating material experience. The sufferings of a gross materialist is in that sense auspicious and the result of the Lord's mercy. Therefore the

untold misery 'jiva' is out to suffer by participating in Lord Krsna's pastimes is considered by far-sighted visionaries as good and beneficial while the myopic materialists abhor it as deathly suffering."

Vrajanath - "Agreed that the conditioned 'jivas's sufferings are ultimately beneficial, but presently it is very painful. Was it not within the Omnipotent Supreme Lord Krsna's means to change this torturous path of material existence to a more facile one?"

Babaji - "Lord Krsna's pastimes are endless and varied, hence this also is another of His many unique activities. When the Supreme Autocrat willfully engages in a kaleidoscope of pastimes then why should it be unusual for His to enact this particular pastime? To keep intact the principle of variedness in His pastimes, not a single pastime of any nature can be rejected. Whatever the pastime, the participants assisting the Lord will have to accept many hardships and pain. Lord Krsna is the 'purusa', or Supreme enjoyer and absolute master. All the 'upakar-ana', or participants and paraphernalia are fully under the control of the 'purusa', and they are the working tools of the Supreme Creator. To surrender oneself to the sweet will of the Supreme Lord, it is only natural that he has to accept adversities. If in the end adversity turns to auspiciousness then that misery is not misery, therefore why must you then call it so? 'Jiva's tribulations while trying to satisfy the Lord in His pastimes is by all accounts pleasurable. Yet the conditioned soul with his free will denies himself the exultations one experiences by assisting in Lord Krsna's transcendental pastimes and instead tightly embraces 'maya' who metes out acute harassment. If anyone is at fault for this dilemma, it is 'jiva' and definitely not Krsna."

Vrajanath - "If 'jiva' was not allocated his share of free will then would anything have gone amiss? Lord Krsna is omniscient, hence He knew that 'jiva' will have to suffer if he is given freedom in which case is Lord Krsna not held responsible for 'jiva's misery?"

Babaji - "Free choice, or 'svatantrata' is indeed the rarest gem. There are many entities in the material world and none were given it, which implies that they are far lesser and negligible beings. If 'jiva' would not be endowed with free will he would then be simply reduced to become at par with inert and insignificant matter. 'Jiva' is a part and parcel of the Absolute Transcendence (cidvastu), hence he possesses all the same qualities of the Absolute whole but only in minute measure. Independence is the innate characteristic of 'cidvashi', or spiritual substance (Krsna). It is impossible to separate a substance from its natural characteristics. Therefore free will is certainly present in 'jiva's nature but proportionate to his infinitesimal size. The presence of free will in 'jiva's original constitution has elevated Him to a much higher status than matter and has made him its Lord and master. It has also favoured him to become the Supreme Lord's dearest servitor. But when the same 'jiva' misappropriates his free choice and becomes engrossed in material activities the merciful Lord Krsna is stricken and mourns 'jiva's ill fate. Crying, the Lord shadows 'jiva's movement, planning out means to save him. Krsna knows that His nectarean and immortal pastime are not

available to the 'jiva', and so - out of full compassion for him, He manifests His inconceivable and wonderful pastimes in this material nature. Realising that the 'jiva', in his conditioned state, is unable to comprehend His transcendental activities, He, Krsna, descended to earth in Navadvipa - appearing as the most munificent incarnation. Acting as the divine spiritual master, the Lord initiated 'Jiva' into the supremely efficacious method for his salvation. He explained the esoteric truth about the Supreme Lord's transcendental name, form, qualities, pastimes and so on. Simultaneously He took the position of a pure devotee and taught the science of pure devotional service by His own exemplary conduct. My dear boy! Can you possibly think of blaming such a magnanimous Lord? Lord Krsna's compassion is immeasurable, but your, the 'jiva's condition is alarmingly precarious".

Vrajanath - "Does it then mean that 'maya sakti', or the illusory potency embodies our ill fate and is our most vicious enemy? Is it only that when the Omnipotent and Omniscient Supreme Lord Krsna dissipated 'maya' that 'jiva's torment is alleviated?".

Babaji - "Maya is the shadow of the Supreme Lord's spiritual potencies, thus is a transformation of that purely transcendental energy. The Lord uses 'maya' as a tool to disinfect the contaminated 'jiva' and make him eligible. Maya' is a maidservant of Krsna and she chastises and cures the errant conditioned souls who are turned away from Krsna. When 'jiva', who is a fully spiritual entity, forgets his position as an eternal servant of Krsna he unnecessarily commits a grievous blunder. It is due to this aberration that 'jiva' is sentenced to repeated punishment, carried out by 'maya'. Who then looms before 'jiva' as a witch. The material world is like a prison for the errant 'jiva'. Just as the king builds prisons out of his kindness to protect his subjects from harm - similarly the munificent Lord Krsna has provided this material creation as reform house for the 'jivas' and 'maya' takes the role of the prison superintendent."

Vrajanath - "If this material world is like the jail then what can be termed as the fetters?".

Babaji-- " 'Maya' is armed with three types of chains : chains made of 'sattvaguna' (the mode of goodness), 'rajaguna' (passion) and 'tamaguna' (ignorance). The condemned 'jivas' are bound with these chains. It is immaterial whether a 'jiva' is in the mode of goodness, passion or ignorance" he is in fetters. Chains may be made of gold, silver or iron - the metals differ but they are chains no less."

Vrajanath - "If we agree that 'jiva' is spiritual then how can the chains of material energy, or 'maya' hold him in bondage?"

Babaji - "Spiritual nature lies absolutely beyond material nature's circle of influence. As soon as 'jiva' falsely arrogates he is the enjoyer of 'maya', 'jiva' is enwrapped in a subtle material body, or 'linga sarira', made up of 'ahankara', or false ego. Maya then shackles 'jiva's subtle body with her chains..."

'Jivas' who are covered by false ego of the mode of goodness are denizens of the higher material planets, or heavenly planets. These demigods are shackled in golden chains of 'sattvagtuna'. Some 'jiva's of the mode of passion are from the higher planets and the rest are residents of the earth planet, but they are both bound by silver chain of 'rajaguna'. 'Jivas in the mode of ignorance are hopelessly inebriated by abominable carnal cravings meant to squeeze out material happiness and they are fettered in iron chains. The chained up souls cannot step out of the prison house - they are caged in by boundless miseries."

Vrajanath - "What are the activities of these 'jivas' held captive in 'maya's Prison house?"

Babaji - "First of all his activities are aimed at satisfying his materialistic inclinations for sense enjoyment. Secondly he tries to gain respite from the constant suffering that accompanies the prison life."

Vrajanath - "Kindly explain more in detail 'jiva's first type of activity."

Babaji - "'Jiva's gross covering is his gross material body. It passes through six phases: the body takes birth, it exists, it grows, it deteriorates, it produces by-products and it is finally destroyed. These six transformations are inherent to the gross material body - additionally hunger, thirst etc. are its characteristics. Conditions 'jiva', now residing in the gross body and being instigated by desires to gratify his senses becomes enslaved by the urges of eating, mating, sleeping etc. All his activities are directed at titillating his senses. From birth to his last breath he must perform ten specific types of activities to maintain himself. Additionally he executes another eighteen activities as promulgated in the Vedas. His motives for these works are that in his present birth he wants to accrue sufficient piety through ritualistic performances that will ensure his elevation to the heavenly planets where celestial delights await him. And thereafter on returning to earth he is certain to be born in a family of brahmanas or any other higher birth and lead a life of contentment. The other option for the conditioned soul is to take sinful ways. With the two kinds of activities - in the former the 'jiva after his sojourn in the celestial planets takes birth as a human, and in the latter he enters different hellish planets where terrible torture is meted out to him, finally re-turning to the earth planet in the form of a human being - the conditioned 'jiva', held as 'maya's' captive, is thus tied to the giant wheel of 'karma' making him perpetually traverse this material nature while he incessantly pursues after material goals for sense gratification. He goes back and forth from experiencing evanescent pleasures from pious deeds or temporary torment through misdeeds."

Vrajanath - "Kindly narrate now in detail the second type of activity."

Babaji - "The spirit soul presently residing in his tabernacle has to undertake various activities to supply to its needs. He must make proper arrangements to appease his hunger and quench his thirst. To ensure easy availability of needs he has to toil tirelessly and accumulate wealth to save for bitter winter for heat and clothing. To satiate his lust he has to marry. He continues to work hard making

sure his children and relatives are abundantly provided for, so that no deficiency arises. When his body is attacked by disease he takes timely action to make it healthy again. For protecting assets and interests he fights for them in court. He comes fully under the sway of the six sinful urges: lust, greed, anger, delusion hate and envy: they goad him into fights, violence, hatred, harrasing others, stealing, cruel-ty, false pride etc. For his shelter, comfort and protection he builds houses. His days and nights are spent in gratifying his senses and replenishing his needs".

Vrajanath - "If 'maya' had covered the 'jiva' with only a subtle body, or 'linga sarira', would it not have served her purpose?"

Babaji - "No, the subtle body alone would be inadequate: hence the gross body was a necessity. Actions initiated by the gross body desires in the subtle body, and as a result of these desires the next new gross body receives its shape and substance."

Vrajanath - "How are actions and their results interlinked? The 'mimamsa' philosophers postulate that providence, who decides the results of actions, is an imaginary being. According to them - 'actions give birth to a principle termed 'apurva' (wonder) and it is this 'apurva' principle which calculates and then gives out the results of actions. Is this a fact?"

Babaji - " The 'mimamsa' philosophers mainly acquainted with the principle of 'karma', or fruitive activity are not conversant with the philosophical conclusions of the Vedas. Basing vague judgements by observing the mood in which certain ritualistic performance are done they espouse a flaccid philosophy. In truth the Vedas disagree with their views. Vedas state - 'dva suparna sayuja sakhaya samanam vrksam parisavajate / tayonanyah pippalam svadvattyansnannanyau' bhicaksiti" (Svet Up.4/6, Mundaka 3/1/1, Rg Veda 1/164/21) :

"Two birds (paramatma or Ksirodakasayi Visnu and the Jiva) are perched on the same branch of a Peepal tree (representing this material world) like friends. One of them (jiva), is eating the fruit of the tree (according to his karma) while the other (paramatma) is a silent non-participating witness."

The purport of this verse is that 'jiva' enthralled by 'maya' is performing works and is tasting the fruit of his actions. The Supreme Lord, controller of 'maya', metes out the results according to 'jiva's' actions. As long as 'jiva' is unable to attain a direct audience with the Lord, the Lord continues to perform pastimes with 'jiva' appropriate to his situation. In this context where is the relevance of the 'mimamsa' philosophers' 'apurva' principle? Atheistic views are never conclusive and perfect."

Vrajanath - "Why do you refer to 'karma' as being without a beginning?"

Babaji - "The prime cause of all fruitive actions is the desire for it, and at the root of this desire lies ignorance. The definition of ignorance is when 'jiva' forgets he is Krsna's servant. This ignorance does not sprout out within the span of the creation of this material universe - the seed of 'karma' lies in the matrix of 'jiva's' marginal

position. Since Karma's source within the material world is untraceable it is described as beginning-less.

Vrajanath - "What is the distinction between 'maya' and 'avidya', or ignorance ?

Babaji - " 'Maya' is Krsna's energy. He has created the material cosmos with this energy. With the intention to redeem the conditioned 'jiva' gone astray the Lord has made 'mayasakti' dynamic... 'Maya' has two aspects - 'avidya' and 'pradhana' (initial cause of the material creation). 'Avidya' is related to 'jiva' while 'pradhan' is related to this material world. The material universe is produced from 'pradhan' and 'avidya' is the cause of 'jiva's' fruitive desires. 'Maya' has another two features - 'vidya' (knowledge) and 'avidya': They are both concerning the 'jivas'. 'Avidya' puts 'jiva' in his conditioned state of captivity and 'avidya' liberates him. When the 'jiva' is imprisoned 'jiva' aspires for reunion with Krsna, the 'vidya' principle becomes activated. But as long as 'jiva' remains oblivious of Krsna he is under the spell of 'avidya'. 'Brahmajnana', or knowledge of the impersonal aspect of Krsna, is also a branch of the 'vidya' principle. The first part of 'jiva's' awakened consciousness is known as positive endeavour and the latter part is called realization of knowledge. 'Avidya' obnubilates 'jiva's' consciousness and 'vidya' dissipates it."

Vrajanath - "How does 'pradhan' function ?

Babaji - "When 'maya' or the material nature is agitated by Krsna's potency in the form of time, 'mahattattva' or the total material substance is produced. Matter comes into existence when 'pradhan' an aspect of 'maya', is stirred into motion. 'Mahat tattva' transforms into 'ahankar' or false ego, and when 'ahankar' comes under the mode of ignorance 'akas', or ether is produced. 'Akas' is then transformed into air, the air to fire, fire transforms to water, water to earth - in this way the gross elements or 'mahabhuta' come into existence.

Now, listen carefully to how the 'panca tanmatra', or five material concomitants are created. 'Time, agitates material nature's feature of ignorance to produce the inclinations for 'jnana' (knowledge) and 'karma' (fruitive action) in 'mahat tattva'. Again the inclination for 'karma' in 'mahat tattva' transforms into the material modes of goodness and passion which produce material knowledge, or 'jnana', and action. 'Mahat tattva' goes through the same process of transformation and becomes 'ahankara', or false ego. 'Ahankara' transforms to 'buddhi' or intelligence. When 'buddhi' becomes transformed it produces the quality of 'sound' in the element 'akas'. The quality of sound transforms into 'touch', which has both the qualities of 'akas' (ether) and 'vayu' (air) namely : sound and touch. Sound and touch are the matrix for life force, vitality and strength ('prana: ojah, bala). Touch is further transformed into 'rupa', or form - a quality of the element 'fire' (tejah): both, sound and touch are also present in 'rupa'. 'Form' transforms to 'rasa', or taste of water which contains sound, touch and form. Further transformation produces 'gandha', or smell in the element 'earth', which includes the qualities of sound, touch, forms and taste. The spirit soul, the living entity, lends support to the entire process of material transformations.

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'Ahankara', or false ego is of three kinds: 'Vaikarika', 'taij-asa' and 'tamasa'. 'Vaikarika ahankara' produces the material elements, and 'taijasa ahankara' produces the two types of senses - 'jnanendriya' (Knowledge gathering sensual organs) and 'karmen-driya' (Working sense organs). The five 'jnanendriya' are - eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin (sense of touch). The five 'karmen-driya' are - mouth, hands, legs, anus and reproductive organ. In this manner all the material paraphernalia - both gross and subtle - may be manufactured but until and unless they come in contact with the spirit soul, 'jiva', they cannot be activated. But once 'jiva' is impregnated by the Supreme Lord's glance into the material body made up of gross and subtle matter, then every-thing starts working by his presence. The modes of goodness and passion affix onto the mode of ignorance, produced out of 'prad-han' and form a conclusive field for action. In the same fashion are the workings of 'avidya' and 'pradhan'.

The material principle consists of twenty-four elements: five gross elements being earth, water, fire, air and ether, the five concomitants being smell, taste, form, touch and sound. The just mentioned ten sense organs (five knowledge gathering and five working) are added as much as mind, consciousness, intelligence and false ego (24 in total). 'Jiva', the spiritual soul is the twenty-fifth principle and 'Paramatma', or the Supersoul the twenty-sixth.

Vrajanath - "In this human body, measuring three and a half lengths of one's arm (elbow to the fingertip), in what proportion are subtle and gross matter present? Where does the spirit soul actually reside?"

Babaji - "The five gross elements, the five concomitants and the ten sense organs comprise the gross body. Mind, consciousness, intelligence and false ego forms the subtle body. One who is falsely identifying with the body and is staking claims in relation to the body, is the 'jiva', who, due to this false identification, has been divested of his true spiritual identity. In truth, 'jiva' is infinitesimal and transcendental to material time, place and modes. Yet in spite of his minute stature he is conscious of his entire body. Just as a touch of sandalwood paste, applied to any part of the body, soothes the entire body. Similarly, the infinitesimal soul, 'jiva', is the knower of his body, which is also called the field or 'Ksetra'. It is he who experiences the worldly joys and sorrows."

Vrajanath - "If, as you say, it is the 'jiva', who is the central figure enjoying the results of his actions and experiencing elation and distress, then how far is God's lordship and control in fact?"

Babaji - "'Jiva' is the controllee, or the initiator of the cause (desire) - while the Supreme Lord is the provider, the supplier and the one who effectuates 'jiva's' desires. 'Jiva' is the master of his own actions. And the Supreme Lord is the ultimate controller arranging for 'jiva' to enjoy the fruits of his past and present actions, as well as prepares him for his future actions. The Supreme Lord is the

disburser of fruits of action and 'jiva' is the enjoyer of those fruits."

Vrajanath - "What are the different types of conditions experienced by the deluded souls?"

Babaji - "The spirit soul deluded by 'maya' passes through five distinct conditions namely - 'acchodita cetana' (covered consciousness), 'sankucita cetana' (contracted consciousness), 'mukulita cetana' (budding consciousness), 'vikacita cetana' (unfolded consciousness) and 'purnavikacita cetana' (full blown consciousness)."

Vrajanath - "Which 'jiva' come under the category of 'acchadita cetana'?"

Babaji - "'Jivas' possessing the inert forms of a tree, plant or rock belong to this category. The presence of consciousness in them is practically non-existent. Having forgotten their eternal relationship of being a servant to Krsna they have become so completely engrossed in matter that they are unable to perceive their spiritual self. Only because of the six transformations, every 'jiva' through, (birth, existence growth, having by-products, decay and death), it is that these inert 'jivas' have the faintest recollection of their original self; This condition indicates the state of 'jiva's most degraded consciousness. The examples of Ahalya, Jamal and Arjuna, the seven Tal trees and so on from the Puranas can shed more light on this topic. 'Jiva' is put to such distressful conditions due to abominable offences and only Krsna's mercy can release them from this state."

Vrajanath - "Who are the 'sankucita cetana'?"

Babaji - "Birds, beasts, reptiles, aquatics, insects etc belong to this category. Unlike the 'acchadita cetana', where the perception of consciousness is almost nil, 'sankucita cetana' 'jivas' possess slight awareness of their consciousness. They carry out activities like eating, sleeping, mating, defending, moving about according to will, fighting with others when life and ownership is in jeopardy, expressing anger when seeing injustice. But they do not have any knowledge of life after death or the transcendence. Traces of primitive scientific responses are present in the mind of a monkey: they are able to slightly analyse consequences, and possess in minute degree a sense of gratitude. These 'Jivas' can differentiate the various material things, but because they cannot probe into the Subject of God, their consciousness is contracted. "We find in the scriptures descriptions of King Bharat being born as a deer but still remembering the Supreme Lord's name. This, of course, is a very special case, out of the ordinary. King Bharat and even King Nrga received animal forms due to grievous offences, which were forgiven later by the Supreme Lord's mercy and they receive His blessings."

Vrajanath - "What class of 'jivas' come under the title of 'mukulita cetana'?"

Babaji - "Jivas' in the form and in a conditioned state go through three phases of existence namely: 'mukulita cetana, vikacita cetana, vikacita cetana and purnavikacita cetana'. Human beings can be divided into five categories: 'niti-sunya' (lawless), 'nirisvara'naitika'(atheistic but law-abiding and moral), 'sesvara-naitika'

(a theist and a moralist), 'sadhana-bhakta' (God's devotee, whose devotion is tempered by rules and regulations) 'Bhava-bhakta' (a pure devotee, whose love and devotion to the Lord is spontaneous).

Those human beings who due to lack of knowledge or due to per-verted knowledge become atheists come under the category of 'niti-sunya' or 'nirisvara naitika'. Morality mixed with restricted faith in God is the hallmark of a 'sesvara naitika' 'jiva'. Those who try to strictly follow the rules of the scriptures and have attraction to devotional service to the Supreme Lord are 'sadhana bhakts'. Limited attachment and spontaneous attraction to serve the Supreme Lord are the symptoms of a 'bhava bhakta'.

'Niti sunya' (lawless, immoral) and 'nirisvara naitika' (atheist and moralist) human beings have 'mukulita cetana' (budding consciousness). Sesvara-naitika (theist and moralist) and sadhana bhakta (devotee guided by rules) human beings possess 'vikacita cetana' (unfolded consciousness). Only the 'bhava bhakta' (spontaneous devotee) is in the stage of 'purna vikacita cetana' (full-blown consciousness)".

Vrjanath - "How long is the 'bhava bhakta' to remain in a deluded conditions?"

Babaji - "This question will have to be taken up when we discuss the seventh sloka. It is late, go back home."

Vrajanath recapitulated all the points he heard on his way back home.

Chapter 17 Jiva's State of Emancipation From Maya's Subjugation

Brajanatha's grandmother completed all the arrangements for his marriage ceremony. She detailed him on it that night. Brajanatha avoided making any comments during or after his grandmother's monologue. After supper he lay face up on his bed and pondered about the status of the pure soul (suddha-jiva) and fell asleep late in the night. But in another room, the aged grandmother had altogether other thoughts keeping her awake and worried. She wondered - 'how can I interest Brajanatha in his own matrimonial affairs, he seems so unconcerned.' Grandmother's thoughts were intruded upon by the sudden appearance of Brajanatha's maternal cousin-brother, Banimadhava. In fact the marriage alliance being sought was between Brajantha and Banimadhava's paternal cousin-sister.

Bijoy Vidyaratna, the future brides' father had sent Banimadhava to finalise last details and so he came to talk with the grand-mother. He said to her - "Granny why delay it further? Please organise everything and expedite this marriage, it is upto you". Grandmother, already concerned about the present situation, expressed her chagrin, - "Dear boy, you are such an expert in these matters, why not speak to

Brajanatha and make him under-stand that he must marry. Every the I bring up this subject he remains mum."

Banimadhava has a short stature, small neck, dark complexion and sneaky, dimly lit porcine eyes; he keeps his fingers in every pie but manages to stay aloof, or atleast gives such an that impres-sion. He quickly retorted - 'Granny, everything will work out just fine. All I am waiting for is your permission, then nothing can stand in my way. You are already aware of what I can accom-plish. I can extract money by counting the waves. Allow me once to raise this topic with Brajanatha. Ah yes! Granny? Have you already forgotten ? You promise to stuff me with all those goodies you prepared ?" Grandmother informed Banimadhava that Brajanatha was already fast asleep to which he replied that he would take it up with Brajanatha tomorrow and left.

Early next morning Banimadhava showed up with a lota (small kettle-shaped vessel) in his hand. Brajanatha came from somewhere outside and sat down on the candi-mandapa platform in front of the Devi temple. Brajanatha addressed him with a mild surprise in his voice - "My brother! What brings you here so early ?

Banimadhava decided to take a straight plunge and said, - "Dear older brother! You have spent a long time studying and teaching the nyaya scriptures (logic, rhetoric). Your father Haranatha Cudamani was a renowned scholar, now you are also famous as a pandita. But have you considered that you are the sole male member in your household. Who will inherit these large holdings if there are no progenies. Big brother, it is everyone's earnest desire that you marry.

Brajanatha said: "Dear brother, why do you uselessly pester me? Nowadays I associate with Lord Gauranga's followers. I have no intention of entering household life. I experience immeuse exul-tation in the company of vaisnava saints in Mayapura. Family life does not attract me; I will either embrace the renunciant's order and take sannyasa or remain in one place under the shelter of the vaisnavas' feet. I am revealing these facts to you because I consider you a close friend, - please do not divulge this to anyone."

Judging Brajanatha's mood Banimadhava thought to himself that a straight-forward, simple approach will not get him far on his mission, so he decided on a more devious course. He slying masked his inner feelings and said : "I am here to assist you in any-thing you want. As a student I carried your books to and fro from the school, and now you are about to enter the sannyasa asrama, this time I will carry your staff and water-pot."

Sly and cunning persons posses forked tongues - they say one thing to one person and twists everything when repeating it to another, causing considerable chaos and contention. It is very difficult to get the truth or real feelings, out of a sly person. Their words are sugar-coated but their hearts are blackened with poison. When Brajanatha heard Banimadhava's sympathetic words he felt encouraged to confide in him, and said - 'Dear brother, I always knew you as a well-wishing and hearty friend. You see, my grandmother is an old-fashioned matriarch and thinks like all

women do, she has no knowledge about the serious facts of life, of renunciation, spirituality, and so on. She simply wants to find a bride for me and drag me into the inferno of family life. She has been tirelessly scheming about this. If you can persuade her to desist from continuing this charade, I will remain ever indebted to you.'

Banimadhava - " As long as Sarmarama (the great arbitrator), yours truly is present, no one can force you against your will. Elder brother, please open your heart to me and tell me honestly why you have developed such strong aversions for household life? I must know so that I can take up your brief with vigour. Who has advised you to embrace renunciation?"

Brajanatha, frank and trusting, told him everything openly; that the respected and elderly Raghunathadasa Babaji was his mentor, to whom he fled every evening, finding emblaming cool in his company from the incinerating pangs of material existence and who was extremely merciful to him. But Banimadhava was a crooked man with sinister designs. He conspired with himself, - 'Now I have it, I know his weakness. I will have to make some devious manoeuvres to bring him back on the track'. Out loud, he said : "Elder brother, I will secretly convince grandmother to give up her plans for your marriage, but first I must return to my house."

Banimadhava went home, but soon after, via a circuitous way, set out for Mayapur. In Srivasangana he sat under the fragrant baku-la-tree and thought deprecatingly --'These good-for-nothing vaisnavas are the real enjoyers in this world. They live in nice settings with blossoming flowers, green shady bowers and wide clean courtyards. The quiet meditation huts (bhajana kutira) are one for each; they sit inside, away from public eye and chant japa - that is all they have to do. They can afford to be complacent like despotic rulers. God fearing people, especially the pious ladies, on their way back from ablutions in the Ganga, bring varieties of fruits, milk and so on -- really cushy life. Earlier the caste brahmanas were able to channel this flow of bounty in their direction by institutionalising karma-kanda performances, but the babajis have outwitted them and have become the latest rage.

O Kaliyuga! I salute you! You protect your followers and allow them to live off the fat of the land. Coming here my eyes have opened up. Alas! My birth in an elevated kulina brahmana family has proved to be fruitless. Today no one offers us even a glass of water, let alone fruits. These charlatans, these vaisnavas dare accuse the scholarly logicians (naiyayika) of word jugglery, calling them fools. And my elder brother Brajanatha, after studying this science thoroughly now believes in their words. He is an unfortunate victim in their mischievous clutches. So what of it! I am Banimadhava, I will harass Brajanatha and teach these crooks in loincloth a good lesson'. He stopped spewing mental venom, sauntered over to one of the huts and entered it.

Call it coincidence, the elderly Raghunathadasa Babaji was the occupant of the hut and he was sitting on a simple hand-made straw mat and chanting japa. The face is an index of the mind. Babaji saw that Kaliyuga having taken the form of this young

brahmana boy had entered his hut. By nature the vaisnavas are very humble considering themselves at all times to be lower than a strand of straw. They tolerate the taunts of inimical persons, and wishes only for their best. Uninterested in seeking respect for themselves, the vaisnavas are always respectful to others. So, Raghunathadasa Babaji endearingly bade Banimadhava a seat.

Banimadhava was a diehard vaisnava hater . Ignorant about the vaisnavas' status he concluded that the elderly Babaji was a sudra, and so he raised his right hand palm up and blessed him, then took his seat. Babaji Maharaja enquired --'Son, what is your name, and what brings you here?' The elderly Babaji had addressed Banimadhava with the more familiar and casual term (tumi), and not with the respectful address (apni). This enraged Banimadhava. With an undignified sneer Banimadhava replied ---'Hey, you Ba-baji, you think just wearing a kaupina (loincloth) can bring you on equal terms with a brahmana. That aside, I like to know wheth-er you are acquainted with Brajnatha Nyaya-pancanana ?"

RB: Kindly forgive my offences, and overlook the speech defects of an old man. Yes, Brajanatha very graciously sometimes comes here.

Bani: That man is not as simple as you think he is. He will visit you regularly for sometime, win your confidence and do whatever he had set out to do. The Belapukura brahmana community is antagonistic towards you vaisnavas after having observed your practices. They selected Brajanatha to come here and find out more about the going ons here. You are an elderly man. You should be careful of him. I will visit you time to time and tell you all about their devious schemes against your lot. A note of caution, Brajanatha must not know I was here, for your own good. I take your leave now.," Banimadhava sidled off and left for home.

After lunch Banimadhava went to Brajanatha. In the course of their conversation Bani casually mentioned - 'Elder brother (dada), I had gone to Mayapura on some work this morning and unexpectedly met a very aging vaisnava, - I think he was called Rathunatha-dasa Babaji. We exchanged a few curteous words and came to speaking about you. He mentioned something so despicable about you that I was shocked; never before have I heard such a castigating speech against a brahmana. Finally he said, that he will feed you with the contaminated remnants of all the castes, and demote you from your brahminical position. What a shame! If a pandita like yourself is insulted, and yet you continue to visit him, then this will blacken the good name of the entire brahmana community."

Brajanatha was shocked to hear Banimadhava's words. Brajanatha had developed a firm faith and trust in the vaisnavas and a growing devotion towards Raghunathadasa Babaji. Suddenly, for no recognisable reason, all his feelings towards them became much stronger. Brajanatha turned to Banimadhava and said ---"brother, today I am busy, tomorrow we can discuss this at leisure, you better go home now." Banimadhava left quietly.

Brajanatha was well aware of Banimadhava's duplicitious character. Although he studied logic and rhetorics extensively, Brajanatha disliked dishonest ways. He had

revealed his intimate thoughts about accepting renunciation to Banimadhava since he had expressed his willingness to assist him in his quest for sannyasa asrama. But now he understood that Banimadhava had spoken encouragingly about his taking sannyasa with an ulterior and malicious motive. He hit upon the thought that Banimadhava's Machiavellian machinations were after all prompted by some gain for himself, probably regarding his marriage.

Hence the visit to Mayapura with intentions of sowing seeds of dissension. Brajanatha clasped his hands and earnestly prayed to the Lord ---"O Lord, let my faith (sraddha) in guru and the vaisnavas continue to grow and become fixed and unshaken; not reduced by the wiles of mammon-worshippers and cheats." He was deeply absorbed in philosophical cogitations till late afternoon. At sunset, he eagerly set out for Srivasangana.

After Banimadhava left Raghunathadasa Babaji's hut, the elderly Babaji considered in his mind that his visitor was an evil-powered demon (brahma-raksasa) ---'raksasah kalimasritya jayante brahma-yonisu' (the demoniac persons will take shelter of kaliyuga to multiply and be born as brahmanas). This description aptly fits my visitor. He is arrogant of his brahmana caste, insolent in behavior, inimical to the vaisnavas and a hypocrite who makes a show of religiosity written all over his face. His narrow shoulders, dim sly eyes and cunning circumlocution reflect his nature. What a striking distinction between the two; Brajanatha has a lovely nature and this man takes after the devil himself. O my Lord Krsna! O Lord Gauranga! please protect me from evil, so I may never have to associate with such men. I must warn Brajanatha against this vicious man'.

When Brajanatha came that evening, Babaji Maharaja's affection which had greatly increased, circumfused him and welcomed him as he embraced him. Brajanatha, considerably moved, fell at his feet, eyes brimming with tears. Out of countenance, Brajanatha remained silent. Babaji Maharaja said --'I was visited this morning by a dark-complexioned brahmana youth, who made certain provocative remarks, do you know this person?

Br.: Dear gurudeva, there are many sorts of human beings, if I may repeat your words; one of them is so prevented that they enjoy causing anxiety to others. Banimadhava (I hesitate to add the prefix brother) is a prime exemplar of this kind. I would be happy not to mention him anymore. His main business is to criticize you to me and about me to you. Wedge a rift in the friendship with falsities and lies; I hope you were not offended by this upstart?

RB: O Krsna! O Gauranga! I am fortunate to be in the service of vaisnavas since long, and by their mercy I am able to judge between who is a vaisnava and a non-devotee. I have properly assessed everything that happened today - you may drop the topic.

Br: Alright gurudeva, let us forget it. Kindly tell me how the conditioned soul attains liberation (mukti)?"

RB: The answer to this question is available in the seventh sloka of the dasa-mula-siksa.

"yatha bhramam bhramam harirasa-galad-vaisnavajanam
kadacit sampasyan tadanugamane syadruciraha
tada krsnavrtya tyajati sanakairmayikadasam
svarupam vibhrano vimalarasabhogam sa kurute" (Dasa-mula 7)

(The conditioned living entity travels high and low from one life species to another. When he finally meets a vaisnava saint who is saturated in love of Godhead, Lord Hari, he gradually develops a taste for serving and following him. By chanting Krsna's name he becomes purified of his material contamination. His original spiritual identity begins to manifest more and more, and he attains eligibility to relish the nectar of pure devotional service to the Supreme Lord.

Br: Respected Babaji, please cite a few verses from the vedas to substantiate this sloka.

RB: Both the Mundaka and Svetasvatara Upanisads repeat the same thing.

"samane vrkse puruso nimagno'nisaya socati muhyamanah
justam yada pasyatyanymisamasya mahimanameti vitasoka" (Mund.3/1/2) (Svet. 4/7)

Although the two birds are on the same tree, the eating bird (jiva) is full of anxiety and moroseness, engrossed in enjoying the fruits of the tree. But if some how or other he turns to his friend, who is the Lord and learns His glories - at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties.)

Br: Does the phrase : _'he turns to his friend, who is the Lord, and learns His glories - at once the suffering bird becomes free from all anxieties'; describe liberation of jiva ?

RB: Termination of jiva's captivity to maya, is emancipation (mukti). The person who is associating with pure devotees is sure to attain mukti. What is required to be known is the status jiva attains after liberation(mukti). The Srimad Bhagavatam declares:

"muktirhitvanyatha rupam svarupena vyavasthitah" (SB 2/10/6)

(Liberation is the permanent situation of the form of the living entity after he gives up the changeable gross and subtle material bodies.

According to this verse the jiva must give up his many other material forms and become permanently situated in his original, spiritual identity (Svarupa). As soon as the chains of captivity are severed, the process of jiva's mukti concludes. Then begins jiva's endless engagements in his new status with his original and spiritual body; - executing his prime necessities (prayojana). The state after extirpation of e

xtreme suffering may also be called mukti, but beyond this, is the condition of sublime, spiritual blissfulness that the liberated jiva experiences. The Chandogya describes it as :

"evamevaisa samprasado'smaccharirat samutthaya
param jyotirupasampadya svena rupenabhinispadyate
sa uttama purusah sa tatra paryyeti jaksana kridana ramamanah"
(Ch. 8/12/3)

(The liberated jiva transcends the confines of his gross and subtle material bodies and acquires a spiritual form luminiscent with transcendental lustre - this is his original, supramundane identity. He is a perfected being and resides in the spiritual world relishing every moment of sublime activities and divine bliss.)

Br: What are the symptoms of a liberated soul?

RB: Chandogya Upanisad mentions eight symptoms :

"atma'pahata-papna vijaro vimrtyurvisoko vijighatso'pipasah satyakamah
satyasamkalpa so'nvestavya" (Ch. 8/7/1)

(A person should search out a liberated soul who is free from material contaminations and sins, who has transcended material nature meaning he is ever fresh, has conquered death, is beyond suffering, is not attacked by material hunger or thirst, whose desires are faultless and spiritual, and whose every wish is fulfilled.)

Br: The seventh sloka of the Dasa-mula mentions that after wandering through many life species the fortunate soul meets a pure devotee vaisnava, steeped in love of Godhead, which brings about his (jivas) benediction. The first part of my argument on this topic is, does the practice and cultivation of brahma-jnana, astanga-yoga and other such auspicious activities, ultimately lead to the attainment of devotion to Lord Hari or not ?

RB: The Supreme Lord has described in His own words in the Srimad Bhagavatam"

"na bodhayati mam yogo na sankhyam-dharma eva ca
na svadhyayastapasyago nestapurttam na daksina
vratani yajnaschandamsi tirthani niyama yamah
yathavarundhe satsangah sarvasangapaho hi mam" (SB 11/12/1-2)

(The Supreme personality of Godhead said - I am not captivated by any of the following practices like : the eight-fold yoga system (asana, pranayama yama niyama etc.), philosophical speculations of the sankhya school, non-violence, penances, studying the Vedas, embracing the sannyasa order of renunciation, conducting sacrifices (agnihotra), philanthropic works like digging wells and ponds, giving charity, observance of religious vows like caturmasya, worshiping demigods with sacred mantras, visiting pilgrimages and so on. But I am easily won over by anyone who associates with my pure devotees (sadhu-sanga), because such

association roots out all unwanted material desires in the heart (anarthas).)

The purport of this verse is, that all these practices are not as adequate as sadhu-sanga is, to attract the Supreme Lord's mercy.

The eight fold path of yoga (astanga yoga) and such practices only superficially pleases the Lord; unlike sadha-sanga, which please Him fully. In another text - (Haribhakti-sudhodaya) this statement is found:

"yasya yatsangatih pumso manivat syat sa tadgunah
svakulard-dhyaitato dhiman svayuthanyeva samsrayet" (Hari.b.s. 8/51)

(A person acquires the characteristics of the company he keeps, much like a gemstone which lends some of its own colour and sparkle to other substances which are in touch with it. Therefore a person can become a pure devotee in the saintly association of pure devotees.)

Sadhu-sanga brings all-round benison for the living entities. The scriptures advise nihsanga, or to give up company ---- this means to refuse contact with the worldly-minded and the mammonites', while single-mindedly seeking saintly company of vaisnavas. Saintly association, even if unknowingly sought for, rewards a person with good fortune. The Srimad Bhagavatam extols:

"sango yah samsrter hetur asatsu vihito'dhiya
sa eva sadhusu krto nihsangatvaya kalpate" (SB 3/23/55)

(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 per-formed without knowledge.)

"naisam matis tavad urukramanghrim sprsaty anarthapagamo yad-arthah
mahiyasam pada-rajo-bhisekam niskincananam na vrnita yavat" (SB 7/5/32)

(Unless they smear upon their bodies the dust of the lotus-feet of a vaisnava completely free from material contamination, persons very much inclined towards materialistic life cannot be attached to the lotus-feet of the Lord, who is glorified for His uncommon activities. Only by becoming Krsna-conscious and taking shelter at the lotus-feet of the Lord in this way can one be freed from material contamination.)

"na hyanmayani tirthani na deva mrcchilamayah
te punantyurukalena darsanadeva sadhavah" (B 10/48/31)

(By devoutly worshiping Gangadevi in holy pilgrimages and the earthen or marble deity forms of demigods for protracted periods, sanctifies the soul; whereas an unalloyed devotee of the Lord purifies any person simply a moments association (darsana), by his mere presence.)

"bhavapavargo bhramato yada bhavejjanasya tarhyacyutasatsamagamah
satsangamo yarhitadaiva sadgatau paravarese tvayi jayate matih" (SB 10/51/53)

(O Acyuta! (O Supreme Being eternally fixed in His original identity, the infallible one). Jiva is eternally enthralled in the continuous cycle of birth and death. When the time for his re-release from this vicious cycle arrives, he attains first the association of saintly persons. Right from that moment he develops attachment to Your lotus-feet. You are the Lord of both the material and spiritual worlds and the shelter of the saintly souls.)

Brajanatha, myboy, the eternally conditioned soul is crucified to the karma-cakra (the endless cycle of fruitive reactions) since time immemorial; wandering in the material universe from one life species to another - sometime as demigod, sometimes as beast. But, if on the strength of his previous pious deeds (sukrti) accumulated over life-times, he meets a pure, elevated devotee of the Lord, he develops attraction for serving the Supreme Lord, Krsna.)

Br: Guruji, you say that sukrti brings a person in contact with a saintly soul; what is sukrti? Is it a part of karma (fruitive activity) or jnana (knowledge)?

RB: According to the scriptures, pious auspicious activities are called 'sukrti. They are of two varieties: bhakti-pravartaka (which invokes devotional service), and avantaraphala-pravartaka (which gets irrelevant extraneous results). Fruitive activities enunciated in the naimittika-dharma or the quasi-permanent religious duties, the empirical knowledge of sankhya philosophy, etc are examples of sukrti which brings extraneous results. Saintly association, visiting spiritually elevating pilgrimages (dhamas), observing devotional vows (ekadasi etc) and so on, are bhakti-pravartaka sukrti. Bhakti-pravartaka sukrti, when accumulated, becomes a force and it generates devotion to Krsna; whereas the avantaraphala-pravartaka sukrti rewards temporary material results and then exhausts itself.

All meritorious deeds such as: giving in charity, performing austerity etc. dispenses sense-gratificatory boons. Realisation of brahman through monistic empirical knowledge is a sukrti which brings one liberation (mukti). However none of these sukrtis are capable of adding up to give attachment for devotional service. The company of pure devotees; observing vows conducive to devotional service like ekadasi, janmasthanami, gaura-purnima; offering service to tulasidevi, to Lord Visnu's temple; honouring mahaprasada (remnants of a pure devotee); circumambulating and worshipping the holy dhamas are all bhakti-pravartaka sukrti.

Br: A person, afflicted by the pangs of material existence desires to end his suffering caused by nescience, earnestly approaches the shelter of Lord Hari's lotus feet, wanting to surrender himself; will he not be awarded devotional service?

RB: If a person becomes conscious, through his power of discrimination, of the distress inflicted upon him by nescience, he comprehends that material life is unreal and contaminated. When he realises that the Supreme Lord's lotus-feet and

His unalloyed, intimate devotees are his only sole sanctuaries and he single-mindedly endeavours to surrender to the Lord, first he finds the protective association of the saintly souls who are engrossed in love of Godhead. This sublime association results in acquiring the prime sukrti of human life, - which in turn rewards him the greatest benediction of attaining the lotus-feet of the Lord.

His initial mood of renunciation and state of awakened consciousness act as indirect, secondary stepping stones toward his devotional goal. Saintly association (sadhhu-sanga) is an indispensable hence a principle means to attain pure devotional service at the lotus-feet of Krsna.

Br. Even if we place karma, jnana, vairagya (renunciation) and viveka (awakened conscience) as the secondary causes for bhakti, why not call them bhakti-pravartaka sukrti?

RB: We have strong reservations regarding this opinion. The results of these performances are extraneous to the real goal and most often, after awarding the results they become redundant and ineffectual. Karma, after pushing the jiva into the pool of material enjoyment, dries up and leaves. Vairagya and viveka (renunciation and empirical queries) often elevates jiva to realise non-dual brahman and no further, due to their own inadequacy. The monistic, nondual brahman realisation usually deprives jiva from receiving shelter at the Supreme Lord's lotus-feet. Therefore, they cannot be assertively termed bhakti-pravartaka sukrti; but in rare instances someone may be carried up by them to the portal, of bhakti, - these instances are exceptions, not the rule. Whereas sadhu-sanga has no irrelevant results as side effects, it elevates the person to the highest realisation - love of Godhead (prema), as confirmed in the Srimad Bhagavatam:

"satam prasangan mama virya-samvido bhavanti hrt-karna rasayanah kathah taj-josanad asv apavarga-vartamani sraddha ratir bhaktir-anukramisyati." (SB 3/25/25).

(In the association of pure devotees, discussion of the pastimes and activities of the Supreme Lord 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 (for the Lord) becomes fixed. Then real devotion and devotional service begins.)

Br: Thus sadhu-sanga is established as being the only bhakti-pravartaka-sukrti. About the procedure, is hearing spiritual topics from sadhus followed by attaining devotional service ?

RB: Alright, I will explain to you the step by step development, listen carefully. While wandering through different life species a jiva is born as a human. He must perform, for whatever reasons Providential or otherwise, bhakti-pravartaka-sukrti in the form of any one of the limbs of pure devotional service. For example - fasting on ekadasi and other devotionally potent and important spiritual occasions; visiting and respecting holy places of the Supreme Lord's pastimes; hearing kirtana

from the lips of a renounced and humble vaisnava sadhu . But those persons who desire sense gratification (bhukti) and liberation (mukti) will not get the result of bhakti-pravartaka-sukrti by participating in any of these.

If innocent persons, even devoid of philosophical understanding, perform these activities; either by accident, or by arrangement of circumstance or because of social etiquette, but without thinking of bhukti and mukti, then they will certainly obtain the result of bhakti-pravartaka sukrti. And when such sukrti accumulates over many lifetimes, they transform into sraddha, or faith in the process of pure devotional service. Sraddha then gives birth to the desire to associate with pure devotees. Pure association inspires steady cultivation of regulative devotional practices (sadhana), meditation and chanting (bhajana).

Regular bhajana destroys the unwanted, material desires in heart (anartha). When anarthas are uprooted the initial sraddha is transformed into unflinching faith (nistha). Nistha, through gradual purification increases taste for devotional service (ruci). Ruci reveals the sublime beauty of bhakti and it becomes converted to strong attachments for bhakti (asakti). When asakti fully blossoms, loving spiritual emotions (bhava, rati) floods the heart. All the different bhavas in concert creates spiritual humour (rasa), leading to love of Godhead prema).

The point to note is, that from seeing a pure sadhu person person with sukrti develops the inclination to associate with him and emulate his examples. The conclusion is, that the first time contact with a sadhu, immaterial of what brought it about, it created sraddha in the heart. Sraddha then inspired the person to approach a pure devotee seeing him in a new light, - this is the second stage of sadhu-sanga. Another term for sraddha is surrender or saranapatti. The first stage of sadhu sanga is characterized by the influence, due to proximity, of the Supreme Lord's favoured place, festive days, objects, paraphernalia and recipient of mercy (puredevotee). The Bhagavad Gita describes the symptoms of saranapatti, which is the result of the first stage of sadhu-sanga, in the following verse:

"sarva-dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo moksayisyami ma sucah" (BG 18/66)

(Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto me. I shall deliver you from all sinful reaction. Do not fear.)

The purport of this verse is, that all varieties of religion include : smarta, astanga-yoga, sankhya, jnana, vairagya etc.(naimittika religion)., The act of abandoning must be conducted on the basis of proper comprehension that the practice of these religions does not tantamount to the execution of the prime necessity of human existence (prayojana). Supreme Lord Krsna, the ever youthful hero of Vraja, the embodiment of eternality, absolute knowledge and bliss, is the sole goal of human existence. Knowing this the jiva must relinquish the desire for bhukti and mukti and surrender to Krsna,- this is real sraddha. And when such a level of sraddha is enthroned in jiva's heart, he sheds tears of remorse (for lost time) and applies himself with gusto in following a pure vaisnava sadhu. This time sadhu-

sanga helps him to find the shelter of a spiritual master (guru).

Br: What varieties of anartha are lodged in jiva's heart ?

RB: There are four types of anarthas, or spiritual detriments in the form of unwanted desires : ignorance of one's true eternal identity (sva-svarupa aprapti); hankering for the illusory and temporal (asat-trisna); offences (aparadha); and, weaknesses and h))%[=I How can the jiva expect divine loving exchanges or prema and bliss to be available in the non-dual impersonal brahman? Who experiences happiness where individual identity is absent? In a situation where everything becomes an amorphous oneness, how is ananda to be distinguished and located ? If the soul or self merges into brahman, who is left as the individual who feels bliss? With the self totally effaced who will perceive and interact with brahman. Brahman is ananda, but with the ab-sence of an individual to enjoy brahman-ananda, everything is inane; where is then the proof that ananda exists at all or not?

With the obliteration of individual personality, the person - bereft of his existence and being is left with no identity , nothing, then who should be concerned about attaining life's prime necessity (prayojana)? The 'I' ceases , hence everything else also ceases to exist. If one argues, that after all, the self who merged into brahman is still present within the eternal brahman as brahman; such logic is lopsided because where is then the question of attaining perfection from a state of perfection?

Brahman-nirvan is not the same as attaining prema, for jiva, it is merely a pretention. If brahman-nirvan exists, then only like the castle in the air - an illusion. The only way prayojana can be accomplished is through devotional service. The pinnacle of bhakti is prema- and it is eternal. The embodiment of purity, Krsna, is eternal, unalloyed bhakti or prema is also eternal; therefore to acknowledge the principle of acintya-bhedabheda is to acquiesce the eternality of prema. Otherwise jiva's prayojana, prema, is corrupted by transitoriness, thus destroying its very basis. Therefore the scriptures firmly support the principle of acintya-bhedabheda. All other philosophies are either derivatives or deviants of this truth.

[That night Brajanatha was deeply pondering over in Babajis delineation of 'prema', as he walked back home. He felt an inef-fable exhilaration flooding his heart.

Chapter 19

An analysis of Abhidheya, or the Most Direct Means of Acheiving the Spiritual Goal.

Brajanatha ate supper and lay down. Different aspects of the acintya-bhedabheda principle formed waves in his mind from the ocean of thought. Doubts sometimes tried to disrupt their flowing progreess. Can it be, that the acintya-bhedabheda principle itself was misconstrued from the absolute truth? But calm and cogent cogitations allayed these disconcerting thoughts: - `No where in the scriptures are evidences denouncing acintya-bhedabheda. In fact, all discordant, unanswered doubts find coherent and convincing asserverations there, to dissipate any scepticism.

Besides Lord Gauranga is the Supreme Personality of Godhead hence how can there be any discrepencies in His profound deliberations. I hope never to distance myself from the shelter of His lotus feet. All this is very encouraging, but what have I actually tangibly accomplished except to learn that the acintya-bhedabheda principle is the highest absolute truth. And what have I gained from such knowledge ?

The revered Babaji Maharaja had said that prema is the ultimate purpose of human life. The karmis and jnanis also seek this divine gem of prema, but without knowledge of what prema is in its pure, pristine state. Hence my target has to be the pure state of prema. I have to ask Babaji Maharaja about this and try to grasp the conclusions on it'. Gradually sleep crept in and Brajanatha entered another dimension.

Late sleep forced Brajanatha awake later than usual, he quickly finished his morning ablutions. His maternal uncle, Bijoya Kumara Bhattacharya, came to visit Brajanatha that morning. Seeing his uncle after a long gap he, offered him prostrated obeisance. Sri Bijoya Kumar was very learned in the Srimad Bhagavatam. He had the great fortune of receiving the direct grace of Srimati Naray-ani devi, who inspired him in Lord Caitanyas teachings. He became extremely attracted to Lord Caitanya. He was an intinerant preacher of the Srimad Bhagavatam.

Sri Bijoya's recent travels brought him to Dhenura village. There he met Srila Vrndavanadasa Thakura, who instructed him to visit the transcendental site of Lord Caitanya's appearance, the yoga-pitha. Srila Thakura predicted that very soon all the places connected with Lord Caitanya's pastimes would be lost, but after almost four centuries they willbe rediscovered. The places of Lord Caitanya's

pastimes are equal in every respect to Vrajadhama, Vrndavana. Those elevated souls who are fortunate to see the transcendental sites at Mayapura and so on, are indeed eligible to perceive Vrndavana.

Sri Bijoya Kumara grew eager to see Mayapuradhama after hearing about it directly from Srila Vyasadeva's in carnation, Srila Vrndavanadasa Thakura. He decided to pay a visit to Vilvapuskarini where his sister and nephew lived and from there close by on to Mayapuradhama. In those days Vilvapuskarini village was neighbouring Brahmanapuskarini village; unlike now, they are miles apart. Yogapitha, or the Lord's birth site in Mayapura was previously no more than a mile from the Vilvapuskarini village. This village now lies sleepy and neglected, also its name changed to Tota and Taranabasa.

Sri Bijoya Kumara quickly embraced his nephew and said - "Son, I am on my way to visit Sri Mayapuradhama. Tell your mother that on my return I will take lunch here".

Brajanatha grew curious and enquired - "Uncle, why do you want to visit Mayapuradhama?" Sri Bijoya Kumara's was not aware of the recent developments in Brajanatha's spiritual life. However what he did know was that Brajanatha had for saken pursuing studies in logic and rhetoric and had seriously taken up Vedanta. Therefore he felt that he should not divulge his intimate spiritual affairs to Brajanatha.

Sri Bijoya Kumara replied, - " I have an appointment with someone here in Mayapuradhama". Brajanatha knew that his uncle was a devotee of Lord Gauranga and an exponent of Srimand Bhagavatam. So he surmised that his uncle must be meeting someone on spiritual matters.

Brajanatha said - "Uncle, since you are going to Mayapura please find the time to meet Srila Raghunathadasa Babaji Maharaja, he is an elevated and respected vaisnava.

Sri Bijoya Kumara was mildly surprised and asked - "Son, you have developed some faith and respect for the vaisnavas. I was given to understand that you have foregone research in logic and rhetoric and have now turned to Vedanta. But I see you have entered the path of bhakti. I need not keep my spiritual matters a secret from you then. Srila Vrndavanadasa Thakura has instructed me to have darsana, (see with devotional faith) of the yogapitha in Mayapuradhama. I have made up mind to first take a dip in the holy Ganga in Mayapura, take darsana of yogapitha and circumambulate it. From there I go to Srivasa-angana and roll in the sacred

feet-dust of the vaisnavas".

Overwhelmed, Brajanatha said - 'Uncle, kindly allow me to accompany you. Let us first meet mother and then proceed to Mayapura'. They did exactly that and arrived in Mayapura. The refreshing dip in the Ganga has exhilarating. Sri Bijoya Kumara was overcome with profound feelings, he said :- 'O how fortunate we are! For twenty four years Nimai showered unrestrained blessings on Ganga-devi and sported in her waves. Today I have sanctified my soul in these same waters and feel immense joy".

Brajanatha's spiritual fervour ignited, and he gushed out: - "Dear uncle, it is my great privilege to be here in your august company, I offer my respects at your feet." Finishing their bath they went to Sri Jagannatha Misra's house, the yogapitha. Unable to withhold their swelling spiritual emotions, tears streamed down in droplets of pearls and bedecked their heart felt prayers to the Lord.

Sri Bijoya Kumar said - 'Anyone who has taken birth in Gaura (Bengal) and has not taken the holy dust of the divine yogapitha on his head should consider his birth as futile - this is not an exaggeration. Look, this place seems ordinary, dotted with simple straw huts. But by Lord Gauranga's grace behold the divine opulence - imposing gem studded mansions surrounded by an exquisite and fragrant flower garden with ornamental archways at the entrances. Look around you at the wonderful sights. There! there, see inside the house, Lord Gauranga and Srimati Visnupriyadevi are standing next to each other. How beautiful They are! Shining with sublime resplendence!!".

Uncle and nephew were stunned in wonderment, they could not move. Slowly they crumbled to the ground as if bereft of all consciousness. After a long time some devotees helped them up. Tears flowed freely as they slowly made their way to Srivasa-angana. In Srivasa-angana they began to roll on the ground and cried out - 'O Srivasa! O Advaita Prabhu! my Lord Nityanada! O beloved Gadadhara and Gauranga! Kindly give us Your mercy. Purge us of our false-ego and arrogance and deliver us at Your lotus feet".

The resident vaisnavas were amazed by such display of spiritual emotions from these two brahmanas and they responded loudly, chanting, 'All glory to Gauranga! all glory to the moon of Maya-pura! all glory to Nityananda!" and began also to dance ecstatically.

Brajanatha went to see his guru and prostrated himself before him.

Raghunathadasa Babaji picked him up and firmly embraced him. Babaji Maharaja

mildly enquired - 'You? at this time? who is that distinguished person with you?' Brajanatha explained everything to his guru. Meanwhile the other vaisnavas had arranged to seat everyone down and made a seat for Babaji Maharaja in the courtyard under the Bakula tree and then they came and invited every-one out. Sri Bijoya Kumar and Brajanatha sat close to Babaji.

Sri Bijoya Kumara enquired humbly - 'Maharaja, how can I attain prayojana?

Raghunathadasa Babaji - You are all very advanced devotees and have profound realisations, yet since you have kindly asked me I shall try to answer your questions to the best of my ability. Pure 'bhakti', free from the adulterations of jnana and karma, is jiva's prayojana. The means to acquire the goal of prayojana is, first by sadhana-bhakti (regulative devotional service) on the stage of sadhana (practice), and prema-bhakti, or raga-bhakti (unalloyed spontaneous devotional service), on the elevated stage of perfected spiritual consciousness.

Bijoya : Revered Babaji, what are the innate symptoms of bhakti?

RB: Srila Rupa Gosvami has written 'Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu' on the express orders of Lord Sri Caitanya. Here the bhakti svarupa laksana (inherent symptoms of bhakti) has been elucidated:

"anyabhilasitasunyam jnana-karmady-anavrtam
anukulyena krsnanusilanam bhaktir uttama" (Brs. Purva 1/9)

* Translation - Ch. 8.

This aphorism capsules the meaning of svarupa-laksana and tatas-tha-laksana (marginal symptoms) of pure bhakti. The words 'bhak-tir uttama' is a synonym of suddha-bhakti, or pure devotional service. Bhakti adulterated with jnana or karma is not pure devotional service. Bhakti adulterated with karma strives after sense gratification (bhukti) and `jnana-adulterated-bhakti' aspires for liberation (mukti). Hence, bhakti which does not harbour either bhukti nor mukti is uttama bhakti. The practice of such uttama-bhakti results in prema.

What exactly is that uttama-bhakti? To perform devotional service to Lord Krsna with mind, body and words with the express desire to please Him. Meaning, a sustained loving and favourable service attitude. These are the svarupa-laksma of pure bhakti. Jiva is endowed with individual capabilities and desires. When Krsna's mercy and the pure devotee's blessings reinforce jiva's own capabilities inexecuting bhakti, then the Supreme Lord's internal energy, svarupa-sakti,

embellishes the jiva with Her transcendent sentiments. The burgeoning of sentiments sets off the ripening process of svarupa-laksana.

The conditioned jiva's mind, words and body are mundane, so when jiva endeavours to apply them with his powers and level of consciousness, it only results in materialistic knowledge and dry, false renunciation. The bhakti symptoms are not evoked from such efforts. But when the Supreme Lord's svarupa-sakti descends and infuses him, even slightly, with spiritual sentiments, then the symptoms of unalloyed devotional service begin to manifest.

Lord Krsna is the paramount Divinity, hence the purest form of bhakti is, devotion to Krsna. Worship of brahman and worship of paramatma constitute the path of jnana and karma - not bhakti. Endeavour is of two kinds: favourable (anukulya) and unfavourable (pratikulya). Only favourable endeavours are included within bhakti. The word 'anukulya; alludes to a certain lofty and hira-tingaxefeeling for Krsna in all activities. On the stage of sadhana-bhakti, this feeling is slightly tinged with mundaneness, and on the perfected stage of raga-bhakti the feeling is cleansed of all material contamination. In both these stages the bhakti symptoms are the same, hence favourable devotional service to Krsna is the svarupa-laksana of bhakti.

Svarupa-laksana cannot be complete without describing tatastha-laksana. Srila Rupa Gosvami enunciates two tatastha laksana: - anyabhilasita-sunyam, or freedom from the desire for non-devotional activities; and jnana-karmady anavrtam, or being unshackled from the bindings of jnana and karma. The aspiration to advance in pure devotional service should be the singular desire in the heart, any other desires are in terrible conflict with the principles of pure bhakti. If the attachment for jnana, karma, yoga, renunciation etc. grows stronger, the heart and consciousness is enshrouded and it also drives away devotional fervour. Therefore, these two deterrents must be strictly avoided when practicing bhakti. Then only can devotional service to Krsna be executed favourably - this is suddha-bhakti.

Bijoya: What are the specifics of bhakti, how can a seeker recognise pure devotional service?

RB: ;Srila Rupa Gosvami enumerated six specific symptoms of suddha-bhakti, as written in Bhakti-rasmrta-sindhu:

"klesaghni subhada moksalaghutakrt sudurllabha
sandra-nanda-visesatma sri-krsna-akarsani ca sa" (Brs. Purva 1/12)

(Suddha-bhakti extirpates distresses (klesaghni), offers good fortunes (subhada), exposes the inanity of liberation (moksala-ghutakrt), makes herself very rarely attainable (sudurllabha), fills the heart with inexplicable joy (sandrananda-visesatma) and attracts Lord Krsna (Sri-Krsna-akarsani).

Bijoya: How does bhakti extirpate distresses(Klesaghni)?

RB: Klesa, or distress, is of three types: papa(sin), papavija (seeds of sin) and avidya (nescience). When suddha-bhakti dawns in the heart the inclination for sinful activities is stamped out. The seeds of sin give rise to the desire for sin; a heart pulsating with feelings of bhakti cannot coexist with such dele-terious desires. The state of jiva's forgetfulness of his original spiritual identity (svarupa) is known as avidya, or nescience. The first stirrings of suddha-bhakti enlightens the consciousness with the self-knowledge that jiva (I) is an eternal servant of Krsna, and it evaporates the illusion of svarupa-bhrama, or misidentification of the self and nescience. Therefore all three - papa, papa-vijam and avidya constituting klesa, or distresses, are dissipated. Hence klesaghni is a characteristic of bhakti.

Bijoya : How is bhakti a rewarder of good fortune (subhada)?

RB: The word 'subha', or good fortune and auspiciousness, means to ascend to a position of everyone's love and respects; to have available all varieties of pleasures and comfort that brings joy; and be adorned with all good qualities. When the heart is imbued with suddha-bhakti the four qualities of humility, compassion, pridelessness and magnanimity, or being respectful to others, ornaments the jiva's character. He thus becomes loved and re-spected by everyone in the world. In fact, all the other good and meritorious qualities manifest in the devotee. Bhakti is competent to reward the devotee all the pleasures and comforts, - even the material ones, or those which are available in impersonal brahman realisation, including mystic perfections. The devotees, however, are not attracted to any of these and so suddha-bhakti rewards the pure devotees with the rare and paramount bliss - eternal, unlimited ecstasy.

Bijoya : How does bhakti evoke a feeling of disregard and disenchantment for liberation?

RB: The ecstasy of spontaneous loving attraction (rati) for the Supreme Lord creates disinterest in devotees for religiosity, sense enjoyments and even liberation.

Bijoya : Why is bhakti described as a goal rarely attained (sudurllabha)?

RB: This particular point requires special attention. A person may endeavour with the best of his ability and for countless years but the slightest lack of any kind in the execution of pure devotional service (bhajana), will make it almost impossible for him to attain suddha-bhakti. The Supreme Lord satisfies most of the practitioners in spiritual life by offering them bhukti or mukti. He does not reward anyone with suddha-bhukti unless he is qualified. These two aspects make bhakti sudurllabha.

By cultivating empirical knowledge of impersonal brahman, one is sure to achieve liberation (mukti). Similarly by performing sacrifices, charity and other pious deeds one certainly enjoys heavenly pleasures (bhukti). But in order to obtain suddha-bhakti one must become adept in the science of Krsna consciousness because no amount of spiritual practices by any method can bring one success. This point has been substantiated in Caitanya Cari-tamrta (Adi 8/17-18 and Brs. Purva 1/23).

Bijoya: How is bhakti the source of inexplicable ecstasy (sandra-nanada)?

RB: Bhakti is the fountainhead of transcendental ecstasy hence it is an unlimited ocean of bliss. Neither the pleasures of this material world nor the bliss of impersonal Brahman realisation multiplied a million folds compare to a mere drop of ecstasy from the unlimited ocean of bhakti. Gross material pleasure is dimly insignificant, and at the other end of its pole, the subtle material bliss, of brahman, is dry and insipid. Both these types of 'joys' are diametrically opposite in nature and creed, from transcendental divine bliss. Antipodes cannot be compared. So, those who experience the bliss of suddha-bhakti, which is so intense and overpowering that any other types of happinesses, including that of brahman, seems vacuous and insignificant. Like a little puddle which cannot be compared to the vast bottomless ocean. The person who is relishing such ecstasy knows of his joys, others cannot speculate on it.

Bijoya : How can bhakti attract Lord Krsna?

RB: The devotee whose heart is infused with suddha-bhakti attracts the attention of Lord Krsna along with all His close associates, by the power of his love. Love is the only way to conquer Krsna - no other means are viable.

Bijoya : Considering that bhakti is such an excellent and expen-dient method for spiritual success, why the scholars, who pour over the scriptures, do not care to try it out ?

RB : The truth is that human intellect is limited. Any attempt by it to comprehend

suddha-bhakti and Krsna consciousness, both belonging to the realm of pure transcendence beyond the mundane, will result in opening up an unbridgeable chasm. But if a sincere seeker, because of his previous pious deeds, develops a slight taste (ruci) for bhakti, he will swiftly grasp the esoteric pur-port of this transcendental science. The path of suddha-bhakti is available to only the pious and faithful souls, not others.

Bijoya: Why is logic, rhetoric and intellect scorned at?

RB: Intellect and logic (yukti) are inept and out of depths in the realm of suddha-bhakti. Hence the Vedas warns us with verses from the Kathopanisad (1/2/9) and Brahma-sutra (2/1/11) (both translations available in Ch.13) that rhetoric (yukti) is ineffectual in understanding spiritual subject matters.

Braja : Is there a path a bhakti that runs inbetween sadhana-bhakti (regulative devotional service) and prema-bhakti (spontaneous loving devotional service)?

RB: Yes, there is the bhava-bhakti; which means there are three stages of bhakti: - sadhana-bhakti, bhava-bhakti and prema-bhakti.

Braja : What are the specific symptoms of sadhana-bhakti?

RB: Bhakti is one - prema-bhakti; it is saturated with the pure consciousness of loving devotional service to Krsna, the ultimate goal of all paths. As long as the conditioned jiva executes bhakti with his material senses, it is known as sadhana-bhakti.

Braja : But you said that prema-bhakti is an eternally perfected condition, inherent to the spirit soul; why then has the jiva to perfect it?

RB: This eternally perfected condition (nitya-siddha vastu) does not require to be again perfected, but the means to manifest it in the heart is known as sadhana. Because prema-bhakti does not appear in jiva's heart in his conditioned state, it is temporarily and ostensibly in a marginal position where it needs to be perfected. But in its' pristine and original condition, prema-bhakti is nitya-siddha - eternally perfected. You may refer to Sri Caitanya-caritamata, madhya, 22/104 - 107 and Bhakti-rasamr-ta-sindhu 1/2/2.

Braja : Kindly elucidate this philosophical point a little more.

RB: Prema-bhakti is the manifestation of Krsna's internal spiritual potency

(svarupa-sakti), hence it is certainly nitya-siddha. It does not reveal itself in the conditioned soul's heart. The effort and method undertaken by the jiva through the application of his mind, body and words to reveal the presence of prema-bhakti within his heart is sadhana, or the means to manifest prema-bhakti. During the period of sadhana prema-bhakti's tran-scendental nature and eternally perfected condition is still under but as soon as it (prema-bhakti) appears, it eter-nally perfected status becomes clearly evident.

Braja: What are the characteristics of sadhana?

RB: The hallmark of sadhana-bhakti is to repose the mind on Krsna by any conceivable means.

Braja: How many types of sadhana-bhakti are there?

RB: There are two types: vaidhi and raganuga.

Braja: Kindly elaborate upon them.

RB: Jiva's intrinsic propensities are cultivated in two ways. That which is developed through discipline (vidhi) is known as vaidhi. The word vidhi, or discipline means, adherence to rules and regulations; hence vidhi and sastra, or scriptures, are syn-onymous. Bhakti which is inspired by scriptural stipulations, is vaidhi-bhakti.

Braja : Later I would like to have raga-bhakti explained - but now kindly delve further into vaidhi-bhakti.

RB: The scriptural instructions on duties that must be performed are known as vidhi, and those which are proscribed are called nisedha. To execute the vidhis and abstain from the nisedhas is vaidha-dharma, or prescribed religious duties, for the jiva.

Braja : I gather from your instructions that all religious scrip-tures advice humanity to abide by vaidha-dharma. But the problem for jiva, particularly in Kaliyuga (because of diminished longev-ity), he does not have the time to even browse through the moun-tains of vidhi and nisedha. Is there a scriptural maxim that capsules the essential dos and donts?

RB: The Padma Purana and again the Narada-pancaratra advices :

"smartavyah satatam visnur-vismartavyo na jatucit

sarve vidhi-nisedhah syuretayoreva kinkarah" (Padma, Uttara 42/103)

(Always remember the Supreme Lord Visnu - is the vidhi; never forget Him, is the nisedha. All the other dos and donts mentioned in the scriptures must be considered as subordinate instructions to these two.)

The purport is, that remembrance of the Supreme Lord is the fountainhead of all vidhis. The entire, intricate arrangement of varnasrama system, a socio-religious society strongly recommend-ed in the scriptures, is subservient to this one principal vidhi. Similarly forgetfulness of Visnu is the paramount nisedha. Instructions against committing sin, restraining the outward pro-jection of the consciousness and on how to perform appropriate penances to counteract sinful reactions, are corollaries to this main vidhi and nisedha. Hence it is to be understood that among all the vidhis, including those in the varnasrama lifestyle, remembrance of the Supreme Lord is an eternal vidhi. This is confirmed in the Srimad Bhagavatam :

"mukha-bahuru-padebhyah purusasyasramaih saha
catvaro jajnire varna gunairvipradayah prthak
ya esam purusam saksadatma-prabhavamisvaram
no bhajantyavajananti sthanadbhrastah patantyadhah"(SB 11/5/2-3)

(Of the four varnas, or social orders, the brahmanas emanated from the mouth of the Supreme Lord Visnu's Universal Form, the ksatriyas from His arms, the vaisyas from His thighs and the sudras from His legs and feet. Each varna appeared with specific attributes and their asramas. Therefore, when the jivas within this varnasrama system fails to worship the Supreme Lord and instead become bloated up with pride of their statuses and begin to disregard the Lord, they are demoted from the human position and cast down into depths of depravity.

Braja: Why all the followers of the varnasrama system do not render devotional service to Krsna?

RB: Srila Rupa Gosvami says that those jivas among the followers of scriptural injunctions (sastra-vidhi) who develop faith (sraddha) in bhakti are the only ones to gain eligibility for the path of pure bhakti. Such persons are not overtly attached to the scriptural rules and regulations in the vaidhi-dharma, nor are they extremely renounced. In their journey through life they observe social etiquette and moral standards to maintain body and soul together and apply themselves in the pursuit of pure devo-tional service. Such eligibility in bhakti is obtained after many lifetimes of pious living or of vaidha-dharma. These faithful persons with

eligibility in bhakti are of three categories: uttama-adhikari, madhyama-adhikari and kanistha-adhikari (top-class, intermediate and neophytes).

Braja: According to the Bhagavad-gita, four types of pious men are said to be eligible for bhakti: artha (the distressed), jijnasu (the inquisitive), artharthi (the one desiring material gain) and jnani (the knowledgeable), are they really eligible for pure devotion ?

RB: When these four types of men advance on the spiritual path because of the potency of saintly association (sadhya-sanga), they develop faith in pure bhakti. It is at this juncture that they gain eligibility, or adhikara, in executing bhakti. There are stellar examples in the scriptures of devotees who rose to the highest levels of bhakti, - Gagendra, Saunaka Rsi, Dhruva, the four Kumaras and so on.

Braja : Do devotees achieve mukti, or liberation?

RB: There are five kinds of mukti namely: salokya (attaining the planet of Lord Narayana), sarsthi (attaining the same opulence as Lord Narayana), samipya (being very near to Lord Narayana), sarupya (attaining the same form as Lord Narayana) and sayujya (merging into the brahman effulgence of Lord Narayana) Sayujya-mukti is irreconcilably contrary to the precepts of bhakti, and so Krsna's devotees do not acknowledge it. Although the other four types of mukti are not strongly opposed to the precepts of pure bhakti, they do possess in some measure, traits which are counter productive to the practice of pure bhakti.

Staunch Krsna's devotees never aspire for any of these muktis which fix their ultimate destinations only up to Vaikuntha - Lord Narayana's abode. These muktis are sometimes dominated by the mood of seeking self-satisfaction and opulent worship of the Lord (sukhaisvarya) and at other times imbued with the loving devotional mood (prema-seva). As far as the mood of sukhaisvarya goes, Krsna's devotees decisively reject it. What to speak of mukti, devotees single-mindedly attracted to Krsna are not interested in Lord Narayana's prasada (mercy; sanctified foodstuff). The reason is, that in spite of Lord Narayana and Lord Krsna being on equal platforms in principle, Lord Krsna is the embodiment of higher spiritual sentiments and moods (rasa).

Braja : Are only those who are arya, meaning being born within the varnasrama system (followers of the vedic scripture), eligible to take up the path of bhakti?

RB: Every human being is a fit candidate to take up the path of bhakti.

Braja: Human beings who follow the varnasrama system have two religious duties:

to adhere to the rules and regulations of varnasrama dharma, and to practice spiritual life of pure devo-tional service, or suddha-bhakti. But those jivas who are outside the varnasrama system have access to only the suddha-bhakti duties, not the varnasrama-dharma duties. This arrangement ap-pears odd, because the varnasrama system followers have to exe-cute both karma-kanda activities and bhakti activities, making life difficult for them. Why is it so ?

RB: Those who have attained eligibility for practicing bhakti (bhakti-adhikari) and are within the varnasrama system, need and must only execute devotional activities. Because bhakti includes the activities of karma-yoga. In those cases where karma activi-ties are independent of, or are contrary to, the bhakti activi-ties, then those karma activities must be rejected, without fear of any adverse repurcussions. Generally the bhakti-adhikari is not dogged by the urge to commit either immoral activities (vikarma) nor slip into passivity. But if by a freak of fate he commits tabooed activities then he is not required to perform prayascitta, or penances, to exonerate his misdemeanours. Once bhakti is established in a person's heart then sudden and acci-dental sinful activities cannot take roots in his heart, they are easily destroyed on their own, hence devotees do not require to perform prayascitta.

raja : How do the bhakti-adhikari's pay their dues to the demi-gods and so on ?

RB: My son, just consider the import of this verse from the Srimad Bhagavatam.

"devarsi-bhutapta-nrnam pitrnam na kinkaro nayamrni ca rajan sarvatmana yah saranam saranyam gato mukundam parihrtya kartam" (SB 11/5/41)

* Translation - Ch. 10.

The most important teaching of the Bhagavad-Gita is available in the Eighteenth Chapter, verse sixty-six, which says, that one must abandon all varieties of religion and simply surrender to the Supreme Lord, Krsna, and He will absolve him from all sinful reactions. The essence of Bhagavat-Gita is that when a person becomes worthy of executing suddha-bhakti he has no longer to conform to the rules and regulations of jnana-sastra (scriptures propagating empirical knowledge) and karma-sastra (scriptures propagating fruitive actions). He attains all round perfection simply by adhering to the path of pure bhakti. Therefore Lord Krsna's proclamation in the Gita 9/31 - 'na me bhaktah prana-syati' (My devotees are never destroyed) must be recognised as paramount".

Babaji Maharaja fell into silent contemplation at this point in the conversation.

Brajanatha and Bijoya discussed among them-selves and arrived at the firm conviction that jnana and karma are very insignificant. All doubts regarding bhakti were cleared up in their minds. They understood that the only true benediction for humanity was available in the form of mercy from bhakti-devi, or goddess of pure devotion, - not in any other shape.

Brajanatha, very gently asked Babaji Maharaja - dear guruji, pray tell us about the different limbs of suddha-bhakti.

RB: My dear Brajanatha, You have heard the explanations of the dasa-mula-siksa till the eighth sloka. Find the time to go over them with your respected uncle. I am truly happy to see him. I will now proceed to the ninth of the dasa-mula teachings. Please listen carefully :

"sruti krsnakhyanam smarana-nati-pujavidhiganah
tatha dasyam sakhyam paricaranamapyatmadadanam
navanganyetaniha vidhigatabhakteranudinam
bhajan sraddhayuktah suvimalaratim vai sa labhate"

`Padasevanam' must be executed with assistance from sravanam kirtanam and smaranam. In executing 'padasevanam' it is imperative to realise that one is hopelessly without means, and is unworthy to serve; at the sametime, to realise that the Supreme Object of service is the absolute embodiment of eternality, complete knowledge and unlimited bliss. `Padasevanam' includes viewing the transcendental face of the Lord, touching His body (the Deity), circumambulating, daily performing ones devotional duties, visiting - the temple, the holy rivers (Ganga), the sacred pilgrimages like Puri, Dvaraka, Mathura, Navadipa and so on. Srila Rupa Gosvami has described in detail this topic when explaining the sixty four limbs of bhakti. Worshiping tulasidevi and serving the sadhus are also with in `Padasevanam'.

The fifth, of the nine limbs of bhakti is arcana, or deity-worship. There are many considerations about eligibility and procedures regarding arcana. If a devotee, already practicing sravanam, kirtanam and smaranam, develops a strong faith in, and a urge to perform arcana, he must approach his guru, receive mantra initiation and instructions on its procedures and then engage in arcana.

Braja : Maharaja, what is the difference between 'nama', or the holy name, and `mantra', or incantations?

RB: `Nama' is the life and soul of `mantras'. Suffixes and pre-fixes like `namah' were attached to the holy name by the great sages thus addressing and propitiating specific powers in the holy name in order to establish privileged links with the Supreme Lord. More details are available in the Chaitanya Caritamrta, Adi 7/72-74 slokas and their purports. Truly, `nama' is impartial, It' can be chanted by anyone.

Jiva is entrapped by maya due to false identification with his body. So, to release his consciousness from the grips of matter it was deemed necessary to introduce the process of awe and reverential (maryada) deity worship. Hence mantra-diksa is a must for materialistic men.

As far as the 'Krsna-mantra' in eighteen syllables is concerned, the four discrepancies of siddha-sadhya-susiddha and ari are not applicable. Initiation into the Krsna-mantra is the most auspicious blessing for humanity. Out of all the mantras that exist, Krsna-mantra is the most potent and powerful. When jiva receives initiation in 'Krsna-mantra' from a bonafide, elevated guru, immediately he becomes the recipient of Krsna's divine potency. The initiate, who is eager for knowledge, receives instructions from his guru about the procedures of worship - which, at this point of discussion is not necessary to elaborate upon. In short, observance of vows for Krsna's birthday, dips in the holy rivers in winter in the month of Magha, Ekadasi vows of fasting, vows in the Kartika month, and so on, are a part of arcana. Regarding the process of worshiping Krsna, one act is absolutely indispensable, - along with serving and worshiping Krsna, His pure devotee must also be served and worshiped.

'Vanadana', or offering prayers, is the sixth of the nine limbs of vaidhi-bhakti. Although it is included within the other limbs like kirtanam, it has been allocated a separate status. Offering obeisances is 'vandana' (it is done with heartfelt prayers). Namaskara, or obeisances are of two kinds: - 'ekanga namaskara' is offering obeisances with folded hands before the Lord; 'astanga-namaskara' is offering prostrated obeisances. However, there are offences to be avoided while offering 'namaskara'. One-handed salutations, prostrated obeisances with covered upper torso, prostrating in front and in line with the Lord's vision, prostrating from behind the Lord, prostrating when keeping the feet on the right, prostrating inside the sanctum sanctorum, are all offences.

'Dasyam', or considering oneself to be a servitor of the Lord, is the seventh bhakti-limb. The servitor's mood is, that he is an eternal servant of Krsna. The ideal way to meditate and worship the Lord is to be imbued with feelings of servitude towards the Lord. 'Dasyam' includes offering prayers, obeisances, fruits of all labours, menial service, proper devotional conduct; reminiscing on the Lord, hearing about His pastimes and glories etc.

'Sakhyam', or making friendship with the Lord, is the eighth bhakti limb. As a friend of the Lord, the devotee is always attentive to attend to His needs. 'Sakhyam' is of two categories: - 'vaidhanga-sakhyam' (friendship regulated by discipline and reverence) and 'raganga-sakhyam' (spontaneous, friendly affection and regard). Here 'sakhyam' refers only to 'vaidhanga-sakhyam'. The attachment and friendship a devotee develops towards the Lord in worshiping the Deity, is 'vaidhanga-sakhyam'.

'Atma-nivedana' is the ninth limb of bhakti. Complete surrender of mind, body and words to Lord Krsna is known as 'atma-nivedana'. The hallmark of this limb is, that the devotee forgoes all types of endeavours for oneself and applies himself

solely for the sake of Krsna. Just as a cattle for sale does not attempt to maintain itself, similarly the devotee remains fully dependent on Krsna's will and even places his own wishes at Krsna's disposal. This theme is echoed in the words of Srimad Bhagavatam :

"sa vai manah krsna-padaravindayor vacamsi vaikuntha-gunanuvarnane karau harer-mandira-marjjanadisu srutincakaracyuta- satkathodaye mukunda-lingalayadarsane drsau tadbhrtyagatra sparse ngasangamam ghrananca tatpada saroja-saurabhe srinattulasyam rasanam tadarpita padau hareh ksetrapadanusarpane siro hrsikesa-padabhivandane kamanca dasye na tu kamakamaya yathottama slokaja-nasraya ratih " .

(Maharaja Ambarisa always engaged his mind at the lotus feet of Krsna, his words in describing the spiritual world and the Su-preme Personality of Godhead , his hands in cleansing and washing the Lord's temple , his ears in hearing the topics about the Supreme Lord , his eyes in seeing the Deity of Lord Krsna in the temple , his body in touching the lotus feet of vaisnavas and embracing them , his nostrils in smelling the aroma of the tulasi leaves offered to Krsna's lotus feet , his tongue in tasting food offered to Krsna , his legs in going to places of pilgrimage like Vrndavana and Mathura or to the Lord's temple , and his head in touching the lotus feet of the Lord and offering Him Prayers. Thus Maharaja Ambarisa desired only to serve the Lord faithfully . In this way he engaged his senses in the transcendental loving propensity for the Lord's service .)

Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara were exhilarated with Babaji Maharajas explanations. They fell prostrated before him in awed affection . Brajanatha said -- Gurudeva , truly you are an eternal and intimate associate of the Lord (bhagavatparsada) . We have received immense good fortune from your nectarean instructions . All this time we have wasted our lives in futile academic pursuits and in wallowing in false - prestige of a noble birth .It is surely on the strength of our piety accumulated over many life - times that we have been rewarded the shelter of your lotus feet .

Bijoya Kumara said - O Gurudeva , you are a stalwart amongst the pure devotees of the Lord. Srila Vrndavanadas Thakura personally instructed me to come to Sridhama Mayapura and see the sacred birth place of the Lord (yoga - pitha) . His blessings has enabled me to see the Lord's transcendental abode and associate with His eternal companion . With your kind permission maharaja , we like to visit you again tomorrow evening .

The elderly Babaji prostrated with amazing alacrity at the mention of Srila Vrndavanadasa Thakura. He rose to his sitting position slowly and said: --"The revered author of my beloved Lord's biography and a direct incarnation of Srila Vyasadeva, is Srila Vrndavanadasa Thakura ; I offer him my repeated obeisances. Both uncle and nephew were oblivious of the time . They suddenly noticed that it was late noon and the hours had sifted by . They begged leave from Babaji and the vaisnavas and hurried towards their residence .

Chapter 20

An Analysis : `Abhidheya' and `Vaidha - sadhana - bhakti', or the Regulative Devotional Service

Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara reached home by two in the afternoon . Brajanatha's mother had made special preparations for her brother , who she now personally served and fed . After lunch uncle and nephew withdrew themselves to a quiet place and ex-changed views on the scriptures and on the instructions they had received from advanced vaisnavas. They felt warm affection for each other . On hearing Brajanatha's reconstruction of Babaji's instructions to him, Bijoya Kumara remarked :- "You are very fortunate ! you have heard such wonderful philosophy from a great soul . It is true that hearing about devotional topics and about Krsna brings immense good fortune but when the same is heard from the lips of a pure devotee the beneficial results are almost immediate .

My son , you are an expert on the scriptures -- especially on rhetorics, you are at the top of everyone . By birth you are from the upper ranks even amongst the brahmana class. Wealth , look at the property you have inherited . All these are now added embellishments because you have taken shelter of a pure vaisnava devotee and have developed a taste for Krsna - katha , or topics of Krsna consciousness ."

While the two men were discussing , Brajanatha's mother surreptitiously slipped into the next room and catching her brothers attention without being seen by Brajanatha, signalled him to come to her . When Bijoya Kumara came near her she said to him, -- "My brother, I am seeing you after a long interval . I have to ask you for a favour . You must convince Brajanatha to take a wife .

I have been observing him lately and it chills my heart to see that his behaviour indicates he is disinterested in marriage . The family match -maker has tabled several propositions, but he is as unbending as the mountain . My mother - in - law has also tried her best but to no avail ' .

Bijoya Kumara heard his sister out patiently . He said,- " I am staying here for another two weeks . I will judge the situation and advice you on what action is to be taken . For now leave it at this and carry on with everything , normally " . When his sister left he returned to Brajanatha and continued their spirit-ual discussion for the rest of the day and the next till noon meal, with times out for eating , bathing and sleeping .

After lunch Bijoya Kumara said,- "This evening we will go to Srivasa - angana and hear from revered Babaji Maharaja an elabo-ration on Srila Rupa Gosvami's sixty four limbs of bhakti . I am so elated to have your association Brajanatha . I Pray that life after life I have your association . Without your help I would have never received such nectarean spiritual instructions .

Babaji Maharaja was saying that there are two paths of sadhana bhakti :- `vaidha - marga' (the path of regulated devotional service) and `raga - marga' (the path of spontaneous devotional service). We are on the `vaidha - marga' from all indications . Before we probe further into `raga - marga' let us properly learn about `vaidha - marga' and how to apply it in real life . Yes-terday Babaji Maharaja had explained the nine limbs of bhakti, but I am still not sure how to translate those instructions into action . Today I want to get a concrete grasp on the subject.

Spiritual topics have a way of not coming to an end, especially when two enthusiastic devotees are seriously discussing them. The sun grew ruddy and weary , ready to set . The two devotees , uncle and nephew, took that as a sign to make preparations to go to Srivasa - angana . Chanting loudly the Lord's name all the way they arrived at the Srivasa - angana . They offered respectful obeisances to all the resident vaisnavas and went into Babaji Maharaja's simple dwelling -- a small , clean hut .

Babaji Maharaja always feels great exultation when he sees sincere devotees with earnest enquiries . He stood up now to greet the two knowledge-seekers and embraced them warmly, pointed to two straw mats indicating them to sit down . Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara prostrated themselves reverentially before Babaji Maharaja and quietly sat - down . At first they exchanged preliminaries regarding the practice of spiritual life and then Bijoya Kumara ,eager to have his questions answered , directed his question respectfully at Babaji Maharaja.

Bijoya :- Srila gurudeva, kindly excuse us for troubling you with so many queries ; you are like a father to us , so please tolerate these torments . We are keen to understand the sixty-four limbs of devotion, as enunciated by Srila Rupa Gosvami . You have already shown us so much kindness , but now , be again merciful and teach us this esoteric science so that we may easily fathom the profundity of suddha bhakti .

Babaji Maharaja was slightly amused ; a light smile playing on his lips, he began to speak -- "The first ten of the sixty-four limbs form a group which may be called as the introductory group . They are :

1. taking shelter of a bonafide guru
2. receiving initiation and instructions on Krsna consciousness from the guru
3. serving guru with proper faith
4. following in the footsteps of previous saints
5. enquiring about one's specific spiritual duties
6. foregoing sense - gratification for Krsna
7. residing in the dhama,like Navadvipa or any site on the banks of the Ganga or Yamuna
8. accumulating and accepting only necessary material things, simply to keep body and soul together
9. observing the spiritual festivals and fast-days, like ekadasi
10. respecting holy trees like avla , pipal , asvattha etc.

The next ten are proscriptions that must definitely be adhered to.

11. keep distance from those who are inimical to Krsna and His devotees, and from mammonites
12. do not overtly concern yourself about collecting a following or disciples, -- should not initiate unworthy disciples
13. discard ostentatious display and external pomp and celebrations
14. should not collect large number of books not quote and analyse extensively from many different and unauthorised literatures
15. do not be miserly nor capricious in ordinary material deal-ings
16. do not succumb to sorrow , frustration and so on
17. must not show disrespect to the demigods and demigoddesses
18. do not cause anxiety to other living entities
19. always avoid any chance of committing nama and seva aparadha
20. do not tolerate criticism and insult to Krsna and Krsna's devotees

These twenty limbs of bhakti are regarded as the portals leading into the path of suddha - bhakti . However , the first three , begining with, `taking shelter of a bonafide guru' , are the most important . The rest forty-four, are to be observed in order to increase bhakti , they are as follows:

21. Decorating the body with vaisnava signs of tilaka etc
22. writing the Lord's name on the person
23. wearing flower garlands and other objects offered to the Lord,which are known as `nirmalya'
24. dancing before the Deities of the Lord
25. prostrating before the Deities , guru and vaisnavas
26. standing up when greeting them eagerly
27. following the procession behind the Deity
28. visiting the temple of Krsna
29. circumambulating the temple Deity , dhama etc.
30. offering worship to the Deity
31. serving the Deity , vaisnava etc
32. singing (bhajans , kirtana)
33. participating in congregational chanting
34. chanting gayatri mantra after acamana
35. offering prayers with feelings of humility and meekness
36. chanting hymns in praise of the Lord
37. honouring and relishing food offered to Krsna (prasadam)
38. drinking caranamrta
39. smeling the incense, flowers , etc. offered to the Lord.
40. touching the Deity
41. seeing the Deity
42. participating in the arotika and other functions
43. hearing about the Lord's name , beauty , qualities etc.
44. patiently waiting for the Lord to shower His mercy
45. remembering the Lord and His activities etc.
46. meditating on the Lord

47. becoming the Lord's servant
48. becoming the Lord's friend
49. surrendering oneself wholesale to the Lord
50. offering the Lord His favourite things
51. leaving no stone unturned for Krsna
52. taking complete shelter of Krsna
53. serving Tulasidevi because she is dear to Krsna
54. respecting the Bhagavatam and other scriptures, knowing they represent Krsna's words
55. serving Krsna's birth place, Mathura, and other dhamas, due to their relationship with Krsna's pastimes
56. serving the vaisnavas because they are dear to Krsna
57. observing festivals in the company of saintly souls with appropriate fanfare commensurate to one's ability.
58. observing Kartika and other vows
59. celebrating the Lord's birthday
60. faithfully serving the Deities
61. relishing the discourses on Bhagavatam and other scriptures given by elevated devotees who are steeped in Krsna's mellows
62. associating with peaceful , elevated vaisnavas more advanced than oneself and who are of the same spiritual disposition as oneself .
63. chanting the holy name of the Lord
64. residing in the dhama, like Vrndavana

The last five are already described along with the other limbs, but due to their pre-eminence they have been reiterated seperately . These limbs of bhakti must be completely inducted into one's devotional practice with the body , senses and inner con-sciousness . From the twenty - first to the forty - ninth limb are instructions about Krsna - mantra diksa .

Bijoya :- Babaji Maharaja , kindly elaborate on the very first limb -- `taking shelter of a bonafide guru' - (Sri - guru - padasraya)

RB :- As prerequisite, the disciple must become eligible to begin practice of suddha - bhakti . Next he must seek and ap-proach a Vaisnava well versed in the science of pure devotion , take initiation from him and enquire from him submissively about Krsna consciousness . Any jiva gifted with sraddha , or faith, is eligible for suddha - bhakti . Accumulated piety over many life times rewards a person the association of saintly souls and the possibility to hear from them on spiritual topics . Such subject matters purify him and creates faith in him called `sraddha' . In tandem with sraddha comes saranapatti , or the initial desire to surrender . Sraddha and saranapatti are similar concepts .

Devotion to Krsna is the topmost spiritual path . The eligibili- ty in suddha - bhakti arises from sincere and firm faith in the Lord , as displayed in the following six qualities: accepting duties and activities favourable to bhakti ; rejecting activities detrimental to bhakti ; knowing Krsna to be the sole protector ; accepting Krsna as the only maintainer ; regarding the self as humble and without means ;

and not having separate and independent will from that of Krsna's . As he becomes eligible he is eager to learn about suddha - bhakti . For this purpose he searches out a bonafide guru and begs for his shelter (asraya).

The Vedas instructs -- Mundaka Upanisad :-

" tad - vijnanartham sad - gurum evabhigacchet samitpanih srotri-yam
brahmanistham " (Mnnd. 1/2/12)

* [Translation -- Ch 6]

Chandogya Upanisad :

" acaryavan puruso veda "

(The person who receives proper initiation from an acarya , or perfect spiritual master, is alone realised in Brahman).

The 'Sri Hari bhakti - vilasa' has extensively delved into the topic of the symptoms of a bonafide guru and of a sincere disciple . The main symptoms are: the ideal disciple must be of right-eous character , faithful and sincere . The model guru must be an exponent and practitioner of suddha - bhakti , well versed in the science of devotion , of spotless saintly character , guileless , bereft of greed , simple , not contaminated by the mayavada philosophy and expert in all activities . If a brahmana , who is well - respected in society , is crowned with such wonderful qualities he automatically becomes a guru for all the different varnas , or castes . In the absence of such a guru, the disciple must find a guru of a higher caste than himself to take initiation from .

The purport of this is, that keeping aside the caste consideration , if one finds a bonafide guru realised in Krsna consciousness then the disciple must surrender to him . And if a brahmana guru of such caliber is discovered then the slight advantage of taking initiation from him is, that in a society mired in caste consciousness , a brahmana guru is unquestionably accepted as superior . The truth , however , is that a real qualified devotee of the Lord is the bonafide guru . The scriptures have also discussed about testing the disciple . Here again the salient factor is that once the guru sees the disciple has become eligible to enter the path of suddha - bhakti and the disciple feels confident to trust and respect the guru as being a pure devotee , then the guru begins to shower his blessings upon him .

There are two categories of guru: -- 'diksa - guru' , or initiating guru and 'siksa - guru' , or instructing guru . The disciple accepts initiation from the 'diksa - guru' and learns the process of Deity worship from him . 'Diksa - guru' is one, but there can be numerous 'siksa - gurus' . 'Diksa - guru' can also give spiritual instructions to his disciple like a siksa - guru.

Bijoya :- One is forbidden by scriptures to discard the 'diksa-guru'; but if he is incapable of imparting proper knowledge of devotion and of vaisnava etiquette ,

then how can he be in a position to teach ?

Before a person accepts formal initiation from a guru he must test the guru whether he is well-versed in the Vedas and in the science of Supreme Absolute Truth .For only such a bonafide guru is indeed able to instruct his disciple in all matters . It is true that one's `diksa - guru' may not be rejected , but on two counts he may actually be denounced by the disciple . First reason is , that at the time of receiving initiation if the disciple for some cause did not research into the devotional calibre of the guru and later found out that he was not conversant with the conclusions of the scriptures and nor was he a vaisnava , hence did not make an iota of spiritual progress , then he should renounce his guru . Many scriptural evidences support this . For example the Narada -pancaratra saysas quoted in Hari - bhakti - vilasa :

" yo vyakti nyaya - rahitamanyayena srnoti yah
tavubhau narakam ghoram vrajatah kalamaksayan " (Hbv. 1/62)

(Any person posing himself as an `acarya' but speaking unautho-rised philosophy contrary to the teachings of the holy texts, and any one who claiming to be his disciple hears it, there by lend-ing it credibility , are both bound for hell .)

The Mahabharata says in the story about Amba :

" gurorapyavaliptasya karyakaryamajanatah
utpatha - pratipannasya parityago vidhiyate ". (Maha . Udyog . Par . 179/25)

(A person who is wallowing in carnal pleasures and material comforts , is confused about the human goal of life and is devoid of bhakti , poses himself as a guru, then such a depraved charla-tan must be described and rejected .)

Another quote in Hari - bhakti - vilasa says :

" avaisnavopadistena mantrena nirayam vrajet
punasca vidhina samyag grahayed vaisnavad guroh".(Hbv.4/144)

(If anyone receives mantra initiation from a non - vaisnava who is a womaniser and is bereft of devotion to Krsna, is certainly doomed to hell . Therefore he must immediately act according to scriptural injunction and take re - initiation from a real vais-nava guru.)

The second reason is, a guru who at the time of giving initiation was a vaisnava and knowledgeable in Krsna consciousness , but later due to bad association or otherwise becomes a mayavadi and a vaisnava-hater or falls into immoral ways , than he must be given up by the disciple . However if the guru is not inimical of

vaisnavas , is not a mayavadi and is not addicted to sinful activities but is lacking in knowledge of the scriptures, then his meagre scriptural understanding should not be a cause for the disciple to disown him . In this case, the disciple must approach his guru with due deference to procure permission for receiving spiritual knowledge and instructions from an advanced , pure vaisnava and serving him .

Bijoya :- What are the logistics of Krsna diksa , or initiation etc.?

RB :- A person must inform himself from the guru about the process of worshipping Krsna and the pure religious teachings emunicated in the Srimad Bhagavatam. Thus trained, he must regu-larly execute with simplicity, devotional service to Krsna .Later we shall discuss the individual steps in deity worship . It is imperative for the disciple to understand from his guru the bhakti concepts of sambandha , abhidhaya and prayo-jama .

Bijoya :- Kindly explain how to serve the guru with faith ?

RB :- Realise that the guru is not an ordinary mortal but is the representative of, and is the best among all the demigods . Never disobey the orders of the guru . He is the expansion of the transcendental Vaikuntha principle (guru-tattva).

Bijoya :- What means, to follow in the footsteps of saints ?

RB :- According to the precepts of sadhana - bhakti, the devotee has to use any and every means to try and attach his mind on to Krsna . Yet it is indeed exigent to emulate the path endorsed by the previous spiritual stalwarts. Because such a path is devoid of distress , is the source of peace and benediction and is an easy straight road up . As we learn from the words of Skandha Purana :

" sa mrgyah sreyaasam hetuh panthah santapa - varjjitah
anavaptasramam purve yena santah pratashire "

(The path which was fearlessly tread by previous acaryas and spiritual stalwarts is a must for all to follow , because this alone will bring benediction and peace from the pangs of material existence .)

The correct path cannot be properly ascertained and charted by any single individual . A succession of acaryas have each re-moved little areas of unclarity on this path of suddha -bhakti. It is a path finely prepared to be followed by the rest . The Brahma - Yamala describes :

" sruti - smrti - puranadi - pancaratra - vidhim vina
aikantiki harer bhaktir utpatayaiva kalpate "

(Even single minded devotional service to the Lord that ignores the tenets of authorised vedic literatures like the Upanisads , Puranas , Narada - pancaratra etc . simply creates an unnecessary disturbance in society).

Bijoya :- Respected guruji, kindly explain how single - minded devotion to the Supreme Lord can be the cause of disturbance ?

RB :- Real, single - minded devotion is possible only when one is traversing the path of suddha - bhakti as formulated by the previous acaryas . Any other method or path besides this leads to a dead end. Inexperienced and myopic preachers such as Dattatreya , Buddha etc . could not properly comprehend the science of suddha - bhakti . Yet they ventured to deviate from the autho-rised path and warped it, selecting at random a little from the original ideas. One group added mayavadi thought while the other diluted it with atheism . They imagined that this misconstrued philosophy will foster single - minded devotion to the Supreme Lord . But this is not true: such perversion of the truth cannot evoke pure devotion , but only chaos and disturbance .

In the practice of raga - bhakti , or spontaneous devotional service adherence to regulations and stipulations enunciated in the sruti , smrti , puranas, panca ratra -- scriptures, especially earmarked for vaidhi - bhakti practice , is not necessary . These elevated devotees are required to emulate the eternally liberated residents of Vraja dhama in the spiritual world . But for the devotees on the level of vaidhi - bhakti it is imperative they follow the examples of the great spiritual stalwarts (mahajanas) like Dhruva , Prahlada , Narada , Vyasadeva , Sukadeva Gosvami and so on . Hence for vaidhi - bhakti devotees the only autho-rised method is to follow in the footsteps of previous acaryas .

Bijoya :- What sort of enquiries are considered saddharma - jijnasa , or researching about specific spiritual duties ?

RB :- This enquiry is exclusively directly towards finding out the spiritual duties and practices of the precious acaryas . The vaidhi - bhakti devotee must be eager to ascertain the spiritual priorities of previous preceptors .

Bijoya :- What means to renounce sense gratification and material comfort for Krsna's sake ?

RB :- `Bhoga' , or sense gratification, means to cater to the demands of the senses in an enjoying spirit . `Bhoga' acts as deterrents to spiritual progress . If one renounces `bhoga' to advance in spiritual practices for attaining Krsna then it is positive and beneficial . `Bhoga' is like an addiction , it always increases its hold on the addict ; hence it is a stumbling block in executing devotional service. Therefore, the devotee must restrict his eating to consuming only offered food (prasadam) in appropriate measure to enable him to enthusiastically execute devotional service . On spiritual festival days and ekadasis he must fast and forgo all sense enjoyments . In this way he must train himself to abrogate sensual pleasures .

Bijoya :- What is the significance of residing in the dhama like Dvaraka and Vrndavana , or living on the banks of the Ganga Yamuna etc ?

RB :- 'Dhama' are places where the Supreme Lord appears and displays His transcendental pastimes . The territories lying on either banks of holy rivers are spiritually enervating . Hence residing in these sanctified places inspires spiritual activities and devotion .

Bijoya :- Is staying in Navadvipa spiritually advantageous because it is situated on the Ganga, or for other reasons also ?

RB :- Ah yes ! Taking up residence anywhere in Navadvipa's thirty two square miles area is equivalent to staying in the holiest of land of Vrndavana. Within Navadvipa, it is especially beneficial to live in Mayapura . There are seven puras or abodes -- Ayodhya , Mathura , Maya , Kasi , Kanci , Avanti and Dvaravati , which award liberation. Of these Mayapuri is the highest abode .

When Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu descended to this material world He brought with Him His own original abode of Svetadvipa (Mayapuri).

Four centuries after Lord Caitanya's advent this Svetadvipa will gain preeminence over its counterparts . The benefit of residing in Navadvipa is, that all offences are nullified and the resident is crowned with suddha - bhakti . Srila Prabodhananda Sarasvati has accorded Navadvipa equal spiritual status with Vrndavana , but in many instances he has shown Navadvipa to be more elevated .

Bijoya :- How can we understand what is a balanced accumulation of material necessities for upkeep of the body ?

RB :- The Naradiya Purana states :

" yavata syat svanirvahah svikuryattavadarthavit
adhikye nyunatayam ca cyavate paramarthatah "

(A person who understands the real goal of human life will accrue and accept material things commensurate to his necessities ; any more or anyless will divert him from his destination).

The eligible vaidhi - bhakti devotee must maintain his varna - srama duties while engaging in devotional service . He must pursue an honest profession to earn money for the upkeep of his family . To acquire material possessions according to need is beneficial . But accumulating in excess or striving for it , increases the element of greed and subsequently his attachment for matter grows, -- this will neutralize his spiritual progress . This fact is true also in the case of accepting less than one's requirements -- the result will be the same ; retardation of spiritual values . Therefore, till such time as when one is not subservient to the physical urges and is not dependant on material things, one must follow a balanced life-style .

Bijoya :- How should a devotee honour and observe 'haribasara' , or spiritual observances ?

RB :- Pure ekadasis are known as 'haribasara' . Afflicted ekadasis are not to be observed . Mahadvadasis , or when the eleventh day extends unafflicted on to the twelfth day of the moon , then this day should be observed and not the afflicted eleventh , or viddha ekadasi . The process for observing ekadasi vows are as follows:.. vow of celibacy from the day prior to ekadasi (tenth) till the whole of next day (twelfth) . Full fasting , even from water on ekadasi , staying up the night of ekadasi and chanting and hearing , next morning break fast on time . By fasting is meant not taking even maha - prasada . In case of sickness , as concession anukalpa, or one frugal and light repast may be taken according to the prescribed method recorded in Hari bhakti - vilasa - 'naktam havisyannam " (After sunset, fruits , vegeta-bles , milk , nuts ,etc. can be eaten in exiguous quantity).

Bijoya :- What gives myrobalan tree , peepul tree etc. a special status ?

RB :- The Skandha Purana writes :

" asvattha-tulasi - dhatri - go - bhumi - sura - vaisnavah
pujिताh pranata - dhyatah ksapayanti nramagham "

(Sacred trees like peepul , banyan , myrobalan (dhatri) , and tulasi , the cow , the brahmanas , the vaisnavas, absolves sins of persons who pray, worship , offer obeisances and meditate on them).

The vaidhi - bhakti devotee , as a part of maintaining house - hold life within the varnasrama system must worship , respect and meditate upon: the banyan , peepul and other shade - giving trees ; Myrobalan and other fruit - bearing trees ; tulasi and other devotion inspiring plants ; the cow and other, universally beneficial animals ; the brahmanas who teach religion and main-tain religious principles; and the vaisnavas, the devotees of the Lord, who purify the whole world .

Bijoya :- Kindly explain what is avoiding the company of men who are inimical to Krsna ?

RB :- 'Bhava', or spontaneous spiritual sentiments, intensifies pure devotion to the Lord . As long as the devotee does not attain the stage of 'bhava' he must shun the company of atheista and non-devotees . 'Sanga' , or association, implies attachment . In the course of necessary dealings with others the various exchanges that takes place, is not 'sanga' . 'Sanga' is, when one grows attached and attracted to a particular person's company . Company of persons who are inimical to the Supreme Lord must be strictly avoided .

Devotees embellished with 'bhava' never feel the urge to associ-ate with agnostics and atheists , or non - believers . Thus such bad company is very dangerous for the neophyte devotees . Just as a dust storm or a heat wave can shrivel and dry up a

creeper, similarly the creeper of bhakti is destroyed in the company of non-believers .

Bijoya : - What persons are considered as inimical to Krsna ?

RB :- Persons who are devoid of devotion to Krsna , grossly materialistic persons overtly attached to women and wine , persons whose hearts are poisoned by atheism and mayavadi thoughts , and persons who are engrossed in fruitive activities, are the four types of inimical non-believers . One has to reject their company .

Bijoya :- How can a person denounce the desire for disciples , and following, and also initiating unworthy disciples ?

RB :- The insatiable greed for money goods one on to collect many disciples -- this is a grievous fault. Increasing the number of disciples forces the person to initiate many unworthy and faithless candidates , thus he commits a monumental offence . There after, no sincere persons except the faithless approach him for initiation .

Bijoya :- How can we give up accumulating many books and stop quoting and analysing extensively ?

RB :- The scriptures are like a bottomless and shoreless expanse Focus your study only on subjects that interest you . Collect relevant books and thoroughly scrutinize them . No one can master any subject if he reads bits and scraps from a myriad of literatures . This is especially pertinent regarding texts on bhakti . Undivided attention in reading only bhakti literature can alone yield a comprehensive grasp on the concept of `sambandha', which is indispensable to spiritual progress . Further more , it is in the best interest to ascertain and acquiesce the straight forward and direct purport of a text, -- too much analysis and extrapolation leads to misconceptions .

Bijoya :- What is meant by not being miserly or being straight forward in ordinary dealings ?

RB : - To maintain the body, it is necessary to procure proper food , shelter and clothing . When these are not available it causes suffering, -- and once having acquired them if they perish , this also brings distress . When such reversals assail the devotee he must not succumb to despair and anxiety , nor to devious designs for surmounting it . He must peacefully pray to the Supreme Lord and try to remember Him constantly .

Bijoya :- How to overcome the numbing grip of sorrow and distress ?

RB :- How can the mind , which is constantly under seize from lamentation , fear , anger , greed , envy etc, meditate on Krsna ? The devotee can become afflicted by lamentation or illusion due to the death of a family member or because of a coveted desire remaining unfulfilled, but he must not allow these to paralyse and cripple him. It is natural to mourn the son's demise , but one must quietly

overcome it by taking shelter of Krsna and praying to Him for solace and strength . In this way a devotee must train himself in always remembering the Lord's lotus feet.

Bijoya :- Can we surmise that not being disrespectful to demi-gods means that we should worship them , -- is this the scriptur-al verdict ?

RB :- It is most essential for the devotee to cultivate single - minded devotion to Krsna . It is proscribed for the devotee to worship any other demigods while considering him to be independ-ent of Krsna's supreme control . Yet if other persons are wor-shiping demigods then the Krsna-devotee must not disrespect the demigods . Every demigod must be recognised as elavated devotees of Krsna and thus are objects of his reverence -- but for the Krsna-devotee Krsna is the prime goal of all worship and medita-tion, in all conditions . The Jiva's heart and consciousness are not free from the influence of the material modes as long as unalloyed devotion has not blossomed . Those persons whose hearts and consciousness are controlled by the three material modes -- sattva , rajas and tamas , worshipping different demigods, each according to their individual modes and preferences is recommend-ed. Such worship is at their best interest in their present condition and they should develop proper faith in worship . Therefore the devotee must not show the slightest disregard for their object of worship . By the mercy of the demigods, their worshippers will become purified of the contamination of the material modes .

Bijoya :- How can we stop being the cause of anxiety and dis-turbance to other living entities?

RB :- Lord Krsna is quickly pleased with persons who desist causing pain and anxiety to other living entities out of compas-sion for them . `Daya' , or compassion, is the foremost quality of a vaisnava.

Bijoya :- How to stop offences against the holy name and in executing service (nama/seva aparadha) ?

RB :-`Seva aparadha', or offences committed in executing devo-tional service pertains to Deity worship,while `nama-aparadha' is related to suddha-bhakti and spiritual life in general. Both these offences are to be shunned with utmost care. There are thirty two `seva-aparadha' and ten `nama-aparadha'.

Bijoya :- A devotee should not tolerate criticism of Krsna and the vaisnavas --- does this instruction consequently imply that the devotee must immediately present a strong reposte ?

RB :- Those who blaspheme Krsna and the vaisnavas are non-believers and inimical to Krsna. This offensive attitude must not be tolerated for any reason and

the devotee has to strictly shun their company.

Bijoya :- Is there a particular connection between the first twenty limbs of bhakti with the rest sixty four limbs ?

RB :- The latter forty-four limbs are a part of what is already contained in the first twenty limbs. They have been mentioned independently so as to highlight their significance and help understand them better. From the twenty-first limbs (adorning the body with vaisnava symbols) to the fiftieth (offering Krsna the choicest objects), both numbers inclusive, comprise thirty limbs which may be categorised under the banner of 'arca-na-marga', or the process of Deity worship. The vaisnava symbols consist of three strands of tulasi neck-beads and tilaka markings in twelve places of the body. The twenty second limb directs the devotee to write the names of the Supreme Lord or the 'panca-tattva' names on the upper part of the body or on the forehead with sandalwood paste or tilaka etc.

As regards the thirty first limb (wear flower garlands offered to Krsna and partake food stuff offered to Krsna) . The Srimad Bhagavatam states :

" tvayopabhukta - sraggandhavasas ' lankaracarccitah
ucchistabhojino dasastava mayam jayema hi ".(S.B.11/6/31)

(Uddhava said -- My dear Krsna , I have taken things which You have used and enjoyed , such as garlands of flowers , fragrant articles , garments and ornaments ; and I eat only the remnants of Your foodstuff because I am Your menial servant . So,I am sure that I shall not be attacked by the spell of material energy).

The next seven limbs upto the thirtieth, are not required to be elaborated upon since they are self-explanatory. The thirty-first limb is best explained in the words of the following sloka :

"paricaryya tu sevopakaranadi-pariskriya
tatha prakirnakacchatravaditradayairupasana " (Brs Purva 2/61).

(Any person who can make arrangements for service to the Lord in the same way that a king is given service by his attendants, is surely elevated to the abode of Krsna after death).

The proceeding fourteen limbs have straight forward easy meanings. The forty-seventh limb, namely dasya, or servitorship, is of two kinds: karmarpan (offering the results of fruitive activity) and kainkarya (constantly engaged in service with body, mind and words). 'Sakhya', or devotional service in friendship, is also of two varieties: visvasa (confidential servant) and mitra-vrtti (a well wisher friend). 'Atma-nivedana' means self-surrender. 'Atma' means the self, not only the spirit-soul self (ahamta), but also mind, words body and all other possessions (mamata),--- both these must be offered to the Lord.

Bijoya :- Gurudeva, kindly explain more about 'dehanistha ahamta' and

`dehanistha mamata'.

RB :- The owner of the `deha', or body, is called `dehi', he is the jiva, or spirit soul who is designated as `aham', or I the ego. When the soul or self falsely identifies with this aham, it is known as `dehanistha ahamta'. Everything related to the body and claimed ownership by the self is extended ego or `aham', this is known as `dehanistha mamata'. Both these must be offered to Krsna. When a person relinquishes false identities of `I' and `mine' and asserts himself in practical life as the servant of Krsna who subsists on Krsna-prasadam and whose body, mind and words belong to Krsna, to be utilised as instruments for His service, is on the platform of `atma-nivedana'.

Bijoya :- How to offer Krsna, one's choicest objects ?

RB :- Whatever desirable objects one is attracted to must be directed to connect with Krsna and then enjoyed , in this way one does not incur the sin of enjoying seperately from Krsna .

Bijoya :- How does a person make a whole - hearted endeavour for Krsna ?

RB :- All understandings , be it worldly or vedic , if it is ensured that they are favourable to Krsna consciousness then such activities are cent percent directed to satisfying Krsna .

Bijoya :- How does one take complete shelter of Krsna ?

RB :- Always think: `I am Yours , my lord !' The devotee's atti-tude and mental frame must be that he is completely surrendered to Him .

Bijoya :- How does one serve tulasi ?

RB :- Tulasidevi can be served in nine ways : to see tulasi , to touch tulasi , meditate on tulasi , glorify tulasi , bow down to tulasi , hear tulasi's glorification , plant tulasi , consume tulasi , and worship tulasi daily . All these services to tulasi are ultimately meant for the Supreme Lord, for this reason tulasi's glories are endless .

Bijoya :- In what manner can the scriptures be shown respect ?

RB :- Texts which determine , analyse and establish what is pure devotion to the Supreme Lord are authorised scriptures, (sastras). Among the many scriptures Srimad Bhagavatam is the foremost because it is the refined essence of the Vedanta . Those elevated saints who are steeped in the immortal ambrosia of the Bhagavat Purana are not attracted to any other scriptures .

Bijoya :- How to glorify Mathura , Lord Krsna's birth place ?

RB :- To hear , remember , glorify the transcendental qualities of Mathura ; have a desire to visit Mathura on pilgrimage , smear the body with Mathura dust , reside in Mathura and serve the holy land. All these activities fulfil one's most coveted wishes . Mayapura dhama is spiritually equally significant .

Bijoya :- What is the significance of serving a vaisnava ?

RB :- The vaisnavas are very dear to Lord Krsna . By serving the vaisnavas a person attains bhakti to the Supreme Lord . The scriptures declare that of all varieties of worship Visnu worship is supreme . But even higher than Visnu worship is the worship of Visnu's servants , the vaisnavas.

Bijoya :- How to perform ceremonies in glorification of the Lord according to one's financial position ?

RB :- Purchase ingredients for offering to the Lord according to the strength of one's purse. After offering to, and worshiping the Lord , His pure devotees the saintly vaisnavas, must be served prasadam to their satisfaction, -- this is known as mahotsava , or grand celebration . It is the best form of celebration in the world .

Bijoya :- How does one honour the month of karttika ?

RB :- Another name for the karttika is Urjja . The devotees take special vows of renunciation and increased devotional activities of hearing , chanting , remembering , circumambulating etc to celebrate Lord Damodara's pastimes --- this monthlong occasion is known as `Urjjadara'.

Bijoya :- How to celebrate the Lord's appearance day ?

RB :- For the surrendered devotees, the Supreme Lord's appearance days like `Krsna-janmasthanami' and `Gaura-purnima' are very special and spiritually significant. They are celebrated with spiritual sobriety and devotional fervour.

Bijoya :- How to serve and worship the Deity with proper faith ?

RB :- In performing Deity worship service, the devotee must always remain enthusiastic and maintain a loving attitude towards the Lord. The Supreme Lord bestows such a sincere soul not merely with pious results of Deity worship, but with the transcendental reward of bhakti.

Bijoya :- Maharaja, kindly explain to us in what way we can relish the nectar of Srimad Bhagavatam in the company of those who are steeped in its divine humour (rasa) ?

RB :- The Vedas is a wishfulfilling desire tree, and the Srimad Bhagavatam is the deliciously ripened fruit of this tree. It is impossible to savour this nectar in the company of those who do not have any taste for it. In fact one becomes an offender if one tries to do so. The sincere aspirer must find a pure devotee, one who is

imbibed in that spiritual humour (rasa), who is himself thirsty for hearing Krsna's sublime pastimes, and in his association relish the succulent sweetness of Srimad Bhagavatam. In pedestrian assemblies or social gatherings, discussion on and readings from the Srimad Bhagavatam will have negative or at best no effect on spiritual progress (suddha - bhakti).

Bijoya :- what is meant by associating with devotees who are peaceful, elevated and have similar spiritual sentiments ?

RB :- A person cannot advance spiritually by associating with non devotees , even if he rubber-stamps them as,or thinks they are, devotees . The sincere devotee always desires to engage in transcendental service of Krsna's eternal , supramundane pastimes . This is the hallmark of a true bhakta . Among them, those bhaktas who are more elevated than oneself must be sought out , because their association enhances bhakti . Otherwise bhakti's growth is arrested , and the unfortunate devotee is gradually dragged down to the same level of the persons he is associating with . The scriptures warn us of this in Hari - bhakti - sudhodaya :
" yasya yatsangatih pumso manivat syat sa tadgunah
svakularddhyai tato dhiman svayuthanyeva samsrayet (Hbs 8/51).

* [Translation -- Ch.17.]

Bijoya :- How is 'nama - samkirtana' , or chanting the holy name defined ?

RB :- 'Nama' , or the holy name, is a transcendental , spiritual entity , without the slightest trace of materialism . The holy name voluntarily appears on the tongue of the devotee who is enthusiastic about devotional service and whose senses have been purified by devotion, -- because 'nama' is not perceived by material senses . With this devotional attitude a devotee should chant individually as well as in a congregation the holy name of the Lord .

Bijoya :- Srila Gurudeva , by your mercy we have already understood the purport of residing in Mathura , the birthplace of Lord Krsna . And now we want to know the essence of this teaching .

RB :- The last five limbs of the sixty-four we just discussed are the topmost activities in bhakti . If anyone can perform these activities without offences even sparingly , then on the strength of their spiritual potency the devotee is very quickly elevated to the platform of bhava - bhakti.

Bijoya :- Revered Babaji, kindly instruct us on whatever there is to know on sadhana bhakti .

RB :- The devotional limbs described here offer certain subsidiary results as mentioned in the scriptures , but they are in principle used only as motivators for the worldly - minded populace to transform their predilection . The direct and real consequence to the performance of these devotional limbs is attachment to

Krsna's lotus - feet . For the serious students of bhakti and the knowledgeable exponents of `suddha - bhakti', the devotional aspect in all activities receive full support while the fruitive aspect in them are disposable .

A person due to his knowledge (jnana) and renunciation (vairagya) obtains some degree of eligibility to step on the path of bhakti ; but it cannot be taken for granted that because of this , his `jnana' and `vairagya' are transformed into limbs of `suddha - bhakti' . `Jnana' and `vairagya' by themselves steels and dries up the heart , where as bhakti is soft,unctious and it melts the heart . Whereas `jnana' (knowledge) and `vairagya' (renunciation) which result from the practice of bhakti is unquestionably ac-cepted as a part of `suddha - bhakti' . `Jnana' and `vairagya' independently are inadequate to crown anyone with the fruit of `suddha - bhakti' , they can never be the cause of bhakti . What they fail to offer is but facilely rewarded by bhakti .

By properly executing `suddha - bhakti' an unique taste for serving and worshiping Krsna is generated , so much so that the strongest of material attachments are dissipated . The `sadhaka' must carefully practice `yukta - vairagya' and avoid `phalgu - vairagya' (false renunciation) . All material objects are to be utilised in serving Krsna (because they belong to Him) but without maintaining any attachment for them ; to handle matter in such a balanced manner is known as `yukta - vairagya' . Since everything is a part of Krsna and has a connection to Him, simply renouncing them as being anti - spirit or mundane coupled with the burning desire and greed for liberation (mukti) is called `phalgu - vairagya' . Hence mundane knowledge (jnana) and false renunciation (phalgu - vairagya) must be discarded .

Bhakti which is exhibited by some for the purpose of accumu-lating wealth , following and disciples is far removed from suddha - bhakti , and is certainly not a limb of bhakti . Quali-ties such as the power of discrimination (viveka) are embellish-ments only for those who have gained eligibility in practicing bhakti , they are not to be confused as limbs of bhakti . Devo-tees practicing bhakti are often graced by qualities like sense control , discipline , cleanliness etc. which appear on their own volition: they are also not limbs of bhakti . These characteristics and more , like internal and external purity , austerities , equipoise and so on automatically blossom in the personality of the Krsna-devotees, he does not have to make a seperate effort to cultivate them .

Any person who sincerely endeavours in practicing any one or more of the principle limbs of bhakti which were presently explained , will definitely attain perfection in spiritual life or Krsna consciousness . I have thus narrated everything about `vaidhi - sadhana - bhakti' in a nutshell . You may try to implement them to the best of your ability .

Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara prostrated themselves before Babaji Maharaja's lotus - feet and said humbly -- ` O gurudeva ! Please be merciful upon us and save us from the deep well of false pride in which we are drowning .

Babaji Maharaja replied -- " Lord Krsna will certainly bestow His blessing on you "

Through the reassuring silence of the late night uncle and nephew retraced their way back home ; their hearts humming with elation, their minds meditating on Babaji Maharaja's teachings .

Chapter 21 'Raganuga sadhana-bhakti', Or 'The Practice of Spontaneous Devotional Service

Bijoya Kumar and Brajanatha felt Babaji Maharajas instructions radiating a sublime calm that soothed their minds and doubts.They arrived at a joint decision to immediately take initiation from Babaji Maharaja.Bijoya Kumara had received traditional initiation from their family- priest ; Brajanatha already had gayatri diksa but no other mantra-diksa.Through Babaji's teachings alone they learnt that chanting a mantra received from a non-vaishnava source , leads to hell.And as soon as a person realises his folly he must receive initiation from a vaishnava guru . To swiftly attain perfection in chanting it is imperative that the guru,or initiating spiritual master , is himself a self-realised and perfected being.

Minds resolved to take initiation from Babaji Maharaja that very morning,they set off to the Ganga.Having sanctified themselves in the holy waters of Ganga and decorating their body with tilaka in twelve places with appropriate mantras,they went early to Mayapu-ra, Srivasa-angana.They prostrated themselves before Raghunatha-dasa Babaji Maharaja. Babaji Maharaja was a self-realised and liberated soul,he understood their intention,but enquired---"What brings you here so early today ?"

They replied---"O revered gurudeva ! We are helpless destitutes,please be kind to us and take us under your shelter."

Babaji Maharaja invited them to come separately into his hut. He initiated them with the eighteen-syllabic Krsna-mantra. They began to chant this potent mantra and became intoxicated and exultant. They exclaimed aloud "all glory to Lord Gauranga ! all glory be to Lord Gauranga ! They raised their arms and made graceful dancing postures. They presented a sublime sight : tulasi beads around the necks , white sacred-thread hung loosely diametrically across their chests and over the left shoulders, prominent tilaka marks in twelve places , their bright faces were flushed with emotions . Initial stirrings of ecstatic symptoms were noticeable as - unrestrained tears flowed from their eyes.

Babaji Maharaja was very moved and he embraced them saying--- " today you have sanctified me " . Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara fell at his feet and smeared their

heads and bodies with his feet dust. Meanwhile Brajanatha's two servants arrived at Srivasa-angana laden with food supplies. Before Brajanatha had set off for Mayapura that morning he had arranged for a large amount of 'bhoga' for offering to Sriman Mahaprabhu and the vaisnavas, which was now brought over as per his instructions. Brajanatha and Bijoyakumara humbly approached the vaisnavas with folded hands begging them to receive the bhoga for the Lord's offering. The temple's head - priest graciously accepted the 'bhoga' and arranged for it to be cooked and offered to the 'panca-tattva' Deities, in the temple alter. The couch-shell sounded and bells pealed out. The vaisnavas assembled in the temple room in front of the Deities of panca-tattva and raised their voices in melodious unison, singing the bhoga-aratika song accompanied by mrdanga drums and cymbals. Gradually the number of vaisnavas swelled and they expressed their exhilaration in sweet chorus, in praise of Lord Caitanya. The aratika-worship ended with a jubilant crescendo.

The temple room was cleared up to serve as the prasadam hall as was usual on festive occasions to accommodate large gatherings. The vaisnavas sat in rows, each with a simple lota, (small metal container) for water. Thanksgiving prayers to the Lord for the prasadam were loudly chanted. Brajanatha and Bijoya out of respect for the vaisnavas did not sit with them. The senior Babajis noticed this and had them practically carried to their seats since they were refusing.

One of the elder Babaji's said --- "you are householder vaisnavas (grhastha-vaisnava), it will be our great fortune to offer danda-vats (prostrated obeisances) to you.

But Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara replied --- "respected Babaji you are a holy preceptor, renounced and advanced; we will consider it a blessing if we are allowed to partake of your sacred remnant. To sit with you and eat will be a grievous offence."

Other elder vaisnavas replied, - in assessing who is an advanced vaisnava, social status such as grhastha vaisnava or a tyagi-vaisnava is not a criterion. A vaisnava is judged by the depth of his devotion and is accordingly placed.'

As they discussed, preparations for serving - out were completed. Everybody was seated in their respective places. Bijoya Kumara did not eat because they wanted to first relish the remnants from their guru's plate, so they waited. The elder vaisnavas marked this and requested Srila Raghunathadasa Babaji, the most respected among them, to kindly offer a morsel from his plate to his two waiting disciples, otherwise they could not honour prasadam. Babaji Maharaja dropped a handful of prasadam from his own plate on to their outstretched open palms. They touched their palms to their foreheads in respect, chanted 'Sri gurava namah', and ate it with the understanding that it was transcendental food stuff. They joined the other vaisnavas and began to relish prasadam.

The vaisnavas honoured prasadam in quiet meditation, only salutatory words at times glorifying prasadam punctuated the comforting silence. Srivasa-angana

became the venue once more for a marvelous festival. The devotees visualised that Srimati Sacidevi and Srimati Sitadevi. Srimati Malinidevi were serving prasadam to Lord Caitanya and His associates, who sat surrounding Him. They remembered a verse from Jagadananda Pandita's book 'Prema-vivar-ta', which aptly described their present experience.

" mayapure nitya-lila kare gura-raya
sukrtira bale bhakta dekhbare paya."(Pr.V.).

[Lord Caitanya eternally enacts His transcendental pastimes in the holy dhama of Mayapura, but only those who are pure of heart, due to innumerable pious deeds, are able to see them.].

All vaisnavas sat absolutely still, they had stopped eating, their eyes remained riveted as the Lord manifested His repasting pastime. The scene disappeared as suddenly as it had appeared. The devotees looked at each in wonderment. As the realisation of what they had witnessed dawned, tears of ecstasy brimmed over. The prasadam before them now tasted relishable beyond words. The vaisnavas discussed softly amongst themselves that these two brahmana youths were definitely recipients of Lord Caitanya's mercy. The Supreme Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu manifested His eternal pastimes in this mahotsava, arranged by them. But Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara felt unfit to accept this accolade; with tear-streaked eyes they said: - " We are wretched and indigent; ignorant about spiritual life. - The wonderful scene we were fortunate to witness was solely due to the mercy of our gurudeva and the saintly vaisnavas.

Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara finished their prasadam, begged permission from the vaisnavas and guru to leave and returned to their residence. From that day they resolutely started a new daily routine. Early morning dip in the Ganga, offer obeisances at the lotus-feet of gurudeva, see the Deity in the temple, circumambulate Tulasidevi and offer worship and water to her, and so on. Each day they made the effort to learn something new, or do something novel to help them make swift spiritual progress.

A week later, they visited Srivasa-angana in the evening after completing their daily brahminical duties of gayatri-mantra japa etc. They attended the evening aratika in the temple, after which they went to see their gurudeva in his hut. They offered their respects, sat down and asked Babaji Maharaja --- 'dear guruji by your blessings we have a clear concept of vaidhi-bhakti-sadhana, or the practice of regulative devotional service. Our earnest supplication to you is, that although we are the most degraded still kindly explain to us the precepts of raganuga-bhakti, or spontaneous devotional service.

Babaji Maharaja was overjoyed at this request and said, - my sons, our beloved Lord Sri Caitanya has endorsed you, hence there is nothing that cannot be revealed to you. Listen very carefully as I expatiate the principles of raganuga-bhakti. I begin this dissertation by first offering my repeated respects at Srila Rupa Goswami's feet. He was saved by my dear Lord Caitanya from the crippling

association of yavana's and He enlightened him with the wisdom of rasatattva, or the principles of spiritual humours. I also offer my deepest devotion to Srila Raghunathadasa Goswami, who was delivered by the most munificent personality, Lord Caitanya. The Lord extricated him from the tangle of temporal attachments and placed him under the safe aegis of Srila Svarupa Goswami, thus rewarding him with all round perfection.

As a preamble to the subject of raganga-bhakti I wish to delineate the symptoms of ragatmika-bhakti, or devotional service under the guidance of an eternal associate of the Supreme Lord.

Braja: Gurudeva, kindly explain to us the meaning of `raga' before we proceed further.

RB: In the course of daily interactions with phenomenon the conditioned soul develops strong love and attachment for the material world --- this is known as `raga'. As the eyes restlessly flit from one beautiful object to another, the external variegatedness in its riotous hues keeps the viewer enthralled, while inside him the heart feels the caress of raga. When such loving emotions, or raga, makes Lord Krsna its sole objective, it is called raga-bhakti;

Srila Goswami defines `raga' as total absorption in one's most worshipful object with feelings tempered by one's innate proclivity (Svarasiki). When devotion to Krsna is fully complemented by this raga, it is described as ragatmika-bhakti. To put it succinctly, ragatmika-bhakti is the insatiable thirst to love Krsna. For those devotees who have not experienced spiritual emotions in that realm of bhakti, or raga, must seek the dictates of the scriptures to enhance their devotion. Awe, reverence and faith are the active principles in vaidhi-bhakti, while a galloping greed for relishing Krsna's pastimes is the hallmark of ragatmika-bhakti.

Braja: Who can be adjudged as a fit candidate for raga-bhakti ?

RB: Vaidhi-sraddha (implicit faith in the scriptural edicts), is said to create eligibility in the practice of vaidhi-bhakti. Similarly, lobhamayi-sraddha (implicit faith in Krsna fomented by intense greed) begets eligibility in entering the realm of ragatmika-bhakti. The `vrajabasis' (eternal residents of Vraja) each have a different spiritual humour (rasa) which are full blown with raga. Devotees who are keen to attain the bhava (loving emotions) that the vrajabasis have for Krsna, are eligible to render raganuga bhakti.

Braja: What is lobha, or greed, in this context ?

RB: When hearing about the devotional sentiments (bhava) and intimate dealings of vrajabasis with their cynosure, Krsna, the devotees' intellect, in order to fully participate in those pastimes, awaits a strong urge and inspiration, this gives rise to `lobha', or greed. The vaidhi-bhakti practitioner's intellect, when listening to Krsna's pastimes, reaches out for the scriptures and logic to comprehend them, but in raganuga-bhakti the intellect has no use of the scriptures or logic, it expectantly

waits to be fully charged with greed for possessing the vrajabasi's bhava.

Braja: What is the process of raganuga-bhakti ?

RB: The sadhaka, or practitioner devotee, must always remember the Lord's associate, the vrajabasi and his eternal service he dearly wishes to follow (with lobha). The sadhaka will reside in Vraja either in person or in spirit and contemplate on the vrajabasi's loving exchanges and conversations with his beloved Krsna. The devotee develops an intense greed (lobha) for acquiring that bhava. He assiduously tries to emulate the vrajabasi of his choice and renders two varieties of devotional service under his constant guidance:--- externally, he serves the Lord as a sadha-ka, and internally, he assumes his spiritual form (siddhadeha) which one day he will permanently acquire, and serves the Lord in that capacity.

Braja: What are the parallels between the limbs of vaidhi-bhakti and raganuga-bhakti ?

RB: All the vaidhi-bhakti limbs like sravanam, kirtanam etc. are very much present in the devotional activities of a raganuga-sadhaka, or one who is eligible to practice raganuga-bhakti. When the sadhaka is savouring within himself the eternal service of Krsna, under the tutelage of his chosen vrajabasi, at that time, the vaidhi-bhakti limbs are being performed by his external self.

Braja: What are the magnificent attributes of raganuga-bhakti ?

RB: Protracted practice of vaidhi-bhakti with utmost sincerity is still unable to produce the results that are available with a far less endeavour in raganuga-bhakti. vaidhi-bhakti is hedged in by a plethora of proscriptions and prescriptions which makes it weak; while raganuga-bhakti inspires dynamic spiritual free-expression which makes it firm and sturdy. Thus the raga which surfaces from the churning of bhava experienced in the heart of the sadhaka --- acolyte to a vrajabasi, activates in tandem the application of sravanam, kirtanam and all the other limbs of vaidhi-bhakti.

Only those devotees whose hearts and consciousness are cleansed of material contamination and have attained `nirguna' consciousness feel inspired to follow an eternal associate of the Lord (vrajabasi). In raganuga-bhakti only greed (lobha) and relish (ruci) evokes the right spiritual consciousness enabling one to follow its path. Raganuga-bhakti and ragatmika-bhakti have the same number of variations.

Braja: How many types of ragatmika-bhakti are there ?

RB: There are two kinds of ragatmika-bhakti--- kamarupa and sambandha-rupa.

Braja: What are the distinctions between them ?

RB: The Srimad Bhagavatam states :-

" kamad-dvesad-bhayat snehad yatha bhaktyesvare manah

avesya tadagham hitva bahavas tad gatim gatah
gopyah kamad bhayat kamsa dvesaccaidyadayo nrpah
sambandhad vrsnayah snehad yuyam bhaktya vayam vibho" (SB 7/1/29-30).

[As through devotion to the Lord one can attain His abode, many have attained that goal by abandoning their sinful activities and absorbing their minds in the Lord with lust, envy, fear or affection. The gopis attained it with their lust (for Krsna), Kamsa through fear, kings like Sisupala through envy, the Vrsnis through family relationships, you Pandavas through affection and we the sage (Narada etc. through bhakti to Krsna).

Of these six feelings-- lust, fear, envy, family ties, affection and bhakti, two are not favourable for devotional service --- fear and envy, hence they are rejected. Sneha, or affection is the preponderant emotion expressed in friendship (sakhya-bhava) hence it is within vaidhi-bhakti. On the other hand prema, or love, and not sneha, which is closely attached to bhava-bhakti, hence sneha is not a part of sadhana-bhakti. However, sneha cannot be included within raganuga-sadhana-bhakti either.

The words --- 'bhaktya vayam vibho', in the sloka means, the rsis (sages) have attained the supreme goal of that of devotion (bhakti) to the Supreme Lord. In Bhakti-samrta-sindhu (purva 2/135), Srila Rupa Goswami explains, that in this sloka 'bhakti' must mean vaidhi-bhakti. When the rsis engage in bhakti it is vaidhi-bhakti; else where, 'bhakti' will connote jnana-misra-bhak-ti, or bhakti mixed with jnana (strong affinity to scriptural knowledge).

The jnanis, or empirical philosophers will interpret the words 'have attained the supreme goal (bhakti)', as merging into brah-ma-jyoti by equating Krsna with His bodily effulgence, brahman. They use the argument that the sun and its rays are the same. Lord Krsna's enemies also merge into the brahma-jyoti. Among these liberated- soul by-merging some attain sarupya-abhasa-mukti, or the semblance of the type of liberation having the same form as the Lord. Some are steeped in the bliss of brahman. However according to the Brahmanda Purana they are elevated to siddha-loka situated on the periphery of the maya world.

Two categories of living entities reside in Siddha-loka: the empirical philosophers (jnanis) who attain sayujya-mukti and those demons who perish in the hands of the Supreme Lord. A few of these jnanis develop attraction for serving Krsna which bur-geons into raga (just discussed), and by serving the lotus-feet of Krsna they attain love of Godhead prema, and become recognised as an intimate devotee of the Lord.

In principle there is no difference between Krsna and His physical lustre brahman --- just as the sun and its rays are the same. The meaning of the word 'tadgatim' is, attaining Krsna. The jnanis and asuras (demons) are elevated to the sayujya liberation, or brahman; while the devotees are benedicted by Krsna's lotus-feet and are eternally engaged in His service. Thus if fear, envy, affection and bhakti are separated then only kama (lust) and sambandha (relationship) are independently assertive. These are the two types of ragatmika-bhakti.

Braja: What is the nature of kama-rupa bhakti ?

RB: The word `kama' implies, craving for enjoyment. This craving is dovetailed in ragatmika-bhakti and is converted into causeless love for Krsna. Lust becomes selfless love; every single endeavour is directed at satisfying and giving pleasure to Krsna. All activities for self-aggrandizement and self gratification cease. And if residues of desire for self-gratification lingers, then those also are sacrificed in the alter of pleasing Krsna. This super-excellent love is perfectly portrayed in the gopis of Vraja, Krsna's cowherd girl-friends.

The sublime love of the vraja-gopis take on a magnificent sweet-ness which in turn initiates commensurate pastimes. The saintly preceptors have defined this love as `kama'. The vraja-gopis' love is truly transcendental, pristine without a touch of any mundane contamination. It can never be compared to the embodied and conditioned living entities' lust, which is self-centered, motivated and plebian. This brilliant love of the vraja-gopis inspired the pure, beloved devotees of Krsna like Uddhava to aspire for it. The kama of the vraja-gopis has no parallels anywhere'. It is superlative and the absolute pinnacle of divine love. Kama-rupa ragatmika bhakti thrives only in Vraja and not else where. The quality of `kama' exhibited by Kubja in Mathura is indeed love but not `kama', it is best defined as near-kama (kama-praya) which is distinct from `kama' just de-scribed.

Braja: What are the characteristics of sambandha-rupa ragatmika bhakti.

RB: Maternal, paternal and other family ties with Krsna is called sambandha-rupa ragatmika bhakti. When the eternal associate's spiritual sentiments spontaneously accepts the role of a close relative of Krsna and totally identifies himself or herself in it, it is known as samabandha-rupa bhakti. This sentiment is displayed by Krsna's parents Devaki and Vasudeva, and in Vraja they are exhibited by Yasoda and Nanda. However, it is noteworthy to mention that because unalloyed spiritual love finds explicit expression in kama-rupa bhakti and sambandha-rupa bhakti hence this bhakti is the exclusive domain of the nitya-siddhas, or eternally perfect associates of the Lord. In delineating ragatmika-bhakti it was deemed necessary to mention them. Now we turn to kamanuga and sambandhanuga --- the two types of sadhana-bhakti.

Braja: Maharaja, Kindly elaborate upon these two sadhana-bhakti ?

RB: Kamanuga is a form of craving that follows in tandem with kamarupa bhakti and is also of two varieties: sambhogecchamayi and tattadbhavecchamayi.

Braja: Please describe them in detail.

RB: Sambhogecchamayi, in essence, pertains to dalliances. The amorous dalliances of the vraja-gopis with Krsna are transcendental, supra-mundane; these are defined as sambhoga, or pleasure. The desire for such pleasureable dealings is the first type of sadhana-bhakti. The second type is, the desire to develop a profound love, full

of sweetness and amorous feelings, emulating the different female group-leaders of innumerable groups of vraja-gopis, or vraja-yuthesvari, nurtur for Krsna.

Braja: In what way are these two raganuga-sadhana bhakti ignited in the heart ?

RB: By seeing the beautiful form of the Lord and by hearing the glorious pastimes of Krsna, the devotee who aspires to experience the bhavas peculiar to those specific pastimes, embark upon practicing kamanuga and sambandhanuga raganuga bhakti.

Braja: Lord Krsna is the purusa, or the only male entity, and the vraja-gopis are all female entities, or prakrti. I have marked that only female beings are eligible to participate in raganuga-bhakti. How can males develop such bhava ?

RB: The living entities in this world interact in five different spiritual humours or mellows (rasas) according to their predilection. Of these, four: dasya (servitor), sakhya (fraternal), vatsalya (parental) and madhurya (conjugal) are reposed in the vrajabasis. There are three spiritual exchanges of rasas where devotees serve Krsna in a male form --- dasya, sakhya and vatsalya (father) each according to their taste. The mothers (maternal) and gopis (madhurya) serve Krsna as females. Therefore, since the eternal associates, or nitya-siddhas, are either male or female, their protoges concomitantly take on their mood and gender.

Braja: How can male devotees serve the Lord with the mood and sentiment of vraja-gopis ?

RB: Those pure devotees who have entered into madhurya rasa, or the conjugal humour, and have a male body here, actually possess a spiritual body with a female form in the transcendental realm. They each take shelter of a vraja-gopi of choice and according to individual proclivity, to follow and serve Krsna in their original spiritual identity as female attendants. The Padma Purana narrates an incidence that corroborates this concept. The great sages of Dandakaranya forest on seeing the exquisite stature of Lord Sri Rama each desired to have Him as their husband. After leaving their mortal frames they entered the spiritual abode of Gokula and served the Lord in their female spiritual forms as gopis, steeped in kamarupa-raganuga bhakti.

Braja: The scriptures tell us that the damsels of Gokula in the spiritual sky are eternally perfected associates (nitya-siddhas). They descend to Vrajadham here, to nourish Krsna's transcendental pastimes. How can the Padma Purana statement be adjusted in this context with that of the gopis of Gokula.?

RB: The nitya-siddha gopis had free and easy access to participate in Krsna's rasalila dance. Those who are sadhana-siddhas, attain perfection through kamarupa-sadhana-bhakti and then become elevated to Gokula. According to the Srimad Bhagavatam sloka [10/29/9 --- 'avaryamana patibhih' ----] meaning even though the nitya siddha gopis were being desisted by their mothers, fathers, husbands, brothers, friends etc from meeting Krsna, Govinda, to whom

they had pledged their hearts,they still went].

The sadhana-siddhas,mostly the Dandakaranya sages, who served Krsna with this mood in their hearts acquired their original transcendental from, --- they became gopis in Vraja

Braja: Babaji,who are nitya-siddhas and how does one know a sadhana-siddha ?

RB: The complete embodiment of Lord Krsna's internal spiritual potency (svarupa-sakti) is Srimati Radharani. Her immediate per-sonal expansions are the eight principle gopis (asta-sakhis) and the other gopis or sakhis are Her further kayavyuha bodily expan-sions. They are all eternally perfected female associates (nitya-siddhas),they are not in the category of jiva-sakti but are in an exclusive class of their own, as the internal spiritual potencies of Krsna.

The ordinary women of Vraja,through intense engagement in sadha-na-bhakti, became perfected and were elevated to be the maids-in-attendance of Srimati Radhika's female associates;they are perfect examples of sadhana-siddha jivas. On the strength of hladini-sakti they have attained salokya (residence in the same planet as the Lord) to serve alongside the vrajagopis. Those devotees who are engaged in raganuga-bhakti in madhurya-rasa, on attaining perfection become elevated as sakhis or gopis. There are some devotees who desire to satisfy Krsna's amorous wishes (riramsa) in an orderly manner thus end up on the path of vaidhi-bhakti. Later, on leaving their bodies they serve Krsna in Dvaraka as His queens. The practice of taking shelter of a vraja-gopi (as in ragatmika-bhakti) is outside the curriculum of vaidhi-bhakti-marg.But those who nurture raganuga-bhakti within and display vaidhi-bhakti discipline externally, will obtain the perfection of serving in Vraja.

Braja: What is the method of satiating Krsna's libidinous urges (riramsa)?

RB: Those who are attracted to Krsna in the same mood of the Dvaraka queens discard their wiles and caprice, and they culti-vate a service atitute of that of dedicated wives for their hus-bands. But they are unable and reticent about fostering in them-selves the temperament of the vraja-gopis. Mahisi-bhava,or the mood of the Dvaraka queens, is described as svakiya,or the bond of love between a legally wedded husband for his wife --- hence,it means to serve Krsna in that mood. The vraja-gopis mood of service to Krsna is called parakiya, or paramour. To them (with mahisi-bhava) the ever expanding rasa of the vraja-gopis is too distant to strive for. The only way to relish the vraja-rasa is to practice raganuga-bhakti in the parakiya-bhava.

Braja: Guruji,by your mercy and your lucid deliberations I have grasped all that you have so far said. But are there any differ-ences between kama (lust) and prema (love) ? If they are the same then, is the use of the word `prema' not sufficient ? The word `kama' I feel, adds a jarring note.

RB: Yes,there are differences. If only `prema' is used in all contexts then, for

example, it becomes equated with sambandha-rupa raga-bhakti which has no involvement of `kama', it is bereft of the desire for self-satisfaction (sambhoga-iccha) and that becomes a gross misrepresentation. Sambandha-rupa raga-bhakti is certainly prema but sans the aspect of `keli', or amorous overtures and passion. When the element of sambhoga-iccha is latched on to simple `prema' then the two emotions amalgamate to create kama-rupa raga-bhakti. Kama-rupa bhakti is present only in madhu-rya-rasa, and not in the others. The vraja-gopis are the sole inheritors and possessors of kama-rupa-bhakti.

Kama, or lust, in this material plane is sense-gratificatory and is distinct of the spiritual `kama'. Material lust is the perverted form of spiritual love. The attraction Kubja in Mathura felt for Krsna, although spiritual, cannot be described as kama. Material lust is selfishly directed at gratifying the senses, hence it is base and despicable; whereas `kama', which is an aspect of sublime love, or prema, is transcendently blissful and divine. Therefore there must be absolutely no hesitation in using the term aprakṛta kama, or transcendental lust.

Braja: Kindly explain what is sambandha-rupa raganuga bhakti ?

RB: To meditate and ascribe (aropa) upon oneself the role of Krsna's father or other familial relationships, is sambandha raganuga bhakti. Three rasas, or humours, are at play here --- dasya, sakhyā and vatsalya. The vrajabasis, or eternal residents of vraja, embody the pristine mood of such relationships. They assert --- `I am Krsna's servitor; I am Krsna's wedded wife; I am Krsna's friend; I am Krsna's father or mother, and so on.

Braja: How does a devotee execute raganuga-bhakti within the humours of dasya, sakhyā and vatsalya ?

RB: Those devotees who relish the servitorship (dasya) rasa emulate the sublime service mood of prominent servitors like Raktaka, Patraka and other nitya-siddha's. Those in fraternal (sakhyā) rasa follow Subala and other nitya-siddhas service mood and specific activities called mudra. Similarly, in parental (vatsalya) rasa, devotees follow Nanda Maharaja, Mother Yasoda and others' bhava and mudra, in serving Krsna.

Braja: What is meant by bhava-cestita mudra ?

RB: Complementary to a nitya-siddha's permanent bhava (spiritual mood and emotion) are specific aspirations which manifest certain activities known as mudra. For example, the devotee in vatsalya rasa must do the same activities Nanda Maharaja performs as service to Krsna when he is overcome with bhava. The devotee must never think of himself as Nanda Maharaja, or Subala or Raktaka, but become subservient to these nitya-siddhas and reflect on their bhava in serving Krsna, otherwise he commits offence.

Braja: What sort of raganuga-bhakti are we eligible to ?

RB: My son, you must analyse your predilections. Your temperament will mirror your taste (ruci) and ruci will guide you to your favoured rasa. Surrender yourself to the nitya-siddha stalwart of particular rasa and practice bhakti. If you have developed a relish for raga bhakti then follow it up accordingly, with appropriate engagements. And if you have not developed that attachment for raga bhakti then sincerely pursue the regulated path of vaidhi-bhakti.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, I have been faithfully studying the Srimad Bhagavatam since long. I always seek the opportunity to hear about Krsna's pastimes. Whenever I meditate on the Lord's wondrous deeds and frolics, certain emotions stir within me. I strongly feel to serve the Divine Couple in the mood of Sri Lalitadevi.

RB: Yes, I understand your mood, you are a manjari under Lalita-devi's tutelage. What type of service do you like ?

Bijoya: I feel that Sri Lalitadevi wants me to string flower garlands. I like to pick beautiful flowers and string them into garlands and hand them in to the divine hands of Lalitadevi. She will receive them with flashing me a brilliant and merciful smile and gently slip them around Srimati Radhika's and Sri Krsna's head.

RB: I bless you my boy ! Let your endeavours for such devotional service be consummated in spiritual perfection."

Bijoya Kumara was overwhelmed being showered with so much blessings, he fell at Babaji's Maharaja's feet and wept profusely. Babaji Maharaja was pleased with Bijoya Kumara's mood of devotion and he said to him, ---" my son, continue your practice of raga-nuga-bhakti in like manner. Always execute the vaidhi-bhakti limbs externally but cultivate intense raga-bhakti inside."

Brajanatha became inspired seeing Bijoya Kumara's good fortune and Babaji Maharaja's show of compassion, so he said to Babaji Maharaja --- `Maharaja, whenever I meditate on Krsna's pastime an urge to serve Krsna under the guidance of Subala strongly compels me.

RB: What devotional service attracts you most ?

Braja: I greatly fancy going behind the distant straying calves together with Subala and bring them back to the fold. Krsna will be seated, playing His flute, and Subala will ask me to feed and water the calves and then bring them to Krsna.

RB: I bless you that you serve Krsna under the direction of Subala; you are eligible for sakhya-rasa.

A miracle happened. From that moment on Bijoya's heart throbbed with anticipation waiting for an indication to perform any chores for Lalitadevi. He viewed Babaji Maharaja in a unique light, seeing him as Lalitadevi in person. He asked Babaji Maharaja if there were any further instructions regarding his raganuga bhaja-na to which Babaji Maharaja replied, --- " you have most of the informations;

there are other details you must know pertaining to your spiritual identity : name, form, dress etc. Come to me alone and I will reveal them to you".Bijoya Kumara prostrated himself before his guru in deep gratitude.

Brajanatha began to see his guru, Babaji Maharaja, as a manifestation of Subala. Babaji Maharaja asked him also to come alone so that he could give him details of his svarupa's name, form,dress etc. Brajanatha fell supine before Babaji Maharaja and offered heartfelt prayers at his lotus-feet.

Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara felt ineffably elated that evening . They fully applied themselves in raganuga bhakti consciousness. Externally no visible changes could be noticed in them as they continued in their usual. In his heart. Bijoya Kumara developed female sentiments and Brajanatha nurtured the temperaments of a young cowherd boy. All these internal adjustments took place like a magic within moments of receiving a pure devotees mystical touch. True though, that everything was there latent in them.

Late in the night they begged leave from Maharaja and walked slowly towards the Vilvapuskarini tank chanting mahamantra on their tulasi beads, --- `hare krsna hare krsna krsna hare, hare hare rama hare rama rama rama hare hare. Moonlight flooded the countryside revealing purple shadows in the landscape. The air was still and welcoming . When the two neared the Laksmanati-la mound they sought the silent shadow of an amlaki - tree and sat down . Bijoya Kumara softly enquired - ` Well Brajanatha ! Our wishes have been fulfilled . You will surely receive Krsna's mercy by the grace of a pure vaisnava . It is best to decide now your future course of action . Tell me honestly what you want - marriage or travelling ? I do not wish to influence your decision towards anything , I merely want to know so that I can explain to your mother the facts .

Braja :- Uncle , I respect and love you, plus you are a scholar and a vaisnava . In the absence of my father you are my guardian , I am ready to accept anything you say . The reason I want to avoid marriage is because I may become attached and forget the spiritual goal . What is your opinion on this ?

Bijoya :- You must consider all aspects and come to a conclusions but without my interference .

Braja :- I strongly feel that I must discuss this matter with Sri gurudeva and then act .

Bijoya :- That is best , tomorrow find out what is gurudeva's instruction regarding this .

Braja :- Uncle what have you decided ? Are you planning to remain in the household , or go travelling ?

Bijoya :- Son , I am also faced with this dilemma of being in two minds . Sometimes I think I must emancipate myself from the flames of household life and go on an

endless pilgrimage but next moment I think that this might steel my heart .
Bhakti-rasa does not bloom in an arid heart and I will be deprived of it . There-fore
I have made up my mind to find out the truth from gurudeva tomorrow and do his
bidding .

They stood up on this decision and slowly walked back to the house murmuring
softly the maha - mantra . They honoured prasadam and lay down for a night of
restful sleep .

Chapter 22

Analysis of the Fundamentals of Prayojana, or Prime Necessity of Life

It is ekadasi today. In Srivasa-angana the vaisnavas have assem-bled under the
Bakula tree and are performing a melodious kirta-na. Many sighed out loud in joy
the names of Lord Nityananda and Lord Gauranga. Amidst all this, the elderly
Babaji Maharaja sat pensively, steeped in meditation. After what seemed a long
time he suddenly exclaimed: "Alas ! Alas ! , " as tears streamed down his cheeks.
He sobbed, --- `O where! O where is my beloved Rupa and Sanatana ! where is my
Dasagoswami, and my dearest soul, Krsnadasa kaviraja ! I am cast into the lonely
well of seperation and I feel so unwell. Thinking of Radhakunda is an unbearable
pain. My life slips away ! O Rupa ! O Raghunatha ! Have mercy ! Let me see you
again so it may resuscitate my life. How am I still living inspite of your absence, my
life is a shame !" Saying this, Babaji Maharaja began to roll on the ground.

The vaisnavas scampered over to the supine form of Babaji and tried to placate
him, --- "Babaji Maharaja, please calm yourself, Rupa and Raghunatha are in your
heart; and see Lord Nitai and Caitanya are dancing in front of you."

Babaji Maharaja immediately stood up with alacrity and enquired: -- Where !
Where ? His vision spotted the exquisite Deity forms of the Pancatattva on the
altar, and that dissipated his distress and gave back his composure. He said " O
blessed Mayapura ! The only place on earth which drives away the pangs one feels
by seperation from pastimes ". Then he lifted his arms and swayed in gentle
dancing movements . Finally he went and sat in his kutira .

Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha came to Babaji Maharaja's kutira and found him in
quiet repose . They fell flat before him in humble submission . Babaji Maharaja was
indeed happy to see them . He asked, -" How is your chanting and bhakti practices
?"

With folded hands they replied --- ` Dear gurudev, your blessings mean everything
to us. We must have performed innumerable pious deeds to discover the sanctuary
under your lotus feet. In accord-ance with your instructions we are observing
ekadasi fast today without drinking water, and so we have come to receive your
bless-ings.

RB: You are truly fortunate souls, very soon you will be elevated to the platform of bhava bhakti.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, what is meant by the platform of bhava (bhava-vastha)? Is it something that you have not yet taught us ?

RB: So far whatever I have discussed with you falls within the jurisdiction of sadhana-bhakti. After extended and tenacious application of sadhana bhakti a devotee is promoted to the platform of perfection (siddhavastha) and its first stages are known as bhava-avastha. Its descriptions are available in the tenth sloka of the Dasa-mula-siksa :-

" svarupavasthane madhura-rasa-bhavodaya iha
vraje radha-krsna-svajana-jana-bhavam hrdis vahan
paranande pritim jagadatula-sampat sukhamaho
vilasakhye tattve parama-paricaryyam sa labhate " (Dasamula 10a)"

[Jiva attains his original spiritual identity (svarupa) when his sadhana-bhakti matures to ripeness. In this stage hladini sakti, or the Lord's pleasure potency, endows him with madhurya-rasa as he aspires to become a protoge of one of eternal associates of Sri Radha Krsna in Vraja. Even in this world, he obtains the unalloyed service of the supreme embodiment of sublime bliss and he experiences ineffable exultation. This transcendental treasure is of unsurpassable value to the jiva].

The next part of the tenth Dasamula-siksa sloka describes 'prema', the absolute necessity (prajojana) for humanity. Bhava just reiterated, is the initial stage of prema:

" prabhuh kah ko jivah kathamidamacid-visvamiti va
vicarjyaitanarthan haribhajana krcchrastracaturah
abhedasam dharman sakalamaparadham pariharan
harernamanandam pivati hari-daso hari-janaih" (Dasamula 10b)

[Who is Krsna ? Who am I, the jiva ? What is the inert world of matter and what is the anti-matter spiritual world ? The devotee who is totally surrendered to serving the Supreme Lord and who knows the scriptural conclusions well enough to apply them positively must review these questions thoroughly. He will then repudiate the monistic philosophy, rise above the stipulations of pious and impious deeds and stop committing offences. He must seek only saintly association and drink the immortal nectar from the holy name and experience inexplicable joy].

The Dasa-mula siksa is a magnificent bouquet of transcendental teachings. They have been compiled from the entire instructions spoken by the Supreme Lord, Sri Caitanya, Himself.

Bijoya: Babaji, I wish to hear a concise adulation of the efficacy of Dasamula siksa, if it is available.

RB: Take note of this verse:-

" samsevya dasamulam vai hitva' vidya-mayam janah
bhava-pusthim tatha tusthim labhate sadhu-sangatah".

[By assimilating and emulating the teachings of the Dasa-mula siksa,the living entity uproots the poisonous ivy of ignorance. Thereafter, in the association of saintly vaisnavas he nourishes the bhakti creeper with bhava and experiences rewarding satisfac-tion].

Bijoya: Gurudeva,kindly permit us to enrich our intellect with the teachings of Dasamula. We will study it daily and offer it in praise of Lord Caitanya. We wish to hear in detail the concept of `bhava'.

RB: If `prema' is compared to the sun, `bhava' is its rays. Bhava is a transcendental emotion imbued in pure goodness and it blossoms in the hearts of jivas situated in their original spiritual identity. This is its intrinsic symptom. Another appellation for `bhava' is `rati', others prefer to call it `premankura',or the buds of prema. The all-illuminating internal potency of Krsna is known as `svarupa-sakti'. One of its prime characteristics is known as `samvit' and is also called visuddha-sattva, or pure goodness, --- it is transcendental to the material nature. When pure goodness at this stage emulsifies with hladini-sakti,or the Lord's pleasure potency,they produce `bhava' .

Through `samvit' the devotee acquires lucid comprehension of the ultimate object (Krsna) and through hladini he is made to relish the ultimate objective (Krsna). Krsna is realised only through help from His samvit potency or svarupa-sakti-vrtti, not by means of jiva's samvit-sakti. When,by the Lord's mercy or His pure devotee's mercy, the Lord's svarupa-sakti burgeons in the devotee's heart,only then samvit-sakti (svarupa-sakti-vrtti) comes alive in his heart and he is enlightened with the knowledge of the spiritual world.

The spiritual world (cit-jagat) is the manifestation of pure goodness (suddha-sattva), while the material world is composed of a mixture of the three material qualities (triguna) -- tama,raja and sattva. When hladini-sakti appears with the knowledge of the spiritual world in the devotee's heart, he begins to relish the transcendental realm. When such relish intensifies many folds and is fully consummated, it is converted to prema. And if this prema is taken to be the sun then bhava is its rays.

One of the symptoms of bhava is it cleanses the heart completely of impurities and softens it to a state where it can easily melt. The word `ruci' or taste, means: a constant desire for the object one covets, a favourable disposition and a feeling for it from the core of the heart. The first stirrings of bhava is signalled by a perfunctory display of ecstastic symptoms (sattvika-vikara) like horripilation etc. In nitya-siddhas, bhava is constantly present, ready to manifest itself at any moment in full splendour. In conditioned souls, bhava dons the mantle of individual temperaments and mirrors them, thus although it (bhava) is self-manifest, but ostensibly it comes forth as not.

The true nature of bhava is to reveal Krsna's transcendental form, identity and the characteristic features of His pastimes. Though it manifests itself as an emotion --- as part of the human psyche which it is not, yet it adopts a role that requires a catalyst to expose it. Bhava or rati possesses its individual flavour that be relished unaided, but for the conditioned souls, it (rati) plays the part of being either the cause or spice that helps them relish Krsna and His pastimes.

Braja: Are there a variety of bhavas ?

RB: Yes, and this is due to its different sources. There are two varieties of bhava: sadhanabhinivesaja-bhava and prasadaja-bhava of Krsna and His pure devotees. Bhava, generally implies the former; the latter is extremely rare.

Braja: Kindly describe what is sadhanabhinivesaja-bhava.

RB: This particular bhava is of two kinds, corresponding to the two paths of bhakti --- vaidhi and raganuga. Bhava initially generates `ruci' in the devotee's heart, later: attachment, or asakti for the Lord, and finally rati, or love. The scriptures and the vedic science of performing arts uses bhava and rati as synonymns, and so will I. In vaidhi-bhakti, bhava is in an unman-ifest state known as sraddha. Sraddha, or implicit faith, first matures itself to become nistha, or steadfastness, which inturn produces ruci, or taste. Whereas in raganuga bhakti, bhava right in the beginning generates ruci.

Braja: What is Krsna's or His devotee's prasadaja-bhava ?

RB: Bhava which arises voluntarily without having to practice either vaidhi-bhakti or raganuga-bhakti, is defined as Krsna and Krsna-bhakta prasadaja bhava.

Braja: How can Krsna-prasadaj-bhava be described ?

RB: Krsna-prasada, or Krsna's mercy is of three types --- vacika, alokadana and hardda. Instances where Krsna rewards all three types of mercy, are found in the scriptures. In vacika, Krsna simply promises His devotee by word of mouth, and immediately that all-benedicting crest-jewel embodiment of divine bliss and transcendently wilful bhakti that seeks only Krsna to serve, awakens as bhava within his heart. Example of `alokodana-Krpa' are the sages of Dandakaranya forest, who had never direct-ly seen the Supreme Lord. But as soon as they beheld the Lord, their hearts were flooded with bhava and bhakti, simply by the mercy of the Lord. Bhava which spontaneously sprouts within the heart, as in the case of Srila Sukadeva Goswami, is due only to the causeless mercy of the Lord, or hardda-krpa.

In the pastimes of the Supreme Lord's full incarnation, as Lord Caitanya, all the three types of krsna-prasadaja-bhava were amply displayed. In many places where the Lord travelled through, countless scores of passers-by who either just saw Him or wit-nessed His ecstatic dancing were surcharged with transcendental bhava because of Lord Caitanya's alokadana-krpa. The despicable brothers Jagai and

madhai were showered with vacika-krpa; they experienced inexplicable bhava just on the statement of the Lord. The Lord infused Srila Jiva Gosvami's heart with hardda-krpa -bhava.

Braja: Kindly describe the krsna-bhakta-prasadaja bhava.

RB: Dhruva Maharaja, Prahlada Maharaja and many others received Srila Narada Muni's mercy, which filled their hearts with bhava that finally elevated them to become crest-jewels among the Lord's devotees. By the mercy of Srila Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami and other eternal associates of the Lord, innumerable persons were inspired to engage in pure devotional service.

Bijoya: What are the symptoms of bhavadaya, or the awakening of bhava ?

RB: Anubhavas are emotions that act as precursors which finally evoke bhava. They are: ksanti (tolerance), avyatha kalatva (feeling that anything outside Krsna is a waste of time), virakti (detachment), mana-sunyata (pridelessness), asabandha (always hope-ful), samutkantha (enthusiastic), sarvada nama-gane-ruci (always relishing the holy name and glorification of Krsna) krsna-guna-akhyane asakati (attached to hearing Krsna's qualities), krsna-vasati-sthale priti (loving and honouring places connected with Krsna).

Bijoya: Kindly describe these characteristics in detail.

RB: In a situation where there is every reason to become per-turbed and agitated and yet one tolerates it calmly, is known as ksanti. Another name for it is ksama, or compassion and peaceful-ness. When a person engages fulltime in serving the Supreme Lord so as to avoid wasting time in nondevotional activities, it is called avyatha-kalatva. `Virakti' is defined as the spontaneous feeling of distaste for objects of sense gratification.

Bijoya: can a person who has received `bheka' (the renunciant's attire) initiation describe himself as someone possessing virak-ti?

RB: `Bheka' is more a social custom than anything else. When bhava is enthroned in the heart, relish of the spiritual realm increases and the attraction for sensual pleasures diminish till finally it is extirpated, --- this is known as the stage of virakti. Hence any devotee who takes `bheka' after attaining virakti for the simple reason he wishes to minimise his necessities is called a virakta-vaishnava. Anyone who puts on the renunciant's robe (bheka) before he reaches the stage of bhava is a charlatan and his status is not bonafide. Lord Caitanya highlighted this principle when He chastised Chota Haridasa.

Bijoya: What is the meaning of mana-sunyata (pridelessness) ?

RB: Pride is born out of possessing noble caste, creed, social status, wealth, strength, beauty, power etc. Therefore a person, who inspite of having all this is prideless, is truly humble . The Padma Purana narrates the story of a very

powerful king who becomes a devotee of Krsna. He leaves his kingship and palace opulence and wanders over to his enemy's kingdom and lives there from begging for his bare necessities. Like a honey-bee he collects a little from everyone. He never reflected on his previous status, but respected the brahmanas and even the candalas, or out-castes.

'Asabandha' means to be convinced that Krsna will someday surely shower His mercy, and so to continue to serve and meditate on Him with such hope. To muster all the means in order to acquire the object one covets is called samutkantha. Next is the taste for chanting. When a devotee fully comprehends that of all the various wings of devotional practices, chanting the holy name is the most efficacious, he engages his entire time in chanting with faith. This taste for chanting is the prime cause for all-round success. The principle of chanting and the truth about the holy name has to be discussed separately.

Regarding attachment (asakti) for hearing Krsna's glories, the 'Krsna-karanamrta' text, has this to say:

" madhuryyadapi madhuras manmathata tasya kimapi kaisoram
capalyadapi capalam cetovata harati hanta kim kurmah " (K-K.65)

[O how exquisite is His ever-fresh youthful beauty; it is sweeter than the honeysuckles. His restlessness defies definition. All this has stolen my heart and soul --- what am I to do ?]

The more a devotee hears or speaks about the wonderful qualities and pastimes of Krsna, the more he wants them, never acknowledging satiety, as his attachment for them continues to expand.

Loving and honouring the Lord's places is accomplished by circumambulating the dhama. While circumambulating (pavikrama) he enquires from the devotees and residents of Navadvipa-dhama the places of the Lord's appearance, where He performed His ecstatic kirtanas; where He would frolic with the cowherd men at noon in His 'purbahna-lila'. On being pointed out the different land marks like Yoga-pitha, Ganganagara, Simulia, Gadigachi, Majida and so on, and on hearing their hoary glories from the lips of a dhama resident, the pilgrim feels that some divine ambrosia was filling his ears sending him into an ecstatic trance, experiencing horripilation and profuse tears.

Braja: If we notice such turgid flow of ecstatic emotions in a particular place, are we to conclude that the place inspires within the devotee love (rati) for Krsna ?

RB: No -- rati means, the spontaneous and uncomplicated effusion of feelings for Krsna, anywhere. Such emotions can be exhibited elsewhere, but that is not rati.

Braja: Gurudeva, kindly explain this point with a few examples.

RB: A person desiring 'mukti' (emancipation) chants the holy name on the stage of

`namabhasa' (shadow name). He hears that namabha-sa has the power to give mukti and is furnished with the evi-dences to prove this. On hearing them he is stirred to tears and falls swooning --- this cannot be described as krsna-rati as because he has no spontaneous and unalloyed attraction for Krsna. He simply displays these emotions, which are near-bhava (bhavab-hasa), only out of covetousness for his objective and the fact that they may help in achieving it.

An epicurean worships Durgadevi praying for materialistic boons for health and wealth etc. He learns about the goddess's mystic potency to fulfil such wishes and is moved to tears, rolling on the ground, and so on. These symptoms are not out of bhava but is at best bhavabhasa or often bhava-dauratmya (crocodile tears with evil intent) as the case may be . Bhava symptoms are never mani-fest or experienced without a long history of constant devotional service with an unalloyed motivation to love Krsna.

In aspiring for bhukti (sensuality) and mukti (emancipation), even if they are in relation to Krsna, the bhavabhasa which are sometimes exhibited are often also bhava-dauratmya. Whatever feelings or emotions are shown by persons who are contaminated by mayavadi thoughts are all bhava-dauratmya. Even if such a person lies unconscious before Krsna's deity for days, it cannot be termed as bhava.

Bhava is the great mystery that sages, who have categorically renounced the world, and even the eternally liberated souls intensely aspire to unravel. It is the recondite treasure that Krsna rarely discloses even to those who are engaged in bhajana for immeasurably extended periods. So how can this divine love, rati, blossom in the hearts derelict of pure devotion and surging with desires for voluptuary and emancipation ?

Braja: Gurudeva, sometimes these symptoms you just described are exhibited by hedonistic men and salvationists while performing Harirama kirtana, what feelings are these ?

RB: Only ignorant and foolish people are impressed by such show- bottle display of emotions, but those who are conversant with the philosophy of `bhava' will immediately recognise them merely as rati-abhasa, to be carefully avoided.

Bijoya: How to judge rati-abhasa ?

RB: There are two varieties of rati-abhasa: pratibimba -- rati abhasa and chaya - rati -abhasa. Liberation cannot be obtained without knowledge of brahman. The process to acquire this knowl-edge is extremely tedious and difficult. A person may desire liberation but does not wish to embark upon the strict disci-plines required on this path. He learns that chanting of God's name is rewarded with mukti and it is facilely performed. Thus thinking how easily one can acquire brahman realisation he feels strong emotions well up, begins to cry, has horripilations and so on. This is pratibimba-rati-abhasa and nothing more spectacular.

Braja: Why is the term pratibimba, or reflection being used here ?

RB: Kirtana when properly performed brings joy. Therefore, when hedonists and emancipationists, each striving for their respective goals, by some good fortune comes in the association of saintly vaisnavas and joins in kirtana with them, the spontaneous emotion of bhava which appears in the vaisnava's hearts like the soothing, sublime moon is also slightly reflected in the hearts of these nondevotees, due to their close proximity.

The pristine form of bhava is never manifest in the hearts of the hedonists and salvationists. They are thrilled to see bhava symptoms displayed in the vaisnavas, which in turn makes them also experience a mere semblance of it. This pratibimba-bhavabhasa or rati-abhasa is generally detrimental to most persons. It does not bring good fortune but merely awards sensual bliss and emancipation and is then depleted and rendered impotent. To formulate this phenomenon as 'namaparadha' will not be a mistake.

Braja: What is chaya-bhava-abhasa ?

RB: Simple, neophyte devotees who are inexperienced about the intricacies of spiritual science perceive with curiosity within their hearts the slight stirrings of bhava symptoms when they come into contact with the Supreme Lord's favoured place, occasion, pastimes etc. These bhava symptoms are factually the nebulous, shadow form of real spiritual emotions, hence are known as chaya, or shadow. In this stage, the neophyte's bhakti is a little more distinct, but not firm. Rati-abhasa or chaya-bhavabhasa appears particularly at this juncture.

Chaya-rati-abhasa occurs as a result of scores of pious deeds. This may gradually lead the neophyte to higher realisations and greater fortunes. But by the catalyst of plentiful association and mercy of elevated vaisnavas, the real and pristine form of bhava may easily appear out of this raw ingredient of chaya-rati. Though this form of chaya-rati is highly beneficial to the neo-phyte, any offences to vaisnavas will trigger-off reversals that will painfully cause it to dwindle like the waning moon of the dark fortnight. What to say of chaya-bhava even pure bhava begins to wither if touched by the ravaging tentacles of vaisnava offences.

Devotees must avoid close contact with confirmed and zealous salvationists for it wilts their bhava; or sometimes it contaminates their consciousness and convinces them to arrogate as self-appointed God who must be worshipped. Such sinister motives become obvious in neophytes when they arrogantly dance or sing etc in kirtana. The neophytes lack proper discrimination hence they intimately interact with diehard salvationists without caution. This causes calamitous effect on their devotional progress, hence they in particular, must shun such non-devotees' company.

In certain persons bhava symptoms suddenly appear even without that they were engaged in devotional service. From this it must be conjectured that these persons were in their previous life executing pure devotional service but due to some

impediments it could not mature and fully manifest. Presently those unknown impediments have been removed and its symptoms surface and crystalise. The reactions such displays evoke among the general public is that of wonder and amazement. This bhava is indeed Krsna-prasadaja, or due to the causeless mercy of Krsna.

In the case where genuine bhava is reposed in the devotee but certain faults and discrepancies in his character come to light, still no intemperance or intolerance should be shown toward him. Because the devotee with bhava is lifted by this transcendental phenomenon to sublime heights of spiritual success, evil deeds cannot be performed by such devotees. But if such follies are to be seen in him then there are two ways to see them: by some providential arrangement this elevated devotee has committed a sinful act, but it is not a permanent slur in his character. Or, that the reactions of his previous sins are still lingering on even after the advent of bhava, they will very soon recede and cease. However, if any person insists on pinning the blame and calumny on such a devotee, he invites the wrath of 'namaparadha' upon himself. Thus the Nrsimha Purana declares :-

" bhagavati ca haravananyaceta, bhramalino'pi virajate manusyah na hi
sasakalusacchavah kadacit timiraparo bhavatamupaiti candrah "

[Just as the moon appears to have dark lines and patches but does not become shrouded in gloom because of them, similarly devotees who possess single-minded devotion to the Supreme Lord in spite of having faults and blemishes, meaning who have committed most abominable acts, keep on radiating because of their love for the Lord].

This injunction must not mislead one into thinking that it is alright for devotees to become compulsive sinners. The fact is, the very desire for committing sin is expunged once the devotee becomes steadfast (nistha) in bhakti. Yet, as long as the body is there, accidents may happen and a devotee could commit sins inadvertently. As soon as that occurs, bhaktidevi instantly incinerates to ashes his sins and cautions the devotee against repeating it. A devotee who continually commits sins has definitely not developed single-minded devotion to the Lord because a sincere devotee can never perpetrate pernicious acts shamelessly relying on the absolving potency of bhaktidevi. This is a grievous offence.

The nature of bhava or rati is, that it gradually and constantly increases the desire to love in the devotee. Thus it is volatile due to a restlessness and it embodies intense bliss. Although it churns up the torrid sancari-bhava, still it remains more soothing and embalming than a million moon's rays."

At this point in their discussion Brajanatha and Bijoya were found profoundly pondering over the concepts of bhava-tattva. Babaji Maharaja also seemed to withdraw within himself. But the two aspirants were too excited and keen to prolong this unexpected lull, so, respectfully they broached their next question. Brajanatha said --- gurudeva, your instructions are so marvellous. They have opened in us the floodgates of immortal ambrosia of prema and extinguished the flames of material entanglement in our hearts. We are like inebriated by this

ambrosia and have lost our sense of direction.

Alas ! Gurudeva, fie on our brahmana birth that has poisoned the heart with pride and arrogance ! We do not possess a drop of humility, so how can we expect to attain bhava ? Our singular hope is in you dear gurudeva. You are an eternal associate of the Supreme Lord, if you give us an iota of divine prema then everything will be perfect for us. On the basis of our spiritual relationship a new optimism is dawning within us. We are spiritually impecunious and wretched, you are an impressive bulwark amongst devotees and very compassionate, so kindly advise us on our real responsibilities. The feeling inside me is prompting me to turn my back on family and home and surrender myself at your feet so I can always serve you'.

Bijoya Kumara, patiently biding time and finding the opportune moment, interjected --- guruji, Brajanatha is young, his mother wishes him to enter household life, but he is not prepared to do so. Kindly tell us what he should do.

RB: You have received Krsna's blessings. So, convert your household into Krsna's household and serve Him. Let everyone follow Lord Caitanya's advice. There are two devotee statuses in the world --- householder and renunciant. A person must remain in the household status till he is ready to renounce it and in this way serve Krsna as a householder devotee. Our dear Lord Caitanya displayed His pastimes in the first twenty-four years as a householder, which stand as perfect examples for a vaisnava household-er; His pastimes in the latter twenty-four years as a renunciant are ideals to be emulated by renunciants and aspiring sannyasis.

My recommendation is that you study the Lord's householder life and try sincerely to follow in His footsteps, at least for the present. You must not think that the highest level of krsna-prema is beyond the reach of householder devotees. The majority of Mahaprabhu's close associates, who were direct recipients of His mercy, were householders. Even the renunciant vaisnavas pray to be blessed with their hallowed foot-dust .

Bijoya and Brajanatha offered their obeisances to Babaji Maharaja and took leave. It was very late in the night. They joined the other vaisnavas of Srivasa-angana and spent the rest of the night singing and chanting the Lord's name. Early next morning they completed morning ablutions, bath and attended the spiritual programmes in the temple. At noon they honoured mahaprasadam with the vaisnavas. Soon after they left and slowly made their way back toward home.

At the Vilvapuskarini water tank they sat down. Uncle and nephew considered all the facts they heard from Babaji Maharaja and decided that both must take up household life and serve Krsna in that capacity. Bijoya Kumara conveyed this news to his sister, Brajanatha's mother , so she could rightaway make necessary arrangements for Brajanatha's marriage. Bijoya Kumara was going off for a few days to Modadruma from where he was immediately sending his younger brother Harinatha to help her with the arrangements . Brajanatha's mother and grandmother were beside themselves in joy. They gifted Bijoya Kumara with a pile

of clothes , as was the custom , and sent him off .

Chapter 23

Preliminary Discussions on the Principle of Chanting the Holy Name

The village of Vilvapuskarini is set in a picturesque surround-ing: skirted in the north and west by the holy waters of Ganga . On the banks of the sparkling clear - water pond in the village stands the equistic temple of Lord Siva named Vilva - paksa . The bela - trees bordering the pond kept the waters cool in summer with their shade . The little hamlet of Simulia is enclosed between Vilvapuskarini village on one side and Brahmanapuskarini on the other, at the periphery of Navadvipa town . Brajanatha's house was located on the northern side of the main road between Vilvapuskarini and Brahmanapuskarini .

Bijoya Kumara bade farewell to his sister and headed for his home . After a short distance he suddenly made up his mind that without properly understanding the principles of chanting the holy name he will not return home . He went back to his sister's residence and announced he was extending his sojourn for a few days . That afternoon Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha were relaxing in their courtyard on the candi - mandapa . Two vaisnavas of the Ramanuja Sampardaya (Ramanandi) with Sri tilaka markings gracing their foreheads were suddenly at their door - steps .

They looked around and chose the inviting shelter of the jack fruit tree in front of the house to rest under . The sun had traversed the better part of the day and was preparing for a breath- taking exit . The two vaisnavas quietly collected the strewn twigs and lit a small crackling fire . They sprinkled frankincense over the fire and inhaled its sweet, fresh fragrance . Brajanatha's mother found great pleasure in being hospitable . When she saw the vaisnava pair , apparently hungry , she sent over food and grains to them . They gladly received them and immediately set about cooking . They prepared a simple meal of roti and vegetables . Offering in silence to the Lord, they then honoured the prasadam .

Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara attracted by their calm countenances and peaceful demeanour went to meet them . Seeing the neatly applied tilakas in twelve places of their body and tulasi neck-beads around their necks, the travelling vaisnavas offered Bijoya and Brajanatha due respect and gestured at them to sit on the outspread blanket . In reply to Brajanatha's question one of the Ramanandi Babajis said, - ` respected maharaja , we were on a pilgrimage to Ayodhya and have come to visit Navadvipa dhama, desiring to see the holy places of Lord Caitanya's pastimes .(Lila)

Brajanatha said - Yes , you are already here . For now, have a proper rest and then you must take darsana of Sri Yogapitha , the birth place of Lord Caitanya and

Sivasa - angana ".

The Sri Vaisnavas expressed great joy and chanted a verse from the Bhagavad - Gita (15/6) .yad gatva na nivartante tad dhama paramam mama ". [One who reaches it (the spiritual abode) never returns to this material world again .] Today , we feel we are truly blessed having darsana of Sridhama Mayapura , the principal among all the holy places .

They sat together and discussed the sacred text Artha - pancaka . This is a small book of extremely esoteric treatises from the Ramanuja Sampradaya . It consists of five principles : sva - svarupa , (jiva's true identity) para - svarupa (the Supreme Beings identity) , upaya - svarupa (the real means) , purusa-rtha - svarupa (the highest human goal) and virodhi - svarupa (the antithesis) . They delved at length on the three prime truths of the Sri Sampradaya . At which point Bijoya Kumara enquired about the Sri Sampradaya's views on the principle of the holy name (nama-tattva).

Their answers were not satisfactory to Bijoya and Brajanatha . Brajanatha commented - Uncle , I have pondered upon this topic for sometime and I have concluded that for the jiva , the shelter of the holy name is the most beneficial and auspicious . The Lord of our hearts , Caitanya Mahaprabhu , advented in this sacred land of Mayapuradhama for the sole purpose of propagating the pure name of Krsna . In fact, just yesterday Srila Gurudeva was reiterating this point that of all the different limbs of bhakti , chanting the holy name is pre - eminently important . He urged us to properly realise nama-tattva . Let us go right away , this evening, and understand from gurudeva the esoteric aspects of chanting the holy names .

More discussions followed , Bijoya and Brajanatha made sure their guests were taken care of and left for Srivasa - angana as the first lamps were bring lit in the houses . They reached Srivasa - angana when the evening aratika was in progress . After aratika the vaisnavas , as usual , assembled on the courtyard platform under the bakula - tree . The venerable Babaji Maharaja was sitting amongst them and chanting on his tulasi beads . Brajana-tha and Bijoya Kumara prostrated themselves at his feet . He embraced them and enquired, -" how is your progress in chanting and bhakti practice ?"

Bijoya Kumara replied with folded hands - benign gurudeva , by your mercy everything is auspicious for us . We like to under-stand the profound significance of the holy name, if it pleases you .

Babaji Maharaja's face immediately lit up with joy and he began to speak: -" There are two categories of the holy name : mukhya (principal) and gaunya (secondary) .

From the time of the universe's creation, God's names which are associated with the material nature are gaunya , or secondary names, like: srsthi-karta (Creator) , Jagat - pala (Universal Preserver) , visvaniyanta (Universal Administrator) visva - palaka (Universal Maintainer) paramatma (Supersoul) and so on. The nomenclature `brahman', though dis-associated from materi-al nature is also a gaunya name . There are immense benefits from chanting God's secondary names, but they rarely bring forth tran-scendental results .

The Supreme Lord's names associated with His supramundane spiritual abode are eternal and have nothing to do with the mundane plane . These names are absolute and spiritual ; they are known as mukhya or principal names : Narayana , Vasudeva , Janardana , Hrsikesa , Hari , Acyuta , Govinda , Gopala , Rama and so on . The principal names are of the spiritual sky and are non - different from the Supreme Lord , Himself . The most fortunate souls in this universe attract the attention of the holy (mukhya) names of God with the purity of their bhakti, and the name dances on their tongue in pristine glory .

The holy names have no connection with this phenomenal platform . By nature , the holy name is endowed with the Supreme Lord's full transcendental potency . It (the name) descends to this illusory sphere of maya to annihilate it . The holy name is the conditioned soul's only friend and well - wisher . Thus Brhannaradiya Purana declares :

" harer namaiva namaiva namaiva mama jivanam
kalau nastyeva nastyeva nastyeva gatiranyatha " . (Br.n.p. 38/123)

[The holy name of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Hari, is my life and soul , Hari's name is my life and soul , my life and soul . In Kaliyuga , there is no effective method for attaining perfection other than the chanting of the holy name; no other way , no other way .]

The Garuda Purana states :

" avasenapi yannamni kirtite sarvapatakaih
puman vimucyate sadyah simhatrastairmrgairiva " . (Ga.Pu. 1/232/12)

[The ominous roar of a lion sends the deer scampering helter skelter for dear life . Similarly, the holy name of God when chanted once, even unwittingly, disperses and extirpates instantaneously all sins .]

The Skanda Purana :-

" adhayo vyadhayo yasya smaranannama - kirtanat
tadaiva vilayam yanti tamanantam namamyaham " .

[I bow down in prayer before the eternal Supreme Lord Anantadeva. Simply by chanting and remembering His hallowed name all mental and physical ailments are instantly cured .]

The Brahmanda Purana :-

" mahapataka yukta'pi kirtayannanisam harim
suddhantah karano bhutva jayate panktipavanah " .

[When even the most deleterious person engages in continuous chanting of the holy name of the Lord, his deepest core is cleansed and soon ranks among the best of the twice born brahmanas]

The Brhad - Visnu Purana :-

" sarvarogopasamam sarvopadrava nasanam
santidam sarvaristanam harer namanu kirtanam " .

[Constant chanting of the holy name is extremely beneficial and auspicious because it destroys all diseases , distresses and impediments]

The Brhannaradiya Purana :-

" hare kesava govinda vasudeva jaganmaya
itirayanti ye nityam na hi tan vadhate kalih " .

[Those persons who always glorify the names of God - Kesava , Govinda , Vasudeva and so on, are protected from the ill-influ-ence of Kaliyuga .]

The Nrsimha Tapini :-

" yatha yatha harernama kirtayanti sma narakah
tatha tatha harau bhaktimudva hanto divam yayuh " .

[In what ever hellish planets the condemned sinners are situat-ed, simply by chanting the Lord's name they attain bhakti and proceed to the transcendental abode of the Lord .]

The Srimad Bhagavatam :-

" yannamadheyam mriyamana aturah patan skhalan va vivaso grnan puman
vimukta - karmargala uttamam gatim prapnoti yaksyanti na tam kalau janah " . (SB. 12/3/44)

[The Lord's holy name is glorious ! Chanted in any condition : almost dead , deathly sick , slipping , falling or in an uncon-scious state , the holy name releases the chanter person from the bondage of karmic reactions and promotes him to the highest level of human achievement . The real pity is, the aberrated people in Kaliyuga refuse to execute this devotional activity .]

The Skanda Purana :-

" ma rco ma yajustata ma sama patha kincana
govindeti harer - nama geyam gayasva nityasah " .

[O respected sage ! It is unnecessary to study at length Rg , Sama , Yagur or any of the vedas . The prime necessity however, is to chant the holy names of God , Govinda, and so on; , just apply yourself constantly to this activity .]

The Vamana Purana :-

" tirtha - koti sahasrani tirtha - k oti satani ca
tani sarvanyavapnoti visnor - namani kirtanat " .

[The spiritual result accrued from millions of holy pilgrimages to sacred places is easily obtained in full, simply by chanting the holy names of the Supreme Personality of Godhead .]

The Skanda Purana :-

" go koti danam grahane khagasya prayaga - gangodaka - kalpavasah
yajnayutam merusuvarna - danam govinda - kirtan na samam satam-saih " .

[Admirable religious activities like giving ten millions cows in charity on the occasion of solar or lunar eclipses ; living in holy places on the banks of the Ganga or in Prayaga for as long as four yugas ; conducting countless sacrifices and donating gold in quantities exceeding the weight of Mount Meru, are equivalent to a mere fraction of the result which is obtained by chanting the Lord's name, Govinda, and so on .]

The Skanda Purana :-

" etat sadvarga haranam ripunigrahanam param
adhyatma - mulametaddhi visnor - namanu kirtanam " .

[The constant chanting of the Supreme Lord, Visnu's holy name is the only means to halt the cycle of birth , death etc, the six - fold miseries of material existence, and is the destroyer of the six enemies like lust greed , anger etc. The name is the fountain head of all spiritual knowledge .]

The Skanda Purana :-

" dana - vrata - tapas - tirtha - ksetradinanca yah sthitah
saktaya devamahatam sarva - papa - harah subhah
rajasuyasvamedhanam jnanasadhyatma - vastunah
akrsya harina sarvah sthapita svesu namasu " .

[The demigods have the power to destroy sins and shower boons and benedictions . Pious activities like charity , penance , vows , pilgrimage, rajasuya and asvamedha sacrifices , transcendental knowledge and so on, possess wonderful powers . The Supreme Lord Hari has collected together all these powers and infused them into His holy names .]

The Bhagavad - Gita :-

" sthane hrsikesa tava prakirtya
jagat prahrasyaty anurajyate ca " . (BG . 11/36)

[O Hrsikesa (Krsna) , the world becomes joyful upon hearing Your name and thus everyone becomes attached to You .]

The Brhan - naradiya Purana :-

" narayana jagannatha vasudeva janardana
itirayanti ye nityam te vai sarvatra vanditah " .

[Those fortunate souls who utter these sacred names of Gof Narayana, Jagannatha , Vasudeva , Janardana and so on, are worthy of being worshipped in the entire universe .]

The Padma Purana :-

" ananyagatayo martya bhogino'pi parantapah
jnana vairagya - rahita brahmacaryadi varjitah
sarvadharmojjhitah visnor - nama - matraika - jalpakah
sukhena yam gatim yanti na tam sarve'pi dharmikah " .

[Gross materialists who are sybarites (epicures) , men of violence , bereft of wisdom and renunciation , promiscuous libertines , disobedient of all religious rules and etiquette, have but one hope of being saved . By chanting the Supreme Lord Visnu's holy name they are not only saved but obtain spiritual merits beyond the reach of all the religious and pious souls .]

The Visnu - dharmottara :-

" na desaniyamastasmin na kala - niyamastatha
nocchistadau nisedho'sti sri - harenamni lubdhake " .

[Those elevated souls who are greedy for chanting the holy name have not subject to any restrictions in chanting regarding time , place , circumstances or contamination etc.]

The Varaha Purana :-

" narayana - acyuta - ananta - vasudeveta yo narah
satatam kirtayed - bhuvati yati mallayata sa hi " .

[The Supreme Lord said, -" those great souls who engage in incessant chanting of the holy names of Narayana , Acyuta , Ananta , Vasudeva and so on, are eternally linked with Me in pure devotion".]

The Garuda Purana :-

" kim karisyati sankhyena ki yogairnarayanaya
muktimicchasi rajendra kuru govinda - kirtanam " .

[O most powerful of kings ! If you desire mukti , or liberation (to obtain your original spiritual identity) then simply engross yourself in chanting the holy name of Govinda . O chief among men ! What is the use then of acquiring sankhya knowledge or practicing yoga ?]

The Nandi Purana :-

" sarvatra sarvakalesu ye'pi kurvanti patakam
nama - samkirtanam - krtva yanti visnoh param padam " .

[Even a person who is mired in the morass of heinous sins can acquire by continuously chanting the holy name the highest possible destination - shelter at the lotus - feet of Lord Visnu .]

The Brhan - naradiya Purana :-

" nama - samkirtanam visnoh ksuttrt prapitadisu
karoti satatam viprastasya prito hyadoksajah " .

[Dear brahmanas ! Any person who continues to chant the Supreme Lord Visnu's holy name inspite of being assailed by hunger , thirst and other distresses is successful in securing the Supreme Lords pleasure and affection .]

The Mahabharata :-

" rnametat pravrdham me hridayannapasarpati

yad - govindeti cukrasa krsna mam dura vasinam " .

[Draupadi , has called out My name : "Hey Govinda !" feeling seperation from He who am far away; I am for this reason ex-tremely indebted to her . This debt has multiplied to such an extent that I am unable to forget it even today .]

The Skanda Purana and the Padma Purana :-

" idameva hi mangalyametadeva dhanarjanam
jivitasya phalancaitad - yad - damodara - kirtanam " .

[The chanting of the Lord's holy name (Damodara) is the real benediction , the only eternal treasure and the acme of human success .]

The Vaisnava - cintamani :-

" aghacchit - smaranam visnor - vahvayasena sadhyate
ostha - spandana - matrena kirtanam tu tato varam " .

[It is true that by remembering (smarana) Lord Visnu's all - auspicious name jiva's sins are eradicated , but after some delay . Whereas, when the name is audibly articulated with lip movements (ostha - spandana) the same is achieved much faster and more effectively .]

The Visnu - rahasya :-

" yadabhyarcya harim bhaktya krte kratusatairapi
phalam prapnotyavikalam kalau govinda - kirtanam " .

[The spiritual benefit a person accrues by devoutly worshipping the Supreme Lord's Deity form and performing thousands of sacri-fices in Satyayuga, is easily acquired by simply chanting the holy name of Govinda in Kaliyuga .]

The Srimad Bhagavatam :-

" krte yad - dhayato visnum tretayam yajato makhaih
dvapare paricaryayam kalau taddhari - kirtanat " .(SB 12/3/52)

[The supreme goal of human life was achieved in Satyayuga through meditation of Lord Visnu , in Tretayuga through perform-ances of elaborate sacrifices , in Dvaparayuga through dedicated temple worship and in Kaliyuga, the very same is attained through chanting the holy names of the Supreme Lord .]

Bijoya, just , stop a moment to consider, - even namabhasa , or the semblance of chanting purely , is superior to all varieties of pious activities . Satkarma , or pious works, are primarily the means only , after it offers results it is depleted and becomes obsolete . Satkarma in any circumstance and form is entirely materialistic . Whereas chanting is cent percent tran-scendental and spiritual activity . Thus the holy name is simul-taneously the most efficacious means for self - realisation , and at the time of rewarding spiritual benefits, it transforms itself to be the very goal it strives to achieve . Another vital point to note is all the different limbs of bhakti are anchored in chanting the holy name .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , I believe in the truth that the holy name is transcendental .
But if I am to indubitably accept that the infallible names of God is in fact
transcendental, then I must first understand how it is so . Therefore I am very keen
to learn about it from you .

RB :- The scriptures say :-

" nama cintamani krsnas caitanya - rasa - vigraha
purnah suddho nitya - mukto'bhinnatvannama - naminoh"(Padma P.)

[The holy name of Krsna is transcendently blissful . It bestow all spiritual
benedictions , for It is Krsna Himself , the reservoir of all pleasure . Krsna's name
is complete , and It is the embodiment of all transcendental humours . It is not a
material name under any condition and is no less powerful than Krsna , Himself .
Since Krsna's name is not contaminated by the material qualities , there is no
question of any involvement with maya . Krsna's name is always liberated and
spiritual ; it is never bound by the laws of material nature . This is because Krsna's
name and Krsna are identical .]

Bijoya : - How can the sound vibration of Krsna's name be any different from
mundane sounds , meaning how can it be supra - mundane ?

RB :- The holy name is not a product of this material universe . The eternal
spiritual spark jiva , when placed in the transcendental realm in his original
spiritual form, is eligible to pronounce the pure name of Krsna . Though now in
his present condition of maya's enslavement and with his gross senses, jiva is
unqualified to utter the pure name . But by the unconditioned mercy of hladini -
sakti (Radharani) and when jiva's spiritual identity begins to assert itself, the holy
name automatically manifests . On this fertile field of purified consciousness the
pure name (suddha - nama) of Krsna, out of its infinite compas-sion , incarnates
and dances on the devotionally enriched tongue of the devotee . The holy name
does not possess a mundane form in the shape of letters or words (but possesses a
c vsaccidananda form) ; only when it gambols on the tongue of the devotee it
appears as syllables , - this is the mystery which surrounds the holy name .

Bijoya :- Among the principal (mukhya) names , which is the sweetest ?

RB :- The Sata - nama - stotra says :-

" visnor - ekaikam namapi sarva - vedadhikam matam
tadrka - nama - sahasrena rama - nama - samam smrtam " .

[One name of Lord Visnu is superior to all the vedic mantras ; and one name of
Lord Rama is more potent than a thousand names of Lord Visnu .]

Then the Brahmanda Purana states :-

" sahasra - namnam punyanam triravrttya tu yat phalam
ekavrttya tu krsnasya namaikam tat prayacchati " .

[A thousand transcendental names of Visnu when chanted three times is

equivalent to one name of Krsna .]

Bijoya :- What is the process of chanting the holy name ?

RB :- A devotee must chant the holy name on a set of tulasi - beads, or when not available, keep count on his fingers . In any case, he must chant continuously without committing offences (nama - aparadha) . The final benediction of chanting purely is 'krsna - prema' , hence he will soon attain it . The significance of chanting on the beads or counting on fingers for a fixed number of times is to observe whether one's chanting is increasing or not . Tulasidevi is very dear to the Supreme Lord , hence chanting the Lord's name in contact with her, in the form of beads, enhances one's feeling and attachment for the holy name . While chanting, always remember that Krsna and His name are identical .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , there are nine limbs of bhakti practices which are further sub - divided into sixty four types . Chanting the holy name is one among them . If we are to chant incessantly where is the time to execute any of the other limbs ?

RB :- This does not present a dichotomy . The sixty four divisions are included in the nine bhakti limbs . These nine organs can be executed in any form: Through deity worship in the temple or chanting in solitude (in elevated association) . To chant , hear , remember etc. sitting in the front of the deities , is in fact , all in the category of chanting the holy name (nama - sadhana) . When one is unable to be in the presence of the deities , then by recollecting the deities' form he must chant , hear etc. the holy name, and in this way execute all the nine bhakti organs . Those who are fortunate by the Lord's blessings, and have developed taste for chanting constantly, are simultaneously engaged in all the nine branches of bhakti . Chanting the Lord's name is the most potent of all the nine limbs . Therefore, when the devotee chants in full ecstasy and none of the other limbs are visible , it is not lacking in anything .

Bijoya :- What is the method for chanting incessantly ?

RB :- To constantly chant means to engage whole time in chanting, even while eating , walking , bathing and going through the motions of other physical activities in daily life ; except during sleep . There are no restrictions or rules for chanting; no considerations of time , place or circumstances .

Bijoya :- Alas gurudeva ! We dare not call ourselves vaisnavas, until we receive your blessings which will then provide us strength to chant continuously .

RB :- Just recall everything I have said regarding the different categories of vaisnavas . Our dearest Lord of the heart , Caitanya Mahaprabhu had said to Satyaraja Khan that anyone who utters Krsna's name just once, is a vaisnava . A devotee who constantly chants Krsna's name is vaisnavatava (an advanced vaisnava) and that elevated vaisnava who upon being seen inspires others to chant Krsna's name, is vaisnavatama (the best of the vaisnavas) . Therefore since you are chanting Krsna's name with sincere faith , even if it is sometimes , you are a

vaisnava .

Bijoya :- Kindly tells us all about the pure name of Krsna .

RB :- When sraddha , or faith, fully matures into single - minded devotion (ananya - bhakti), only then is Krsna's name properly chanted . Any level of chanting lower than this, is either namabhasa (semblance of the name), or at best nama - aparadha (offensive chanting) .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , should harinama , be considered as sadhya (the ultimate goal), or as sadhana (the process) ?

RB :- When harinama is chanted on the stage of sadhana - bhakti it is considered as sadhana . And when harinama is chanted with bhava-bhakti and prema - bhakti , it is indeed sadhya - vastu , or the supreme objective . The pure name of Krsna manifests in degrees commensurate to the chanter's level of devotion .

Bijoya :- Are there any distinctions between the holy name of Krsna and Lord Krsna Himself ?

RB :- The answer is in the absolute negative - no differences . However , there is one unique , even mystical feature about this . Harinama is more merciful than Krsna - svarupa . Offences committed against Krsna's svarupa are never forgiven by Krsna; but offences against the Svarupa as well as against the holy name , are both very kindly absolved by Krsna - nama . So you must learn by heart and understand the ten offences to the holy name (nama - aparadha) and meticulously avoid them . Because, in order to chant the holy name purely, you have to get rid of nama - aparadha . Remind me tomorrow to discuss nama - aparadha .

Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha fell at their spiritual master's feet begging permission to leave . They smeared his feet dust on the heads and left . Slowly as they walked back home, they thought deeply about the glories of the holy name and its spirit-ual identity .

Chapter 24

Deliberations On The Offences Against the Holy Name -nama Or,- aparadha.

That night Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha chanted harinama fifty thousand times on their tulasi beads with pure faith on. Next morning they felt greatly exhilarated that by the mercy of Krsna they were able to chant purely. They exchanged notes and personal experiences on chanting. Their day was quickly devoured by a melange of activities beginning with a dip in the ganga, deity worship, chanting harinama, studying the dasa-mula philosophy, discussing Srimad

Bhagavatam, serving the vaisnavas, honouring Krsna-prasadam and so on. Come evening, they went to the Srivas-angana in Mayapura.

They entered the bhajana-kutira of Babaji Maharaja and prostrated themselves before him. Babaji Maharaja bade them to be seated. They eagerly enquired from Babajji Maharaja about the nama-aparadha.

Babaji Maharaja spoke softly with his usual air of composed joy. He said ---" Just as chanting the holy name is the highest devo-tional principle, similarly its antipode is nama-apardha, --- more greivous than all the other inful activities and offences. The Padma Purana, in describing the holy name, states :

" namaparadha-yuktanam namanyeva harantya-gham/ avisranta-prayuk-tani tanyevarthakarani ca "(Padma P.Svargakhandā 48/49)

[The holy name alone can exonerate the sins and offences of an offender to the holy name. The incessant chanting of harinama is the only way to achieve prayojana (prime necessity), which is prema, or love of Godhead] .

Take heed of the fact that the method for counteracting offences is an onerous one. Therefore intelligent persons will carefully circumvent comitting namaparadha. Pinpoint the source of namapa-radha and destroy it, then the pure name will begin to manifest. For example a devotee while chanting is moved to tears and horripilation (asru-pulaka) but an under-current of namaparadha disqualifies him from chanting pure name (suddha-nama). Hence the practitioner (sadhaka) must be awake and cantious about this dan-ger.

Bijoya: Srila Gurudeva, what are the symptoms of suddha-nama ?

RB: Chanting, which is without a trace of namaparadha is suddha-nama. perfect or imperfect pronunciations of the name is not the criterion.

Heed this injunction from Padma Purana :

" namaikam yasya vaci smarana patha-gatam srotra-mulam gatam va suddham vasuddha-varnam vyavahita-rahitam taratyeva satyam taceddeha-dravina-janata-lobha-pasana-madhya niksiptam syannaphala-janakam sigrhamevatra vipra." (P.P.Svarga.kh.48/90-91).

[O Learned brahmana, if any person even once chants, hears or remembers the holy name, harinama will positively liberate him from material existence. There are no material considerations regarding the holy name; whether it is etymologically pure or whether not, or the pronunciation is right or wrong, and so on. The truth is, that if the all-powerful holy name is chanted with material attachments for one's body wealth, family and following; with greed (for distinction, adoration and position --- labha, puja, pratistha) etc. then the desired result of chanting is preempted] .

The detriments to chanting the holy name are of two kinds: exigu-ous (samanya) and enormous. Chanting with exiguous detriments is called namabhasa, or semblance of the pure name, where the results are delayed. Where the detriments are enormous, chanting is impure, hence vitiated by namaparadha. In this case, only con-stant and intensive chanting for a protracted period can demolish the enormous detriments.

Bijoya: It is now clear to me that for the sadhaka, an in-depth understanding of the principles of nama-aparadha is exigent. Kindly reiterate the namaparadhas.

RB: There are ten namapardhas lucidly enumerated in the Padma Purana :

- 1) " satam ninda namnah paramaparadham vitanute yatah khyatim jatam kathamusahate tadvigarham.
- 2) sivasya srivisnorya iha gunanamadi-sakalam dhiya bhinnam pasyet sa khalu harinamahitakarah.
- 3) guroravajna.
- 4) sruti-sastra-nindam.
- 5) tatha-arthavada.
- 6) harinamni kalpanam.
- 7) namno valad yasya hi papa-buddhirna vidyate tasya yamairhi suddhih.
- 8) dharma-vrata-tyaga-hutadi-sarvasubha-kriya samyamapi pramadah.
- 9) asraddadhane vimukhe'pyasrnvati yascopadesah sivanamaparadhah .
- 10) srute'pi nama-mahatmye yah priti-rahito narah aham mamadi paramo nammi so'pyaparadhakrt."

- 1) [To blaspheme the sadhus (saintly devotees of the Lord) is a very grievous offence. The saintly devotees are attached to chant-ing harinama and propagating its glories all over the universe. So how will the holy name tolerate any offences against such sadhus ?
- 2) It is an offence to consider the most auspicious name, beauty, qualities, pastimes of the Supreme Lord Visnu, as mundane and disassociated, or different from Him. It is also offensive to equate demigods like Lord Siva with the Supreme Godhead Visnu, or think that they are independent of Lord Visnu's control.
- 3) A person must never harbour the misconception that the guru, who is realised in the glories of the holy name, is an ordinary mor-tal.
- 5) To think that the glories of the holy name are imaginary or exaggerated.
- 6) To think that the names of the Supreme Lord are all ficti-tious.
- 4) To blaspheme the vedic literatures and its corollaries.
- 7) Those who commit sins on the strength of the holy name are the most egregious offenders, no amount of prayascitta, yoga or medita-tion can absolve their offences.
- 8) Religious vows, penances, renunciation, homa sacrifices are indeed pious activities. But they are mundane activities, hence it is an offence to compare them to the transcendental activity of chanting the supra-mundane names of God.
- 9) To instruct a faithless person on the glories of the holy name is an offence.
- 10) Those persons who even after repeatedly hearing about the wonderful and transcendental qualities of the holy name still maintain material attachments,

thinking in terms of me and mine, are gross offenders to the holy name.]

Bijoya : Gurudeva, kindly expatiate on individual nama-aparad-has.

RB : Let us begin with the first offence. Those saintly devotees who have surrendered exclusively to the holy name have foregone every material aspirations like fruitive works, religiosity, empirical research (jnana), yoga etc. hence to criticize them is a deleterious offence. harinama cannot tolerate any blasphemy against them because they are engaged in disseminating the tran-scendental teachings about the glories of the holy name. There-fore a devotee must desist from being critical about these sadhus who are the guardians of the holy name and recognise their ele-vated status. Join them in the sankirtana movement of congre-tion-al chanting of the holy name and instantaneously attract the mercy of harinama.

Bijoya: Gurudeva,I have understood the significance of the first namaparadha.

RB: There are two different explanations of the second namaparad-ha. Intellectual hair-splitting of the significance of Lord Sadasiva's (the foremost amongst the demigods) and Lord Visnu's names,qualities etc. and considering them to be independent of each other, and that each of them are seperate,even competing Supreme Controllers (isvara), is an offence. This tantamounts to polytheism, which concomitantly hinders the growth of unalloyed devotion to the Supreme Lord. Thus, one must chant the name with the realisation that Lord Krsna is the Supreme Controller of all the demigods including Sadasiva, who receive all their powers from Him (Krsna) and are certainly not independent of His con-trol.

The other explanation is, the holy name is sivasya,or all-auspi-cious. Hence, to see the Lord's name,form,qualities, pastimes and so on as seperate from the eternally perfected Supreme Personali-ty, is a heinous offence. Lord Krsna's name, form etc. and the Lord Himself, are all cent percent spiritual, transcendental and identical. Anyone who does not comprehend this esoteric science suffers gross misconception.

Bijoya: It was not difficult for us to grasp the first two of-fences since you had earlier discussed about the transcendental personality of Krsna and the simultaneous oneness and difference of His name, form etc with His energies. Kindly tell us about the third offence which involves guru-tattva.

RB: The teacher who delineates the highest and the most esoteric principles of harinama is the true nama-guru,or the spiritual master who initiates the disciple into the chanting of the holy name. It is imperative for the disciple to develop unflinching faith in the nama-guru. So if a person, due to misinterpretation of the truth,considers that the nama-guru is conversant with scriptures dealing only with the holy name and so is not as knowledge able as one who is well-versed in the vedanta philoso-phy commits a serious offence against the holy name. The truth is, that the guru who is realised in the science of the holy name is the best of all the spiritual preceptors, hence he must never be slighted.

In the sruti-sastra, whenever there is probing of the profound spiritual topics, the holy name is accorded the highest pedestal. This quote from the Rg veda cited in the Haribhakti-vilasa is self-explanatory: (Hba.11/274-276):

" Om asya janantonam cidviktan mahaste visno sumatim bhajamahe om tat sat om padam devasya namasa vyantah sravasyavasrava apan-na-mrktam namani ciddadhire yajniyani bhadrayante ranayantah samdrstou om tamustotarah purvam yathavida rtasya garvabham janusa piparttan asya jananto nama cidviktan mahaste visno sumatim bhajamahe." (Rg.Veda 1 mandala 159/3).

[O Supreme Lord Visnu ! Your sacred name is absolutely cognisant and all-illuminating because the entire vedic scriptures have emanated from it. Your holy name is the spring of supreme bliss the embodiment of brahman, readily available and full of transcen-dental knowledge. We cogitate upon the purport of the holy name and discuss it among us and we chant the Your name continuously --- in this way we worship You.

O Lord Visnu, ever since our faith in You has become steadfast, our desire to gain your direct audience has lead us to offer incessant prays at Your lotus-feet, since they are the sublime purifying agent's of the devotees' hearts and the repository of relishable transcendental pastimes. We are all the time hearing Your unsurpassable qualities being glorified and we praise them amongst our selves. In this way we have taken shelter of Your omnipotent and all-purifying name.

O sages ! Know with certitude that the original, primeaval Su-preme Lord Krsna is that very personaility you seek. Worship Him with this realisation, for He is the ultimate goal in the Vedas: the absolute essence. He is the embodiment of eternity, absolute knowledge and bliss. The purpose of human life is to know Him, to describe His and His incarnations' wonderful acts.

We wish to eulogize You and worship You according to our spiritu-al emotions and taste. This way we wish to crown our lives with paramount success and continue to chant Your holy name which is dynamic, variagated and omnipotent . It is the most relishable activity and we experience the greatest pleasure doing it] .

Thus we find the Vedas and Upanisads praising the holy name and its incomparable potencies, hence it is an offence to castigate such sruti scriptures. It is a matter of immense misfortune that persons give more weight to other instructions from different srutis but neglect those srutis which establish the superiority of the holy name and of chanting as the most essential spiritual activity. This is very offensive and because of it they fail to inspire in themselves proper faith and attachment for the holy name. You must comprehend that these srutis and their teachings are the essence of vedic knowledge, only then can you sincerely chant harinama.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, your words are cascades of ambrosia; kindly proceed to the fifth offence.

RB: To think that the qualities of the name described in the scriptures are either imaginary or exaggerated is a serious nama aparadha. This line of thinking is condemned in the scriptures, as in Jaimini Samhita:

" sruti smrti-puranesu nama-mahatmya-vacisu
ye'rthavada iti bruyurna tesam niraya-ksayah "

[Those persons who disrespect the srutis, smrtis and puranas which glorify the holy name, claiming them to be mere exaggerations, are hurled down to the hellish planet known as aksaya].

The Supreme Lord instructs Bodhayana in the Brahma-samhita.

"yannama-kirtana-phalam vividham nisamya na sraddadhati manute yadutarthavadam

yo manusastamiha duhkacaye kshipami samsara ghora vividhartti-nipiditangam "

[That person, who even after hearing about the wondrous results of chanting the holy name, refuses to develop sincere faith in the holy name, and on the contrary expostulates that they are inflated panegyrics, is hurled by Me into the deep gloom of material nescience after excruciating sufferings].

The scriptures have unanimously declared that the Lord's holy name is invested with the Lord's full potency, it is absolutely spiritual, hence the nama possesses the power to dissolve this entire cosmic creation at will. According to the Visnu-dharma:

" krsneti mangalam nama yasya vaci pravarttate
bhasmi bhavanti rajendra mahapataka-kotayah "

[O most powerful king ! those who utter `Krsna' and other munificent names of the Supreme Lord, destroy millions of reprehensible sins].

The Brhannaradiya:

"nanyat pasyami jantunam vihaya hari-kirtanam
sarvapapa-prasamanam prayascittam dvijottamah "

[O learned brahmana ! Those who give up chanting the Lord's sacred name, that extirpates all sins, are seen by Me as no better than animals].

The Brhad-visnu Purana:

" namno'sya javati saktih papa nirharane hareh
tavat kartum na saknoti patakam pataki janah "

[The holy name possesses such incredible powers for purifying sin that even the most sinful person cannot commit more sins than it can purify]

The scriptural quotes reflect only partially the uniqueness of the holy name. The fruitive workers (karmi) and empirical philosophers (jnani) greedy for pecuniary profits and for protection of their prestige positions, deceive people by saying that

these scriptural statements are fictitious and grandiose. They say that such praises are piled upon the harinama because this will motivate people to chant --- in reality they are nothing more than turgid lies. How will such offenders cultivate taste in chanting harinama.

Therefore, chanting the holy name must be strengthened by faith in the scriptural injunctions. Company of offenders to harinama must be scrupulously avoided. Mahaprabhu has advised that if a devotee even accidentally meets such an offender, he must clean-use himself with a full bath, with his clothes on.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, it appears that for a grhastha it is a hard struggle to chant the pure name. He is mostly surrounded by non-devotees and offenders. As brahmana panditas it is difficult for us to find saintly association. O merciful master, if you bless us then we can find the strength to denounce bad, atheistic association. The more we hear from you, greater is our desire for more.

ORB: The sixth nama-aparadha is, to consider the names of God as imaginary, fictitious --- not real. The mayavadi thinkers and the gross materialists conclude that brahman, the Absolute Truth, is impersonal, formless and nameless. Names like Rama, Krsna and so on, given to brahman are fabricated by the sages only to accomplish a specific purpose, -- once that is achieved, the names are no longer necessary. This is the opinion of demoniac offenders to harinama. The holy name of the Lord is eternal and transcendental. It descends from the supra-mundane plane and appears on the spiritualised senses of a chanter purified by devotional service. Devotees must receive proper instructions from the scriptures and their spiritual masters about the absolute Divinity of the holy name and then chant sincerely. Otherwise they will be disinherited from harinama-krpa, or mercy from the holy name.

Bijoya: Srila Babaji, prior to finding the safe sanctuary of your lotus-feet we were contaminated by the bad associations of materialistic men and shrewd, sophisticated rhetoricians. By your kind blessings all that is history. What is the seventh namaparadha ?

RB: Another heinous namaparadha is to commit sinful acts on the strength of harinama. Such sins cannot be absolved by the yogic process of yama, hiyama etc., nor by prayascitta and so on. They can be extirpated by harinama alone, because they fall within the purview of nama-aparadhas.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, if every kind of sin is destroyed by harinama, then how is it possible for one who chants the holy name to perpetrate offences against the harinama ?

RB: My son, the day jiva takes shelter of the pure name (suddha-nama) one utterance of 'Krsna' is enough to exterminate all sins, both prarabdha and aprarabdha. Jiva's chanting thereafter reaps prema, or love of Godhead. Thus, one who chants the pure name is not only not prone to sinful ways, but is even repelled at the very thought of performing pious deeds. What to speak of papa and

punya (sins and piety) , he is least attracted to mukti. Where is then the question of his committing sin.

As far as the sadhaka's chanting is concerned, his chanting is still on the level of namabhasa and not pure name , because aparadha residues faintly linger in his consciousness . Namabhasa chanting also eradicates all previous sinful reactions and evokes abhorance for committing further sins. Whatever latest sinful reactions are left over and are due to soon mature into fruiti-tion , are gradually dissolved by namabhasa chanting, including those rare ones which may suddenly surface. But if the devotee tries to exploit this sin eradicating potential of harinama to continue to sin (premeditated , or out of sheer nonchalance) thinking that chanting will certainly vindicate him from his sins then his sins escalate to transform into nama-apardha.

To understand the eighth namaparadha you must discriminate between pious activities and devotional service. satkarma (pious acts) comprises of : religiosity, meaning following the varnasrama system; giving charity; observing religious vows; performing philanthropic works ; renouncing everything , including the fruits of labour ; conducting religious sacrifices; practicing mystic yoga etc. Besides these, every other religious and pious deeds , prescribed in the scriptures , are within the purview of mundane religious works, hence are not spiritual. Whereas chanting the Lord's holy name is a supra-mundane, purely spiritual activity.

These pious activities are only the means (upaya) : they hold the illusory promise of hitherto never experienced the bliss begot ten from achieving the ultimate spiritual goal . --- However, that is not possible since they are just the means. With chanting it is different . --- On the stage of sadhana-bhakti, (practicing), harinama is indeed the dynamic means right from the start, which at the time of giving results is transformed into the very goal it sought after, in practice period. Therefore, harinama must not be considered to be at par with any other activities --- pious, religious or otherwise. Those who do not concur to this view are offenders to harinama. Again, those who solicit from harinama the same exiguous results rewarded by pious acts also commit offences against the holy name. Because this tantamounts to equating altruistic performances with chanting the holy name.

You must clearly comprehend these distinctions between mundane and spiritual acts, and their individual separate results. Abhid-heyā -- jnana, or the knowledge of the most efficacious path and direct to realising absolute truth , is knowing that harinama is transcendental and that the path of sat-karma, the giver of insignificant results, cannot help one reach the absolute goal.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, I feel very elated. I am convinced that nothing is superior to harinama. Kindly tell us about the ninth namaparadha and quench our thirst for knowledge.

RB: Of all the instructions espoused in the entire vedic scripture, chanting

harinama is the foremost. Only those persons who have cultivated firm faith in unalloyed devotion (ananya bhakti) are eligible candidates for chanting the holy name. Faithless persons are averse to spiritual activities and to hearing the Lord's name, hence to instruct such irreverent people about the holy name is an offence. It is enjoined, to say, to the public, that harinama is the most beneficial and that chanting will bring all round benediction. But confidential knowledge about harinama and chanting should be disclosed only to the worthy and faithful.

When you become a realised and advanced devotee you will acquire the potency to empower others to take up devotional service. First you will have to instill faith in harinama, in the spiritually inclined persons, and then initiate them into the process of chanting the holy name. So long you remain a madhyama-adhikary bhakta, or intermediate devotee, you must avoid camaraderie with faithless, gross materialistic and atheistic persons.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, there are many persons who initiate unfit persons into harinama for material gains and personal fame. How should we see them ?

RB: They are nama-aparadhis, or offenders against harinama.

Bijoya: This is the tenth nama-aparadha, kindly tell us more about it.

RB: Certain type of men are imbued with false ego imagining they are the monarchs of everything they survey and treat people around them as their serfs. On rare moments, they are gripped with the mood of renunciation and a curiosity for the unknown. They approach learned men and hear about the glories of the holy name, but they do not receive this knowledge with proper faith and devotion. They are nama-aparadhis. Thus this verse from Sri Siksastaka enjoins ;
"namnamakari bahuda nija-sarvasaktis-tatrapita niyamitah smarane ne kalah
etadrsitava krpa bhagavanmamapi durdaivam-idrsam-iha-jani na-anuragah" (Sri Siksastaka 2)

[My Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name there is all good fortune for the living entity, and therefore You have many names, such as Krsna and Govinda, by which You expand Yourself. You have invested all Your potencies in those names, and there are no hard and fast rules for remembering them. My dear Lord, although You bestow such mercy upon the fallen, conditioned souls by liberally teaching Your holy names, I am so unfortunate that I commit offences while chanting the holy name, and therefore I do not achieve attachment for chanting].

So my son, these are the ten nama-aparadhas, avoid committing these offences. Very soon the holy name will shower you with the benediction that will elevate you to the platform of pure devotion, to become uttama-adhikary.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, I find that the mayavadis, karmis, yogis etc are all offenders to the holy name. Anyhow, is it correct of the pure devotees to participate in the congregational chanting of the name ?

RB: In an assembly of chanters comprising of a majority of nama-apardhis , vaisnavas are advised not to join in. But in a kirtana group consisting mainly of pure devotees and devotees on the platform of namabhasa, there is good reason to participate . It will bring great satisfaction . It is late , I will stop now , but tomorrow you must hear about namabhasa in detail .

Bijoya and Brajanatha felt stirrings of ecstasy thinking about harinama . With Voices trembling with loving emotions , they offered prayers to Babaji Maharaja , smeared their foreheads with his foot - dust and begged permission to leave . The entire way back to their house they were immersed in singing Mahaprabhu's favourite kirtana , ` hari haraye namah krsna ' !

Chapter 25 Offences to the Holy Name (Part 2)

Punctually next evening Bijoya and Brajanatha arrived at Babaji Maharaja's kutira . They went in quietly and prostrated themselves in humble submission before their elderly spiritual master . After a respectful silence Bijoya said - Gurudeva , kindly elucidate in detail the principle of namabhasa , or semblance of the pure name . Our thirst to hear more about harinama is ever increasing .

RB :- You are truly fortunate . To consummately comprehend the principle of harinama three subjects must be understood - pure name (nama) , semblance of pure name (namabhasa) and offences to the name (namapardha) . Pure name and offences to the holy name has already been discussed in some detail hence today we will mostly delve on namabhasa .

Bijoya :- What is namabhasa and how many types are there ?

RB :- The sanskrit word abhasa means rays , lustre and reflection . The lights that emanate from a glowing object is called kanti (rays) or chaya (lustre) . Hence harinam which is like the sun has two types of abhasa - nama - chaya (the lustre of the holy name) and nama - pratibimba (reflection of the holy name) . The spiritual preceptors and theologians constantly use terms like bhakti - abhasa , bhava - abhasa , nama - abhasa , vaisnava - abhasa etc. In all instances abhasa indicates chaya and pratibimba .

Bijoya :- A vaisnava is one who engages in chanting harinama . When he chants on the platform bhakti - abhasa his chanting is nama - abhasa and he is a vaisnava - abhasa . Bhava and bhakti mean the same thing but in different stages , one is the strunken stage and the other is the full blown stage .

Bijoya :- Kindly describe the stage of vaisnava - abhasa .

RB :- The Srimad Bhagavatam states :

" arccayam - eva haraye pujam yah sraddhayehate
na tad - bhaktesu canyesu sa bhaktah prakrtah smrtah ". (SB 11/2/47)
[Translation available in Ch. 8]

The word ` sraddha ' used here actually means sraddha - abhasa . Because the ` sraddha ' , or faith in worshiping the Deity of Krsna which precludes respect and worship of the devotees is but a semblance or reflection of real sraddha - not sraddha proper . This sraddha is merely as a custom or tradition not the transcendental faith which forms a part of pure devotion (ananya - bhakti) a person's sraddha and worship is mundane so he is also a prakrta bhakta , or mundane , neophyte devotee - this is the definition of vaisnava - abhasa .

Lord Caitanya designated Hiranya and Goverdhan (Srila Raghunatha Gosvami's uncle and father) as vaisnava - praya , or almost a vaisnava . This means that such persons decorate themselves with tulasi neck - beads , tilaka etc. like a regular vaisnava but chant with namabhasa - they are not pure vaisnavas .

Bijoya :- If mayavadis wear tulasi neck - beads , tilaka and chant harinama should they be seen as vaisnava - abhasa ?

RB :- No , they are not even vaisnava - abhasa . They are offenders , hence they are known as vaisnava - aparadhi , or offenders of vaisnavas . Although their chanting is at best pratibimba - abhasa and they are on the platform of pratibimba - bhava - abhasa and for this they may be placed as a vaisnava - abhasa ; but they are not because they are heinous offenders . They do not deserve the honorable appellation vaisnava in any way - thus they are categorised seperately .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva I wish to know suddha - nama and its symptoms more in detail , kindly tell us .

RB :- When chanting the holy name is untainted by desires for any aspirations other than for bhakti , empirical knowledge , fruitive works and other such mundane activities and is performed with devotion then suddha - nama is chanted . While the desire to invoke the transcendental potency of the holy name and experience supreme bliss is not a desire for any mundane aspirations other than bhakti (anyabhilasa) . Besides , this all other desires one wishes to accomplish through chanting - including absolution of sins and attaining liberation , are anyabhilasa , or extraneous desires for things not related to bhakti . As long as anyabhilasa remains the pure name (suddha - nama) does not manifest .

Suddha - nama cludes the sadhaka so long he craves for the exigious rewards derived from practice of yoga , empirical knowledge , fruitive works etc. The heart must be purged of the detrimental , non - devotional nature and the favourable devotional qualities in chanting the holy name must be cultivated , this will manifest suddha - nama . Thus suddha - nama means chanting the name purely , free from nama - abhasa and nama - aparadha . Lord Caitanya , the most munificent incarnation of Godhead and the deliverer in Kaliyuga has said about chanting the holy name :

" trnad - api sunicena taror - api sahisnuna
amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada hari ". (Sri Siksastaka 3)
[Translation in Ch.3]

Bijoya :- Master , what are the inherent differences between nama - abhasa and
nama - aparadha ?

RB :- When the pure name (suddha - nama) is not chanted nama - abhasa is
being chanted . In certain condition this nama - abhasa is exactly that and in
certain other condition it is nama - aparadha . When chanting is contaminated by
delusion and mistake (pramada and bhrama) or by lack of comprehension it is
simple nama - abhasa chanting . In the case where chanting is polluted by
mayavadi soplism , desire for emancipation or sense gratification , it is nama -
aparadha chanting . If the ten nama - aparadhas just enumerated are committed in
knowingly and without guile , then also it is simply nama - abhasa chanting .

It is noteworthy to know that as long as nama - abhasa is not stained by nama -
aparadha symptoms the hope that it will one day become suddha - nama is always
alive - but as soon as nama - aparadha enters nama - abhasa chanting the
possibility of suddha - nama appearing becomes bleak . The only recourse then ,
left is to simply and strictly follow the process of purification from the offences
against the holy name .

Bijoya :- What is the process of elevating nama - abhasa chanting to the level of
suddha - nama ?

RB :- A devotee must associate with a pure devotee and over a period his devotion
becomes pure - he acquire a taste for suddha bhakti . On this stage the name that
appears on his tongue is suddha - nama . However at the same time he must shun
the company of nama - aparadhis , otherwise he aborts the dawning of suddha -
nama . sat- sanga , or saintly association is the only cause of jivas prime
benediction . Therefore the Supreme Lord , Our beloved Caitanya Mahaprabhu
instructed Srila Sanatana Gosvami that sat- sanga was the root or seed of pure
devotion , while the company of sense enjoyers and non - devotees were its
destrayers , and must be rejected . Krsna's holy name must be chanted in sat- sanga
.

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , does that mean that unless one renounces his wife and family
the spirit soul has no chance of chanting suddha - nama !

RB :- A devotee must renounce the association of women . But if the householder
vaisnava associates with begally wedded wife without attachment and conducts his
family affairs it cannot be termed ` stri - sanga ' , or associating with women . The
physical attachment and attraction the man has for the women and vice verse is
called yosit - sanga , or sexual attachment . This a grhastha vaisnava who is free
from such carnal attractions can by chanting suddha - nama achieve the ultimate
goal of human life - love of Godhead . (Prema)

Bijoya :- What are the different symptoms of nama - abhasa ?

RB :- The Srimad Bhagavatam writes :

" sanketyam parihasyam va stobham helanameva va
vaikuntha - nama - grahanam asesagha - haram - viduh ". (SB 6/2//14)

[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) , jockingly , for musical entertainment , or even neglectfully . This is accepted by all the learned scholars of the scriptures .]

Those persons who have insufficient knowledge about the principles of harinama and sambandha - jnana chant in nama - abhasa . Nama - abhasa is of four types - sanketa (by hinting at) , parihasa (jockingly) , stobha (as musical entertainment) and helana (neglectfully) .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , kindly elaborate upon these four types .

RB :- At the moment of death Ajamila called out for his son Narayana . Narayana is another name of Krsna , the Supreme Lord hence Ajamila got the result of sanketa chanting of the holy name or pork as ` harama ' . This word has two syllabus ha and rama ; rama being the Lords name , their utterance becomes sanketa nama - abhasa , which saves them from the torture chambers of Yamaraja , the god of death . All the scriptures ' atianimous verdict is that nama - abhasa chanting gives liberation . The sound vibration and letters of the harinama are inseparably linked with Mukunda (the Supreme Personality of Godhead us the giver of mukti , liberation) . Thus the mere utterance of God's name bring the chanter in Lord Mukundai contact . Liberation through cultivating knowledge of Brahman comes after long endeavour but it is achieved facilely through nama - abhasa chanting .

Bijoya :- Dear master , I have read in the scriptures that the arrogant empiricist philosophers saking emancipation , the ignorant , base mleccas (meat - eaters and barbarians) and the atheistic demoniac person uninterested in spiritual goals have attain liberation simply by chanting Krsna's name even jockingly or mockingly . What is stobha nama - abhasa gurudeva ?

RB :- When a vaisnava is chanting Krsna's name another person - tries to desist him from it by disrespectfully mocking his chanting - it is known as stobha . Another example of stobha is an agnostic caricatures a vaisnava chanting harinama and says - how absurd to think that your Hari - Kestho will take care of everything ! The sound vibrations of hacinama possesses such immense potency that even a disrespectful and atheistic person can attain liberation by stobha - nama - abhasa .

Saying Krsna's name with disdain and with no love and appreciation is called helana - nama - abhasa . The following description is found in the Mahabharata Prabhasa - Khanda -

" madhuram madhuramet anmangalam mangalaram sakalanigamaballi - sat - phalam cit - svarupam sakrdapi parigitam sraddhaya helaya va bhrguvara nara -

matram tarayet krsna - nama ".
[Translation in the 6th Ch.]

The words `sraddhaya means with love and faith and helaya means without love and affection in this sloka . The phrase `naramatram tarayet ' means Krsna's holy name give mukti to even yavanas .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva is helana or helaya nama an offence ?

RB :- When the elements of shrewd cunning and envy enters helana it is then nama - aparadha , and when chanted innocently and without malice it is nama - abhasa .

Bijoya :- Master , what results are available from nama - abhasa chanting and what cannot be had from it ?

RB :- Nama - abhasa chanting rewards the chanter with bhukti , mukti , eight - fold mystic perfect etc., what is cannot give is Krsna - prema , or love of Godhead - the ultimate goal of human life . When the nama - abhasa chanter associates with a pure devotee and is elevated to the level of madhyama adhikary vaisnava then by pure devotion (suddha - bhakti) and pure chanting (suddha - nama) he soon attains Krsna - prema .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , many neophytes or vaisnava - abhasa who wear and apply vaisnava symbols and marks on their persons and have been chanting nama - abhasa for long are unable are to obtain prema - what is the cause of it ?

RB :- This entire process is strouded in mystery . Persons with bhakti - abhasa are certainly eligible and capable of acquiring the level of suddha - bhakti . Unfortunately due to a lack of ananya - bhakti , or single - mindedness in bhakti they misjudge people thinking a wrong person to be a sadhu . They associate with this so - called sadhu imagining that it is sadhu - sanga . Often their sadhu is a mayavadi or a charlatan and as a consequence to this bad association they commit vaisnava - aparadha . They block their own devotional progress and slide down to the offensive pit of monistic mayavadi thought .

A deviant from the path of pure bhakti he suffers the humiliation of being counted amongst the rank of offenders , gradually distancing himself from the ultimate , eternal destination . But somehow if on the level of bhakti - abhasa the neophyte's sukrti , or pious results are a strong enough force then they will extricate him from bad association and deliver him to sat - sanga vaisnava , or a pure vaisnava devotee .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva what are the consequences of nama - aparadha ?

RB :- If the five types of sins (Panca - maha - suna papa) a jiva in evitably has to commit in the course of daily living is multiplied a million folds they still do not match in severity with nama - aparadha . That gives you a touch of the idea of

what nama - aparadhais .

Bijoya :- Maharaja , if the results of nama - aparadha are as you describe them , then are there no positive and good results from uttering the syllabus of the name ?

RB :- The holy name rewards the nama - aparadhi by fulfilling his desires , that initially motivated him to chant . But harinama never blesses him with prema , love of Godhead . Along with his fulfilled desires he also has to suffer the consequences of nama - aparadha , because his chanting is instigated by material cunning . But in between , sometimes his chanting is clean of this mundane cunning and caprice , his harinama in these instances are counted as sukrti , or pious deeds . When his piety matures and accumulates to a substantial amount they reward him with the association of a vaisnava who is very attached to the suddha - nama . Under his influence the nama - aparadhi chants continuously and abrogates his nama - aparadhas . This method has also helped invetevate monists and emancipationists to gradually attain the platform of bhakti .

Bijoya :- Master , if one name of Krsna is potent enough to nullify all sins then what is the necessity to chant incessantly ?

RB :- The heart , consciousness and demeanour of nama - aparadhis are always materially contaminated , robbing them of their interest in God . They develop dislike for saints and spiritual topics - anything relating to spirituality . But their attraction for unholy association , mis - conceptions about the scriptures and immortal activities are also temporary . Therefore non - stop harinama protects them from these aberrations . Without the defilement of unholy association etc., his chanting gradually becomes purified and spirituality takes on a stronger note in his life .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , these nectarean instructions are entering our hearts and inspiring us with uncheckable zest for the holy name . It is abhasa and nama - aparadha . For this we are eternally grateful to you . If there is anything you like to tell us in conclusion I am eager to hear it .

RB :- Srila Jagadananda Pandita has given us wonderful instructions in his book ' Prema Vivarta ' . In the seventh chapter he writes " A person cannot chant Krsna's holy name purely in the company of non - devotees . The name's sound and syllabus may be uttered , but that is not real chanting .

Chanting of this nature is at best in the clearing stage - the semblance of harinama , or nama - abhasa . It is always mixed with offences to the nama . Chanting of this quality is detrimental to spiritual progress and cannot be considered as pure bhakti .

If you really desire to chant purely then seek earnestly the company of pure devotees (sadhu - sanga) of Krsna . Reject all unwanted cravings for sense enjoyments , liberation , mystic powers and other material desires . Avoid nama - aparadha and rise above the dualities of honour , dishonour and so on . This life in

the material world is meant to be utilized in the Supreme Lord's service . Render service to Him sans attachment to mundane objects and chant Krsna's holy name constantly .

Accept everything that is favourable for executing devotional service and reject everything that is unfavourable for practicing bhakti . Do not endeavour for mundane speculative knowledge (jnana) , fruitive activities (karma) and mystic yoga . False renunciation is called monkey renunciation (markata - vairagya) , which covertly simply aims at bodily pleasures and comforts . Bear in mind Lord Krsna always protects and maintains every living entity . Himself submit your life and soul at the Supreme Lord's lotus - feet , that way , rid yourself of unwanted material desires .

The omniscient Supreme Lord Krsna knows how rare it is for the jiva to find sat - sanga , so He has come personally as a pure devotee Himself to Nadia : Therefore all who are endowed with superior intelligence must take shelter of Lord Gauranga's lotus - feet ; because Lord Gauranga is the perfect saint and spiritual preceptor .

My dear brothers who are in the renounced order , do not listen to mundane prattles nor engage in such discussions when you meet anyone . Think not of a woman even in your dreams . The vows of your renounced order proscribes female association . If you desire to continue your relationship with Lord Gauranga then remind yourself constantly of Chota Haridasa and why he was ostracised by the Lord Himself .

Refuse rich palatable food and expensive and fine clothes . Always remain humble and serve the Divine Couple Sri Radha and Sri Krsna in the depth of your hearts . Chant incessantly the holy name like Srila Haridasa Thakura . Meditate on the asta - kaliya lila (eight , three - hourly pastimes) of Sri Radha and Krsna in their bowers of Vrndavana .

Lord Gauranga's instructions are both to the householder and renunciant devotees . He said - take great care that not a moment passes without uttering Lord Krsna's name ' . Many rules and spiritual practices are not necessary for advancing on the path of pure bhakti . Simply beg for complete shelter of harinama and purify your heart and consciousness .

The Supreme Personality of Godhead , Krsna descends to this material universe in the form of His own holy name , simply out of compassion for the conditioned souls . And presently , to display special mercy to the jivas in Kaliyuga , Lord Krsna has advented as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu . Serve Lord Gauranga's dear associates with sincerity and a guileless heart . This ensures you of the safe haven of Lord Krsna's lotus - feet .

Glorify Lord Caitanya's magnanimity with His associates Chant the Hare Krsna maha - mantra and dance in ecstasy . Very quickly you will be favoured with the most treasured object : prema . The Supreme Lord appeared in Nadia solely to

freely distribute this priceless treasure " .

To hear Babaji Maharaja recite Prema Vivarta stirred up deep spiritual feelings in Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara . They saw how this affected their gurudeva . He was still , almost unconscious for a long period . Slowly he came back to the present and with tear - streaked cheeks he stretched out his hands , clasped them behind his two disciples heads and began to sing this bhajana , or devotional song .

How marvelous and potent is Lord Krsna's holy name !
Though my heart constantly burns with the flames of material desire / like the sun
- scorched sands of the desert ,
Harinama enters through the gates of my ears ,
showers nectar divine and embalms my heart .
My heart now sings that name ,
It dances on the tip of the tongue ,
In ecstatic sounds - around and around .
My voice is caving in , my body shivers like a leaf
The feet , beyond control , - dances without respite .
Tears cascade , the perspiration forms pearls ,
Hairs stand on end on my pale supine form .
Conscious thought slips away
And Bhava emotions plunder my core .
O sacred nama , You disrupt my life
Fill my heart with manna sweet
Then you sweep me off my feet
And deposit me on the sublime waves of endless prema .
I fail to understand what is happening to me ;
I am confused , mad - my mind is in a whirl .
Is this His behavior , whose shelter I have sought
Lords fail me , describe Him , I cannot .
Nama is wilful , freer than the wind
whatever makes Him happy I treasure in my thoughts .
Nama , O blooming bud of prema
The saturated ambrosial trove
Delight me once again with Your dynamic force .
Display in droplets Your wonder and beauty
Steal my heart and offer it Krsna
May You blossom in full glory and transport me to Vraja
And lift up the gossamer curtains on the stage of eternal time
To open my eyes to the amorous pastimes of Radha and Krsna .
O gift me with my spiritual form and keep me next to Him
Destroy this despicable tabernacle that shackles me .
Glorious is Krsna's name
A boundless cloud of ambrosial rain
Eternal , independent and pure .
O Lord ! crush all obstacles that check me from chanting
So I may welcome the dawn of pristine bliss " .

The Singing continued late into the night Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha realised that the song had stopped . They begged permission from Babaji Maharaja to leave and set off home their hearts throbbing with joy .

Chapter 26 The Study of Rasa, or Spiritual Humour Commences.

Bijoya Kumara kept himself away for almost a month. Meanwhile Brajanatha's grandmother did not waste anytime after receiving both Brajanatha's and Bijoya Kumara's consents in Brajanatha's immediate marriage. The match-maker brahmana had found, by all counts the right bride for Brajanatha. Bijoya Kumara promptly sent his brother to Bilvapuskarini village to take care of the necessary arrangements for the forth coming nuptials of his nephew. Finally a date was fixed and other details worked out.

One day, soon after, Bijoya Kumara came. He was listless and pensive about his spiritual life. He felt apathetic to mundane discussions and kept to himself. Brajanatha approached him and said ---`Uncle, you appear restless, why do not disclose what is on your mind ? I have acquiesced to tying the knot on your behest, and now you are not revealing your heart to me.

Bijoya Kumara replied --- I have decided to go on a pilgrimage to Purusottama hsetra, puri with a group who are living after a few days. Let us visit Srila gurudeva and ask his permission'.

That late afternoon bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha went Srivasa-angana and related everything to raghunatha dasa Babaji and requested his permission to visit puridhama. Babaji Maharaja was very pleased. He informed them that Lord Caitanya's preceptonal seat at kasi Misr's house in puri was presently held by Sri Gopala-guru-Gosvami, a disciple of Srila vakressara pandita. They must take dassana of his lotus-feet and attentively hear his mistructions. In fact Srila Svarupa Damodara's teachings were in his safe and efficient custody.

On their way back from Mayapura Brajanatha informed Bijoya Kumara his desire to accompany him to puri. Bijoya Kumara was overjoyed. They told everyone in the house their decision. Grandmother was not the one to be left behind so she voiced her feelings strongly that she was going to puri with them. Thus the travel plans were fixed for the threesome. As the hot days of the month of Jaistha approached the pilgrims set out for jagannatha puri.

In a few days they reached dantana and soon after in Jabesvara. In Remuna they had darsana of the famous Ksira Cora Gopinatha deity and then moved onto Viroja Ksetra on the banks of river Vaitarini. Here they performed the nabhi-gaya sacrifice, bathed in the vaitarini and slowly arrived in garden of Ekamra to see Lord

Lingaraja,Siva. A few days later they arrived in Sri-Ksetra,puri.

The larger group dispersed in small numbers or singly to the residences of the family panda's or temple priests who help guide the pilgrims visiting puri. Bijoya Kumara,Brajanatha and Grand-mother set up residence in Haracandi Sahi. Immediately they set about visiting the holy spots (panca-tirtha),take dips in the ocean,circum-ambulate,hunour Jagannatha prasadam and so on for a few days. Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha then went inside the temple of Lord Jaganatha's. They had darsana of Lord Caitanya's deity, His lotus-feet and finger impressions on the temple floor and Guruda stambha respectively. (When Lord Caitanya had darsana of Lord jaganatha in intense ecstasy He would weep incessantly and the stores would melt to His transcendental touch). Remember-ing the Lord's pastimes they came in a trance,experiencing high-est bliss.

From there they went to Srikasi Misra's house. First they offered obeisances to Sri Gambhira (Lord Caitanya's quarters during His last twelve years in Puri) and Lord caitanya's wooden clogs (Khadama). This spacious mansion provided the temple of Sri Radhakanta on one side of the complex and Srila Gopal-guru Gosva-mi's residence opposite the temple. Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha entered his room and threw themselves down on the ground with humility and chocked with emotions.

Srila Gosvami having observed their devotional attitude reached down raised them up and embraced. After they were seated he en quired --- where doyon come from ? I like to know more about you" They introduced themselves and Srila Gosvami became overwhelmed with joy upon hearing details about them. At the mention of Navadvipa he said --- I feel very fortunate today having set eyes on dhama-vasis (residents of the dhama). I am eager to learn how Raghunatha dasa Goracanda dasa and the other vaisnavas of Sri mayapura are Raghunatha dasa always reminds me of my siksa-guru Srila raghunatha das Gosvami."

Srila Gopala-guru sent for his disciple Sri Dhyana-candra and instructed him to feed the two honourable guest with prasadam.

After maha prasadam the three sat together and discussed many Krsna conscious topics. Bijoya Kumara, the pandita of Srimad Bhagavatam nd Brajanatha,the expert in many different scritures,impressed Sri Dhyana-candra with their crudition. He informed his guru. Srila Gosvami about their guests knowledge of the scritures.

Srila Gosvami called for the two and benignly told them --- you are the two priceless gems of my heart,allow me to have your darsana everyday as long you are in puri.

Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha humbly replied --- master,Srila raghunatha dasa babaji is well in mayapura; he has showered us with much mercy. Before coming to puri he instructed us to ap-proach your lotus-feet and hear your teachings.

Srila Gosvami said --- `Raghunathadasa Babaji is a great pandita,be sure to follow

his advice carefully. If you have any queries come tomorrow at noon, after the mid-day offering and join here for maha-prasadam. Thereafter we will meet and discuss your questions. They offered their respects to Srila Gosvami and returned to their residence in haracandi sahi.

Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha came to radhakants temple next day at the pre-arranged time. After honouring maha-prasadam they went to meet Srila Gosvami and offered obeisances at his feet. They asked --- master, we are keen to learn about the principles of rasa (rasa-tattva). If we are allowed to hear about spiritual humours in Krsna bhakti from your lips, it will be a great fortune for us. You are the chief preceptor of the Nimananda disciplic line and in Lord Caitanya's line you are the bonafide successor to Srila Svarupa damodara Gosvami. We offer our respects to you as you are the world acarya. Whatever we hear from you about rasa will crown our study and research with success.

Srila Gosvami was extremely pleased that he found two very worthy disciples in such a quiet way. He said --- that Supreme Personality, who advented in Navadvipa to mercifully accept the residents of Bengal (gandiyas) and Orissa (Udriyas) as His own, may He, Nimai Pandita, son of mother Saci bless us with spiritual bliss. May Srila Svarupa Damodara who by his flawless service in madhurya-rasa was the source of constant ecstasy for Lord Caitanya, appear in our hearts. And may Srila Vakresvara Pandita, who captivated Nimai Pandita with his scintillating Devananda Pandita, shower benedictions upon you.

Rasa, or spiritual humour is an unparalleled esoteric principle. It is like the fully blossomed flower of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Krsna's transcendental pastimes. When Krsna-bhakti reaches the pinnacle of purity and becomes dynamically active it is transformed into 'bhakti rasa.'

Brajanatha: Is rasa a pre-perfected principle ?

Guru Gosvami: This question does not have a patent, one line definition. I will elaborate upon the subject and you try to understand it. You must have heard from your gurudeva about Krsna-rati or prema --- this is known as sthaya-bhava, or permanent emotions. When sthaya-bhava is fanned and nurtured it evolves into Krsna-bhakti rasa.

Brajanatha: Kindly expand upon sthaya-bhava and samagri-bhava. Srila gurudeva has explained 'bhava' to us, but we have not heard how the mingling of bhavas produce rasa.

Gosvami: Bhava-bhakti and Krsna-rati are synonyms. It flourishes in the devotee's heart due to his previous and present involvement in devotional service. It embodies spiritual bliss and yet at a mature stage it metamorphoses into rasa. Samagri-bhava has four divisions: vibhava, anubhava, sattvik, Vyabhicari or sancari. Vibhava is the means to relish rati or prema; it is of two kinds: alambana and uddipana. Alambana is the cause which gives rise to spiritual sentiments (rati); it is of two varieties: visaya and asraya. The object of love, or rati is visaya (alambana)

and one who shelters love is the asraya (alambana). The one who possesses rati is asraya and the one who that love (rati) is directed at, is visaya, or object of love. Krsna's devotee's heart shelters rati, or love for Him hence he is the asraya, and Krsna is the object of the devotee's love so He (Krsna) is the visaya.

Braja: So far we have understood vibhava (alamban and uddipana) --- then alambana which is of two kinds visaya and asraya. Krsna is the point is whether Krsna at any stage becomes the shelter of rati or the asraya ?

Gosvami: Yes, He does become the asraya. When the devotee is loving Krsna, Krsna is the visaya and devotee the asraya. But when Krsna is loving His devotees, He (Krsna) becomes the asraya and devotees the visaya.

Braja: We have heard from gurudeva of Krsna's sixty-four qualities. Is there anything more you would like to tell us on this subject.

Gosvami: Lord Krsna is the repository of unlimited excellences which manifest in Him in the absolute degree. Due to variagated-ness in the absolute platform Krsna's excellences are displayed in increasing intensities. In Dvaraka they are complete, or purna; in Mathura they are more complete, or purnatara and in Gokula they are most complete, or purnatama. In His pastimes, or lila where He is always the hero, or nayaka Krsna's sentiments vary correspond-ing to the place etc, that dictates the mood of the lila. There are four types of nayaka: dhirodatta, dhiralalita, dhirasanta and dhiraddhata.

Braja: Respected Gosvami kindly describe to us the four types of nayaka.

Gosvami: The dhirodatta nayaka is characterised by certain qualities like gravity, humbleness, forgiveness, compassion, pridelessness and an inner pride which is never expressed. The dhiralalita nayaka is humourous, or rasika, ever-youthful in body an expert wit and extremely confident of Himself. The dhirasanta nayaka is peaceful, stoical in distresses and discomforts, considerate and so on. In specific lilas. As dhiroddhata nayaka He is envious, arrogant, deceitful, controlled by rage, restless and boastful.

Braja: Quite a few antagonistic and opposing characteristics were mentioned --- how is that possible ?

Gosvami: Krsna possesses absolute power and opulence. Therefore because of His inconceivable potency all the conflicting qualities and antipodes are perfectly harmonised in His character. There are sufficient references in the scriptures substantiating this point. The Kurma purana:

" asthulascananuscaiva sthula'nuscaiva sarvatah
avarnah srvatah proktam syamo raktantalocana
aisvarya yogad-bhagavan viruddhar tho'bhidhiyate
tathapi dosa parame naivaharyya kathancana
gunaviruddha apyete samaharyyah samantatah "

[Opposing qualities are wonderfully adjusted in the personality of the Supreme Lord. He is transcendental without a material form and minutely small, or atomic in size, yet He is, in every respect, corporeal and minute. Although He does not have a material complexion. His body is coloured a transcendental darkish hue. The scriptures describe, His eyes are crimson. He is endowed with absolute opulence and hence even the contrary characteristics are also mentioned. But in the Supreme Lord's personality they are not incriminating discrepancies. Though these characteristics are ostensibly opposing in nature, in the personality of the Supreme Lord they are all divine excellences].

In the Maha-varaha Purana:

" sarve nityah sasvatasca dehastasya paramatmanah
hanopadanarahita naiva praktijih kvacit
paramanandasandoha jnana matrasca sarvatah
sarve sarva-gunaih purnah sarvadosa-vivarjjitah "

[The Supreme Soul, Paramatma's body is nitya, or eternal (it does not register change, like the material body), sasvata, or even existant (it is never deteriorated nor destroyed). It is un-touched by hana, or shedding and upadana, or acceptance --- unlike the human body it is above the influence of mechanisms of accepting and giving up the body the Lord's body is not mundane but absolutely transcendental, spiritual and full of bliss. All the parts and limbs of this sublime form is embellished in complete with perfect excellences and are devoid of any flaws].

The vaisnava-tantra:

"astadasamahdosaih rahita bhagavattanuh
sarvaisvaryamayai satya-vijnananandarupini "

[The Supreme Personality of Godhead's body is free from the eighteen grievous faults (maha-dosa). It is in every respect opulent omnipotent's embodiment of absolute truth and spiritual, unlimited bliss].

The Visnu-yamala described the eighteen maha-dosa:

"mohastandra bhramo ruksarasata kama ulvanah
lolata madamtsaryye himsa khedaparisraman
asatyam krodha akankha asanka visvavibhrama
visamatvam parapeksa dosa astadasodita "

[The following eighteen characteristics have been defined as dosa, or faults: illusion, lethargy, error, uncivility, libidinousness, restlessness, madness, envy, hate, lamentation, unenterprising and comfort seeking, dishonesty, anger, anxiety, fearfulness, acute lunacy, severe disbalance and dependance on others].

All these qualities are perfectly manifest in every incarnations of the Supreme Lord. In Lord Krsna, the source of all incarnations, they are reposed in absolute perfectness. Besides these characteristics Krsna possesses eight additional ones which assert His virility and manliness as the supreme enjoyer. Beauty and grace

predilection for pastimes, elegance, anspiciousness, patience and constancy, power and influence, charm, magnanimity. Sobha, or beauty and grace means to be merciful to ones subordinates; bold with ones equal; heroic and valourous; enthusiastic; gait, dispassionate observation and amiable, sweet speech. When all endeavours are sweetened by dynamic grace it is known as madhury or elegance. Being the repository of the entire uni-verse's toust makes Him all-anspicious (mangalya). He never wavers or falters from performing His work and duty, so He is patient and steadfast --- sthairya. The ability to attract every-one is a sign of teja, or power and influence. One who makes endless efforts in romance is lalita, or charming. Completely surrendering oneself is called andarya, or magnanimity Lord Krsna is the supper-excellect hero, hence far His part in general pastimes He has been gloried as the best instructor of religious principles as shown in His conversation with ganga Rsi; as the eleverest strutigist when we advised Uddhava in the science of warfare and so on.

Braja: Master, the facts about Lord Krsna as the supreme actor who embodies the entire spectrum of rasas was very enlightening for us kindly tell us about those intimate devotees who eligible to taste rasa and are already on the platform of vibhava.

Gosvami: Those devotee's whose inner being are steeped in Krsna consciousness are tasting rasa. Twenty-nine of Krsna's qualities from satyavak or truthful to hriman, or modest and bashful men-tioned in the scritures are also present in His devotees. Thus there are two kinds of rasopayogi, or devotees eligible for rasa: sadhaka, or practitioners and siddha or perfected. Those devotees who are completely attracted to Krsna directly are the sadhakas. The Srimad Bhagavatam sloka (11/2/46: isvare tadadhi nesu ---") describes the madhyana-adhikary, or intermediate devotee who are the sadhakas.

Braja: Gurudeva, the devotees described in the Srimad Bhagavatam sloka (11/2/47: arcayameva haraye ---'), are they not on the level of tasting rasa ?

Gosvami: If they can progress to the stage of suddha-bhakti by the mercy of a devotee than they can become sadhakas, --- other-wise not. Vilvamangal Thaluira is a shining example of a sadhaka hence a sadhaka is to be judged by his standard.

Braja: Who are the siddha bhaktas ?

Gosvami: Those devotees who do not experience any of the Klesas, or distresses, whose activities revolve solely around Krsna and who are always thirsting to drink the pleasure inducing ambrosia of Krsna prema are called siddhas. They are of two types: samprapta siddha, or attained complete perfection and nitya-siddha, or eternally perfect.

Braja: What are the differences between these two siddhas ?

Gosvami: samprapta siddha devotees are sub-divided into ; sadhana siddha, or those attaining perfection through sadhana (applica-tion) and Krpa-siddha, or

those being promoted to the stage of perfection by the mercy of the supreme Lord and His pure devotees. The nitya-siddha devotees have been described by Srila Rupa Gosvami as :

" atmakotigunam Krsne premanam paramam gatah
nityanandagunah sarve nityasiddha mukundavat "

[The nitya-siddha devotees have the same eternal and blissful qualities like the Supreme Lord Mukunda (giver of liberation). Their most prominent characteristic is that their love for Krsna is millions of times intenser than self-affection].

By the Padmattara-Khanda:

" yatha sanmitribharatau yatha sankarsahadayah
tatha tenaiva jayante nijalokad-yadrcchaya
punastenaiva gacchanti tat padam sasvatam param
na karma bandhanam janma vaisnavnanca vidyate "

[Sumitra Devi's son Sri laksmana and Bharata descended to earth accompanying Lord Ramacandra, did sankarsana, or Lord balarama with Lord Krsna's incarnation by the desire of the supreme Lord. With the conclusion of the Lord's incarnation's pastimes on earth they returned to the supreme eternal abode along with the Supreme Lord. Similarly the Yadav accompanied Krsna down to the mundane plane and at the end of His lila they went back to the spiritual sky with Him. Thus the vaisnavas are not bound by the laws of Karma to take birth like ordinary mortals.

Braja: Gurudeva thus far we have understood your elaborations on vibhava-alambana. Kindly explain what is uddipana, or a stimulant.

Gosvami: Those who stimulate bhava are uddipana Krsna's qualities, endeavours, embellishments, smile, body fragrance, flute, bugle, auhle-bells, conch, foot-impressions, places of pastimes, tulasi, the vaisnavas, ekadosi days and so on are uddipana. Krsna's qualities are of three kinds: kayika (physical), vacika (in speech) and manasika (mental). His age, among others is one of the main kaysora. This is described in Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu:

" kaumaram pancamabdantam paugandam dasamavadhi
asodasacca kausoram yauvanam syattatah param " (Brs.2/1/309)

[Kanmara is till five years of age, panganda till ten, from eleven years till sixteen is Kaisora and thereafter is yanvana].

Kaisora is further divided into adi (beginning), madhya (middle) and sesa (end). The most prominent kayika quality is Krsna's beauty and attractiveness (saundarya). saundarya means the perfect grace and symmetry of all the bodily features. Prasadhan, or embellishment includes clothes and how to wear it, ornaments and other jewellery, Krsna's flute is always in His hand; there are three varieties of flute: venu, murali and vamsi. The Venu measures twelve finger widths in length, has a circumference the size of a thumb, with six holes. The murali is two hand spans in length with a hole at its mouth and four other holes for scales. The vamsi is seventeen finger-widths in length; has eight scale holes at a

half finger-width distances and the mouth playing hole is finger-widths from the top, the last, or bottom hole is three finger-width from the end --- in all it has nine holes. The right opening conchshell Krsna holds in His hands is called Panca-janya.

All these paraphernalias and traits are infused with the uddipana bhava and evoke love in the devotees towards the object of love, Krsna. It becomes dynamic and produces is sthaya-bhava, or the permanent sentiment. Sthaya-bhava crystallises into rasa. We leave this topic at this point and continue tomorrow with anubhava and so on. Try and assimilate what we discussed today.

Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha took Gosvami's foot-dust and smeared it on their heads and begged permission to leave. First they went to the siddha-bakul tree, the mystical tree that provided Srila haridasa Thakura its cooling shelter for many years. Thereafter they had darsana of Lord jagannatha. They passed a wonderful evening and returned home.

bhasa, bhava-abhasa, nama-abhasa and vaisnava-abhasa ?

RB :- A vaisnava is one who engages in chanting harinama . When he chants on the platform bhakti - abhasa his chanting is nama - abhasa and he is a vaisnava - abhasa . Bhava and bhakti mean the same thing but depending on their withdrawn or manifest is the condition they are given different appellatives.

Bijoya :- Kindly describe the stage of vaisnava - abhasa .

RB :- The Srimad Bhagavatam states :

" arccayam - eva haraye pujam yah sraddhayehate
na tad - bhaktesu canye na tad - bhaktesu canyesu sa bhaktah prakrtah smrtah ".
(SB 11/2/47)

[Translation available in Ch. 8]

The word `sraddha' used here actually means sraddha - abhasa . Because the `sraddha', or faith, in worshipping the Deity of Krsna which precludes respect and worship of the devotees, is but a semblance or reflection of real sraddha, - not sraddha proper.

Chapter 27 Details Of Rasa, Or Spiritual Humours

The next day, the two sadhakas thirsting for knowledge of rasa arrived at the Radhakanta temple after attending the noon a rati in the Jagannatha temple and after honouring maha-prasada. Srila Gopal-guru Gosvami had finished prasadam and sat prepared for his meeting with Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha. He presented a marvelous picture. He was attired in clean, fresh robes of a renunciant, the urddha-pundra tilaka marking on his prominent forehead glowed and the Lord's

name written all over his body were con-spicuous. Four strands of thick, dark tulasi neck-beads coiled around his neck,his right hand was inside the little sack that held the chanting beads and his eyes were half-closed in deep meditation.

Time to time pearl drops showered from his eyes and moistened his chest and at intervals he cried out in anguish of seperation:--- "O Gauranga ! O Nityananda !" Then gradually his ample and softly glowing darkish figure quietened. He sits on a straw mat, his wooden clogs lay at a distance and his water pot stood within reach. His disciple Dhyana-candra sat near by writing the proce-dures for deity worship. Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha upon enters room prostrate themselves on the ground in front of him. Srila Gosvami hugs them affectionately and makes them sit down comfort-ably.

Both Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha are well-versed in the scrip-tures,they were sincere vaisnavas and residents of the holy dhama of Navadvipa. These were reasons enough for the inmates of the ashrama to hold them in high esteem. Whenever they visited the temple they were deferentially received. They listened attentive-ly to Srila Gosvami's words as the subject of conversation rested on rasa.

Gosvami: Yesterday we discussed vibhava. Today I will try and cover the other three samagri bhava,namely: anubhava,sattvika and vyabhicari. I have already defined vibhava as that which ignites rati (love) in the lover for the beloved. Rati churns up certain emotions, or bhavas, latent in the heart. The emotion which acknowledges these awakened bhavas is called anubhava. Although anubhava,when expressed seems to have affinity to vikara,or transformations of love; in fact they are the catalysts within that evokes bhava in the heart.

Dancing, rolling on the ground,singing, lamenting loudly,stretch-ing and yawning, making loud roaring sounds,long sighing, obli-vi-ous of peoples reactions,drooling,raucous langhing,swooning, hiccoughing etc. are the external symptoms indicating bhava or feelings within.

Braja: How can these physical transformations enhance the tasting of rasa in sthayi-bhava ? The relishing of rasa in purely an inner experience while these anubhava symptoms are expressed externally --- how did they become two, seperate samagri-bhava ?

Gosvami: Son, you have fulfilled the purpose of studying rhetoric (nyaya). Your mind is incisive, I have never come across another person who has posed such probing questions. When I was studying the science of rasa from Srila Vakresvara Pandita I had the same queries. My gurudeva very kindly dissipated my doubts. This recondite science was revealed to me in this manner.

When the jiva's internal activities on the suddha-sattva,or tran-scendental plane, stimulates bhava so as to aid it, a natural variagatedness is displayed by it. This transcendental variagat-edness infuses the heart with ineffable bliss in many different ways. Bliss causes physical transformations (vikara) which are seen exhibited as ecstatic symptoms. When the heart is efferves-cent and prancing the

devotee is seen dancing, when the heart hums with joy the devotee sings out aloud, and so on. These ec-static, manifest symptoms are not its main activity. Anubhava is the supporter of vibhava,so when anubhava is churned up in the heart, splendid symptoms are exposed through the body.

As the heart becomes flushed with sthayibhava, a second function is initiated in the heart in the form of anubhava. Therefore anubhava is indeed an independent samagribhava. The physical symptoms like singing,yawning etc. are called sita, or cold, and dancing etc are termed `ksepana, or hurled. There are other anubhava symptoms which are extremely rare: utphullata, or the entire body pulsating with excessive jubilation; raktodgama, or spouting blood; asthih-sandhi-viyoga and karsana, or dislocation and shrinking-in of bones at the joints. Those extraordinary symptoms like kurmakara, or tortoise state, that our most beloved Lord Nimai Caitanya exhibited, are not possible for, nor applicable to, sadhakas".

Due to the elevated plane of discussion the two seekers of knowledge paused to ponder over what was already narrated. Their esoteric quest at least for the time was sated. They felt grateful to their benefactor, spontaneously they stretched forward and gathered Srila Gosvami's feet dust and applied it reverentially on the foreheads. After a while they enquired :-- Srila Gosvami, what is sattvika-vikara, or transformations of bhava ?

Gosvami: When the heart is under seige from any kind of bhava, or loving emotions relating to Krsna, either directly or indirectly, the heart in that state is described as `sattva'. The ranges of emotions directly fomented by the state of sattva is called sattvika-bhava; which is of three kinds: snigdha, digdha and ruksa (cool, unctuous, and rough).

Braja: Kindly explain these three sattvika-bhavas.

Gosvami: Snigdha sattvika-bhava is divided into mukhya, or principal and gauna, or subsidiary. When the heart is flooded with an imperious love for Krsna (mukhya-rati), mukhya snigdha-bhava is expressed through stambha, sveda etc, (paralysis, perspiration) and other such principal symptoms. Where rati, or love for Krsna, is slightly indirect and mixed, it is called gauna-rati and the snigdha-bhava and its symptoms are both gauna, or subsidiary: vaivarna and svarabheda, (pallor and aphony) are its two symptoms.

Besides mukhya and gauna rati, if any other loving sentiment accosts the heart, rati's attendant bhava, --- digdha-sattvik-bhava is manifest through shivering, or kampa. An ostensibly devotional person who is without rati, but on hearing the fabulous qualities and activities of Krsna is struck with wonder, which sometimes leads to ananda, or bliss --- it is then described as ruksa-bhava: horripilation is its singular symptom.

Braja: How does sattvika-bhava become manifest ?

Gosvami: The sadhaka's heart surrenders itself to prana, or life air, when it

becomes one entity with sattvika-bhava. At this stage prana is put into an abnormal condition which causes per-turbations in the body --- thus symptoms such as paralysis (stambha) etc are seen.

Braja: How many types of sattvika-vikara, or ecstatic transformations are there ?

Gosvami: There are eight sattvika-vikara: stambha (paralysis) sveda (perspiration), romanca (horripilation), svarabheda (aphony) vepathu, or kampa (shivering), vaivarna (pallor), asru (tears) and pralaya (devastation). Prana, the jiva's life energy levitates inside his body on vayu (air) --- one of the five gross elements. Besides air, prana sometimes associates with the other four gross elements (mahabhuta), causing different transformations in the body according to each element. With bhumi (earth) it produces stambha; with apa (water), asru ; with teja (fire), vaivarna and sveda is produced; with akasa (ether, or sky) the body is overcome by pralaya, or unconsciousness; and when prana is in its own element air, it causes kampa, svarbheda and romanca in varying intensities known as manda (slight) madhya (medium) and tivra (strong).

These eight sattvika-vikara are external and internal and in both cases they are laced with extreme perturbations. Such vikaras are at different times termed anubhava or bhava. Anubhava is active only externally hence cannot accept the nomenclature sattvika-bhava. In the activities of anubhava-symptoms of nrtya (dancing) etc, the sattvika-bhava is not directly responsible --- here the intelligence (buddhi) is agitated and it acts. Whereas in the symptoms of stambha etc. sattvika-bhava acts directly without any interference of the intellect. Therefore anubhava and sattvika are separate, individual bhavas.

Braja: Revered Gosvamiji, kindly explain the cause of symptoms like stambha etc.

Gosvami: Stambha, or paralysis, occurs when the devotee is speechless, feeling vacant and acute inertia due to any or all of these: delight (harsa), fear (bhaya), astonishment (ascarya), extreme depression (visada) and rage (amarsa). Sveda, or excessive perspiration, is accompanied by drooling and melting of heart, caused by harsa, bhaya and amarsa. Romanca, or horripilation, happens because of astonishment, delight, enthusiasm and fear. Lassitude, amazement, wrath, pleasure and fear prompts choking of voice leading to svarbheda, or aphony. Vepathu, or uncontrollable shivering, is a result of greed (laulya) brought about by fear, anger and delight. Vaivarna, or pallor is caused by a combination of lassitude, rage and fear. Asru, or involuntary tears, pour out from feelings of delight, anger or lassitude; tears from delight are cold (sitala) and from anger etc, they are hot (usna). Pralaya, or unconscious state, occurs from losing the motivation to act and from erasure of all knowledge, due to corresponding extreme joy and sorrow and falling on the ground.

Sattvika-bhava has four levels depending on the intensity of pure emotions: dhumayita (smoking), jvalita (smouldering) dipta (lit-up) uddipta (flaming). Ruksa, or rough, sattvika-bhava is mostly dhumayita; snigdha sattvika-bhava gradually rises to the higher intensity levels. Rati, or pure spiritual love, is the

cause of the most wonderful and inexplicable bliss. Because ruksa-bhava lacks rati it is flaccid, and without splendour.

Braja: Gurudeva, I understand that sattvika bhava blooms due to enormous good fortune. How are we to view emotions expressed in performances by artists and by many others, to achieve worldly objectives ?

Gosvami: Sattvika-bhava, springing from the sincere execution of unalloyed and unmotivated devotional service, is vaisnava-bhava, or spiritual emotions expressed by pure vaisnava devotees. All the other inferior bhava in the descending scale are divided into four categories: rati-abhasa, sattva-abhasa, nihsattva and pratipa.

Braja: Kindly define them.

Gosvami: The sentiments of attraction and attachment for the Supreme Lord on hearing topics about Krsna expressed by the mayavadis and others aspiring for salvation, like the monist sannyasis of the Sankara school, are called rati-abhasa. When narrations about Krsna's activities are heard by dull and weak-hearted women and infirm empiricists they feel joy and astonishment on the level of a sattva-abhasa. The sentiments displayed by persons with an over-sensitive heart, by stage artists and those set on achieving their mundane goals, which are often expressed through crying and horripilations are known as nihsattva; most of them are hard-hearted but by constantly exercising their lacrima glands they create artificial tears and soon crying becomes a second nature. Finally, pratipa-bhava-abhasa arises from fear, anger etc. which are caused by activities that go against Krsna and His edicts.

Braja: Vibhava, anubhava and sattvika bhava are now clearer to us than ever. We have also grasped the differences in anubhava and sattvika bhava. Kindly explain vyabhicari bhava.

Gosvami: There are in all thirty three vyabhicari bhava. They are termed vyabhicari because they specifically aspect sthaya-bhava. They are infused (sancarita) through the mediums of words, limbs and the heart --- hence they are also referred to as sancari-bhava. They arise like the sun over the horizon from the ocean of nectar of sthaya-bhava and beautifies its water, but always re-mains engrossed in its own nectar.

The thirty three bhava are: nirveda (remorse or indifference), visada (dejection), dainya (humility), glani (lan-gour), srama (fatigue), mada (intoxication), garva (pride), sankha (anxiety), trasa (fear), avega (trepidation), unmada (madness), apasmrati (absent-mindedness), vyadhi (sickness), moha (illusion), mrtyu (deathliness), alasya (laziness), jadya (inertia), brida (bashfulness), avahittha (hiding emotion), smrti (rememberance), vitarka (argumentation), cinta (worry), mati (understanding), dhrti (patience), harsa (mirth), autsukya (eagerness), augrya (fierceness), amarsa (anger), asuya (jealousness), capalya (restlessness), nidra (sleepiness), supti (dreaminess) and bodha (perceptiveness).

There are two groups of sancari bhava: --- svatantra (independent) and paratantra (dependent). Dependent bhava is further divided into vara (favourable) and avara (unfavourable). Favourable bhava (vara) is of two kinds: saksat (direct) and vyavahita (indirect). Independent (svatantra) sancari bhava are of three types: rati-sunya (without rati, or love), rati-anusparsa (touching rati) and rati-gandha (flavoured with rati). If these bhava are directed towards the competing camp (vipaksa) then they are of two types: pratikulya (contrary) and anaucitya (unfit). All the bhavas have four different phases or modulations (dasa): utpatti (birth), sandhi (conjunction), savalya (fusion) and santi (passive).

Braja: We like to know these four phases of bhava in more detail. Bhava-utpatti is easily understandable, but the others, not so easily.

Gosvami: The confluence of two similar or dissimilar bhava is called sandhi. The physical symptom of inertia brought on by beneficial and unbeneficial bhava mingle as one in the state of sandhi: --- harsa (smiling pleasure) and sankha (anxiety) emerge at the same moment only to absorb two different bhava and become the sandhi. Savalya is a condition where many different bhavas assert themselves simultaneously causing friction and elbowing amongst themselves and where one even tries to overpower the other. Kamsa on hearing Krsna's pastimes experienced krodha (anger) and trasa (fear) --- this is bhava-savalya.

In bhava-santi, bhava which reach great intensities become pacified and finally fade away. The young cowherd boy-friends of Krsna become extremely worried when they do not see Krsna, but on hearing His flute, even from a distance, their trepidation is instantly calmed (santi).

Braja: Gurudeva, is there more to be said on this topic ?

Gosvami: Thirty-three vyabhicari bhava, one principal sthaya-bhava and seven subsidiary sthaya-bhava, of which I will later discuss, add up to forty-one bhava. All of them produce transformations (vikara) in the body and senses --- hence these are the heart's proclivities which father the different bhava.

Braja: Which specific bhava do they give birth to ?

Gosvami: The eight sattvika-bhava (asta-sattvika) and all the anubhava within the range of vibhava.

Braja: Are they all natural ?

Gosvami: No, some are natural and others incidental and fresh (agantuka). The permanent bhava (sthaya-bhava) of every individual devotee is his natural bhava. In general, vyabhicari bhava are mostly agantuka.

Braja: Do all the individual devotees possess the same bhava ?

Gosvami: No, the devotees are individuals hence their predilections are exclusive and varied. Different bhava manifest and acquire diversity of character according to the devotee's innate disposition. The bhava take on variagated shades depending on the state of the devotee's consciousness and heart, namely --- garis-thatva (heaviness), laghisthatva (lightness) and gambhiryya (gravity). But amrta, or nectar, by nature is always fluid, and the intrinsic character of Krsna's devotee's heart is like amrta. Let us leave this discussion at this point, tomorrow we shall continue it.

Bijoya and Brajanatha prostrated themselves before Gosvami and begged his permission to leave.

Chapter 28 Analysis Of Rasa, Or Spiritual Humours

Braja: Gurudeva, you have described the four bhava: vibhava, anubhava, sattvika bhava and vyabhicari bhava; which of these is sthayibhava, or permanent spiritual humour.

Gosvami: Yes, all these are indeed bhava. Yet amongst them, that bhava which pre-eminently asserts itself, embracing within itself and subjugating all other bhava like an emperor: both conflicting and congenial, is the devotee's permanent spiritual humour (sthayibhava). Krsna-rati enclosed in the heart of the asraya devotee (shelter) is also sthayibhava. However, this asraya, when it is discussed under the topic of samagribhava, is placed in the category of alambana within the spectrum of vibhava. Now this same bhava brings the rest of the bhava under its sway, where some of them act as the cause that give rise to rasa, while others as rasa's attendants. Thus though it seizes the position of the relisher (asvadanarupa) it still accepts the role of the object of relish (asvadya-rupa).

Cultivate sthayibhava exclusively in solitude, analysing its distinctive features that separates it from the others. rati, or love, born of sthayibhava is of two kinds: principal (mukhya) and subordinate (gauna). The dissertation on bhava-bhakti given earlier contained sections that described rati in suddha-sattva category, this is mukhya rati.

Braja: As students of rhetoric, an insignificant branch of knowledge, compared to our present education, our syllabus included a section on rati. My idea of rati of those days has thankfully been completely uprooted by my understanding the state of consciousness which is imbued with suddha-sattva. It is clear to me that the sublime exchanges of spiritual humour (rasa) with the Supreme Lord is solely feasible for a jiva who is situated in his original spiritual identity (suddha-svarupa).

The rhetorician's view of rati pertains to the jivas embodied condition, and which he tries to experience in his subtle body through mind and intellect. Your explanation of rati has opened my eyes to a divine understanding of rasa --- it is the most precious treasure of the suddha-jiva (liberated souls) which the baddha-jiva can only very slightly relish by the mercy of hladi-ni-sakti. I like to know in some detail suddha-rati.

Guru Gosvami was extremely pleased to hear Brajanatha's perceptive analysis of this esoteric philosophy. Pearly drops rained down from his eyes in uncontained joy, he embraced Brajanatha and said, ---"I am truly fortunate to have gained a disciple like you. So hear on; mukhya-rati is of two varieties: svartha and parartha.

Braja: Kindly elaborate upon these terms.

Gosvami: Svartha-rati nourishes itself with the help of all congenial bhava (aviruddha) and uses the opposing bhava (viruddha) to produce exhaustion. In parartha-rati, rati receives the aviruddha and viruddha bhava in scanty measures. And there is another variety of mukhya-rati. Mukhya-rati has five divisions: suddha,dasya,sakhya,vatsalya and madhura. Just as the sun-rays passing through different varieties of quartz gives out many types of light similarly rati passing through the different quartzes of sthayibhava brings out distinct symptoms.

Braja: Srila Gosvami, what is suddha-rati ?

Gosvami: Mukhya-suddha-rati is subdivided into three: samanya,svaccha and santa. The rati, young girls and common people have for Krsna is samanya-rati or slight love. Mukhya-rati takes on a variagatedness in contact with the many types of devotees who develop love for Krsna according to their mood of worship. Such love, when it passes through the devotees transparent bhava, is called svaccha (transparent). Devotees who are infused with such rati sometimes sees Krsna as the almighty master (prabhu) and glorifies Him with prayers. Othertimes he sees Krsna as his friend and jokes with Him in sakhya mood. He also thinks of Krsna as his son, fondling and protecting Him in vatsalya mood. As his `kanta',or lover in madhurya mood he feels exhilarated in His company, and as the Lord within his heart --- Paramatma, he lovingly meditates on Him (paramabrahman rati).

Devotees who achieve the state of transcendental consciousness which is nurtured by equanimity and equipoise and who meditate with love on Krsna in His Paramatma form, is said to be in santa-rati. This suddha-rati or santa-rati, is of two kinds: kevala-santa (exclusively) and sankula-santa (mixed). In kevala rati only one rati is in full play without the intrusion of any other. Kevala rati is exhibited by servants (dasa) like Vrajanu-ga, Rasala etc; friends (sakha) like Sridama and by senior members (gurujana) like Nanda Maharaja. Where two or more ratis are displayed in a devotee it is known as sankula-rati. Uddhava,Bhima and Radharani's elderly maid Mukhara, are examples of devotees in sankula rati.

Braja: I was under the impression that the eternal devotees of Vraja do not manifest suddha-rati. But I see that a little santa-rati is present in Vraja. In

Rhetoric, rati is absent in the state of santa, but it is present in the parabrahman-rati. I am eager to hear about the symptoms of dasya-rati and so on.

Gosvami: The devotee's mood of reverential worship stemming from an attitude where he thinks of --- "Krsna is the Lord and I am His servant", evokes in him dasya-rati. Those who are firmly attached to this rati are not charmed by anything else. Those who consider Krsna as their equal and repose unflinching faith in Him, possess sakhya-rati. Person's senior to Krsna (gurujana) showers Krsna with kindness and love --- this is vatsalya-rati. This rati is marked by a protective mood where the gurujana, or guardians, look after Him, perform auspicious rituals for His protection and welfare, offer Him their blessings, fondle Him with affection and so on.

Braja: Kindly tell us also the madhura-rati-laksanam.

Gosvami: When the Vraja-gopis' love for Krsna is prompted by the eight types of sambhoga, or relishes like smarana (remembering), darsana (seeing) and so on, it is called madhura-rati. This rati is expressed by means of kataksa (side-glances), bhruksepa (longing glances), priyavani (sweet talks), hasya (laughing and joking) etc. This rati is, from santa to madhura, increasingly relishable and blissful --- eternally present in pure devotees, according to their level of elevation. I have enumerated in precise the five symptoms of mukhya-rati.

Braja: Gurudeva, we like to hear your explanations of the transcendental gauna-rati, or subsidiary rati, which is the melting pot of rasas.

Gosvami: The superexcellent bhava which belong to alambana and are accepted by the smaller, secondary rati are known as gauna-rati. There are seven gauna-rati or bhava: hasya (laughter) vis-maya (astonishment), utsaha (eagerness) soka (lamentation), krodha (anger), bhaya (fear) and jugupsa or ninda, (scorn). First six of these only, can be directed at Krsna. When suddha-rati appears in a devotee, his body and activities centering his body, becomes the object of criticism, and so it is called jugupsa bhava and is considered in rasa analysis as the seventh gauna bhava.

Inherent differences exist between the gauna-bhava symptoms (hasya, vismaya etc) and suddha-sattva bhava, yet because gauna-bhava is linked-up with paratha-mukhya-rati the symptoms of hasya etc are described as rati. In certain devotees only, gauna-bhava reaches permanency --- but not in all cases. Thus they are referred to as irregular, unsteady and temporary. Under specific conditions they acquire sufficient force to chase away the straightforward rati and establish themselves as the prime bhava.

Braja: In Rhetoric there are eight bhava like srngara (amorous), hasya (jocular), karuna (pity) etc. I have realised that they are applicable only to the base, mundane rasa, exhibited in ordinary romantic dealings between a man and a woman. They have no place in the pure, transcendental rasa of Vraja. They thrive in the mundane mind and consciousness but never in the purified spiritual

consciousness. Thus what the great spiritual preceptors have enunciated as sthayaibhava with its five mukhya rasa and seven gauna rasa is in all respect accurate. Kindly expand upon hasya-rati and the others.

Gosvami: Hasya rati appears when funny words are spoken, the dress looks odd or actions are caricatured and so on. It is characterised by opening-up of the heart, widening of eyes; flaring out and vibrating of nostrils, lips and cheeks. This rati is also born out of a love for Krsna instigated by a constricted bhava (sankoca). On seeing anything wonderful or extra ordinary, the heart expands with astonishment and wonder (vismaya). It is expressed through dialation and protrusion of the eyes, exclama-tions of appreciation, horripilation etc.

Utsaha,or eagerness, is recognisable in an agile and resolved mind by how swiftly it becomes attached to a grand project which is eulogised by stalwart saints and whose symptoms like quick-ness, impatience and enthusiasm are displayed. In krodha-rati (anger) the heart burns in rage due to pratikula-bhava,or con-flicting and unfavourable feelings; callous intemperance, frown-ing, livid eyes,etc are its symptoms. Bhaya-rati (fear) is caused by seeing a terrifying scene and the heart palpitates with rest-less apprehension --- symptomised by going into hiding, dryness of heart, running away etc. Jugupsa-rati,(scorn) is evoked by anything contemptuous leading to disgust --- the physical trans-formations exhibited in this rati are : spitting (expectorate), grimacing, vilisfying etc. All these feelings are then considered rati when they are favourably disposed to Krsna --- or else they are useless foibles of a mortal's heart.

Braja: How many bhava are there in bhakti-rasa ?

Gosvami: There are eight sthaya bhava, thirty three sancari-bhava and eight sattvika bhava,totalling forty-nine. When these bhava are mundane they stem from the three modes of material nature and become the cause of fleeting joys and sorrows. Whereas, when these bhava are dovetailed towards Krsna they become transcenden-tal to the material modes and are sources of profound,immortal bliss --- even deep despondency feels very pleasurable.

Srila Rupa Gosvami writes that Lord Krsna and His beloveds (vrajagopis) acting as alambana, generate rati. Stambha (paraly-sis) and such rati act as assistants to rati like nirveda (uncon-scious) etc. At the time when rasa is inaugurated these rati are not described anymore as karana (cause), karya (active) or sahaya (assistant) but as vibhava and so on. Vibhava makes those rati competent to accept the role of relishing visaya,and hence the preceptors call them also vibhava. Nrtya, or dancing, and so on magnify and demonstrate (anubhava) these rati called vibhava,hence dancing etc are termed anubhava.

The sattvika bhava also act in similar fashions and use anubhava to demonstrate sattva hence they are called sattvika bhava. That bhava which injects nirveda (unconsciousness) etc symptoms into anubhava-rati and vibhava-rati and breathes variagatedness into them is known as sancari-bhava. The pure devotees,preceptors and experts in the scriptures and in the science of God-consciousness have

identified devotional service (seva) as the singular cause of bhava. In truth, bhava which possesses the appendage rati are inconceivable, and is the playground for the purest form of bhakti.

Scriptures like Mahabharata have deified spotless bhava, enthroning it on a pedestal that lies beyond the jurisdiction of empirical speculation and analysis. Therefore the scriptures recommend not to broach this inconceivable knowledge through inductive philosophy and rhetorics. Rati is the enchanting element in the paradigm of rasa, it colours Krsna's beauty and so on in vibhava, and then nurtures all the vibhava along with itself. Krsna's beauty etc. are the mainstay (asraya) of madhurya rasa and so on. Rati initially manifests Krsna's beauty, then beauty after being relished, enhances rati. Therefore vibhava, anubhava, sattvika and vyabhicari bhava give support to rati, and vice versa.

Braja: Gurudeva, kindly explain to us the differences between Krsna-rati, or love for Krsna and visaya-rati, or infatuation with matter.

Gosvami: Visaya-rati is worldly and gross. Krsna-rati is supra-mundane, spiritual --- it has its roots in the extra-ordinary, in transcendence. Worldly love brings pleasure in union and pain in separation. When love for Krsna blossoms in the pure devotee's heart, rasa is churned up to produce the bliss of relish (sambhogā). In separation (vipralambha), this bliss acquires wonderful inflections. In Lord Caitanya's conversation with Srila Ramananda Raya, the latter composed a poem in reply to Mahaprabhu's question. The poem (as it appears in CC madhya 8/194) describes in some detail the fascinating facets of vipralambha bliss. A whisper of grief is indeed present in these lines, but in reality they are intensely exhilarating.

Braja: The rhetoricians argue, manifest rasa is incomplete; what is our answer to this ?

Gosvami: Mundane rasa is indeed incomplete. Sthayibhava reveals itself as rasa only after samagri bhava merges with it --- but not otherwise. Transcendental spiritual rasa is unparalleled and in the devotee's perfected stage (siddha-avastha) it is incessant and self-manifest. On the stage of sadhana, rasa displays itself as perceivable reality in the material world. Mundane rasa disappears in times of separation. Whereas spiritual rasa shines brighter to a devotee who has renounced material attachments. It (rasa) is the effervescence of the majestic hladinisakti, epitomizing Her inconceivable bliss and Her characteristics. Hence unmitigated, supreme happiness is synonymous with rasa, it is impenetrable with the intellect because it is inconceivable.

Braja: How many spiritual rasa are there ?

Gosvami: There are one principal rati and seven subsidiary rati totalling eight. Similarly there are five types of principal rasa and seven subordinate rasa.

Braja: The more I hear about this topic my thirst increases to know more. What are these rasa ?

Gosvami: Srila Rupa Gosvami writes in the Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu (5/64):

" mukhyastu pancadha santah pritah preyamsca vatsalah
madhurescetyami jneya yatha purvamanuttamah
hasya'dbhutastatha virah karuno raudra ityapi
bhayanakah sa vibhatsa iti gaunasca saptadha " (Brs.5/64)

[There are five principal devotional rasa, or humour: santa (neutral or passive), prita (satisfied), preya (affection), vatsala (protective and indulgent) and madhura (conjugal). Each of these rasa are respectively superior to the preceding one. There are seven subordinate rasa: hasya (jocular), adbhuta (wonder), vira (chivalry), karuna (pity), raudra (wrath), bha-yanaka (terrifying) and vibhatsa (ghastly).

Braja: The use of the word bhava in relation to spiritual rasa carries any special significance ?

Gosvami: Very elevated and self-realised saints have probed deep into their inner selves with the help of transcendental sciences and their purified minds, to release loving emotions locked within, and as they surface on their hearts they take the classification: bhava, within the spectrum of rasa. Earlier, we discussed that there are two varieties of bhava: cintya-bhava (conceivable) and acintya-bhava (inconceivable). Cintya bhava is a debatable subject since it awakens in the arena of limited intellect of conditional souls and is a product of material nature and mundane religiosity.

Mundane bhava, even when directed towards the Supreme Lord, is cintya-bhava. Factually, cintya bhava is incongruous and is not feasible to be applied in relation to the Supreme because the Supreme Lord is in the realm of transcendence. However, it is incorrect to construe that since the Supreme is alien to cintya-bhava hence bhava, as such, does not exist at all in relation to the Supreme Lord. The entire gamut of bhava is perfectly compatible to the Supreme, this is inconceivable (acintya).

Acintya-bhava occupy the devotee's heart only on invitation and must be cultured with single-minded devotion. In time, you will realise that one of them is sthaya-bhava and the other acintya-bhava are samagri bhava --- but all of them must be indelibly embossed in the heart. Only then are you able to evoke the eternally perfected, endless rasa within yourself.

Braja: Gurudeva, what deep samskara, or purificatory process, is relevant to this subject ?

Gosvami: Jiva ensnared by material nature is caught in the cycle of repeated births and deaths, working out the accrued reactions of his actions (karma). In this process two types of samskara: --- praktani (past) and adhunika (present), have helped in framing up his mental constitution or temperament. The original, spiritual soul possessed a pure consciousness and nature, which has been polluted.

On the strength of previous pious deeds (sukti), that lead to saintly association (sadhu sanga) and devotional service, new samskara is formed, which uproots the polluted samskara, once more allowing the original samskara its rightful place. Deeper the samskara sinks-in, more strongly is the presence of acintya tattva felt inside the heart.

Braja: Gurudeva, I am keen to understand which persons are worthy candidates for fathoming rasa tattva.

Gosvami: Only those persons who are able to awaken acintya bhava by the process of deep samskara, just described, are eligible candidates for rasa-tattva. All others are debarred from it. Srila Rupa Gosvami writes:

"vyatitya bhavanavartma yascamatkarabharabhuh
hrdi sattvojjvale vadham svadate sa raso matah." (Brs.5/79)

[Above bhava is the edifice of sthayibhava, a monument of breath-taking beauty and wonder; it is enjoyed in the heart, illuminated and cleansed by pure goodness --- this is rasa].

Braja: Which persons are considered unfit for rasa ? It is an aparadha to instruct an unfit person on the holy name, similarly it is a gross aparadha to reveal the subtleties of rasa to an undeserving person. Gurudeva kindly make us beware of it, since we are already in a lost condition.

Gosvami: The practice of vairagya, or renunciation, which spurns suddha-bhakti is in truth phalgu-vairagya, or fake renunciation. Pursuit of jnana, or knowledge, which excludes suddha-bhakti is dry and empirical. Krsna-bhakti-rasa is the greatest treasure of spiritualists and must be very well protected from unworthy plunderers, just as priceless gems are always carefully guarded against thieves. Among the unworthy are the phalgu-vairagis, or show-bottle renunciants, dry empiricists, rhetoricians, fruitive workers, gross materialists, monists, mayavadis etc.

Braja: Gurudeva, we are so fortunate to hear these wonderful instructions from you, we will try sincerely to follow them.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, I maintain my family reciting and lecturing on the Srimad Bhagavatam. This text is a treatise on rasa; hence, is it a aparadha to earn money by reading it out to the ordinary public ?

Gosvami: Indeed ! It is an excellent text ! The Bhagavatam is the crown jewel of all the scriptures, the mature, nectarean fruit of the entire vedic literature. Simply abide by its espousals, especially this one :

"muhur aho rasika bhuvi bhavukah" (SB 1/1/3).

[O thoughtful devotees ! Expert in the science of rasa, relish-ers of the spiritual humours ! Kindly continue, even after liber-ation, to savour the sublime and nectarean fruit of the Vedas, known as the Srimad Bhagavatam].

According to this edict, the only eligible candidates for rasa-tattva are the bhavuka (thoughtful and expert) and rasika (relish-ers of rasa) devotees, --- no other person is allowed access to it. Therefore son, immediately abandon this method of earning livelihood. You are a thirsty searcher for rasa --- hence do not commit further aparadha against rasa-tattva. The vedas declare that rasa is personified in Krsna --- " raso vaih sah" (Tait.Up.2/7).

The scriptures offer several options for earning one's livelihood, follow its bonafide advice. But stop lecturing and reading the Bhagavatam for monetary gains. If you find a rasika audience then read to them the Bhagavat Purana with great jubilation, but without expecting or taking a fee, donation, etc.

Bijoya: Gurudeva you have saved me from the clutches of a terrible aparadha. But how to counter the aparadha I have been committing ?

Gosvami: That aparadha will not remain. You entreat to rasa-tattva guilelessly and it will surely exonerate you from your aparadha. Do not worry about it any more.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, better I maintain this body even by some base profession, but never more do I wish reveal the intricacies of rasa-tattva to an undeserving person and earn my living from it.

Gosvami: Dear sons, you are blessed ! Krsna has accepted you as His devotees, otherwise how could you have developed so much determination in bhakti culture. You are the residents of Navad-vipa dhama and Lord Gauranga has inspired you with His potency.

Chapter 29 Rasa Further Analysed

Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara decided to stay during catur-masya vrata (a four month vow during the monsoons) in Purushottams-ksetra, Puri. During this time they were keen to learn the de-tails of rasa-tattva from Srila Guru Gosvami and embark on the path of rasa. Brajanatha's grandmother on hearing the spiritual benefits of staying for catur-masya-vrata in Jagannatha-ksetra agreed to Brajanatha's proposal. Every morning and evening they visited the temple to have darsana of Lord Jagannatha. They bathed in holy ponds like the Narendra Sarovara lake and saw the important sacred places with great joy. They kept themselves properly informed about Lord Jagannatha's srngara and festivals --- and observed them with devotion. They kept Srila Guru Gosvami regularly posted on their activities and plans.

Srila Guru Gosvami was extremely pleased with them. He said: --- "Brajanatha, Bijoya Kumara, I have developed a deep vatsalya affection for you, so much so that I would very much feel your absence when you leave. I am extremely happy that

you are here. It may be possible to find a bonafide spiritual teacher but very rarely does one find a sincere disciple.

Humbled by Srila Gosvami's words and presence, Brajanatha asked, -- Gurudeva, kindly explain to us the different rasa and their relation to the bhava, such as vibhava.

Gosvami: Your enquiry is of a very elevated order. Please listen, for I speak only what Lord Caitanya wishes me to say. The first rasa is santa-rasa; here santa-rati is the sthayi-bhava. The happiness experienced in impersonal brahman realisation (brahma-nanda); or by yogis steeped in meditation on the self (atma-sukha), are comparatively feeble to the joy of God realisation. It is much greater and the Supreme God's personal form is the source and cause of that joy.

The beatific, transcendental form of the four-handed Lord Nara-yana, Supreme Personality of Godhead, is the cause (alambana) of santa-rasa sentiment. He is embellished with absolute qualities like omnipotence, opulence etc.; hence visaya (object) and anubhava integral to this alambana also appear in like manner. Peace-ful, equipoised persons take shelter of santa-rati. Self-realised, liberated transcendentalists who are self-satisfied (atmarama) and the elevated renunciants who possess unflinching faith are in santa-rasa. The four Kumaras (Sanaka, Sanandana etc) are the foremost atma rama. They look like young boys and dress in sannyasi clothes. Initially they were realised in the impersonal brahman. Later they became attached to the exquisite beauty of the Supreme Personality of Godhead and began to worship Him.

Renunciants whose spiritual path is cleared of impediments and who have cut off material attachments by practicing yukta-vairagya (renunciation through using everything in the Lord's service) but are still not able to completely denounce the desire for mukti (liberation), enter into santa-rasa. The following are some of the uddipana (stimulants) in santa-rasa: ---studying the principal Upanisads; living in solitary places; surfacing of the inner proclivities; discussing philosophical truths; establishing the preponderance of knowledge and learning; appreciating the Lord's Universal Form (visvarupa); associating with devotees in jnana-misra-bhakti (devotion mixed with jnana); debating on the Upanisad with persons of equal intellect, and so on.

The other uddipana in santa-rasa are: fragrance of tulasi buds offered at the feet of the Lord; the sound of a conchshell; sacred mountains; holy forests; spiritually potent places; the river ganga; the act of ridding material holdings and sins; the conviction that time (kala) is the destroyer of everything, and other such symptoms. The vibhava in santa-rasa are ditto.

Braja: What are the anubhava symptoms in santa-rasa ?

Gosvami: The vision remains transfixed at the tip of the nose; activities and efforts are like that of an avadhuta (mendicant); eyes to the ground while walking; is fond of showing the jnana-mudra (a sign made by joining the forefinger and the thumb

making an O; does not feel hatred towards those who are inimical to the Supreme Lord; has little feelings of devotion towards devotees who are even favoured by the Supreme Lord; is fond of severing all material ties and becoming a jivan-mukta (liberated in this body); is impartial, selfless and disinterested; is egoless and is under a vow of silence etc. are the extra-ordinary influences of this rati and are the symptoms of anubhava in santa-rasa. The transformations of anubhava are : yawning, stretching the body, giving instructions on devotion, offering obeisances to Lord Hari and glorifying Him with prayers.

Braja: What are the ecstatic transformations (sattvika-vikara) in santa-rasa ?

Gosvami: Except for devastation or near-death (pralaya) other ecstatic transformations like stambha (paralysis) occur frequently in santa-rasa. Those sattvika-vikara which are with vigorous symptoms (dipta-laksana) do not appear in santa-rasa.

Braja: What are the sancari-bhava in this rasa ?

Gosvami: The most commonly seen sancari-bhava conditions in all santa-rasa categories are : nirveda (remorse), dhrti (patience), harsa (smiling), mati (understanding), smrti (reminiscence) visada (dejection), utsukata (eagerness), avega (trepidations) and vitarka (argumentativeness).

Braja: How many kinds of santa-rati are there ?

Gosvami: Santa-rati is the sthaya-bhava in santa-rasa and is of two varieties: sama and sandra. In asamprajna samadhi (in yoga, this samadhi is when the atma is unable to perceive his svarupa) the body registers symptoms like harsa, kama (attraction) romanca (horripilation) etc., when he perceives the Supreme Lord in his heart --- this is how sama santa-rati is manifest. In nirvikalpa samadhi one is free from all nescience and dualism. Thus situated, when the yogi sees the Supreme Lord face, to face he experiences ineffable bliss, --- the hall mark of sandra santa-rati.

Santa-rasa is of two types: paroksyia and saksatkar. Sukadeva Gosvami and Bilvamangala Thakura had attained brahman through jnana, but they rejected brahmananda for the immortal nectar of bhakti. The famous and most erudite Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya is another example.

Braja: Why is santa-rasa absent in rhetorics ?

Gosvami: In mundane relationships, the state of santa neutralises all variagatedness, hence it is overlooked. In transcendental dealings, with the advent of santa-rasa, spiritual humour (rasa) gradually increases. The Supreme Lord has declared that when the devotee's consciousness is fixed with determination (nistha) in Him, it is called sama. The fact is, the consciousness cannot become fixed (nistha) on the Lord without santa-rati. Therefore santa-rasa must be cultivated within spiritual culture.

Braja: Gurudeva, the subject of santa-rasa is now clear. Kindly explain the intricacies of dasya-rasa.

Gosvami: The spiritual preceptors designate dasya-rasa also as prita-bhakti-rasa. The Lord's servitors, who are indeed receiving His favours, are of two kinds: dasya, who consider themselves His servitors, and lalya, those who consider themselves maintained by Him, --- who are totally dependent on God. Thus prita-bhakti-rasa is also divided into two sections: sambhrama-prita and gaurava-prita.

Braja: We desire to know these divisions in detail.

Gosvami: Devotees who assert themselves as Lord's servants develop awe and reverential love (priti) for Lord's Krsna. This matures into sambhrama-prita. Both Krsna and His servitors are alambana in this rasa.

Braja: What is sambhrama-prita ?

Gosvami: In Sambhrama-prita-rasa in Gokula, Krsna is in His original two-handed form. Besides this, in some places Krsna manifests His two-handed form, and at other places, His four-handed form. As the two-handed Krsna, playing flute in Gokula, He wears the peacock feather in His crown and is dressed as a cow-hard boy. But in other places two-handed Krsna is dressed opulently with ornaments and jewels. Srila Rupa Gosvami writes:

" brahmandakoti dhamaikaromakupah krpambudhih
avicintya mahasaktih sarva siddhinisevitah
avataravalivijam sadatmaramahrdgunah
isvarah paramaradhyah sarvajnah sudrdhavratah
samrddhi ksamasilah saranagatapalakah
daksinah satyavacano daksah sarvasubhankarah
pratapi dharmikah sastracaksurbhaktasuhrttamah
vadanyastejasayuktah krtajnah kirttisamsrayah
variyan balavan premavasya ityadibhirgunaih
yutascaturvidhesvesa dasesvalambano harih " (Brs.2/3).

[The Supreme Personality of Godhead is embellished with innumerable transcendental qualities. Millions of universes (brahmanda) reside in every pore of His body. He is an ocean of compassion, whose unlimited, awesome potency is unfathomable by human intellect. He is the repertory of all mystic perfections and is the primeval cause of every variety of incarnations like gunavatara, lila-avatara, saktyavesa-avatara and so on. The self-satisfied yogis (atmaramas, including the illustrious Sukadeva Gosvami are charmed by Him. He controls everything and is the Supreme Object of worship for the jivas and demigods alike.

He is omniscient, infallible, absolutely opulent, forgiving, protector of His devotees who have taken His shelter. He is the Supreme icon of munificence, truth and ambidexterity. He is everyone's well-wisher and benefactor, majestic, symbol of religiosity. He is the eye of the scriptures, the friend of the devotees,

magnanimous, valourous, grateful, the performer of wonderful deeds, superior than anyone, powerful, subjugated by love and so on].

Braja: What are the four kinds of dasa ?

Gosvami: Adhikrta, asrita, parisada, anugata. Adhikrta dasa means he is the property of the master, he always indulges his master and maintains a meek and humble disposition. Asrita dasa, or one who has taken complete shelter, is ready to fully execute the master's wishes. Parisada dasa, or a companion, --- is a constant associate, trust worthy and loyal. Anugata dasa, or a submissive servant, is always compliant to the desires of his master.

Braja: Gurudeva, who are some of the personalities in each of these categories of dasa ?

Gosvami: Brahma, Lord Siva, Indra the demigods and demigoddesses are adhikrta dasa and dasi (man servants and maid servants). Having earned positions of authority for the administration of universal affairs, they serve the Supreme Lord in this capacity. Asrita-dasa is of three kinds: saranagata (surrendered) jnani (who pursue knowledge) and sevanistha (fixed in service). Kali-yanaga (the serpent), the kings who were imprisoned by Jarasandha and so on, are examples of saranagata dasa. Saunaka Rsi and other rsi discarded aspirations for liberation and took shelter of Supreme Lord Hari, they are jnani dasa. Attached and dedicated from the very beginning to bhajana (devotional service) Candrad-vaja, Harihara, Bahulasva, Iksaku, Pundarika etc are sevanistha dasa.

Uddhava, Daruka, Satyaki, Srutadeva, Satrujit, Nanda, Upananda, Bhadra etc are parisada dasa. Though they proffer advice and consultations, in their free time they render menial service. Bhisma, Pariksit Maharaja and Vidura are also parisada dasa. Uddhava is the best among all Krsna's beloved dasa.

Those servants of Krsna who are always engaged in serving Him are anugata dasa. They are of two categories: those who reside in Vrajadhama, and those who are in Dvarakapuri. Raktaka, Patraka, Patri, Madhukantha, Madhuvrata, Rasala, Suvilasa, Premakandha, makarandaka, Ananda, Candrasaha, Payoda Bakula, Rasada, Sarada and so on, are dasa in Vraja. Sucandra, Mandala, Stambha, Sutamba etc are residents, dasa of Dvaraka. In Vraja Raktaka is the leader of the anugata dasa.

There are three types of parisada dasa: dhurya (front-runner), dhira (steady) and vira (valourous). Asrita dasa is also of three types: nitya-siddha (eternally liberated) siddha (per-fected) and sadhaka (practitioner).

Braja: What are the uddipana (stimulants) in dasya-rasa ?

Gosvami: The sweet sound of the flute, the sound of the horn (srngi), to laugh together, to hear Krsna's wonderful qualities, the lotus flower, Krsna's foot marks, fresh rain-clouds, Krsna's body fragrance and so on, are dasya-rasa uddipana.

Braja: What are the anubhava in this rasa ?

Gosvami: To apply himself fully to his designated duties, to carry out Krsna's orders, to serve the Lord abandoning envy, anger etc, foster warm camaraderie with Krsna's servitors, steady and dedicated to serving Krsna and so on, are the extraordinary anubhava of this rasa. Physical transformations such as dancing, feelings of affection for Krsna's servants and indifference to others etc are the ordinary anubhava.

Braja: What are the sattvika vikara (transformations) in the different kinds of prita-rasa ?

Gosvami: All the sattvika bhava beginning with stambha are present in this rasa.

Braja: What are the vyabhicari bhava in it ?

Gosvami: Harsa (smiling), garva (pride), dhrti (patience), nirve-da (remorse), visada (dejection), dainya (humility), cinta (worrying), smrti (remembering), sankha (anxiety), mati (under-standing), autsukya (eagerness), capalya (restlessness), vitarka (arguing), avega (trepidation), hri or brida (bashfulness), jadya (inertia), moha (illusion), unmada (madness), avahittha (hiding emotions), bodha (perceptiveness), svapna or supti (dreaminess) klama or glani (langour) vyadhi (sickness) and mrtyu (deathli-ness) are the vyabhicari bhava in this rasa.

Mada (inertbriation), srama (fatigue), trasa (fear), apasmrti (absent-mindedness), alasya (laziness), augrya (volatileness), kroda (anger), asuya (jealousy) and nidra (sleepiness) are very uncommonly found. In meeting with Krsna, harsa, garva and dhrti are expressed, while glani, vyadhi and mrityu result due to seperation from Krsna. The other eighteen bhava (nirveda,visada etc) are exhibited both in union and in seperation.

Braja: What are the sthayi-bhava in prita-rasa ?

Gosvami: The feelings of awe and respect for the master produces simultaneously tremors in the heart and deep affection for Him. When they unite with love (priti), it makes priti the sthayi bhava in this rasa. In santa-rasa rati alone is the sthayi bhava, whereas in priti-rasa, mamata (deep affectionate attachment) strengthens rati to form priti, which is then the sthayi bhava. Priti which is mixed with sambhrama (awe and respect), or sambh-rama-priti, gradually refines into prema, sneha and raga, respec-tively.

As soon as sambhrama-priti sheds the moods of awe and reverence, the crystallised result is prema, or love of Godhead. When prema becomes more concentrated to cause the heart to melt, it is known as sneha. In sneha the devotee cannot bear to be seperated from Krsna even for a moment. When the devotee reaches that stage in sneha where sorrow and grief feels like happiness, the state of raga is achieved. In raga, seperation from Krsna evokes in the devotee the wish to leave his body.

The adhikrta dasa and asrita dasa can reach only upto the stage of prema. The

parisada dasa is able to achieve sneha. The vraja-nuga-dasa, or Krsna's servitors in Vraja like Pariksit, Daruka and Uddhava are capable of attaining raga. In tandem with blos-soming of raga, the first flush of sakhya rasa is also felt. The learned scholars on this subject state that in this rasa, union with Krsna is called yoga and seperation is ayoga. Ayoga is of two types: utkanthita (extremely eager) and viyoga (seperation). Yoga is of three kinds: siddhi (perfected), tusthi (satisfying) and sthiti (stable). In the state of extreme eagerness (utkanthi-ta) caused by seperation (ayoga) on seeing Krsna, siddhi yoga takes place. After a period of seperation, meeting with Krsna is called tusthi. Living together with Krsna is known as sthiti yoga.

Braja: Gurudeva, we have understood sambhrama-priti, kindly ex-plain gaurava-priti.

Gosvami: Those dasa, or servitors, who feel pride in being main-tained by Krsna (lalya-abhimana) are said to have gaurava-priti. However, priti is only then gaurava when it is nurtured by vibha-va etc. The Supreme Lord Hari and His lalya-dasa (maintained servitors) are the alambana in gaurava priti. Mahaguru, Maha-kirti, Mahabuddhi, Mahabala, Raksaka and as their maintainer (lalaka) Krsna, are the visaya-rupa alambana.

There are two varieties of lalya-dasa: kanistha (junior) and putra (son). Sarana, Gada, Subhadra etc. pride themselves in being kanistha; while Pradyumna, Carudesna, Samba etc. take pride in being Krsna's putra-dasa. Krsna expressing protective affection (vatsalya), smiling and so on, act as uddipana. The anubhava in gaurava priti are :sitting at a lower level from Krsna, follow-ing in their guru's footsteps, discarding whimsical ways and so on. Sancari-bhava and vyabhicari-bhava are as before.

Braja: What is the purport of the word gaurava ?

Gosvami: A parental relationship where Krsna is considered the father or guru, based on physical affinity with Krsna, is called gaurava. The intense and affectionate absorption in one's main-tainer (Krsna) is gaurava-priti. This is the sthaya-bhava of this rasa.

Braja: Gurudeva, we have understood priti or dasya rasa. Kindly tell us about preya bhakta or sakhya rasa.

Gosvami: Lord Krsna, His confidantes and friends are the alambana in this rasa (sakhya). The two-handed flute player Vrajendra- nandana Krsna, is the visaya. Krsna's friends are the asraya.

Braja: What are the different types of confidantes and their symptoms ?

Gosvami: In form (rupa) qualities (guna) and dress (vesa) the friends and confidantes are similar to the Krsna's dasa. But unlike the dasa's sambhrama-jnana towards Krsna (awe and rever-ence) the sakha (friends) exchange trust and

confidentiality (visrambha) with Krsna. They are of two types: pura-sambandha and vraja-sambandha. Arjuna, Bhima, Draupadi, Sridama Vipra etc are pura-sambandha sakha ---- of them Arjuna is the closest to Krsna.

Krsna's sakha in Vraja (vraja-sambandha) always desire to be in His company, greedy to see Him, because Krsna is their life and soul. Thus they are the principal sakha. The sakha of Vraja are of four kinds: suhrd, sakha, priya-sakha and priya-narma-sakha.

The suhrd posses a touch of the guardianship sentiment (vatsalya) for Krsna. They are slightly senior in age to Krsna, and carry weapons to protect Krsna from harm and attacks from enemies. Subhadra, Mandalibhadra, Bhadravardhan, Gobhata, Yaksa, Indrabha-ta, Bhadranga, Virabhadra, Mahaguna, Vijaya, Balabhadra etc. are suhrd sakha. Among them Mandalibhadra and Balabhadra are most prominent.

The sakha friends (second type of sakha) are younger in age to Krsna, they posses a tinge of dasya-bhava, or the mood of the servitors, but are fully in sakhya-rasa. Visala, Vrsabha, Ojasvi, Devaprastha, Varuthapa, Maranda, Kusumapida, Manibandha, Karand-hama are some of Krsna's dearest sakha sakha. Devaprastha is the closest among the sakha, to Krsna.

Krsna's priyasakha are equal in age to Him and posses the pure camaraderie of a confidante with Krsna. Sridama, Sudama, Dama, Vasudama, Kinkini, Stokakrsna, Angsu, Bhadrasena, Vitasi, Pundarika, Vitanka and so on, are the eminent priyasakha. The fourth kind of friend --- priya narma sakha, are superior to the other three (suhrd, sakha and priyasakha). They are very intimate and confidential friends of Krsna and are ambidextrous. Subala, Arjuna, Gandharva, Ujjvala etc. are Krsna's priyanarma sakha. Ujjvala is always joking and jovial. Some of the friends are eternal associates and extremely beloved of Krsna (nityapriya), some are demigods (sura) and some are sadhakas. The sakha are engaged in many activities, serving Krsna in a variety of ways like a friend and pleasing Him.

Braja: What are the different uddipana of this rasa ?

Gosvami: Krsna's age, His boyish charm, horn, flute, conch, amuse-ments, jocularly, prowess, the effort of performing and helping in pastimes are uddipana in sakhya-rasa. Further uddipana are Krsna's age: kumara (childhood) and pauganda (boyhood) when He goes to graze the cows (gosthe) and kaisore (youth) when He is in Gokula and Mathura.

Braja: What are the anubhava of the sakha in general ?

Gosvami: Arm-wrestling, ball games, dice-playing, playing piggy-back, playing with sticks, Krsna makes a wish and His friends compete to do it first, sitting together on the same seat or swinging on the swing together, joking and chatting together, water sports, playing with monkeys, making music and dancing etc are the anubhava of the general sakha.

The speciality of suhrd sakha are to offer good advice and be always forward in every activity. The sakhas specialise in pre-paring chewing betel, decorating Krsna with tilaka, sandalpulp and so on. The priya-sakhas are known for their bravery --- giving them victory in battles,wresteling, receiving medal from Krsna etc. To assist Krsna in His madhura-rasa pastimes are the prerogatives of priya-narma-sakha. Like Krsna's dasa, they also decorate Krsna with wild flowers, fan Him and so on.

Braja: Gurudeva,what is the extent of sattvika-bhava and sancari-bhava in this rasa.

Gosvami: They are slightly more pronounced here than in dasya rasa.

Braja: What are the sthayi-bhava in this rasa ?

Gosvami: Srila Rupa Gosvami writes in Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu:

" vimukta sambhrama ya syadvisrambhatma ratirdvayoh
prayah samanayoratra sa sakhyam sthayisabdabhak" (Brs:Pa.La.3/45).

(The affectionate exchanges between two equals which are minus the elements of reverence and deference (sambhrama) but are full of love, trust and confidence (visrambha) is called sakhya-rasa, or fraternal humour, --- and this also is the sthayi-bhava in this rasa).

Braja: What is the meaning of visrambha, or trust ?

Gosvami: Srila Rupa Gosvami describes it with these words in the Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu:

" visrambho gadha-visvasa-viseso yantranajjhitah" (Bra:Pa.La. 3/ 46).

(The feeling of complete equality between two persons reflecting unquestioning trust and confidentiality is known as visramabha).

Braja: Kindly tell us the gradual progression of levels in this rasa.

Gosvami: sakhya-rasa is a matrix for prema, sneha,raga --- ex-panding all the way upto pranaya.

Braja: What are the symptoms of pranaya love in this rasa ?

Gosvami: Although it is capable of accomodating feelings of reverence and deference (sambhrama), pranaya is completely devoid of sambhrama. Sakhya-rasa is magnificent. In prita, dasya-rasa in vatsalya-rasa, Krsna and His devotees exhibit differences in their creed of bhava. Sakhya-rasa or preya-rasa is certainly the more favoured among these rasas. The reason is that only in sak-hya-rasa Krsna and His devotees exchange the same creed of sweet bhava between them.

Chapter 30

Analysis Of Rasa Continues

Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha relished Khicuri prasadam and went to pay respects to the samadhi , or the sacred tomb of Srila Haridasa Thakura . Thereafter they went for an auspicious darsana of Lord Gopinatha in Tota, and finally arrived in the Radhakanta temple . They offered prostrated obeisances at Srila Guru Gosvami's feet and sat down . While Srila Gosvami went to take prasadam they discussed various Krsna-conscious topics with Sri Dhyana Candra Gosvami . When Srila Gosvami returned and sat down, they submissively enquired from him the details of vatsalya rasa , or parental humour .

Srila Gosvami said : In vatsalya - rasa, Lord Krsna is visaya alambana (principal objective) and His superiors and elder Vrajabasis are asraya alambana (principal support) . Krsna is the paragon of beauty , dark complexioned , reservoir of all auspiciousness , tender and gentle , sweet in speech, guileless , bashful , humble , charitable and respectful to elders . Krsna's superiors are : Yasoda Devi , Nanda Maharaja , Rohini Devi , senior gopis , Mother Devaki , Kunti Devi , Sri Vasudeva , San-dipani Muni and so on . Mother Yasoda and Nanda Maharaja are principal among the seniors. Uddipana in vatsalya rasa are : Krsna as the child , His beauty , baby's clothing , childishness , restlessness , baby talks , chuckling laughter , pranks etc.

Braja :- What are the different anubhava of this rasa ?

Gosvami :- Smelling the top of Krsna's head , gently squeezing and stroking His body , blessing Him , commanding Him , pampering Him , protecting and maintaining Him , offering Him good advice, are some of the anubhava . The general activities in this rasa are kissing , embracing , calling Krsna by His names and chastis-ing Him at appropriate moments .

Braja :- What are the sattvika vikara , or ecstatic transform ations in this rasa ?

Gosvami :- The eight regular transformations like paralysis , shivering , weeping etc. and the outflow of breast-milk (of the ladies) are the nine sattvika vikara .

Braja :- What are the vyabhicari - bhava of vatsalya - rasa ?

Gosvami :- All the vyabhicari - bhava symptoms of prita or dasya rasa plus murccha , or epileptic convulsions are manifest in vatsalya rasa .

Braja :- What are the sthayi bhava symptoms in this rasa ?

Gosvami :- When kindness , love and compassion shown by the disburser of mercytowards the receipient of mercy is devoid of awe of and reverence (sambhrama), it is the sthayi - bhava of this rasa . The vatsalya love of Yasoda and

others are by nature mature and matronly . Here sthayi bhava extends to prema , sneha and raga .

Lords Balarama's love for Krsna is a mixture of dasya rasa and vatsalya rasa . Yudhisthira's love is infused with vatsalya , dasya and sakhya rasa . Ugrasena possesses dasya , vatsalya and sakhya rasa . Nukula , Sahadeva , Narada and others exhibit a combination of sakhya and dasya rasa . Lord Siva , Garuda , Uddhava etc. exhibit an amalgam of dasya and sakhya bhava .

Braja :- Gurudeva , we have understood the magnificence of vatsalya rasa . Kindly purify and enliven us with details of the paramount of all rasa, - the madhura - rasa , or the sweet conjugal humour .

Gosvami :- Madhura bhakti rasa is the apex of all rasa . When a materialistic person turns to God and religion he embraces renun-ciation . And as long as he cannot acquire the right to engage in transcendental humours (cid-rasa) he is shut out from experienc-ing madhura - rasa, being a non-eligible candidate for madhura - rasa . madhura - rasa is esoteric and rare . Scarcely is some-one eligible found, hence madhura-rasa must be kept very confi-dential . Although the salient features of the rasa will be described to you , I will be brief .

Braja :- Gurudeva , I am a follower of Sri Subala . Kindly gauge as to how much from your dissertation on madhura - rasa am I fit to hear .

Gosvami :- The priya - narma - sakha are permitted to partici-pate in madhura or sringara rasa in extremely restricted meas-ures. Keeping that in mind I will reveal what is commensurate to your eligibility - no more .

Braja :- What is the alambana in this rasa ?

Gosvami :- Sri Krsna is the visaya alambana of this rasa . He is the epitomy of unparalleled beauty , charm and amorous escapa-dees (nagara) . The gopis of Vraja are the asraya alambana in madhura or sringara rasa . Among all the gopis Srimati Radha is the crest jewel . The sound of flute and so on one the uddipana is this rasa . Sidelong glances , enigmatic smiles etc. are the anubhava in madhura - rasa . All the sattvika bhava shine re-splendently in this rasa . Besides alasya (laziness) and augrya (rudeness and volatility), the other vyabhicari bhava are displayed here .

Braja :- What is the sthayi - bhava ?

Gosvami :- When madhura rati , or conjugal love is nurtured by the heart's natural vibhava, it blossoms into madhura rasa , or conjugal humour . This divine love between Sri Radha and Sri Krsna is never accosted or impaired by either svajatiya (same creed of love) or vijatiya (alien creed) bhava .

Braja :- How many types of madhura - rasa are there ?

Gosvami :- Vipralambha , or pining-love in seperation and samb-hoga , or the

exulting love in union, are the two types of madhu-ra - rasa .

Braja :- What is vipralambha ?

Gosvami :- Vipralambha rati has many sub - divisions such as purva raga , mana , pravasa , etc.

Braja :- What is purva - raga ?

Gosvami :- Feelings and emotions lovers experience before meet-ing each other, are called purvaraga .

Braja :- What are mana and pravasa ?

Gosvami :- Mana is well known and pravasa means to be bereft of the lovers presence .

Braja :- What is sambhoga ?

Gosvami :- The inexplicable exultation ensuing from the meeting of the lover with the beloved is called sambhoga . I will now re-frain from divulging more about madhura - rasa . Those elevated souls who are eligible to engage in the esoteric science of madhura bhakti rasa, may refer to the book, 'Sri Ujjvala - nilam-ani' .

Braja :- Kindly explain briefly the different varieties of subordinate devotional humours , or gauna - bhakti - rasa .

Gosvami :- hasya (amusement) , adbhuta (wonder) , vira (chivalry) , karuna (pity) , raudra (anger) , bhayanaka (terrifying) and vibhatsa (horrific) are the seven subordinate rasa . When they gain prominence and intensity to the extent of usurping the positions of the mukhya rasa , or principal humours , they assert themselves as individual rasa or humour . On the stage where they are able to express themselves independently they become sthayi - bhava, and nurtured by their inherent vibha-va they are converted to full fledged rasa , or humours .

In actual fact, there are only five rasa such as santa , dasya etc. Generally, these seven subordinate humours form a part of vyabhicari bhava .

Braja :- in the study rhetorics I have already come across the seven subordinate rasa . What I desire to know very much is the relationship between the principal devotional humours and these subordinate humours .

Gosvami :- I will enumerate the different compatible and incom-patible rasa . Santa rasa is amicable to dasya , vibhatsa , dharma-vira and adbhuta rasa . On the other hand adbhuta rasa is friendly to dasya , sakhya , vatsalya and madhura rasa . The enemies of santa - rasa are madhura , yuddhavira , raudra and bhayanaka . Dasya rasa is congenial with vibhatsa , santa , dharma - vira , dana - vira rasa; it's opponents are madhura , yuddha - vira and raudra rasa .

Sakhya rasa is friendly to madhura , hasya and yuddha - vira - rasa ; it is unfriendly to vatsalya , vibhatsa , raudra and bhayanaka rasa . Vatsalya rasa concurs with hasya , karuna and bhayanaka rasa ; but disagrees with madhura , yuddha - vira , dasya and raudra rasa . Madhura rasa is compatible with hasya and sakhya - rasa and is incompatible with vatsalya , vibhatsa , santa , raudra and bhayanaka rasa . Hasya rasa is compatible with vibhatsa , madhura and vatsalya rasa and incompatible with karuna and bhayanaka rasa . Adbhuta rasa compliments vira , santa , dasya , sakhya , vatsalya and madhura rasa , but resists raudra and vibhatsa rasa . Vira rasa is friendly to adbhuta , hasya, sakhya and dasya rasa but inimical to bhayanaka rasa . Some are of the opinion that santa rasa is also inimical to vira rasa . Karuna rasa coordinates well with raudra and vatsalya rasa , but not with vira , hasya , sambhoga- madhura and adbhuta rasa . Raudra rasa is in harmony with karuna and vira rasa but not with hasya , madhura and bhayanaka rasa . Bhayanaka rasa mixes well with vibhatsa and karuna rasa but opposes vira , madhura , hasya and raudra rasa . Vibhatsa rasa is in congruity with santa , hasya and dasya rasa but incongruous with madhura and sakhya rasa . All the other rasa are neutral with each other .

Braja :- Guruji, what are the outcomes of these minglings of different rasa ?

Gosvami :- When compatible rasa mingles together it becomes greatly relishable . The mingling is at its best when anga (limbs) links up with angi (body) . The criteria is not whether the rasa are principal or subordinate, but that the angi rasa seek out compatible rasa as their anga .

Braja :- Kindly define the differences between angi and anga ?

Gosvami :- Here again the consideration is not of principal or subordinate rasa , ---- that rasa which attains prominence over others is the angi , or body . While those rasa which nourish angi rasa are called anga rasa and they take on the role of sancari - bhava . The Visnu-dharmottara states :
"rasanam samavetanam yasya rupam bhavedvahu
sa mantavyo rasah sthayi sesah sancarino matah"

(When several rasa become simultaneously active anyone which out does the others, is considered a sthayi-rasa, while the others take the appendage sancari-rasa).

Braja : Gurudeva, how does gauna rasa obtain the position of an angi-rasa ?

" pradyon vibhavanotkarsat pusthim mukhyena lambhitah
kuncata nijanathena gaunopyangitvamasnute
mukhyastvangatvam - asadya pusnannindram - upendravat
gaunam - eva - anginam krtva nigudha - nija - vaibhavah
anadivasanodbhasa - vasite bhakta - cetasi
bhatyeva natu linah syadesa sancari - gauna vat
angi mukhyah svamatrangair - bhavaistairabhivardhayam
svajatiyair - vijatiyaih svatantrah san virajate
yasya mukhyasya yo bhakto bhavennitya - nija - asrayah

angi sa eva tatra syanmukhyo'pyanyo'ngatam vrajet ". (Brs. U.La. 8/35 - 35)

(Sometimes when mukhya , or principal rasa , the protagonist of rasa , takes on a withdrawn mood (sankoca) and nourishes the gauna , or subordinate rasa, simultaneously vibhava becomes strongly manifest , then gauna rasa wears the crown of an angi-rasa . Meanwhile, mukhya rasa slips into the role of an anga ,and cloaks its own magnificence . Just as Vamana (Upendra) support-ed Indra similarly mukhya rasa acting as an anga nurtures gauna rasa, now turned angi .

Mukhya rasa shines resplendently in the bhakti - saturated heart of the devotee , which is scented with the sublime fragrance of endless , transcendental desires to serve the Lord . Unlike the gauna sancari rasa, which when becomes wanton (vyabhacari) , merges into mukhya - rasa; but mukhya - rasa remains firm and conspicuous . Mukhya-angi-rasa allows itself to be garnished by svajatiya (same creed) and vijatiya (alien creed)-anga con-glomerate of bhava, and then manifests itself independently.

One who is attracted to a particular mukhya rasa becomes eternal-ly imbued and ensconced in it , and it manifests to him as an angi rasa . All other rasa , even the mukhya ones, are relegated the anga position in relation to one's mukhya angi rasa .)

Another pertinent point is when anga rasa confluent with angi-rasa and enhances the relish of rasa, then only is it anga rasa , otherwise its alliance with angi is meaningless .

Braja :- What happens when contrary rasa conflux ?

Gosvami :- A tasteless , undelectable rasa is created , similar to a concoction of deliciously sweet nectar with salty , acidic fluids . Such mixtures are called extreme rasabhasa or conflict-ing tastes .

Braja :- Is this mixture of contrary rasa always un relishable under all circumstances ?

Gosvami :- Srila Rupa Gosvami answers this in his 'Bhakti - rasamrta - sindhu' :
" dvayorekatarasyeha badhyatvenopavarnaane
smaryyamanatayapyuktau samyena vacane'pi ca
rasantarena vyavadhau tatasthena priyena va
visayasrayabhede ca gaunena dvisata saha
ityadisau na vairasyam vairino janayedutyuh ". (Brs. U.La. 8/43)

(The mixing of two contrary rasa in the following situations do not produce a conflict in taste , or virasata : when logically describing the pre - eminence of one contrary rasa of the two which have mingled, and thereby revealing the other's inferiority ; when described as the object of smarana , or remembrance ; when dispassionately ascertaining the positions of each; , when tatastha or priya rasa creates a distance from the main rasa and when construeing differences between

the contrary (virodhi) gauna rasa and the visaya or asraya .)

Another interesting feature is, that in Maharaja Yuddhisthira, dasya and vatsalya manifest at different times . Two contrary rasa never manifest together at the sametime . Yet on the stage of adhirudha mahabhava , or the highest state of spiritual love, the confluence of contrary bhava or rasa does not create conflict .

Srila Rupa Gosvami further explains :

" kapyacintyamahasakatau mahapurusa sekhare
rasavalisamavesah svadayaivopajayate " . (Brs.U.La. 8/57)

(In some rare cases crest - jewel devotees endowed with incon-ceivable , divine potency , experience the simultaneous conflux of contrary rasa just to display the extra - ordinary raptures of relishing rasa .)

Braja :- I have heard from the lips of learned vaisnavas that Caitanya Mahaprabhu strongly denounced rasabhasa , to the extent He refused to hear any composition which was corrupted by rasa- bhasa . I have so far gathered the numerous discrepencies of rasabhasa may I hear the different varieties of rasabhasa ?

Gosvami :- The absence of anga engenders every encounter a potential rasabhasa . Rasabhasa is in three gradations : uparasa , anurasa and aparasa .

Braja :- Gurudeva , kindly explain these gradations .

Gosvami :- Sthayi - bhava , vibhava , anubhava etc.along with the twelve rasa (santa , dasya etc.) which acquire contrariness (virupata) can become uparasa . It is caused by the contrasts in sthayi bhava , vibhava and anubhava . When hasya and other rasa are unrelated to Krsna , they are called anurasa . Vira and other rasa when manifest in a person with tatastha bhava is also anurasa .

Braja :- But gurudeva , how can an emotion be called rasa when it is divorced from Krsna , it is at best a mundane rasa . Why does anurasa have such symptoms ?

Gosvami :- Rasa which do not have direct and personal connection with Krsna are anurasa . For example the gopis laughter (hasya) seeing Kakkhati's (Srimati Radharani's pet monkey) prancing and pranks . Srila Narada Muni expresses wonder (adbhut) when he hears the parrots in Bhandiravana discussing vedanta philosophy . Certainly , there is a faint and distant connection with Krsna , but not a direct one - such are anurasa .

Braja :- What is aparasa ?

Gosvami :- In a situation where Krsna is the object (visaya) of laughter etc. (hasya etc. rasa) and His enemies are the shelter (asraya) or enjoyers of this rasa , then such hasya - rasa etc. are called aparasa . Jarasandha's repeated derisive laughter (hasya - rasa) seeing Krsna fleeing is aparasa . Srila Rupa Gosvami writes in his book :

" bhavah sarve tadabhasa rasabhasca kecana

amiprokta rasabhijnaih sarve'pi rasanadrasa ". (Brs. U.La. 9/21)

(Some persons refer to the entire spectrum of bhava as tadabhasa and others as rasabhasa . But the expert scholars of rasa designate any transcendental bhava evoking divine bliss as rasa .)

So overpowering was the effect of rasa analysis on Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara that they fell to the ground , eyes brimming with unrestrained tears ; they could simply repeat in gratitude :

" om ajnana timira andhasya jnananjana salakaya
cakur unmilitam yena tasmai sri gurave namah " .

(I humbly worship my spiritual master who , by applying the salve of transcendental knowledge on my eyes has extirpated the five greivous nesciences (ajnana) :- ignorance about jiva's real spiritual identity (svarupa) ; false identification of the body as the self ; proprietorship over matter as its master and enjoyer ; attachment to things not related to Krsna ; fear and antagonism . From these five stem the darkness of ignorance (timirandhasya) in the form of the four vedic goals : dharma (religiosity) , artha (material wealth) , karma (sense enjoyment) and moksa (liberation) . The guru then opens jiva's spiritual vision and makes them fixed in devotional service to the Supreme Personality of Godhead .)

Srila Guru Gosvami bent down and raised the supine forms of Brajanatha and Bijoya Kumara and firmly embraced them . He showered unreserved blessings on them pronouncing: "May the beacon of rasa philosophy light up your heart " .

Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha daily visited the Radhakanta temple and engrossed themselves in spiritual discussions with Sri Dhyana-candra Gosvami . Drinking the foot - bath water (caranamrta) and eating Srila Guru Gosvami's food remnants (adharamrta or prasadam) became an eagerly - awaited ritual for them . On different days they visited separate holy spots : Srila Haridasa Thakura's bhajana - kutir , his samadhi mandira , the siddha - bakula tree , Sri Gopinath mandira , and so on . Here they observed how in various ways the many vaisnavas chanted, and enriched their own quality of chanting .

Another of their favourite occupation was to visit places of Lord Sri Caitanya's pastimes described in ` Stava - vali ' and ` Stava - mala ' and experience the bhava . Whenever they saw vaisnavas performing kirtana they joined in . Gradually Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha were advancing in chanting and in devotional service . Bijoya Kumara thought to himself that Srila Guru Gosvami had given a very brief account of madhura rasa and so felt the urge to ask him further on the topic . He knew that Brajanatha was attracted to sakhya rasa but he was definitely inclined toward madhura rasa . With this in mind he approached Sri Dhyancandra Gosvami, who kindly gifted him the book ` Ujjvala - milamari ' . He studied it, and whenever doubts arose went to Srila Gopal Guru Gosvami and clarified them .

One evening Bijoya Kumara and Brajantha were sitting on the beach and watching the endless waves . They discussed that life was like those waves , a continuum of unknown future . And who could predict the future . It was best to immediately

learn the process of raga - bhajana , or pure , spontaneous devotional service, from Srila Gopala Guru . Brajanatha commented that he had seen the process Sri Dhyanaandra Gosvami followed in his bhajana and he was impressed with it and was willing to emulate it . And if he could receive more esoteric instructions on the process then it would bring good and quick results . Having thus decided , Brajanatha approached Sri Dhyanaandra Gosvami for his hand - written notes on the process of his bhajana . But Dhyanaandra expressed his inability to do so without Srila Gopala Guru's permission .

Brajanatha and Bijoya then approached Srila Guru Gosvami regard-ing this . He agreed and said that they should come to him with the notes . They begged Sri Dhyanaandra for the notes and re-ceived it . They decided to read it meticulously, and at every stage consult Srila Guru Gosvami on its esoteric aspects .

Sri Dhyanaandra Gosvami was a pandita, well - versed in all the scriptures . His expertise , however , was in the profound meth-odology of the vaisnava science of pure devotional service , or bhajana . He was the foremost of Srila Gopal Guru's disciples . He tutored Bijoya Kumara and Brajantha in all the esoteric as-pects of the process of pure spontaneous devotional service . But whenever doubts arose they humbly approached Srila Gopal Guru and clarified them . They understood the divine attributes of Lord Sri Caitanya and grasped the transcendental pastimes of Lord Krsna . Thus they entered the path of asta - kaliya bhajana , or the process of spiritual meditation on the daily on-going eternal pastimes of the Supreme Lord which are divide into eight three hourly pastimes .

Chapter 31 Dissertation On The Details Of Madhura - Rasa

The dark thunder clouds were replaced by white fleecy clouds of autumn. One night the cooling moonbeams spread a silvery sheen over mother nature. Bijoya Kumara was lost in reading `Ujjvala nilamani'. Nowadays, due to his training in the madhura rasa, he was only attracted to Krsna's pastimes in Vraja --- especially His tender and loving exchanges with the gopis of Vrndavana. He glanced out of the window and beheld Puri's nocturnal grandeur. It was ten, and he felt a strong urge to visit Sundaracala. He had heard that Lord Caitanya always felt He was in Vrajadhama each time He went to Sundaracala.

Bijoya Kumara left for Sundaracala alone. He walked past Balagan-di and along Sraddhabali. The purple woods on either side began to remind him of Vrndavana. Bijoya Kumara suddenly felt weight-less, as if floating in sublime exhilaration. He spoke to him-self: --- "O how fortunate I am to actually behold Vraja dhama ! A rare sight even to Lord Brahma, the creator. Ah ! there lies Kunjavana ! Within its leafy bowers of heady-scented malati blossoms and madhuri creepers, our beloved Lord of the heart, Krsna, is wittily conversing with the gopis".

Feeling not a trace of fear or reverential awe, Bijoya Kumara eagerly hastened

towards this Kunjavana. A few steps later Bijoya Kumara faltered, intense spiritual emotions welled up and he fell swooning to the ground. The gentle caressing breeze soon resuscitated him and he woke up. He furtively glanced around him not seeing the Kunjavana, his Lord and the gopis he felt desolate and afflicted. Slowly, Bijoya Kumara returned home. Without telling anyone anything he silently lay down to sleep.

The sight of the Lord's Vraja-kunja-lila in the woods had set his heart aglow with divine ecstasy. Bijoya Kumara decided to relate this mystical incident to Srila Gopala Guru. But in the next moment he hesitated, remembering the instruction that transcendental pastimes were seen due to immense good fortune hence must not be disclosed to anyone. He gradually drifted into a peaceful slumber. Next morning he awoke feeling remiss. After noon-prasadam he went to the Radhakanta mandira and prostrated himself before Srila Gopala Guru. Srila Gosvami was very pleased to see him; he embraced him, sat him down and enquired about his devotional progress. Bijoya Kumara immediately felt the calming effect of his guru's presence. He was burdened with some questions on madhura rasa so he enquired.

Bijoya:--- Gurudeva, I am ever grateful to you for your unlimited patience and mercy. I beg permission to enquire about certain esoteric aspects of 'Ujjvala-nilamani' which are beyond my grasp.

Madhura rasa has been extolled as par excellent among the principal rasa, and which is capable of evoking the most extraordinary spiritual emotions and humours. But that is quite understandable, since all the supra-mundane attributes of santa, dasya, sakhya and vatsalya are eternally reposed in madhura rasa. Not only that, --- even some deficiencies of sublime splendour present in the other rasa, shine with full glory in madhura rasa. Thus how can anyone question the paramount position of madhura rasa ?

For those on the path of austerity and renunciation (nivrttimarg), pursuit of madhura rasa is inappropriate, because their hearts are desert-like. As for the hedonists, a non-sensual and non-materialistic religion or goal is incomprehensible. Hence their aspiration for madhura rasa of Vraja, which is categorically antipodal to mundane lust and enjoyment, is simply irreconcilable. What I cannot understand is, that such a divine and supra mundane rasa should ostensibly be exhibited as the ignominious and insufferable exchanges between a man and woman ?

Gosvami: Son, you are knowledgeable about how variety on the mundane plane is a mere reflection of the variegatedness in the transcendental realm. In fact this material world simply mirrors the spiritual world. The mystical truth is that the reflected image is perverted and inverted, meaning, what is best and highest in the original, is the worst and lowest in the reflected image. Conversely, the most inferior in the original is the most superior in the reflection. A good example of this is when you stand in front of the mirror all the limbs of body are on the wrong side.

The Supreme Being, Absolute Truth, through the agency of His inconceivable potency has projected Himself onto the reflection as the shadow of His own potency, and which is diffused in the form of this material existence. Therefore, mundane nature is the opposite of the absolute nature. Rasa of the mundane is a diametrically inverted version of the rasa in transcendence.

The extra-ordinary bliss available in the spiritual sky because of its magnificent variagatedness is the absolute, supreme rasa. When this supreme rasa is reflected on the mundane plane, the materially conditioned soul has to imagine and interpolate a phenomenal designation for it. They confuse the formless impersonal aspect with the Supreme Absolute Person thus, misconstruing that all variagatedness is essentially temporary and corporeal. This impedes their understanding of the existence and nature of the supreme Absolute Being. This is especially true with rhetoricians and empiricists.

The Supreme Absolute Being is the embodiment of rasa and rupa, or beauty. Therefore, He is the repository of wonderful variagatedness. This variagatedness is also reflected on to the mundane plane as perverted rasa, and hence, on first glance, this rasa appears to be above the material senses. The spiritual rasa is composed in a totally different way than this perverted mundane rasa.

In the spiritual realm, santa rasa --- a spiritual humour marked by a dispassionate attitude and a neutrality of feelings, is in the lowest rung of rasa gradation. Above it is dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhura respectively. Madhura rasa, which is at the top in the spiritual realm is, in this gross plane, at the bottom. Similarly vatsalya is above it, then sakhya, dasya and at the apex is santa rasa in the material world. Those who draw their conclusions based on the nature of this material plane, misconstrue the position of, and activities in, madhura rasa: thinking of it as degraded and base.

In the spiritual world madhura rasa is resplendent with divine purity and pristine, extra-ordinary magnificence and sweetness --- forever unblemished. In the transcendental plane, Krsna's activities and exchanges with His consorts and associates (energies), --- meaning the purusa (Supreme Person, the Enjoyer) and prakrti (female counterpart, the enjoyed) relationship is absolutely sanctified and metaphysical because Krsna is the only purusa and the transcendentalists are all prakrti. Whereas, exchanges and activities on the material plane based on mundane relationships are blemished and shameful.

In the material world, since both the 'enjoyer' and the 'enjoyed' are jivas, the entire business is unethical and exploitive, and runs contra to the nature of truth. In reality, jiva is not lord and enjoyer over another jiva. All the jivas, according to their inherent nature are the 'enjoyed' (bhogya), and Krsna is the sole 'Enjoyer' (bhokta). Thus jivas' involvement in activities which are contrary to his eternal nature is reprehensible. There are many similarities between the 'original object' and its 'reflection', hence parallels between mundane man-woman relationship and Krsna's transcendental pastimes with the gopis, are inevitable. Yet, whereas

one (the mundane) is vile, the other (spiritual) is sublime.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, I am ever grateful to you ! Your wonderful analysis has strengthened my faith in this self-evident truth and dissolved the clouds of doubt. I have gained a firm grasp on the subject of madhura rasa of the spiritual world.

How extra-ordinary this madhura rasa ! The expression itself is nectarean and its transcendental energy is so saturated with supreme ecstasy. I am amazed, that even after knowing about madhura rasa there could be someone who would still seek bliss of santa rasa. They must be truly unfortunate. I am keen to hear deeper and profounder details about madhura rasa, kindly explain these to me.

Gosvami: Sri Krsna is the visaya in madhura rasa and His beloved gopis are the asraya in madhura rasa; both combine to become the alambana in the rasa.

Bijoya: How is that Lord Krsna, when He is the visaya of madhura rasa ?

Gosvami: Ah ! My son ! What a beautiful question ! Lord Krsna alone is that magnanimous purusa, embellished with all good qualities. He possesses a striking hue of fresh, monsoon laden clouds; He is lovely, charming and endowed with all-anspicious symptoms. He is strong, ever-youthful, an expert and sweet speaker, intelligent and a genius. He is also very peaceful and patient, witty, cunning, self-satisfied, grateful, generous. He is captivated by people's love. He is grave, the most accomplished in everything and illustrious. He is the enchanter of damsels, is always original and unique, the performer of extra ordinary deeds. His beauty is unmatched, He is the apple of everyone's eyes, an expert flute player and so on. The brilliance of His lotus feet wanes the pride of all the cupids. His benign glances enraptures everyone's heart. He is the transcendental ocean of sublime pastimes who inundates the hearts of young maidens with unlimited good fortune.

Bijoya: Krsna, the repository of all transcendental, divine qualities and splendour, is the sole hero of this arcane madhura rasa --- this I have firmly understood. Previously, even after studying many texts I unquestioningly gave primacy to logic, awed by it. I thought deeply about Krsna's personality yet could not develop unflinching faith in Him. And ever since my heart is impregnated with just a touch of taste in bhakti --- very much by your mercy, it is effervescent with spiritual feelings and I am constantly experiencing Krsna's presence. Even if I want to leave Krsna, He will not forsake my heart. How munificent He is ! I can truly realise the import of this wonderful verse composed by Srila Rupa Gosvami:

" sarvathaivaduru ho' yamabhaktair-bhagavad-rasah
tat padambuja-sarvasvairbhaktairevanurasyate
vyatitya bhavanavartma yascamatkarabharabhuh
hrdi sattvojavale vadham svadate sa rraso matah" (Brs.Da 5 La 78/79).

(Those who are convinced that Lord Krsna's lotus feet are the summum bonum of life are the purest of devotees, and they alone are capable of relishing this rasa. While those whose hearts are bereft of bhakti where mundane emotions are rampant, are generally mired in impure habits and are fond of argumentations.

They can never perceive this rasa. The person who has transcended the noumenal plane and whose consciousness and heart has become enlightened by the brilliance of pure goodness (suddha-sattva) that ushers the dawn of magnificent bhava, is experiencing rasa).

Rasa is not available in the material plane --- it is of the spiritual world. As because jiva is a spark of spiritual energy, a spiritual entity, rasa manifests in his consciousness. Rasa --- appears only in deep spiritual meditation. Those who have re-a-lised the distinction between suddha-sattva, or pure goodness, and misra-sattva, or mixed goodness, by the guru's grace, are free from doubts.

Gosvami: Very good Bijoya, you are correct in your understanding. Let me see if you know the relation between suddha-sattva and misra-sattva. The answer to this will dissipate many of your doubts and open the doors of perception to a new truth".

Bijoya prostrated himself before his spiritual master and began to speak with humility: "Gurudeva, I will try my best to answer with your blessings. Kindly correct me if I make any mistakes. Existence presupposes life, or being. The realities existence, form ability and activeness present in an entity is called potency (sattva). That existence which is eternal, endless, ever-fresh or perennial, unaffected by time, or past and future, and is in-fused with extra-ordinary wonder, is called suddha-sattva, or the potency of pure of goodness. Anything begotten from pure spiritual energy, is suddha-sattva.

Maya-sakti, or the illusory energy, which is the shadow representative of cit-sakti, or spiritual energy, is dictated by time-changes such as past and future. All the potencies (sattva) emanating from maya-sakti are limited, hence they are created (have a beginning) and possess maya's nature of passion (rajo). They are also marked for destruction hence they possess maya's nature of ignorance (tamo). Energies endowed, with such qualities are called misra-sattva, or mixed energy.

The suddha-jiva, or pure spirit soul, is also suddha-sattva, or energy of pure goodness. His form, qualities and actions are in pure goodness. When suddha-jiva becomes imprisoned by maya then his pure energy is contaminated by maya's illusory potencies of material modes --- passion and ignorance.

Gosvami: Your explanations are very subtle indeed. Now tell me how does jiva's heart become enlightened by suddha-sattva ?

Bijoya: As long as jiva is held captive in this material world, suddha-sattva's brilliance is curbed by residual opacity. Jiva's original spiritual identity, or svarupa, is manifest to the extent commensurate to suddha-sattva's degree of brilliance. Such results cannot be achieved through pursuit of knowledge. Can dirt be cleansed by another form of dirt ? material activities are in themselves contaminated (dirt) so how can they remove stains (dirt) ? Jnana, or knowledge, is like fire, when applied to a dirty or contaminated object it completely burns it and nullifies its very existence. So how can it (jnana) provide the joy that comes from being cleansed of dirt ?

By the mercy of guru , Krsna and vaisnava jiva can obtain bhakti, which alone can invoke the suddha-sattva lying dormant in his heart. Once suddha-sattva appears, it will illuminate the heart with pure light.

Gosvami: My son ! It is truly a pleasure to instruct a fit candi-date such as yourself. Do you have any further questions ?

Bijoya: Gurudeva, earlier you described the four types of nayaka, or protagonist, or the hero: dhirdatta, dhiralalita dhirasanta and dhiroddhata. Which of these is Krsna?

Gosvami: Krsna can play all these roles. Whatever slightly con-trary and distinctive moods there are between each different nayaka, they are all perfectly harmonised in Krsna because He is the embodiment of all rasa and endowed with inconceivable poten-cies; these apparent disparities are present on His behest. Beside these four unique personality traits, Krsna is embellished with another arcane feature which is known only to extra-ordi-nary, rare personalities.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, you have showered your mercy without any parti-ality, so kindly let it continue to flow even regarding this topic.

As Bijoya Kumara spoke, he was overcome with intense emotions. He fell down at Srila Gosvami's feet, bathing them with his tears. Srila Gosvami was greatly moved, he bend down and embraced him, and both their tears mingled. Srila Gosvami sat down silent, his voice was choked, he was unable to speak. Finally in a faltering tone he said: --- "In madhura rasa, Krsna as nayaka assumes two rol es: pati and upapati.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, Krsna is our eternal husband (pati) but why is he being called upapati, or paramour ?

Gosvami: This is very confidential knowledge shrouded in mystery. The transcendental affairs are already like the corruscating, rare gems of magnificent mystery, and as their crest jewel para-kiya bhava, or paramour mood of madhura rasa, shines with intense incandescence.

Bijoya: The pure devotees in madhura rasa serve and love Krsna as their husband (pati). What is the purport behind worshipping Him as upapati or paramour ?

Gosvami: When the Supreme, Absolute Being is declared as exclu-sively impersonal, then rasa has to be suppressed in His person-ality. Vedic truths such as the statements of Chandogya Upanisad 8 /13/1 (rasa vaisah) become meaningless. The impersonal aspect is insipid, lacking lustre and spiritual bliss. Whereas, as the personal feature unfolds, rasa is increasingly manifest. Rasa is the principal truth. Higher to the impersonal is the personal aspect of the Supreme Absolute Being especially in His role as the Supreme Controller, or isvara. Above this feature of santa rasa is His personality as Lord and Master in dasya rasa.

Gradually, rasa expands from dasya to sakhya to vatsalya and to madhu-ra. And within madhura rasa the parakiya bhava, or paramour mood, is superior to the svakiya, or conjugal relationship.

There are two other aspects of Krsna, as purusa: atma-ramata, or complete and satisfied in the self, and pararamata, or the enjoy-er of His separated expansions and energies which emanate from Him. In the atmaramata aspect, rasa has no one else to repose in, other than Krsna. Just as Krsna's atmaramata is eternal so also is His pararamata. The harmonious existence of two opposing elements in the Supreme Purusa's personality is His prerogative and is natural.

In Krsna's pastimes, He manifests atmaramata in one centre of activity while in another He displays the highest mood of para-kiya bhava in pararamata. When the nayaka, or hero, and nayika, or heroine, --- two completely separate individuals, are brought together by raga, or spontaneous love, it transudes a magnificent nectar called rasa, this is parakiya rasa.

Rasa springs forth from the atmaramata feature and expands to the limits of parakiya madhura rasa. Atmaramata, is at the bottom of the rasa barometer. When rasa slides down towards the bottom, it begins to parch, and when it moves upwards in the direction of parakiya-madhura-rasa, rasa gushes with exuberance. Krsna is the nayaka, or main hero, hence how can parakiya relationship be considered venal.

As the mortal jiva, tries to play nayaka, the question of judging his activities as moral or immoral is indeed relevant --- thus here the parakiya bhava is condemnable. The wise have therefore decided that the relationship between the paramour and his un-chaste lady-love is despicable. Srila Rupa Gosvami writes, that in alankara, or aesthetic literature (novel), upapati, or the paramour concept, has been severely castigated --- being directed at the mundane nayaka. However the finger of accusation can never point to Krsna because He is the repository of transcendental rasa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

Bijoya: Kindly explain the different features of pati and upa-pati.

Gosvami: A person who accepts a maiden's hand in marriage is her pati, or husband. Anyone, who out of intense love for a married or betrothed lady, trespasses all religious principles to win her love, is a upapati. A married woman who ignores the religious edicts of heaven (svargaloka) and earth and disregards the nuptial vows surrendering herself to another man other than the husband, is called a parakiya. Parakiya women are of two categories: kanya and parodha.

Bijoya: What are the characteristics of svakiya ladies ?

Gosvami: Svakiya women are married according to religious laws, are obedient to their husbands and are fully dedicated to the religious institution of marriage.

Bijoya: Who are Krsna's svakiya lady-loves and parakiya lady-loves ?

Gosvami: His lady-loves in Dvaraka are married to Him are sva-kiya, and His lady-loves in Vraja are mostly parakiya.

Bijoya: What are the nuances and placements of these two categories of Krsna's lady-loves in His aprakata-lila, or unmanifest pastimes ?

Gosvami: This is an extremely esoteric subject. You already know that Krsna's divine qualities (vibhuti) are in four parts --- three parts are displayed in the spiritual sky and the remaining one, in the material world. This single part manifests the entire material cosmos consisting of the fourteen planetary systems. Between the material cosmos on one side and the spiritual sky on the other side flows the mass of water known as Viroja. The spiritual sky is surrounded on all sides by the brilliant peripheral zone known as Brahman-dhama. Past it, are situated the spiritual planets of Vaikuntha. Vaikuntha is dominated by the mood of opulence (aisvarya). Here Lord Narayana reigns as the Supreme overlord, served by countless servants and divine attributes.

In Vaikuntha the Supreme Lord exhibits svakiya rasa. Sridevi, Bhudevi, Niladevi and so on, are His potencies and wives who serve Him as their husband in svakiya rasa. Above Vaikuntha lies Gola-ka. In Goloka the maidens of Vraja serve their beloved Krsna with their specific rasa.

Bijoya: If Goloka is stated to be Krsna's most elevated place of residence, or dhama, then why is Vraja described as such a glorious and splendid place ?

Gosvami: Vraja, Gokula, Vrndavana etc are within the precinct of Mathura. Mathura and Goloka are on the same spiritual level. This one, spiritual principle, when is manifest as the highest abode in the spiritual sky, it is called Goloka, and when it is manifest in the material plane it is Mathura-madala --- both are equally illustrious.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, it is difficult for me to understand how this can be possible.

Gosvami: Krsna's inconceivable potency makes it possible. The mysterious workings of His inconceivable potency (acintya-sakti) is beyond the realm of logic, intellect and the noumenal. The abode described as Goloka, when it descends to this material world as the place of the Supreme Lord's manifest pastimes (prakata-lila), it is called Mathura-dhama --- and in His unmanifest pastimes (aprakata-lila) the same is known as Golokadhama.

Krsna's transcendental pastimes are eternal. The devotee who is elevated enough to perceive the state of pure goodness (visuddha-sattva) can see Goloka. In fact he can have this experience even residing at Gokula [in the material world]. Those whose consciousness is corrupted by mundane nature cannot perceive Goloka. Although Gokula is nondifferent from Goloka, such mundane persons see even Gokula as an ordinary place belonging to this material world.

Bijoya: How does one judge who is eligible to see Goloka ?

Gosvami: Srila Sukadeva Gosvami states in the Srimad Bhagavatam:

" iti samcintya bhagavan mahakaruniko vibhuh
darsayamas svam lokam gopanam tamasah param
satyam jnanamanantam yad-brahma-jyotih sanatanam
yaddhi pasyanti munayo gunapaye samahitah" (SB 10/28/14-15)

(The gopas, or Krsna's boy-friends, are eternally liberated associates (nitya-siddha) who have descended to the material plane to assist Krsna in His pastimes. There are sadhana-siddha gopa, or conditioned jivas who attained perfection through sadha-na (devotional practices emulating a nitya-siddha gopa). Yet the gopas may wrongly think, that since everyone in this material world is going up and down through the different life species due to ignorance and karmic reactions, they must also be destined to this fate. The most compassionate One and the greatest mystic, the Supreme Lord, in order to save them from such a fallacious assumption made them see that part of Goloka which relates to His pastimes with gopas, --- for Goloka lies beyond this material nature and in the transcendental realm. Goloka is eternal, ever extant and unlimited; devoid of any trace of material qualities. It is all-encompassing and self-manifest, it is perceived only by the pure devotees in their pure heart).

My son, without Krsna's mercy Goloka cannot be perceived. Krsna has shown to the residents of Vraja the beauty and opulence of Goloka simply by His causeless mercy. Goloka is situated outside the jurisdiction of mundane nature and the variagateness displayed there are eternal realities, ever-existent and a transcendental wonder. The Brahman-jyoti, or the transcendental effulgence, is eternally manifest here as Krsna's physical aura. Devotees who are cleansed of material aberrations can perceive this magnifi-cent vision.

Bijoya: Are all the liberated jivas able to perceive Goloka ?

Gosvami: Out many millions of liberated souls one rare soul is found who is a devotee of the Supreme Lord. Those who attain liberation through the processes of eight-fold mystic yoga (astanga-yoga) and of knowledge of impersonal brahman, end up in Brahman-dhama, and suffer from amnesia (atmavismrti). Devotees who are attached to the Lord's opulence (aisvarya) and worship Him in awe and reverence also cannot see Goloka; they serve the Lord in Vaikuntha with pomp and grandeur. Among the pure devotees engaged in serving Krsna in the mood of Vraja rasa (Vrajarasabha-jana), those who are recipients of Krsna's mercy which completely eradicates their material bondage, are able to see Goloka.

Bijoya: Alright, if only such rare, elevated and liberated devo-tees can see Goloka then why do the scriptures like Brahma-sam-hika, Harivamsa, Padma-Purana etc carry descriptions of Goloka ? If Krsna's mercy decends on only those engaged in Vraja bhajana then what was the necessity of narrations about Goloka ?

Gosvami: The rare souls absorbed in relishing Vrajarasa who are lifted out of the material world by Krsna and placed in Goloka, can see the entire Goloka. Some

very pure and elevated devotees of Vraja can see certain parts of Goloka. Of the two types of pure devotees --- siddha, or perfected, and sadhaka, or practicing, the sadhakas have not yet gained eligibility to see Goloka. Siddha-bhaktas are again of two varieties: vastu-siddha, or those who are perfected in realisation of the ultimate objective (Krsna) and svarupa-siddha, or those who have achieved the perfection of being reinstated in their original spiritual identity.

The vastu-siddha devotees are the glorious ones who are placed directly in the spiritual abode of Goloka by Lord Krsna's mercy. The svarupa-siddha devotees are able to directly perceive Goloka but have not received Krsna's mercy to the extent of being lifted out of the material nature and becoming installed in Goloka. But Krsna's mercy is gradually opening-up further their spiritual and devotional visions, hence they are eligible to a wide range of spiritual perfections. Differently graded svarupa-siddha devotees have their spiritual eyes opened to varying degrees, and their vision of Goloka is commensurate to Krsna's mercy they have received.

As long as bhakti is on the platform of sadhana-bhakti, whatever the devotee sees in Goloka is slightly tinged with mundane nature. After being promoted to the stage of bhava-bhakti the devotee is blessed with glimpses of Goloka. On the level of prema-bhakti, the devotee sees Goloka to a much greater extent.

Bijoya: Gurudeva in what aspects are there differences between Goloka and Gokula, or Vraja ?

Gosvami: Whatever you see in Vraja are all there in Goloka. The differences arise due to the gradations of the viewers, according to their levels of faith and devotion. In reality there is no distinction between Goloka and Vraja Vrndavana. It is merely the viewers perception that creates differences. A person steeped in ignorance (tama guna) sees everything in Vraja, or Gokula, as material objects. The passion-filled (rajoguna) persons see with a slightly more elevated material consciousness. Persons who are spiritually and devotionally advancing on the stage of goodness, towards the state of pure goodness (visuddha-sattva), sees transcendence, each according to his level of advancement. Every individual has different degrees of eligibility and what they see is also different.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, the subject is becoming increasingly clear in my understanding, but kindly give examples to properly clarify this point. I am aware that material examples cannot fully explain spiritual concepts but even if they convey limited or a single similarity then the whole becomes easier to comprehend.

Gosvami: It is indeed a complex problem. It is prohibited to reveal one's own realisations of these esoteric truths. Whatever realisations and perceptions you gather by Krsna's mercy must be kept a guarded secret. However, I will disclose to you whatever the previous spiritual preceptors have acquiesced to reveal. And that which remains further to be known will be soon perceived by you by Krsna's mercy.

In Goloka all perceptions are based on pure spiritual knowledge. Here mundane intuition is absolutely absent. For the purpose of nourishing rasa, cit-sakti, or the internal spiritual potency of Krsna, conjures up a wide range of bhava. Often in bhava, the element of abhimana, or an emotional mix of self-assertion with pride out of love, is present. Krsna in Goloka is unborn and without a source. Yet eternal associates like Nanda Maharaja and Yasodadevi, who assist in pastimes, have personified the vatsalya rasa through their abhimana of fatherhood and motherhood respectively.

In madhura, or srngara rasa, the dichotomy of vipralambha-bhava, or mood of separation, and sambhoga-bhava, or the ecstasy of union, are present as manifestations of abhimana. Again in para-kiya-bhava, in spite of the institution of svakiya, or conjugal relationship, the parakiya abhimana and the upapati abhimana are eternally in full play.

In Vraja, these self-same abhimana through mundane notions become manifest as gross and materialistic. For example: Mother Yasoda giving birth to a child; Krsna's bedroom; the nitya-siddha gopis marriage to Abhimanyu and Goverdhana, and their parakiya abhimana, or extra-marital relationship, etc are portrayed in a very mundane light. In truth, all this is orchestrated by Krsna's yoga-maya potency and has extremely subtle links with the original principle, the primeval truth. No part of it is false and every aspect of it is a facsimile of Goloka. The only refractions present are caused by the varying degrees of opacity due to mundane consciousness, in the viewers.

Bijoya: Then must we first purify our bhajana of asta-kaliya-lila-smarana, or meditation of, eight three hourly eternal pastimes (in Goloka) and then try to grasp these topics ?

Gosvami: No, that is incorrect. Remembering or meditating on the asta-kaliya-lila must be conducted on the basis of how one perceives Vraja-lila here. On the strength of one's bhajana one attracts the Lord's grace, and accordingly, they will spontaneously manifest themselves to him. It is absolutely unnecessary for the devotee to try and correct his bhava in the pastimes, all by himself.

Bijoya: One of the axioms of rhetoric states:
" yadrsi bhavana yasya siddhirbhavati tadrsi"

(A person attains grades of perfection in measure of his intellect). According to this logic, whatever was the quality of meditation during the years of sadhana will beget equivalent degree of perfection. Therefore, may I assume that it is after all imperative that one refines his meditation on Goloka ?

Gosvami: Very true. Whatever is present in Vraja is rooted in the Supreme Absolute Truth --- nothing present there is contrary to the transcendental reality. Any contradiction would have contaminated it. When sadhana becomes purified and mature, it is transformed to siddhi, or perfection. As much as sadhana becomes refined, the incipient perceptions of siddhi becomes sharper. Give full

attention to your sadhana, so that it is executed properly. Do not try to refine your bhava in lila --- it is beyond your capacity. In due time Krsna, who is the fountain-head of acintya-sakti, will do that for you. On your own, such at-tempts will be adulterated by empirical, non-devotional jnana; but when Krsna showers His grace all anomalies are removed.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, I feel so blessed today. May I ask another question ? Are the ladies of Dvaraka also allowed shelter in Goloka ?

Gosvami: Vaikuntha in the spiritual sky offers endless bliss. Vaikuntha is the highest attainment. Dvaraka and other countless realms are present there. The queens of Dvaraka serve Krsna in their individual palaces. Other than the damsels of Vraja no one else in madhura-rasa is allowed entry into Goloka. The entire spectrum of transcendental lila enacted in Vraja are all present in Goloka. However, it is mentioned in Gopala-tapani that Queen Rukmini enjoys svakiya-lila with Krsna in Mathura within the precincts of Goloka.

Bijoya: The range of parakiya-rasa pastimes visible in Vraja, are they all present in Goloka in the same succession ?

Gosvami: Yes they are the same, except without those portions which are enacted in conjunction with maya, the illusory potency. Although these sections are missing but each of them have a pure transcendental source. I do not wish to delve deeper into this topic, you will learn about it through your mature bhajana.

Bijoya: This entire material manifestation disappears at the time of maha-pralaya, or total annihilation. Then how far is the time-lessness, or the ever-in-the-present notion (samprata-bhava) of Vraja-lila, eternal ?

Gosvami: Vraja-lila is eternal in two ways. The manifest pastimes are samprata-pratiti, they are a continuum just as a circle is; different pastimes occur at different places within this expansive material cosmos, at all times. In this way the manifest pastimes (prakata-lila) are eternal. In the unmanifest (aprakata) state, all pastimes are continuous, ever-in-the-present, ---eter-nal.

Bijoya: If the prakata-lila is manifest in every universe (brah-manda), then is there a Vraja-dhama in each of the universe ?

Gosvami: Yes, that is true. Goloka is a manifest entity, and is present in every brahmanda as the transcendental site of divine pastimes (lila-dhama): Goloka is also manifest in the hearts in the of pure, unalloyed devotees.

Bijoya: In those brahmanda where the lila become unmanifest (aprakata), why does the mathura-mandala area remain prakata ?

Gosvami: There, the aprakata-lila is eternally present. The dhama remains prakata in order to exhibit mercy to the pure devotee residents.

The narrations concluded at this point. Bijoya Kumara returned home engrossed in thoughts of devotional service in the asta-kaliya-lila.

Chapter 32 Dissertation On Madhura - Rasa : Analysis Continues

Bijoya Kumara finished his evening prasadam and went to bed . Brajanatha concluded his bhajana meditation , kept his japa beads aside and retired for the night . Bijoya Kumara was unable to sleep . He was always under the impression that Goloka was a separate place , and today he heard that Goloka and Gokula are non - different . Parakiya - rasa has roots also in Goloka . One thought kept gnawing knowing at his brain, - 'how does Krsna fit into the role of an upapati , or paramour. Krsna is the Supreme Transcendental Truth - He, the saktimana, and His sakti are non -different . Even if sakti is separated , how can sakti become another's property or wife (parodha), and Krsna the upapati ?'

He considered asking Srila Guru Gosvami the next day about it ; but then he thought of not bringing up the topic of Goloka again with Guru Gosvami . And yet this nagging doubt had to be removed . These deep cogitations were soon overtaken by sleep. Bijoya found himself in a dream with vivid images . He was in the presence of his gurudeva, Srila Gosvami and was asking him that very question which had doggedly burrowed his mind .

He saw his guru speaking and heard his words distinctly . Srila Gosvami was saying,- 'Dear son ! Krsna's will is unchallengeable and absolute . He eternally wishes to secret away the svakiya - bhava which is characterised by opulence and reverence (aisvarya) and display His madhurya bhava . Because of this , Krsna gives a separate identity , individuality and existence to His energies . Krsna's divine energy became transformed into countless millions of damsels who serve Him with tender care . But Krsna is not attracted by service in the mood of aisvarya . So , by exhibiting an incredible aspect of His transcendental potency He arranges for all the damsels to be married and be living in their individual households . These ladies begin to identify with their new statuses and situations, each as a married woman and a lady of the house .

Similarly Krsna assumes a debonair paramour's role for them . He , out of greed for parakiya rasa is hurried into transgressing His atma - rama - dharma , or the nature of being self - satisfied and content . And with other's wives , His beloved sweet - hearts , He engages in gorgeous pastimes such as the rasa - lila . His flute becomes one of His beloved sweet - hearts and participates in these pastimes . For a variety of such reasons parakiya rasa is perfectly displayed in Goloka . Goloka's innumerable sylvian bowers like Kelivrndavana remain eternally in pastoral splendour .

The site of rasalila , Yamuna river , Goverdhana - hill and all the other places in

Vraja of Krsna's pastimes , are its in en-tirety, available in Goloka . And similarly, also present in Goloka is the conjugal mood (dampatya) with its own originality . The purest form of svakiya bhava (conjugal mood) is available in Vaikuntha . An unique feature of Vraja is that although the parakiya relationship assumes here a gross dimension - interpreted as illicit , amorous relationship with another's wife , in truth it is not . Because Krsna's energies are His own, since time immemorial . The Vraja damsels are Krsna's eter-nal conjugal partners and consorts .

Parakiya bhava is exhibited in Goloka only in the form of abhima-na , or asserting one's ego based on false identity . In Vraja , Abhimanyu and the other gopas , or cowherd boys and men , are incarnations of this `abhimana of Goloka'; they descended to Vraja as the husbands of the gopis , in order to nourish and assist in Krsna's pastimes . Thus making Krsna the upapati , or paramour and the leading hero of Vraja's pastimes . Far beyond the reach of material nature , in the transcendental abode of Goloka abhimana alone is able to fully nurture rasa . In Gokula , or Vraja , situated in this material world , perception of conju-gal vows and trespassing those vows are orchestrated by yoga - maya, or the Lord's internal potency. She (yoga-maya) accomplish-es this task by initiating incarnations in embodied forms of the entire array of abhimana, she then allocates to them individual identities " .

Bijoya Kumar's doubts dissipated as his dream faded away . His understanding that the transcendental abode in the spiritual sky , Goloka, is manifest as Goloka in the material world, became a firm conviction . The ecstatic revelation of his own self's individual spiritual identity (tadatmya - svarupa) in Vraja - rasa gathered inchoate momentum in his heart . His meditations on the eternal asta - kaliya - lila of Vraja, turned deep and reso-lute . He woke up feeling overwhelmed with the mercy his guru had showered on him . He decided to hear about the different accesso-ries for relishing rasa , directly from his guru and solidify his faith in bhajana .

Completing his noon - prasadam Bijoya Kumara arrived at his guru's asrama. He fell at his guru's feet and began to weep in ecstasy . Srila Guru Gosvami slowly lifted him up and sat him down with loving care. Srila Gosvami said, -"Son , I see that Krsna has blessed you . I myself feel blessed just seeing you " . As he spoke, he felt in the throes of divine rapture, he em-braced Bijoya and began to recite a song from ` Prema-Vivarta ' :

" prosonno hoiya krsna jare krpa kare
sei jan dhanya ei samsar bhitoro
golokera paromo bhav tar citte sphure
gokule golok paye maya pare dure " .

[When Krsna is pleased with someone
And showers him His mercy divine
Blessed is he, - the light of the earth .
The sublimest bhava of Goloka
Stirs in the depth of his heart
Goloka descends to Goloka

And maya recedes into a forgotten past .]

He sang for a longtime. Gradually the ecstasy subsided and he became aware of his external surrounding . Bijoya Kumara offered repeated obeisances to his guru . He then began to speak .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , I do not know what is Krsna - krpa , or Krsna's mercy . But of this I am convinced that your mercy is the cause of all my spiritual progress . I have abandoned pursuit of trying to perceive Goloka and am now very satisfied in trying to realise Vraja . I wish to properly understand the varieties in Vraja - rasa .

Kindly explain if those damsels of Gokula who accept Krsna as their husband are eligible to be called svakiya or not ?

Gosvami :- Yes , due to their firm faith that Krsna is their husband they attained , for the present , svakiya bhava , or conjugal love . But characteristically the Gokula damsels are connected to Krsna in parakiya bhava . And , in this case , although they are not of svakiya nature , yet because their marriage to Krsna according to Gandharva - rites was solemnised their svakiya bhava for the present (samprata - avastha) is perfectly harmonised in the Gokula pastimes .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva, I have numerous queries; I wish to grasp your answers to these, in the light of the philosophy cocooned in the 'Ujjvala - nilamani'. First, I want to have a clear concep-tion about nayaka , or hero . The text says that there are four types of nayaka : anukula , daksina , satha and dhrsta . Kindly expand upon each of these nayaka .

Gosvami :- The nayaka , or hero, who is faithful in love to one sweet - heart without aspiring or endeavouring for further roman-tic liasons, is called a anukula , or favourable nayaka . Lord Rama epitomised this mood towards Sitadevi , and Lord Krsna towards Srimati Radha .

Bijoya :- Earlier you spoke of the four kinds of nayaka like dhirodatta etc. What is the individual relationship between each of the first four types with each of the second set of four . What , for example , is the characteristics of dhirodattanukula nayaka ?

Gosvami :- A dhirodattanukula nayaka is grave , humble , for-giving , sympathetic , fixed in his resolve , not boastful of himself , secretly prides in himself and is very noble and gener-ous . But he is also quick to forsake all these qualities and run behind his nayika (sweet - heart or heroine).

Bijoya :- Kindly describe the dhirolalita - anukula nayaka .

Gosvami :- The dhirolalita qualities are : he is a brilliant wit , ever - youthful , relisher of rasa , confident and without anxiety . When these attributes are permanent features in his character - not be abandoned for any reason , he is called

dhiro-lalita - anukula - nayaka .

Bijoya :- What is the nature of dhira - santa - anukula nayaka ?

Gosvami :- His nature is peaceful , tolerant , considerate and is guided by his conscience .

Bijoya :- And the dhiroddhata - anukula - nayaka ?

Gosvami :- When the dhiroddhata nayaka's personality , marked by envy , false - pride , deceptiveness , anger and self - praise , becomes favourable he is known as dhiroddhata - anukula - nayaka .

Bijoya :- How can a nayaka become daksina ?

Gosvami :- Daksina means honest and guileless . A daksina nayaka will , without stopping to respect , fear and love his first lady-love or nayika , become romantically attached to another nayika . He maintains equal depth of relationship with many nayika simultaneously .

Bijoya :- Who is called deceitful or double - faced (satha) ?

Gosvami :- The nayaka who is amiable and sweet in the presence of nayika but is vituperative and offensive behind her back, is called a satha , or two - faced .

Bijoya :- What are the symptoms of a dhrsta, or an impudent ?

Gosvami :- The nayaka who carries on his person signs of intimacy with another nayika but boldly and glibly lies to the nayika, is a dhrsta .

Bijoya :- In total how many types of nayaka are there ?

Gosvami :- As far as we are concerned, Krsna is the only nayaka . In Dvaraka He is purna (complete) , in Mathura He is purnatara (more complete) and in Vraja He is purnatama (most complete) . Since Krsna is both pati (husband) and upapati (paramour) plus the three grades of completeness, add upto six varieties . Then there are the four kinds of nayaka like dhiro-datta etc. which multiplied to the previous six, makes twenty four . Then further multiply twenty - four with the second - set of nayaka, like anukula , daksina etc., - that makes ninety - six types of nayaka .

Another factor in consideration is that there are twenty - four nayaka in svakiya - rasa and twenty - four in parakiya . In svakiya rasa, Krsna's withdrawn and diffident (sankoca) mood , and in parakiya rasa , the pre-eminent rasa displayed in His Vraja - pastimes as the twenty - four different nayaka , are all eternally manifest . Different nayaka types are required to be displayed for different pastimes and even for short periods - all of them are distinctly recognisable .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva I am gradually discerning the different types of nayaka and their unique characteristics . I am keen to learn who are Krsna's assistants, as nayaka .

Gosvami :- The nayaka has five categories of assistants : ceta , vita , vidusaka , pithamardaka and priyanarmasakha . They are all proficient in sweet and pleasing conversation, they possess a deep devotion and commitment , are experts in judging time and situation , are ambidextrous , they can charm away the anger of the gopis and pacify them and they do intimate and confidential counselling .

Bijoya :- Kindly tell me the different characteristics of the individual assistants .

Gosvami :- The ceta sahaya , or assistant, is good in spying and gathering informations, accomplishes secret missions, is intrepid and intelligent . Bhangura and Bhrngara are the leading ceta sahaya of Krsna in Gokula . The vita - sahaya is conversant with dresscodes and clothes , is cunning , a glib talker, knows the mystical art of casting spells and charms ; Kadara and Bharati-bandhu are prominent vita sahaya . Gormondising , quarreling , caricaturing with the body , quick with repartees and making others laugh by dressing funnily are the qualities of Vasanta the gopa , Madhumangala and the other vidusaka - sahaya of Krsna.

Almost as qualified as the nayaka Himself , the only pithamardaka sahaya , Sridama is still content to be the nayaka Krsna's follower . The priyanarmasakha sahaya, mainly Subala and Arjuna, are privy to, and knowledgeable about, rare mysteries and secrets and they emulate the mood of the gopis . The ceta sahaya are in dasya - rasa , pithamardaka are in vira - rasa , and the other three sahaya are all in sakhya rasa . Further, the ceta sahaya are all in the category of Krsna's servants while the other four sahaya are His sakhas , or friends .

Bijoya :- Are there no female sahaya of Krsna ?

Gosvami :- Yes there are , and they are known as duti .

Bijoya :- Are there many kinds of duti ?

Gosvami :- There are two varieties of duti : svayam duti and apta - duti . Kataksha and Vamsiddhvani are svayam duti .

Bijoya :- Who are the apta - duti ?

Gosvami :- Krsna's apta - duti are Vira , who is bold - even cheeky and an artful speaker, and Vrnda , who is an expert flatterer . The svayam duti and apta - duti are very special (asad-harani) . Besides these special duti, Krsna has many ordinary duti (sadharani) such as Lingini , Daivajna and Silpakarini etc. They will be discussed later under the topic of nayika - duti, when it is more relevant .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva, I am steadily comprehending Krsna as nayaka , His mood , characteristics etc. Also, that His pastimes as pati and upapati are both eternal . As

pati He is in Dvaraka and as upapati His pastimes are staged in Vraja . Since our beloved Krsna is upapati , it is central to my bhajana to learn about the damsels of Vraja .

Gosvami :- All Krsna's girl - friends in Vraja are primarily in parakiya - rasa ; because without parakiya , the madhura - rasa cannot fully blossom to its pristine splendour . The madhura rasa in Dvaraka , of the queens , are attenuated due to the conjugal relationship . The damsels of Vraja are embellished with pure spiritual lust for Krsna , making madhura - rasa unbridled and intrepid - and this gives excessive pleasure to Krsna .

Bijoya :- What is the purport of this philosophy ?

Gosvami :- Rudra (Siva) , the preceptor on the philosophy of rasa says that womanly traits like contumacy and insolence (vamata), elusiveness (durlabhatva) etc. create an aura of being difficult to obtain , which becomes Kamadeva's , or cupid's weapon - the arrow . Visnugupta comments , that where the impediments to reach the coveted doe - eyed damsel are numerous , the gallant lover's heart becomes more captivated by her .

Krsna is atma - rama , or self - satisfied , yet in the rasa - lila He expanded into as many Krsna's as there were gopis , and danced with them . Every sadhaka must develop attachment and devotion to the rasa - lila . One word of advice regarding it is , if the sadhaka desires his highest benefit then he must enter this divine pastime like a pure devotee ; - he must never even slightly pamper the thought of acting like Krsna . The purport is to develop the mood of the gopis (gopi - bhava) , being humbly subservient to them (gopis) .

Bijoya :- Kindly elaborate upon what is gopi - bhava .

Gosvami :- Krsna , son of Narada Maharaja , is a gopa , or cow-herd boy . His sole enjoying partners are the gopis . The way the gopis serve Krsna , the sadhaka who is eligible to practice madhura - rasa , must try to worship and serve Krsna in the same manner as the gopis . He must assume in his mind that he is a gopi in Vraja , and a maid - servant of some immensely fortunate Vraja gopi ; his only business should be to strictly execute her instructions and serve Sri Radhika and Krsna . He must recognise himself as a parodha , or a gopi married to a gopa , but is always desiring Krsna's association and is a childless maiden . Only then can he evoke rasa from within his heart . The parodha - abhimana is the innate nature of the gopis . Srila Rupa Gosvami writes :

" mayakalitatadrka - strisilanenanusuyibhih

na jatu vrajadevinam patibhih saha sangamah " . (Ujjvala , Krsna - ballabha . Prah : 19)

(The Vraja gopis , who maintain the abhimana (self - assertion) of being parodha , become wives of gopas after a mock - marriage arranged by yogamaya , or the Lord's internal potency , is performed . But they (gopis) have never consummated their marriages with their individual husbands . When these gopis are away from

their houses for their lover's (Krsna) tryst , again yogamaya arranges for exact replicas of these gopis to be present in the houses . When the husband returns and sees his wife is in the house , he can never develop envy or jealousy towards Krsna .)

There has never been an intimate conjugal relationship between the Vraja gopis and their so - called husbands . In truth , these husbands are the corporeal incarnations [in Vraja] of their individual bhava [of Goloka] . The marriages are also illusory notions (mayika - pratyaya) , hence there is no question of the Vraja gopis being their wedded wives ; or in relation to Krsna , another's wife (paradaratva) . Nevertheless , the parodha - abhimana [in the Vraja - gopis] is eternally present . Other-wise , if this is absent : the magnificent rasa generated out of fear of trespassing [marriage vows] ; the gopis attitudes of rebellious insolence (vamata) and elusiveness (durlabhatva) ; and the impediments [to the paramour] due to their nature , would never be natural and spontaneous . Similarly , in order to attain the bhava of a nayika (heroine) or Krsna's beloved , in the Vraja - rasa , one must cultivate parodha - abhimana . Sri Laksmidevi in Vaikuntha is an example of someone who did not cultivate abhimana .

Bijoya :- What is the process of becoming , or knowing oneself as a parodha ?

Gosvami :- One must meditate : ` I have taken birth in a gopa's home in Vraja and when I reach the proper age I will marry a gopa etc. When such meditation and faith become intense , the desire to enjoy Krsna's company gains momentum . In this manner , when one assumes the nature and mood of a maiden - wife of an uncon-summated marriage (aprsutika) , it is called gopi bhava .

Bijoya :- How is it possible for a male sadhaka to assume gopi bhava ?

Gosvami :- Jiva thinks of himself as male (purusa) due to the influence of illusory energy . In the pure , spiritual nature , other than Krsna's eternal male associates , all jivas are female . In transcendental nature , distinguishing signs indicating the different sexes do not exist . But anyone can acquire the right to become a woman in Vraja on the dint of his nature , predeliction and firm abhimana . Those who possess an unwavering desire for madhura - rasa , are eligible to become damsels in Vraja . When a person's sadhana is in consonance with his taste and propensity , he attains perfection accordingly .

Bijoya :- How do you describe the glorious position of a parodha ?

Gosvami :- When the parodha Vraja - damsel desires to enjoy with Krsna , her intrinsic beauty par excellence and her treasure - house of excellences gift her befitting embellishments to make her a ravishing , bewilching beauty in her lover's eyes. The parodha experiences a greater degree of the sweetness of rasa .

Bijoya :- How many varieties of Vraja damsels are there ?

Gosvami :- They are of three kinds : sadhana para , devi and nityapriya .

Bijoya :- Kindly describe the sadhana para .

Gosvami :- Sadhana para is of two types : yauthiki and ayauthiki . Those who are engrossed in Vraja - rasa sadhana and take birth in Vraja in groups , are called yauthiki , or linked to a group (yutha) . Yauthiki are further subdivided as : munigana and upanisadgana .

Bijoya :- Which munis took birth in Vraja ?

Gosvami :- The munis who were worshipping Gopala but could not attain perfection saw Lord Ramacandra's beauty [in Tretayuga] and gained great impetus in their sadhana . After perfecting their sadhana in gopi - bhava they were born as gopis in Vraja . This is substantiated in the Padma Purana . The Brhad - Vamana Purana states that some of the munis attained spiritual perfection at the beginning of the rasa lila .

Bijoya :- How did the upanisad attain the statuses of being born as gopis in Vraja ?

Gosvami :- Endowed with very subtle and fine spiritual perceptions , the highly elevated personifications of upanisad were astounded by the gopis' good fortune . They then deeply meditated and worshipped the gopis with profound devotion and finally were born in Vraja as damsels .

Bijoya :- Who are the ayauthiki sadhanapara gopi ?

Gosvami :- Those who are extremely attracted to the gopi - bhava and eagerly channelise this natural proclivity in their sadhana are ayauthiki ; they are of two types : pracina and navina . They take birth either alone , in pairs or in threes , in Vraja . The pracina ayauthiki attain salokya (the same abode) with the nityapriya gopi . The navina ayauthiki come from the demigods and human species and take birth as gopis in Vraja . Gradually they are converted to pracina and attain salokya , as earlier described .

Bijoya :- Kindly explain who are the devis ?

Gosvami :- When Krsna's partial expansion incarnates in the heavenly planets as a demigod , the nityapriya gopis also descend as demigoddesses in their partial expansions , to please Krsna . Again when Krsna appears in Gokula , Vraja , in His full expansion (purna - rupa) then also the devis take birth in Gokula as young gopis who are known as the prana sakhis and are assistants to the original source icons of their expansions (amsi) , the nityapriya gopis .

Bijoya :- At which times does Krsna accept a partial expansion (amsa) in the heavenly planets ?

Gosvami :- Krsna's direct partial expansion (svamsa - rupa) is Lord Vamana , the son of Aditi ; and His separated partial expansion (vibhinnamsa) appear as demigods . Lord Siva and Lord Brahma were not conceived in any mother's womb .

Siva and Brahma are not on the level of the ordinary jivas who are endowed with fifty qualities in meagre measures , yet both are vibhinnamsa , or seperated , partial expansions . Because both posses these fifty qualities in large measure and additionally posses five other qualities in limited quantities , they are considered the chiefs of the demigods . Ganesa and Surya hold similar positions and are worshipped in this material cosmos with the equal respect .

The other demigods are grouped together with the jivas . All the demigods are Krsna's vibhinnamsa . Their wives are the vibhinnam-sa of the Lord's spiritual energy . Prior to Lord Krsna's appear-ance , Brahma instructs these ladies to take birth , in order to please the Lord . They then appear either in Vraja or in Dvaraka , depending on their individual taste (ruci) and sadhana . The devis in Vraja become the prana - sakhi , or assistants to the nityapriya gopis , because of their intense desire to attain Krsna .

Bijoya :- Like the upanisads who took birth in Vraja , are there any other predominating goddesses from the vedas who also ap-peared in Vraja ?

Gosvami :- The srsti - khanda of the Padma - Purana states that Gayatridevi , the mother of the veda , was born in Vraja as a gopi and attained Krsna's association . From this point on she acquired the form of kama - gayatri .

Bijoya :- It is true that kama - gayatri is beginningless . At first she was present as the mother of the vedas , as Gayatridevi , later on the strength of her sadhana and by discussing and meditating on the good fortunes of the upanisads she took birth in Vraja along with Gopala - upanisad . As kama - gayatri she is eternal , simultaneously she is eternally existent as Gayatridevi in a seperate but eternal identity .

Bijoya :- The upanisads and others obtained the rare birth as gopis in Vraja . They acquired the gopiabhimana and accepted Krsna as their hero and husband . Krsna became their husband by the vows of marriage according to the Gandharva rites . I have understood all this . I am eager to learn whether the nityapriya gopis , who are Krsna's girl - friends from time immemorial , have Krsna as their upapati , is it a relationship constructed by maya , the illusory potency ?

Gosvami :- True , it is conceived by maya , but not by the mundane maya (mahamaya) . The mundane illusory potency (maya) cannot even touch Krsna - lila . Although Vraja - lila is enacted within this material world , it is nevertheless , completely transcendental to the illusory material energy . Cit - sakti's , or the spiritual energy's , another definition is yogamaya . Yogamaya creates a very special effect surrounding Krsna - lila to the eyes of the mundane spectators , so that they see these pastimes in a completely different light than they really are .

When the nityapriya gopis descend from Goloka to Vraja , Yogamaya accompanies them , bringing with her the parodha - abhimana of Goloka . She establishes these individual parodha - abhimana as individual personalities (such as Abhimanyu) in Vraja . Then she arranges the marriages between the nityapriya gopis and their

personified abhimana , thus installing Krsna as their (gopis) upapati . The Omniscient Personality of Godhead Krsna , and His omniscient energies (saktigana) totally absorbed in rasa , acquiesces their individual statuses , and its bhava . This underlines the pre - eminent position of rasa and the absolute prerogative (iccha - sakti) of the supremely independent and wilful Lord .

Both Vaikuntha and Dvaraka are deprived of such intensities of rasa , and so on . The pranasakhis , or assistant gopis , gain salokya (residence on the same abode) with their mistresses , the nityapriya gopis , and experience an incipient conjugal relationship with Krsna which later matures into upapati , or para-mour - lover relationship . This is their ultimate fulfilment .

Bijoya :- What an extra - ordinary spiritual perception ! I am truly overwhelmed with joy . Kindly instruct me on the nityapriya gopis .

Gosvami :- Do you think Lord Gauracandra would permit me to speak such esoteric realisations to you if you were not a really eligible candidate ? Just mark how the greatest of preceptors , Srila Jiva Gosvami has kept this subject extremely confidential , revealing and elaborating upon it only in places , in his commentaries and books like the Krsna - sandarbha . He was always apprehensive that unauthorised and uneligible persons will per-vert the meanings of these arcane topics and practice aberrations on its authority .

The reprobate acts and sacrilege committed by the pretender - vaisnavas nowadays , known as rasa - vikrti and rasa - abhasa , in the name of bhakti is what Srila Jiva Gosvami was deeply con-cerned about . In spite of being exceedingly cautious the damage could not be prevented . You must be very careful not to disclose this philosophy to the undeserving . Let us turn back to the subject of nityapriya gopis .

Bijoya :- Who are the nityapriya gopis ? Although I have studied many scriptures , I wish to learn everything from the hallowed lips of my spiritual master , whose instructions are ambrosial .

Gosvami :- Srimati Radha and Srimati Candravali are the fore-most of the nityapriya gopis in Vraja , and like Krsna they repositories of divine attributes like exquisite beauty , versa-tality and so on . They find mention in the Brahma - Samhita :

"ananda - cinmaya - rasa - pratibhavitabhistabhira eva nija - rupa-taya kalabhih goloka eva nivasaty - akhila - atma - bhuto govindam - adi - purusam tam - aham - bhajami " . (Br.Sam : 5/37)

[I worship Govinda , the primeval Lord , residing in His own abode , Goloka , with Radha , resembling His own spiritual figure the embodiment of the ecstatic potency possessed of the sixty - four transcendental arts , in the company of Her confidantes (sakhis) - who are the embodiments of the extensions of Her bodily form , permeated and vitalized by His ever - blissful spiritual rasa .]

Lord Brahma offers a cursory mention of nityapriya gopis in his book , considered to contain the essence of the vedas . Thus it is plainly clear that they are eternal are

transcendental to the material nature and are manifestations of spiritual potency . The sixty - four supramundane activities and arts are a part of their eternal pastimes . The comment - " kalabhih svamsarupabhi saktib-hih " to this verse may have other interpretations but I have adhered to Srila Svarupa Damodar Gosvami's purport which is very profound , and reflects the deep insights of Srila Rupa Srila Sanatana and Srila Jiva .

Bijoya :- My ears are straining to hear the nectarean names of the nityapriya gopis .

Gosvami :- Scriptures like Skanda purana , Prahlad - samhita etc. mention the following names : Radha , Candravali , Visakha , Lalita , Syama , Padma , Saibya , Bhadraka , Tara , Vicitra , Gopali , Dhanistha , Pali and so on . Candravali is also known as Somabha . Srimati Radhika is also known as Gandharva . The other illustrious gopis are : Khanjanaksi , Manorama , Mangala , Vimala , Lila , Krsna , Sari , Visarada , Taravali , Cakoraksi , Sankari , Kumkuma and so on .

Bijoya :- What is the relationship between them ?

Gosvami :- All these nityapriya gopis are group leaders , or yuthesvaris . There are hundreds of groups , or yuthas . Each group has millions of beautiful and qualified ladies . Beginning with Srimati Radhika to Kumkuma all are group leaders . Visakha - Lalita , Padma , and Saibya are especially mentioned as not being group leaders . Among different group leaders , Srimati Radhika and the others of the asta - gopis , or the circle of eight gopis , are the most prominent .

Bijoya :- Visakha , Lalita , Padma and Saibya are some of the leading gopis and are proficient in enhancing Krsna's pleasure in His lila . Why have they not been unequivocally designated as yuthesvaris ?

Gosvami :- They are so highly accomplished that it is only fit they be acknowledged as group leaders . But especially Lalita and Visakha are so overtly enamoured by Srimati Radhika's infinitely ecstatic mood and to such an extent , that they refuse the status of a group leader . Of these four , some are obedient to Srimati Radhika and others to Srimati Candravali . This has been ascer-tained from the scriptures .

Bijoya :- I have read that Lalita has her own group , can you kindly explain this ?

Gosvami :- Srimati Radhika is the group leader par excellence . Some of the gopis from Her group are especially attracted to a particular bhava of Lalitadevi and so they call themselves Lali-ta's followers . Same is the case with Visakhadevi . Lalita , Visakha and others from the asta - gopi are seen as Srimati Radhika's group monitors . Only by immense good fortune can someone become a member of Sri Lalita's group .

Bijoya :- Which scriptures contain the names of these gopis ?

Gosvami :- Several texts mention these names : Padma Purana , Skanda Purana ,

Bhavisyottara Purana etc. as well as in the vaisnava tantra scriptures .

Bijoya :- Srimad Bhagavatam is certainly the crest jewel of all the scriptures. If these names were mentioned there it would give me endless joy.

Gosvami :- Srimad Bhagavatam , on one hand expounds the highest spiritual truths and on the other is an unlimited ocean of nec-tarean rasa. The preceptors of rasa - tattva verify that Srimad Bhagavatam espouses all the variances in the rasa culture. Sri-mati Radhika's name and all the gopis identities and devotional moods has been mention in an extremely cryptic manner. If you scrutinise the verses of the tenth canto in Srimad Bhagavatam , everything is revealed in them . Srila Sukadeva Gosvami has purposely camouflaged these confidential topics to keep unautho-rised materialists at bay.

My dear Bijoya , what use is there in giving a person a japa-mala and a few nicely arranged words of instructions ? The more spir-ituallly advanced a person becomes , deeper is his grasp of the profounder precepts . Therefore , real erudition is then exhibit-ed when confidential spiritual concepts which are not meant for general discussion are presented encrypted . Each person's under-standing of any subject is commensurate to his advancement and knowledge . Esoteric spiritual precepts cannot be understood without a bonafide guru coming in the line of authorised discip-lic succession. And without this connection should anyone hear or read this subject , his endeavours will bear no fruit --- his knowledge will be impotent . Study Ujjvala-nilamani thoroughly and you will be able to detect all the rasas in the Srimad Bhagavatam .

The discussion ended after a long time . Bijoya slowly walked towards Hara - candi - sahi deep in thought about the rasa of nayaka - nayika - tattva displayed in the spiritual realm . At moments the bhava of Vidusaka and Pithamarddaka overcame him and thrilled him with great exultation . On other occasions , think-ing of Vamsi , the svayamduti of Krsna , incessant tears streamed down his face . The sublime bhava of Vraja , now visible on the horizon of Bijoya's heart , made him vibrant and exuberant . The ecstatic vision he had the previous night on his way to Sundara-cala , in the sylvian woods , now flashed in his heart .

Chapter 33

Dissertation On Madhura - Rasa : Analysis Continues

Today Bijoya Kumara and Brajanatha had taken a dip in the sacred pond of Indradyumna Sarovara . They returned home and ate their mid - day prasadam . Brajanatha decided to visit Srila Haridasa Thakura's samadhi . Bijoya Kumara went to the Radhakanta mandira , and prostrated himself before Srila Guru Gopal Gosvami . Re-spectfully he sat waiting for his guru to signal him when it was proper for him to speak .

When Srila Goswami was ready Bijoya Kumara enquired - Gurudeva , the daughter of Vrsabhanu , Srimati Radhika, is the reigning mistress of my heart , my very life and soul are in Her hands . It is inexplicable how my heart melts at the very mention of Her name . Krsna is indeed our sole and ultimate destination, yet His pleasurable dalliances with Sri Radha are the most relishable spiritual experiences . Narrations where Srimati Radhika is absent , although Krsna's descriptions are there , seems insipid to me .

Gurudeva , may I frankly express something to you ? I do not feel like introducing myself as Bijoya Kumara Bhattacharya and longer . I enjoy thinking of myself as Srimati Radharani's maid - servant , entirely dependant on Her support . Another unique development I feel in me is, I detest discussing even the subject of Vraja, with materially engrossed persons . Assemblies where persons who are ignorant about the profundity of rasa are speaking, are unbearable to me , I feel the urge to get up and leave .

Gosvami :- O how fortunate you are ! Until a person does not acquire the complete faith that he in his spiritual form, is a damsel in Vraja , he is not eligible to discuss the intimate pastimes of Sri Radha and Sri Krsna , what to speak of humans, even demigods and demigoddess are not privileged to talk about such topics .

Earlier I spoke about Krsna's sweet hearts; amongst all of them, Srimati Radha and Srimati Candravali are the foremost . They both have millions of groups of youthful maidens following them . At maharasalila, countless millions of exquisite beauties grace the dance .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , let Candravali have her millions and mil-lions of yutha , but kindly tell me the glories of Srimati Rad-harani and purge my contaminated heart and ears, - please fill my ears with nectar divine; this I earnestly plead with you as your surrendered disciple .

Gosvami :- Ah yes ! Between Radhika and Candravali , Srimati Radha is the embodiment of mahabhava , or the unsurpassable pinnacle of bhava . Thus She is superior in all respects to Candravali . The sruti scripture `Tapani - sruti' has described Her as Gandharva . The end section of Rk veda recounts how resplendent Sri Radhika is in the company of Madhava , Krsna . The Padma Purana records Sri Narada Munis statement that Srimati Radha's kunda , or lake, is as precious to Krsna as Sri Radhika Herself . It is only natural that Srimati Radha , above all the gopis , is most beloved of Krsna . What is Radha - tattva , or the transcendental principal of Radha ? Krsna's hladini - sakti , or pleasure giving potency, is the topmost amongst all His poten-cies . Srimati Radhika is the embodiment and vital soul of hladi-ni - sakti .

Bijoya :- This spiritual precept is prodigious ! Who is Srimati Radhika in truth .

Gosvami :- Srimati Radhika , daughter of Vrsabhanu, is the icon of susthu - kanta . Sixteen different toiletry and make - up accourterments (srngara) and twelve

ornaments (alankara) constantly decorate Her .

Bijoya :- What is the meaning of susthu - kanta - svarupa ?

Gosvami :- She possesses such unsurpassable beauty that She does not require any beauty aids, make - up or ornaments to enhance her exquisiteness : cascading hair in curly locks; lovely, ex-pressive lotus - like face; large , elongated eyes , and so on . The shape of Her body is perfectly proportionate : firm breasts , narrow waist , petite shoulders , Her nails glow like moonstone gems . She is paragon of unmatched, sublime beauty .

Bijoya :- What are the sixteen different srngara , or accoutre-ments of beauty .

Gosvami :- Elaborate bath , the brilliant gem on Her nose ring , blue sari , sash round Her waist , platted curly locks , dangling earrings, sandal paste smeared on Her body , flower arrangements on Her hair-do , fine necklace , a lotus flower in Her hand , chewing betel leaf , a dot of musk on the chin , maskara on the eyes , designs painted on the cheeks , feet painted with red alta and brow decorated with tilaka are the sixteen srngaras that shine with divine splendour on Her person .

Bijoya :- What are the twelve alankaras or avaranas ?

Gosvami :- Fabulously precious - gems in Her crown , golden ear-rings , girdle around the hips , a gem - studded golden locket , upper ears pierced with golden studs , chockers around Her throat , a variety of rings on Her fingers , necklace with star designs , wristlets and armllets , gem - studded ankle - bells and toe - rings are the twelve alankaras , or ornaments, which bask in Srimati Radhika resplendent beauty .

Bijoya :- What are the principal attributes of Srimati Radhika ?

Gosvami :- Radharani , the queen of Vrndavana , like Krsna is the treasure - trove of endless excellences . Out of these , twenty five qualities are the most prominent

1. She is madhura , or extremely lovely to look at .
2. blossoming with the fresh youthfulness of adolescence .
3. has bright restless eyes .
4. a tender soft smile constantly plays on Her lips .
5. beautiful auspicious signs and lines mark Her body .
6. Her bodily fragrance enmaddens Krsna .
7. an expert musician .
8. destrous in the art of pleasing conversation .
9. is witty and humorous .
10. is humble .
11. is full of compassion .
12. is extremely intelligent .
13. is ambidextrous .
14. is shy .

15. is unshakeably righteous and chaste .
16. is patient and can tolerate pain and suffering .
17. is grave and sober .
18. She relishes pastimes and sports .
19. is always eager to manifest the zenith of mahabhava emotions .
20. She is the embodiment of vraja - prema , Her very sight evokes spontaneous love of Godhead in the residents of Gokula .
21. is famous all over the universe .
22. is the apple of everyone's eyes - especially the elders .
23. is controlled by Her girl - friend's love and affection .
24. is the most beloved of Krsna's girl - friends .
25. Krsna is always obedient to Her wishes .

Bijoya :- I wish to learn in detail the beautiful and auspicious signs and lines that mark Srimati Radhika's body .

Gosvami :- The Varaha - samhita , books of astrology , Kasi - khanda , Matsya Purana , Garuda Purana etc. have proffered the following descriptions of auspicious signs and lines : the auspicious 'yava' line at the base of the left big - toe ; a disc below it ; a lotus flower at the base of left middle - toe ; a flag; and a banner below it; a line beginning right of the middle - toe up to the middle of the feet ; a goad (ankusa) at the base of the little left - toe .

On Her right foot : a conchshell at the base of the big toe ; a fish on the heel ; a throne at the base of the little - toe ; a chariot above the fish ; a mountain ; a coil ; a mace ; and a spear .

The left hand : life line begins at the joint of the index finger and middle finger and runs all the way to the bottom of the little finger ; another line starting below the life line from the middle of the palm travels upto the joint between the index finger and thumb ; at the base of the thumb , starting from the wrist, a line meanders up , meets the middle line and reaches the mid - section between the thumb and index finger; plus the five discs on each finger tip add up to eight signs ; an elephant below the ring - finger ; a horse below the life - line ; a bull below the middle - line ; and below the little finger a goad , a fan , a bela - fruit tree , a post an arrow , a lance , a string of beads in all eighteen .

On Her right palm : same three lines like life - line etc. as on the left palm ; a conchshell on each finger - tip ; yak - tail fan below the index finger ; and below the little finger a goad , a palace , a kettle drum (dundubhi) , a lightning , a pair of carts , a bow , a sword , a water pot with spout .

There are seven on Her left foot , eight on Her right foot , eighteen on Her left palm and seventeen auspicious signs on right palm adds up to a total of fifty auspicious signs and lines .

Bijoya :- Are none of these attributes mastered qualities available in another person ?

Gosvami :- These attributes are present in minute degrees in jiva , whereas in Srimati Radhika they are there exist in absolute degree . In the demigods and demigoddesses these are present in a higher measure than they are in the jivas . Sri Radhika's every single attribute is supramundane , because in material nature no one possesses any of these attributes either in perfectness or in absolute degree . Even Gauri , Parvati does not possess them in perfect and absolute measure .

Bijoya :- Yes , truly Srimati Radhika's unsurpassable beauty and super - excellent attributes are inconceivable . Her mercy alone can gift a man with the ability to perceive them .

Gosvami :- What words can describe Her beauty and excellences ? Even Krsna is kept enchanted by them , hence how can they be compared to anything at all ?

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , kindly tell me about Srimati's sakhis , or female attendants and associates ?

Gosvami :- Srimati Radhika's yutha is the finest . The damsels in this yutha are embellished with all good excellences . And with them they create an amorous and romantic ambience to attract Krsna .

Bijoya :- How many types of (Radhika's) sakhis are there ?

Gosvami :- In all , five kinds : sakhi , nityasakhi , pranasakhi , priyasakhi and parama presthasakhi .

Bijoya :- Kindly describe them individually .

Gosvami :- Kusumika , Vrnda , Dhanistha etc. are prominent sakhis while Kasturi , Manimanjari are nityasakhis . Famous pranasakhis are Sasimukhi , Vasanti , Lasika and so on ; they often acquire Srimati Radhika's selfsame image (svarupata) . The priyasakhis are Kurangaksi , Sumadhya , Madanalasa , Kamala , Madhuri , Munjakesi , Kandarpa - sundari , Madhavi , Malati , Kamalata , Sasikala and so on .

The chief among the parama prestha sakhis are the eight sakhis or asta - sakhis : Lalita , Visakha , Citra , Campakalata , Tungavi-dya , Indulekha , Rangadevi and Sudevi . They assist in the most confidential pastimes of Srimati Radha and Sri Krsna and , depending on the situation , they exhibit sometimes more love for Krsna and sometimes more towards Srimati .

Bijoya :- I have now a better concept of yutha , but what is the position of ' gana ' , or followers ?

Gosvami :- Within every yutha , or group , are smaller divisions or subgroups which are known as gana . For example , within Srimati Radhika's yutha are those who owe allegiance to Lalita-devi , they are referred to as Lalita's gana .

Bijoya :- The parodha bhava , or the female paramour temperament , is certainly an extremely exalted attribute of the damsels of Vraja . But is there a situation where parodha - bhava is not worshipable ?

Gosvami :- The distinction of male and female in the material world is illusory . These designations are the results of fruitive actions in material nature . The material nature or illusory potency is a breeding ground for irreligious and base desires , and hence the religious teachers and thinkers have proscribed man - woman relationship outside the institution of marriage . The great poets and philosophers have thus taken this a step further and denounced parodha - bhava , or paramour relationship , in mundane literature in order to uphold the pristine position of rasa and protect it under the shield of religious vows .

Rasa , which sprung from transcendental dalliances , is pure and eternal . The perverted version of this rasa is the cohabitation in the material world between the illusory male and female entities . This mundane rasa is extremely limited and bound by rules and regulations . For this reason the conditioned and insignificant female jiva is forbidden from a paramour relationship .

On the other hand , where Krsna , the embodiment of eternity , absolute knowledge and bliss (sacidanand vigraha) , is the sole purusa , or the male entity - the nayaka , there parodha - bhava , or paramour relationship , which churns up rasa , is not in the least impure or condemnable . Thus , within this highest spiritual concept there is no room for adjusting the plebian and illusory law supporting the institution of mundane marriage . When the hero of Goloka , Krsna , brings with Him His Gokuladhama and the supreme parakiya - rasa , or paramour love , down to this earth then the maidens of Gokula are above reproach for exhibiting their parodha - bhava though it has been crucified in mundane literatures .

Bijoya :- In the Gokula - maidens ' love for Krsna , what chief symptoms are manifest ?

Gosvami :- The Gokula - maidens perceive Krsna exclusively as the darling of Nanda and Yasoda (Nandanandana) . The bhava symptoms garnered from this love and affection is very difficult to fathom , what to speak of non - devotees and empiricists , but , even for the devotees . In Nandanandana Krsna , the aisvarya - bhava , or the reverential awe and opulent mood , is practically shrouded by an excess of madhurya - bhava , or the conjugal temperament . Even when Krsna while joking shows - off His four - handed form , the gopis are apathetic towards it ; nay , they ignore it . And in the presence of Srimati Radhika the four - handed form quickly disappears and is replaced by His two - handed , original form . These supra - mundane phenomena are a direct consequence of Sri Radhika's profound parakiya - rasa - bhava .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , I feel so very fortunate and I am ever grateful to you for these purports . Kindly explain the different nayikas , or heroines ?

Gosvami :- There are three types of nayikas : svakiya , parakiya and samanya . I have already spoken about the svakiya and para-kiya nayikas in spiritual rasa , so now I will delve on only the samanya nayika . The panditas of rhetorics , mundane literature and arts have ascertained that the samanya nayika are prostitutes , only greedy after money . They do not despise the characterless , unqualified nayaka , nor do they love and respect the nayaka endowed with upright character and good qualities . Hence their love and attachment is not true love , but a semblance of love , or srngarabhasa . However , in the case of Kubja of Saurindhra in Mathura , who was defined as samanya in relation to Krsna and whose attachment to Him was considered srngarabhasa , developed a particular temperament toward Krsna , which placed her as a parakiya by our spiritual authorities .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva what is this particular temperament ?

Gosvami :- When Kubja was still ugly and unattractive , she was never in love or infatuated with anybody . And when she beheld Krsna's beautiful features , she felt a spontaneous urge to apply sandalwood paste on His body . This was an exhibition of love , ascertained as parakiya love . However , her love was not the same as that of the Queens of Dvaraka , who always desired to give pleasure to Krsna . Therefore her love (rati) for Krsna is inferior to that of the Queens ' . For this reason she had tugged at Krsna's upper garment and had begged for love (rati) . Because her love was mixed with selfish motives , it (rati) is categorised as sadharani .

Bijoya :- In spiritual rasa the nayikas are divided into svakiya and parakiya . What are the other differences between the two ?

Gosvami :- Both svakiya and parakiya nayikas are of three types mugdha , madhya and pragalbha .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , because of your unlimited grace , each time I meditate on transcendental rasa I see you as one of the maidens in Vraja . At that moment all material designations of male and female disappear . I am extremely keen to learn about the differences in sentiments between the various nayikas because although I feel the bhava of the Vraja - gopis I cannot act in an appropriate manner . Therefore I wish to garnish my spiritual sentiments with their service attitude , and serve Krsna ; I pray at your feet . Kindly school me in this subject . What is mugdha - nayika and so on ?

Gosvami :- The symptoms of a mugdha nayika are : she is ever-fresh and youthful , extremely feminine , her love slants very much towards the leftist mood (bama - bhava) , she is captivated by the sakhis , is very bashful in expressing love , but in private she is artfully meticulous . If the nayaka (hero) is offensive she simply observes (Him) with tearful eyes - she does not speak harshly nor sweetly , nor does she fly into a temper - tantrum (mana) .

The madhya nayika's amorous passion (madana) and her shyness are in equal measure . She is everfresh and youthful , and her manner of speech is intrepid and

saucy (pragalbha) . Her amorous plays takes her upto the ecstatic symptom of murcha , or loss of consciousness . Her temper (mana) is at times mild but at other times it is severe . When angry , she is of three types : passive and composed (dhira) , intolerant and restless (adhira) and a mix of both dhira and adhira .

When dhira , the madhya nayika ridicules her beloved with sarcastic words ; when adhira , she hurls hurting words in a rage ; and when dhira - adhira , she is moved to tears and speaks cuttingly to her beloved . The madhya nayika possesses a combination of the mugdha's mood and the pragalbha's temperament , hence the pinnacle of all rasas are reposed in her .

The pragalbha nayika's symptoms are : she is everfresh and youthful , blinded by passion and extremely enthusiastic about romance . She knows the art of weaving a net of myriad moods (bhavas) and accosts , even intimidates , her beloved with her rasa . Her speech and activities are grave and very mature , and when angry she is harsh and imperious .

In regards to anger , the pragalbha nayikas are also of three kinds : dhira , adhira and dhiradhira . The dhira pragalbha is indifferent about amorous pleasures (sambhoga) , keeps her emotions and feelings a secret and she is affectionate . The adhira pragalbha pitilessly rails at her lover and runs him down . The dhiradhira pragalbha possesses a very similar person-ality to that of the dhiradhira nayika . Both the madhya and pragalbha nayikas are further subdivided into jyestha and kanis-tha . So there are jyestha - madhya and kanis-tha - madhya ; jyestha - pragalbha and kanis-tha - pragalbha . These distinctions of jyestha and kanis-tha mirror the inflections of the nayaka's love , or its intensity .

Bijoya :- In all , how many nayikas are there ?

Gosvami :- There are fifteen different nayikas . Kanya is exclusively a mugdha and therefore is of one kind . Mugdha , madhya and pragalbha are the three kinds of nayikas , where only madhya and pragalbha nayikas are further subdivided into dhira , adhira and dhiradhira - in simple arithmetic $3+3+1 = 7$. Seven svakiya nayikas and seven parakiya nayikas plus the one kanya , makes a total of fifteen nayikas .

Bijoya :- What are the different psychological conditions a nayika displays ?

Gosvami :- There are eight specific conditions : abhisarika , vasakasajja , utkanthita , khandita , vipralabdha , kalahantarita , prositabhartrka and svadhina - bhartrka . All the fifteen nayikas display these eight symptoms .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva kindly explain in more detail these conditions starting with abhisarika , or fondness for trysting with her lover .

Gosvami :- The nayika who makes the nayaka keep his lovers tryst , or who herself goes on a lover's tryst , is an abhisarika . The nayika who goes trysting on a fullmoon night , in a white sari , is a jyotsnabhi sarika ; and who goes trysting on a

dark - moon night in a black sari is tamobhisarika . She goes on her tryst bedecked in jewellery from head to feet ; moving stealthily and silently , shyness and modesty covers her body like a mantel and she seeks a sweet and gentle (snigdha) sakhi to accompany her .

Vasakasajja means to decorate the house and self in expectation of the lover , or nayaka ; hence the nayika who is acting in such a manner is called a vasaka - sajjika . She is determined to make amorous advances and plays in the presence of her lover . She eagerly awaits His arrival , discusses His pastimes with her girl - friends while waiting , repeatedly sends her female messengers to find out the latest news of His coming .

When the nayika becomes eager and extremely anxious due to the late arrival of her lover who is not at fault for the delay , she is called an utkanthita nayika . She experiences burning in the heart , quivering in the body , the mind continuously questioning as to why her lover did not come , feels frustrated and irritated in all her activities , perspires profusely , and narrates to everyone about her condition . The vasakasajja nayika's condition towards the end also transforms into that of the utkanthika nayika's when after waiting past the appointed time , instead of getting enraged , she begins to brood over the possibility that her lover must have come under the spell of some other woman's wiles . At this stage , the anxiety of waiting and of seperation makes her utkanthika .

When the nayaka does not turn up at the designated time but saunters in at the end of the night with visible marks of amorous play with another nayika , then the nayika in - waiting becomes ` khandita ' , or cut up . She expresses anger , releases long sighs and turns her face away from her beloved .

The vipralabdha condition is brought on by the nayaka when He fixes an appointment with the nayika which He conveys to her through signs , but for reasons beyond control He does not come . A spectrum of emotions wash over the nayika ; she feels the crippling pangs of seperation , is constantly brooding , is full of remorse , fretful thoughts plague her mind , cries constantly , loses consciousness , heaves heavy sighs and so on .

The kalahantarita nayika refuses to talk with the nayaka and irately spurns Him even when He falls at her feet in the presence of other sakhis . She raves incoherently , beats her head in grief , feels debilitating langour , breathes heavily and so on .

When nayaka travels far away , nayika is in a state of prositab-hartka . She fills the emptiness of her lover's absence by glorifying Him , feels lonely and humble , grows thin , suffers insomnia , pales with meloncholy , is restive , inert , worries deeply and so on . While the svadhinabhartka nayika keeps her beloved enchanted and near her always . She is engaged in frolic-ing in the forests , sporting games in the water with nayaka , or picking flowers and so on .

Bijoya :- The state of svadhinabhartka is very blissful to the nayika .

Gosvami :- When the nayaka is spellbound by a svadhinabhartrka nayika , so much so that He is unable to leave her company even for a moment , she is known as madhavi svadhinabhartrka nayika . Of the eight nayikas just enumerated , three - i.e. svadhinabhartrka , vasakasajja and abhisarika are always joyful and decorated with numerous jewellery and ornaments . While the other five : khandita , vipralabdha , utkanthita , prositabhartrka and kalahantarita nayikas abstain from fineries and ornaments and are often sitting resting their left cheeks on clenched fists in deep melancholy and fretful worries , that torments their hearts .

Bijoya :- What is the purport of being tormented by Krsna - prema ?

Gosvami :- Krsna - prema , or love of Krsna, is on the absolute plane and is wholly spiritual , therefore it is supremely bliss-ful . The torment one experiences in loving Krsna is simply another form of that supreme ecstasy . Torment in the material world is excruciating but in the spiritual realm it is a variant of divine ecstasy . One who experiences spiritual torment in Krsna prema alone perceives bliss as it manifests into spiritual rasa . This experience cannot be put into words .

Bijoya :- What are the gradations and degrees of Krsna - prema in these different nayikas ?

Gosvami :- The nayikas are grouped in three categories according to their varying intensity of love for Krsna . They are : uttama , madhyam and kanistha . It must be understood that Krsna reciprocates the different nayika's love in proportion to their intensity .

Bijoya :- What are the symptoms of each of these three categories ?

Gosvami :- The uttama - nayika is prepared to give up all her activities and duties however important , simply to give even a moment's pleasure to her beloved (nayaka) . If ever the nayaka should cause her pain and sorrow she never retaliates or shows malice . And if she hears even fabricated stories about the nayaka being in distress , her heart aches for Him . The madhyama nayika is one who is pained when she hears of her nayaka's troubles . The nayika who is fretful of impediments like her own shyness in reacting to public opinion when meeting her beloved nayaka , Krsna , is called a kanistha .

Bijoya :- How many types of nayikas do we have now in all ?

Gosvami :- The nayikas total 360 types . The first set of 15 nayikas multiplied by 8 makes 120 and further multiplied by 3 (the categories just mentioned) gives 360 nayikas .

Bijoya :- Gurudeva , I have followed your explanations on the different nayikas , I am eager to know more about the various and divergent personalities of the many yuthesvaris , or group leaders .

Gosvami :- Yuthesvaris are of three kinds : svapaksa , vipaksa and tatastha . They are again divided in three sections according to their good fortunes : adhika , sama

and laghvi . They are once more grouped in three categories : prakhara , madhya and mrdvi . Those yuthesvaris whose speeches are intrepid and impudent (pragalbha) are called prakhara . Those whose speeches are least pragalbha are mrdvi yuthesvaris and those who are in between these two , are the madhya yuthesvaris .

The adhika yuthesvaris are further subdivided into atyantiki and apeksiki . One who is unaparalleled and unsurpassable in all respects is atyantiki - adhika - yuthesvari - She is Radhika . Srimati Radhika is also madhya - she has no equal in Vraja or anywhere else .

Bijoya :- Which yuthesvaris come under the category of apeksika - adhika ?

Gosvami :- Those who are superior to one or more yuthesvaris are known as apeksikadhika .

Bijoya :- Who are the atyantiki - laghu yuthesvari ?

Gosvami :- The atyantiki - laghu is inferior to all the other yuthesvaris . Whereas all other yuthesvaris are inferior to atyantiki adhika . The sama laghu is only one of a kind . The madhya yuthesvaris are further sub - grouped in nine divisions . Thus there are a total of twelve sections of yuthesvaris :

1. atyantikadhika
2. sama laghu
3. adhika madhya
4. sama madhya
5. laghu madhya
6. adhika prakhara
7. sama prakhara
8. laghu prakhara
9. adhika mrdvi
10. sama mrdvi
11. laghu mrdvi
12. atyantika laghu .

Bijoya :- What are the different dutis , or female messengers ?

Gosvami :- Dutis are most important to the nayikas because nayikas are hankering for their beloved Krsna's company and the dutis assist them towards reaching that goal . Dutis are of two kinds : svayam duti and apta duti .

Bijoya :- Kindly describe svayam duti .

Gosvami :- Due to excessive enthusiasm the svayam duti sheds her shyness ; she becomes enamoured by love for the nayaka and ex-presses her own bhava , or loving sentiments , towards the nayaka . These sentiments are in the form of messages or com-plaints (abhiyoga) expressed in three ways : kayika (physical) vacika (speech) and caksusa (eyes) .

Bijoya :- What is vacika abhiyoga ?

Gosvami :- Vacika abhiyoga is expressed in vyanga , or a form of speech which carries insinuations and banterings . Vyanga is of two arts : sabda - vyanga (of words) and arthavyanga (of meanings) . Vyanga sometimes makes Krsna its subject , and sometimes the articles present on the scene , to manifest itself .

Bijoya :- In what way does Krsna become the subject of vyanga ?

Gosvami :- Vyanga works in two ways when making Krsna its sub-ject : saksat (direct) and vyapadesa (on pretext) .

Bijoya :- What is saksat vyanga ?

Gosvami :- Saksat vyanga is of many types , but mainly three : garva (vanity) , aksepa (lamentation) and yacna (solici-tations) .

Bijoya :- Kindly explain aksepa vyanga .

Gosvami :- Aksepa vyanga leads to two other varieties of vyanga sabdottha (from words) and arthottha (from meanings) . You are a student of rhetorics and literature hence I think citing examples are unnecessary .

Bijoya :- Yes , that is corrcet , what is yacna vyanga ?

Gosvami :- Yacna vyanga is of two types : svartha (self - interest) and parartha (other's interest) . Both these yacna vyangas are embellished with sabda vyanga and arthavyanga . When bhava is added to sabda vyanga it becomes sanketika (symbolical) yacna . In svartha yacna the duti speaks about herself and in parartha yacna she instigates another person to speak about somebody else not present .

Bijoya :- That was mostly about saksat vyanga , which I have understood . The sabda vyanga and artha vyanga are often present in the nayika's speech when as she addresses Krsna directly with complaints , (abhiyoga vakya) . These have been expressed in plays and dramas by the authors and poets through clever use of words and nuances . What is vyapadesa (pretext) in vyanga ?

Gosvami :- The word vyapadesa is a technical terminology for the word apadesa , found in the literatures of rhetorics . It factu-ally means , to use some other topic as pretext to convey a confidential matter .

The direct meaning of a speech spoken to Krsna by the nayika will convey the obvious , but in vyanga the meaning changes : it will imply a prayer soliciting Krsna's company and the opportunity to serve Him - this is the definition of vyapadesa . This form of speech (vyapadesa) also acts like a duti , or female messenger .

Bijoya :- Vyapadesa is a form of artful speech full of innuen-does and insinuations whose hidden meaning is solicitation or yacna . I have understood it , kindly tell

me more about vyanga .

Gosvami :- When nayika speaks to Krsna and sees that Krsna is listening but thinks that He is not , so she begins to prattle with a bird or beast or tree etc. present there - it is known as purastha - visaya - gata vyanga , or addressing some other entity in the presence of nayaka to attract His attention .

Bijoya :- Kindly elaborate upon the kayika - abhiyoga , or messages conveyed through the body .

Gosvami :- Kayika abhiyoga is done in the presence of Krsna . In many ways the body sends signals to Him . Cracking of finger joints , getting up quickly on some pretext ; covering the body out of fear or shyness ; drawing figures on the ground with the toe ; scratching the ears ; applying tilaka with slow , deliberate movements ; playing about with the dress and wearing new clothes ; making the eyebrows dance ; embracing a sakhi ; chas-tising a sakhi ; biting the lips ; stretching the bones ; jin-gling the ornaments and jewelleries ; pulling at the hands from the shoulder sockets ; embracing trees etched with Krsna's name , and so on , are all kayika or angika abhiyoga .

Bijoya :- What is caksusa abhiyoga , or messages signalled with the eyes ?

Gosvami :- Smiling through the eyes , half opening the eyes , making the eyes dance , expressing hesitation with the eyes , looking out of the corner of the eyes , glancing with only the left eye , squinted glances etc. are messages and feelings con-veyed with the eyes .

Bijoya :- So far you have described svayam duti very systemati-cally but briefly , knowing well that there are unlimited types of svayam duti . Who are the apta - dutis and how many types are there ?

Gosvami :- Those sakhis who never leak out confidential matters and never breach another's trust reposed in them even in death , is called an aptaduti . They are extremely affectionate and superb conversationalists . Such ambidextrous young maidens are the favourite dutis of the vraja nayikas .

There are three categories of aptadutis : amitartha , nisrstartha and patrahari . The amitartha dutis are percipient of implica-tions conveyed by innuendos and hints ; they immediately arrange trysts between their mistress and her beloved . One who makes appointments only after being convinced by logic and reason , is known as nisrstartha duti . The patrahari duti is simply a carri-er of messages .

Bijoya :- Are there any more apta dutis ?

Gosvami :- Silpakarini , Daivajna , Lingini , Paricarika , Dhatreyi , Vanadevi and the sakhis are also considered dutis . Many of the female artists arrange amorous rendezvous through paintings and sketches . Daivajna duti sets up secret meetings based on astrological readings . Purnamasi is a renunciant (tapasvini) and she is a Lingini duti .

Labanga - manjari , Bhanumati and others are sakhis who are paricarika duti , but for Srimati Radhika they act as dhatreyi dutis . Vanadevi is the presiding deity of Vrndavana .

Many of the sakhis mentioned earlier also act as dutis . They are vacika dutis who convey messages which are spoken directly with unequivocal meanings ; they are also vyanga dutis who deliver messages in sabda vyanga and artha vyanga (which were earlier discussed) . The complete gamut of abhiyoga (messages) covered by them are : vyapadesa , sabdamula , arthamula , prasamsa , aksepa and so on .

Bijoya Kumara keenly absorbed all these esoteric analyses of different types of intimate devotional services . He offered dandavat at his guru's feet and begged permission to leave . His mind was alive with thoughts scrutinising the arcane knowledge he received,while he slowly walked towards home .

Chapter 34 Dissertation On Madhura - Rasa Continued

Bijoya Kumara finished early his midday repast. He was going as usual to meet his guru in Kasi Misra's house. Having spare time in hand he strolled by the ocean. The sparkling waves caught his attention, he began to think of the ocean of rasa: `this ocean is stirring up spiritual emotions in my heart. Although mundane, it is awakening and bringing to the fore recondite transcendental sentiments which are like gurudeva's description of rasa. My gross and subtle bodies have melted into oblivion and I am stand-ing before the ocean of rasa relishing my spiritual identity of that of a manjari (manjari-svarupa).

Krsna, whose complexion resembles the luminous dark hue of fresh monsoon clouds is the sole proprietor of my heart. Beside Him, is the darling daughter of Vrsabhanu, Srimati Radhika,---- She is my Ladyship and enthroned in my heart. The amorous exchanges between Srimati Radha and Sri Krsna have metamorphosed into this ocean before me. The gamut of bhava steeped in rasa, are the unbroken scrolls of waves. As and when, whatever bhava peaks it heaves me, a sakhi on the shores, and sweeps me away in its currents and anoints me with its deluge of Krsna prema. This ocean of rasa is Krsna; hence the ocean's complexion is the same as Krsna's com-plexion and the cresting waves of divine love is Srimati Radha, so the colour of the waves is a beautiful molten-gold.

The larger waves are sakhis and the smaller ones are the assist-ants to the sakhis. I see myself as the smallest of waves, far-away trying to serve the assistants.' Bijoya Kumara was enrapp-tured and engrossed in his meditation. Slowly his consciousness returned to his immediate, external surroundings and he walked away from the ocean and reached the Radha-kanta temple. He pros-trated before his guru and humbly sat down.

Srila Guru Goswami received him with warm affection and said : I hope you had a comfortable walk here ?

Bijoya: Srila gurudeva, your mercy is the singular cause of all my good-forture. I sincerely wish to serve the sakhis and so I like to learn the subtle variations in them.

Gosvami: Bijoya you must realise that it is impossible for the jiva to describe in full detail the transcendental attributes of the sakhis. Whatever we have learnt is by Srila Rupa Goswami's mercy. The sakhis are the lovely damsels of Vraja who perfectly augment the transcendental amorous pastimes of Krsna. They are reservoirs of trustworthiness for the Divine couple of Vrndavana. Only a select few, blessed souls develop the eagerness to thoroughly educate themselves about them. The sakhis who are attached to their individual yutha, or legion are divided into: adhika, laghavi and again as prakhara, madhya and mrdvi. I have already touched on these gradations yesterday with you. Srila Rupa Goswami comments about them :

"prema saubhagyasad gunyadyadhikyadadhika sakhi
sama tatsamyato jneya tallaghutvattatha laghuh
durlanghya vakyaprakhara prakhyata gauravocita
tadunatve bhavenmrdvi madhya tatsamyamagata
atyantikadhikatvadibhedah purvavadatra sah
svayuthe yuthanathaiva syadatratyantikadhika
sa kvapi prakhara yuthe kvapi madhya mrduh kvacit" (Ujjvala: sakhiprah 1).

(The sakhis are replete with the supramundane good fortune of divine love (prema) and decorated with all-immaculate excellences. When such characteristics are in abundance in certain sakhis they are called adhika, when they are in moderate measure, the sakhis are called sama and when in lesser degree they are known as laghavi. Those sakhis whose orders dare not be transgressed are known as prakhara, they are dignified and weighty. When gravity and weightiness in personality is less than they are in the prakhara, those sakhis are known as mrdvi and when they are in moderate degree they are called madhya sakhis. The last batch of sakhis are also divided into atyantika , adhika etc. The headmistress of the legion [yuthesvari] is alone an atyantika-adhika sakhi in her own yutha, or legion ; but in other legions she is sometimes prakhara and at other times mrdvi).

Bijoya: The atyantika yuthesvari is the leader of the group. She is divided into three categories: prakhara, madhya and mrdvi. You have earlier discussed about them. Kindly tell me what differentiates the numerous sakhis from each other.

Gosvami: In a yutha, or legion, the yuthesvari is atyantika-adhika. The other sakhis in the yutha are classified into three sections : apeksikadhika, apeksikasama and apeksika-laghvi --- that makes a total of nine varieties :

1. apeksikadhika prakhara.
2. apeksikadhika madhya.
3. apeksikadhika mrdvi.
4. apeksikasama prakhara.
5. apeksikasama madhya.
6. apeksikasama mrdvi.
7. apeksikalaghu prakhara.
8. apeksikalaghu madhya.

9. apeksikalaghu mrdvi.

Atyantika laghu is again of two kinds: atyantika-laghu and sama-laghu. The nine apeksika sakhis plus these two atyantika laghu and the yuthesvari herself, totals twelve types of nayika, or sakhis, that comprise every single yutha.

Bijoya: How are the more prominent sakhis classified ?

Gosvami: Sakhis like Lalita belong to Srimati Radhika's yutha and are classified as apeksikadhika-prakhara. In the same yutha Visakha and others are in the category of apeksikadhika madhya; and Citra, Madhurika and others are apeksikadhika-mrdvi. However, in comparison with Srimati Radhika, the asta-sakhis like Lalita devi are apeksika laghu-prakhara.

Bijoya: Are there any classifications in apeksika-laghu-prakhara?

Gosvami: Yes, they are of two types: vama and daksina.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, pray tell their differences.

Gosvami: The vama apeksika-laghu-prakhara sakhis like Lalitadevi are always eager to embrace the loving sentiment of mana, and when mana wanes they are left with enrage; they do not easily submit to the wishes of the nayaka. Such are the characteristics of the vama sakhi, who in Srimati Radhika's camp (yutha) are lauded as vama prakhara.

Nayikas, who are apathetic to mana, speak reasonably with the nayaka (Krsna) and are easily captivated by the nayaka's sweet talks are daksina sakhis. In Srimati Radhika's camp (yutha) Tungavidya is described as daksina prakhara sakhi.

Bijoya: Who are the atyantika laghu sakhis ?

Gosvami: Because they are always mild and gentle and are very junior, these sakhis like Kusumika are called atyantika laghu.

Bijoya: In what manner do these sakhis act as messengers ?

Gosvami: They arrange for a lovers tryst, running between the nayaka and nayika who are at distances from each other.

Bijoya: Do sakhis attain the position of a nayika, or heroine ?

Gosvami: The yuthesvaris, or camp leaders are eternal nayikas. The apeksikadhika-prakhara, apeksikadhika-madhya and apeksikadhika-mrdvi sakhi's characteristics place them in both categories of nayika and sakhi. In relation to sakhis who are inferior to them, they are nayikas, and simultaneously they are sakhis in relation to their superiors,--- in any case they are allocated the unique status of being quasi-nayikas (nayika-praya).

The apeksikasama-prakhara, madhya and mrdvi sakhis are sakhis in relation to superiors and nayikas in relation to inferiors. The apeksikalaghu --- prakhara, madhya and mrdvi are almost all sakhis. The atyantika laghu sakhis are all sakhis in relation to their yuthesvari as well as to the three types of sakhis. They comprise a fifth class and are hence called nityasakhis, or eter-nal sakhis. In relation to the yuthesvaris the apeksika group of sakhis are both sakhis and dutis (messengers) but never nayikas. But in relation to atyantikalaghu sakhis, or the nityasakhis, all others are nayikas, and never their dutis.

Bijoya: Who are the dutis of the sakhis ?

Gosvami: The yuthesvaris are eternal heroines (nitya-nayika) and because they are everyone's favourite and beloved, they do not have fixed head-dutis. Which ever sakhis are dear to the yuthes-vari in her camp, she engages them in plying messages. However, sometimes the yuthesvari herself acts as an indirect messenger (gauna duti) to her favourite sakhis in their amorous interplays. Sending of messages which are not to distant places is called gauna --- it is, in relation to Krsna, of two types : samaksa and paroksa.

Bijoya: What is Krsna-samaksa dutya, or messengering ?

Gosvami: It is again of two kinds: sanketika and vacika.

Bijoya: What are sanketika and vacika dutya ?

Gosvami: When Krsna is communicated with by signs such as wink-ing, raising eyebrows, crooking the index finger etc indication for Him to go and meet the nayika it is called sanketika. Mes-sages which are spoken directly, in the open or in seclusion, to Krsna are known as vacika.

Bijoya: What is paroksa dutya ?

Gosvami: When a sakhi offers her colleague (sakhi) to Krsna in His presence, or sends her to meet Him, it is called paroksa dutya.

Bijoya: How is the nayika-praya dutya ?

Gosvami: When apeksikadhika-prakhara, madhya and mrdvi sakhis act as dutis to their respective laghu sakhis, they are said to be acting as nayika-praya dutis. Amongst them the sama and madhya sakhis are extremely hearty and affectionate with each other and are known for their tender - sweet dealings between them. These subtleties are perceived only by the most elevated and realised pure souls.

Bijoya: What is sakhi-praya dutya ?

Gosvami: Usually Laghu-prakhara, madhya and mrdvi are engaged in sending messages hence their messengering is called sakhi-praya dutya.

Bijoya: Kindly describe nitya-sakhi.

Gosvami: Those gopis who are not very keen to become nayikas and who are satisfied and attached to being sakhis, are nitya-sakhis. There are two types of nitya-sakhi: atyantika laghu and apeksika laghu.

Bijoya: Are traits such as prakharya, or intensity and keenness, permanent, eternal traits in particular sakhis ?

Gosvami: They are indeed personality traits that sakhis possess; but relevant to specific circumstances, these qualities are in-verted. For example, in endeavouring to dissolve Srimati Radha's anger in love (mana), Lalita is extremely concerned and tender.

Bijoya: It seems to me that it is under Srimati Radha's careful arrangement that the sakhis can meet Lord Krsna.

Gosvami: Bijoya, there is something strictly confidential about this topic. When any sakhi is sent as a messenger (duti) to Krsna, and delivers the messages in lonely spots, even if Krsna seeks romantic intimacy with her, she declines. If she acquiesces to Krsna's advances then trust and faith in the priya-sakhi's ability and uprightness as a messenger is irreparably damaged.

Bijoya: What are the primary activities of the sakhis ?

Gosvami: There are sixteen such activities : (1) describing the wonderful qualities of the nayaka to the nayika and vice versa.(2) Encouraging and enhancing nayaka's and nayika's attach-ment for each other.(3) Arranging secret trysts for Them. (4) Arranging for sakhi (Radha) to offer Herself to Krsna. (5) To make fun and cut jokes. (6) To instil confidence and faith. (7) To try out new and novel sartorial styles and dressing. (8) Ex-pertly ween out both Their emotions and inner feelings for each other. (9) To cover up mistakes and oversights. (10) To educate Them on how to bluff the husband, mother and so on. (11) To bring the nayaka and nayika together at appropriate moments. (12) Serving Then by fanning with camara or hand fan etc. (13) To rebuke the nayaka in particular instances, as well as rebuke the nayika on certain other occassions. (14) Sending messages. (15) To protect nayika's life. (16) To be attentive to, and diligent about, every little detail (in service). All these activities can be described through examples ---- would you like to hear them ?

Bijoya: Gurudeva, you have given me ideas and guidelines, I will read the examples in Ujjvala-nilamani. I am eager to hear about the loving exchanges between Krsna and the sakhis.

Gosvami: The svapaksa-sakhis, or sakhis belonging to a fripendly or supportive group (yutha), are categorised as asama sneha and sama sneha in relation to their love for Krsna and their yuthes-vari, or group leader.

Bijoya: Kindly describe these two categories.

Gosvami: Asama-sneha sakhis are also of two kinds. Some sakhis are more attached and affectionate to their yuthesvari than to Krsna. Those who consider themselves hari-dasi, or maid-servants of Hari, Krsna, do not mingle with other yuthas, or groups, but are fully loyal and affectionate to their own yuthesvari, and yet their love for Krsna is even more. The other kind consider them-selves as maid-servants of the sakhis, or sakhi-dasi; they love the sakhis more than Krsna.

Bijoya: Which sakhis come under these categories ?

Gosvami: Among the five varieties of sakhis we earlier discussed, the sakhis are more affectionate to Krsna, while the prana-sakhis and nitya-sakhis are more affectionate to the sakhis.

Bijoya: Who are the sama-sneha sakhis ?

Gosvami: Those sakhis who possess equal affection for Krsna and their yuthesvari are sama-sneha sakhis.

Bijoya: Who among the sakhis are acclaimed as the best ?

Gosvami: Those sakhis who share equal love for Srimati Radhika and Sri Krsna but feel pride in knowing that they belong to Srimati Radhika and are recipients of Her love, are the outstanding sakhis. They are the priya sakhis and parama-prestha sakhis.

Bijoya: Gurudeva, Kindly tell me the differences between sakhis who take opposing stances known as paksa (for) and pratipaksa, or vipaksa (against).

Gosvami: All the damsels of vraja can be divided into four groups: svapaksa, suhrtpaksa, tatastha, and pratipaksa. Suhrtpak-sa and tatastha are incidental stances arising out of specific situations. The differences between svapaksa and pratipaksa generate rasa.

Bijoya: I desire to know this subject in more detail.

Gosvami: I have already described in detail about svapaksa. Suhrtpaksa sakhis are of two kinds: ista sadhaka and anista-sadhaka. Those who are friendly to the opposite camp (pratipaksa) are known as tatastha. Those who subvert and foil another group from achieving their goal and in the process bring suffering upon them both, due to inimical feelings for each other, are pratipak-sa sakhis. Deceit (chadma), jealousy (irsa), restlessness (capa-lya), cynicism (asuya), envy (matsarya), intolerance (amarsa), conceit (garba) and other such bhavas, or emotions, gradually manifest in the vipaksa-sakhis.

Bijoya: How is garba, or conceit exhibited ?

Gosvami: There are six types of garba: ahankara (egotism), abhi-mana (touchiness), darpa (arrogance), uddhasita (insolence), mada (haughtiness), auddhatya (impertinence).

Bijoy: Gurudeva, can these be described in more detail ?

Gosvami: When svapaksa (one's own group) is being praised, the feeling of regret for the pratipaksa (opposite camp) is called ahamkara (egotism). To express with emotions and actions , sva-paksa's level of excellence in prema , is abhimana (touchiness). To loudly boast about the exclusive admission rights into Radha-Krsna's pastimes by the svapaksa sakhis, is known as darpa (arrogance). The direct retorts and derisive jokes hurled at the pratipaksa or vipaksa=sakhis is uddhasita (insolence). The feel-ing of pride in accomplishing expertly one's devotional service is here referred to as mada (haughtiness). To unabashedly declare one's (svapaksa) superiority in everything is auddhatya (impertinence). In general , the sakhis cryptic and critical conversations are called garba.

Bijoy: Do the yuthesvaris directly express jealousy (irsa) ?

Gosvami: No, due to the gravity of their senior positions the yuthesvaris never articulate directly any jealousy towards the vipaksa. In fact, even sharp-tongued (prakhara) yuthesvaris restrain themselves to soft and mellow speech with vipaksa yu-thesvaris.

Bijoy:Gurudeva, the yuthesvaris in the Vraja pastimes are all eternally perfected energies (nitya-siddha sakti) of the Supreme Lord. What is the purport of their jealous and hateful dealings with each other ? Observing all these mundane empiricists and rhetoricians are scornful about the absolute , esoteric sublime-ness of Vraja-lila. Their contention is, if such hate and jealousy is present in the Supreme Transcendental Principle, then why despise and renounce worldly activities ?

Prabhu, we reside in Navadvipa dhama; by Sri Krsna Caitanya's desire the place is infested with a variety of non-devotees. There are the karmakandis (smarta brahmanas), the logicians and empiricists and uncountable blasphemers. They try to pick faults and criticise the wonderful and supra-mundane vraja-pastimes of Sri Radha and Sri Krsna, and they propagate them as mundane , illusory. Kindly enlighten us on this arcane knowledge so that our dedication becomes firmer.

Gosvami: Those who are devoid of any spiritual relish or rasa, are the ones who complain about the presence of conflicting spiritual sentiments in the hearts of confidential and beloved associates of the Supreme Lord , Krsna. To fathom this recondite knowledge one must perceive that priya - narma - sakha , whose best friend is Krsna , the beguiler of millions of cupids and the slayer of the Agha demon , is the embodiment of srngara, or madhurya rasa in Vraja. He (Priyanarma sakha, the embodiment of srngara rasa) arranges for opposing spiritual emotions like irsa among the different paksas, or groups , to enhance rasa and satisfy Krsna.

But such opposing bhavas are expressed only at times of union (with Krsna) and are merely transformations of sneha, or affection. When seperated (from Krsna) , opposing the paksas feel deep affection for each other.

Bijoy: Prabhu, we are unfortunate, conditioned souls, hence for us these arcane topics are not easy to comprehend. Kindly elabo-rate upon this mystical truth.

Gosvami: The nectar or rasa of prema is a vast ocean of milk. If contentious arguments which is akin to cow urine (very acidic), is poured into this ocean, the milk curdles due to it being an antidote to rasa. It is not advisable to delve deeply into this esoteric truth . Only those who are favoured by bhaktidevi (the goddess of pure devotion) as a result of their immeasurable piety , and who enlightens their hearts with the beacon of cit - hladi-ni - sakti , or the Supreme Lord's transcendental pleasure giving potency , are able to become cognizant of the spiritual essence sans arguments .

Whereas , when one tries to grapple this subject with reason and logic, the inconceivable , pure conclusions remain latent and arguments and rhetorics increase and run into polencics. But you are a very fortunate soul. You are a receipient of bhaktidevi's blessings and so the esoteric essence has been revealed to you. Since you have questioned me out of your keenness to be firmly established in these spiritual conclusions , I will try to reit-erate and expand upon them. You are not an argumentative rhetori-cian, nor a karmakandi smarta brahmana, neither an empiricist philosopher nor anagnostic, you are also not a neophyte devotee on the level of vaidhi bhakti. I have no reservation about speak-ing to you on any spiritual siddhanta, or conclusion.

There are two types of enquirers : one bases his enquiries on dry logic and reason ; the other has faith in the principles of bhakti and in order to expand his understanding of the eternally perfect and infallible truths, he enquires submissively. It is best to avoid answering questions of dry logicians and rational-ists, because they do not believe the Truth. Their reasons and arguments are all based on mundane speculations hence they have no access into the realm of inconceivable spiritual concepts. Indefatigueable juggling of ideas nor speculation can enhance their comprehension to the level of spiritual percepience of inconceivable precepts. They ultimately land into the quagmire of atheisim and reject God in totality.

There are numerous divisions among the devotee (bhakta) enquir-ers. The bhakta who has gained eligibility into srngara-rasa can grasp this topic at hand only if he finds a bonafide and quali-fied guru. The transcendental emotions and spiritual sentiments, or the rasa of Vrndavana - lila is super excellent. This may, superficially, look like the srngara-rasa , or amorous sentiments , of the material world, but in truth it is completely different from it . The Srimad Bhagavatam, in the tenth canto (SB 10/33/30) states that anyone who reads or hears the rasa-lila pastimes will have the seed of materialism, which is the cause of his material disease, extracted out of his heart.

What is the conditioned soul's heart disease ? Mundane lust. Jiva's

misidentification with the gross material body that wedges the differences of male and female genders , and the three subtle elements (mind,intelligence,false-ego) comprising his subtle material body which is a matrix for endless mundane desires, can all be easily extirpated by the all-purifying vraja=pastimes of the Supreme Lord. In fact , nothing else contains the potency to do so. This aspect of Vrndavana-lila srngara-rasa in itself is so amazingly wonderous that mundane lust, so contemptible, is depu-rated by hearing or reading about it . The brahman concept, that absorbs the minds of atmaramas, or impersonal, monistic philosophers, is blown away like a dry leaf in a storm, as srngara-rasa regally and eternally enthrones herself on that abdicated throne. Srngara-rasa shines eternally in the brilliance of her own glory, thus waning the radiance of awe and reverential , humour or aisvarya-rasa , of vaikuntha in the spiritual sky. Her's is the rasa par excellence where purnananda and sandrananda, or the fully-blossomed ever-expanding nectarean bliss, is permanently present . Neither dry humourless joy, nor mundane happiness and not even restrained transcendental bliss exist within her. She shelters within herself the unlimited variagated bhavas, or spiritual emotions, which manifest themselves in many instances as contradictory, or vijatiya bhava, simply to assist rasas to find full expression. These vijatiya-bhavas are sometimes affec-tionate (snehatmaka), at other times filled with jealousy and hate (dvesatmaka).

However , jealousy, hate etc vijatiya-bhavas are diametrically opposite in nature to their counterparts in the material world. They are variagated transformations of the feeling of supreme bliss. They are like the sun that heats up the water and swells and expands the ocean of rasa. According to Srila Rupa Gosvami bhava is variagated. Those bhavas which accept allround sameness in texture , are svapaksa bhava. Where there are slight differ-ences in bhava texture (orjati) it is suhrt-paksa. Where the differences are pronounced, bhava is tatastha. And when the texture is opposing, having a totally alien hue , bhava is vipak-sa. So when bhava is vijatiya, or of conflicting textures, they are not palatable ; hence the supreme ocean of bliss produces feelings of jealousy, hate etc.

Bijoy:: But how can conflicting, even adverse bhavas and polari-sations of paksa (for) and vipaksa (against) find place here ?

Gosvami: When two nayikas express very similar bhavas with equal fervor , it is time for paksa and vipaksa bhavas to make an entry. Thus you see, that camaraderie and belligerence are both inflections of rasa, and that too , solely for the purpose of enriching and sweetening the uninterrupted flow of srngara-rasa.

Bijoy: Are Srimati Radhika and Sri Candravali , both sakti prin-ciple, at par with each other ?

Gosvami: No, no ! Srimati Radhika embodies the unattainable (for any other being) , paramount spectrum of bhavas (mahabhava-mayi) and the hladini-sakti, or (Krsna's) pleasure giving potency. Sri Candravali is only Her partial expansion and an infinitely lesser potency. This notwithstanding, Candravali has been especially empowered and assigned with certain emotions, or bhavas , which are

facsimilar to Srimati Radhika's . Solely to nurture Srimati Radhika's loving pastimes in srngara-rasa, and because of it Candravali's bhavas produce conflicts (vipaksata).

Another important factor is , that two yuthesvaris cannot possess completely similar textures of bhavas (sajatiya bhava), on rare occasions when similarities do surface, then there is only a touch of it and also it happens suddenly. Svapaksa and vipaksa bhavas are natural products in the intercourse of rasas.

Bijoya: Srila Gurudeva, my apprehensions have finally been al-layed. Your nectarean instructions have entered my heart and terminated the bitterness of ignorance and doubt. I have now a comprehensive understanding of the different divisions of alamba-na, or the cause of spiritual sentiments (bhavas) , in madhurya-rasa.

Krsna, the icon of eternality, absolute knowledge and bliss, is the sole nayaka, or hero. The hero manifests a variety of charac-teristics which are broadly captioned under: dhirodatta, dhirala-lita, dhirasanta and dhiroddhata. He plays both the husband and the paramour, eternally churning up rasa with His pastimes. In these roles He introduces attitudes like being favourable, gener-ous, deceitful and precocious (anukula,daksina, satha, dhrsta). He, the divine flutist , is always served by His dearest friends Ceta, Vita, Vidusaka, Pithamarddaka and Priyanarna sakha. Krsna, as the singular object of madhurya-rasa, has appeared in my heart.

The damsels of Vraja are the nayikas, or heroines, who are the shelters and supports of madhurya-rasa. Nayikas are of two kinds: svakiya and parakiya. In Vraja pastimes the parakiya nayikas are the mainstay support of srngara-rasa. Parakiya nayikas are of three varieties: sadhana-para, devi and nitya-priya. These exqui-site damsels of vraja have distributed themselves over numerous yuthas , or groups , in order to serve Krsna. Millions upon mil-lions of vraja-gopis are guided by innumerable yuthesvaris. Srimati Radhika and Sri Candravali are the two principle yuthes-varis. Srimati Radhika's yutha features five types of sakhis : sakhi, nityasakhi, pransakhi, priyasakhi and parama-presthasakhi.

The eight main sakhis like Lalita, Visakha are the paramaprestha-sakhis. Although they are qualified to become yuthesvaris, the yearning to remain always subservient to Srimati Radhika prompts them not to opt for leading a seperate yutha. But those gopis who like to emulate them are known as their (Lalita, Visakha) followers. In all , mainly there are fifteen categories of nayikas, or vraja-gopis : mugdha, madhya and pragalbha, who are further grouped as : kanya, svakiya and parakiya. But if other sub-categorisations are also included like the eight condi-tions of nayikas such as abhisarika (on her way to the lovers tryst) , who are all then graded as : uttama, madhyama and kanis-tha, then there is a final tally of $15*8*3=$ three hundred sixty.

My heart goes into raptures thinking about the yuthesvaris warm and affable demeanour (suhrd vyabahara), I even comprehend their purports. I can grasp the differences of activities between dyutakarya (messengering) and sakhikarya (chores of a maid in attendence). This most esoteric knowledge has opened my

doors of perception and I understand the principle of rasa-asraya, or the support and shelter of rasa. I have also grasped the principle of alambana, or the cause which gives rise to spiritual sentiments, which finds expression within vibhava when the object (visaya) and asraya (subject, shelter) of srngara rasa are brought together. Tomorrow I shall be back at my place here at your lotus-feet to learn about uddipana, or the causes of stimulation of rasa. Supreme Lord Krsna, has truly been merciful to me to bring me to a guru of your sublime caliber. Your nectarean words are my only sustenance.

Gosvami affectionately puts his arms around Bijoy and says : " My son , I am forever grateful to Krsna for sending me such a worthy disciple as you. The more esoteric questions you ask, Srila Nima-nanda is prompting from within me with all the right answers."

It was a touching scene. The overwhelmed and grateful disciple and the satisfied and humble guru were exchanging words of deep - felt spiritual affection. The residents of the Sri Radhakanta temple were in raptures. Sri Dhyana-candra was extremely pleased to see Bijoya being showered with such abundant , divine grace. Suddenly, some exalted devotees of the temple began to sing a song composed by the great vaisnava poet Candidasa :

"soi keba sunailo syamnam

kaner bhitor diya, marome posiloga, akul korilo mor pran
na jani katek madhu, syamname ache go, badon chadite nahipare
jopite,jopite nam,abos korilo go, kemane paibo soi tare.
nam partape jar aichan korilo go, anger parose kiba hoy
jekhane basati tar nayone dekhiya go, jubati dharom koiche roy
pasorite kori mone pasora najaye go, ki koribo ki habe upaye
kahe dwijo condidase, kulbati kulnase,apnar jouban ja caye".

(Sister ! who uttered Syama's name ?

It entered my ears and lodged itself in my heart.
And why does it make my heart so flighty
Oh what sweet nectar springs from that name
My palate can't restrain itself from such relish
My body is numb as I chant incessantly Syama's name
O Sister ! How can I find Him.
If His name is so potent , to do this to me
What will become of me by the mere touch of His body
Ever since my eyes have dwelt on Him
How can I keep my vows of chastity ?
Long have I struggled to push Him away from my thoughts
But alas ! What can I do ? Is there another way ?
Dvija Candidasa humbly says,
The upholderess of the family honour has sacrificed Herself
At the altar of Your (Syama's) ever-fresh, blossoming youthful-ness.

Accompanied by the khola drum and symbols the singing continued late into the

night drowning everyone in waves of ecstasy. Bijoy prostrated himself before his guru Srila Gosvami, offered his respects to all the vaisnavas and left for his home.

Chapter 35 Analysis of Madhura-rasa Continues.

The intimate and intricate details of alambana-tattva, or the cause which gives rise to spiritual sentiments- bhava, kept his mind constantly preoccupied, his heart desired for nothing else. There was a growing disinterest in all material dealings. Today, Bijoy quickly ate some morsels which were readily available and hurried off like a lunatic, to the Radhakanta temple and prostrated himself at Srila Gosvami's feet. Srila Gosvami affectionately lifted him up, embraced him and made him sit down. Without wasting a word Bijoy submissively enquired : " Prabhu, I am yearning to learn about the different uddipanas in madhurya rasa, kindly teach me."

Gosvami: Uddipana, or stimulants of rasa, in madhurya-rasa are Krsna's and His beloved gopi's qualities, names, characteristics, wardrobes, links or connections and ambience (guna, nama, carita, mandan, sambandhi, tatastha).

Bijoy: Kindly describe these in detail.

Gosvami: Guna, or qualities, in uddipana are of three kinds : manasika (of the mind), vacika (of speech) and kayika (physical). The manasika gunas are many like gratitude, compassion, forgiveness etc. The vacika gunas are, pleasing words that sound sweet to the ears. The kayika-gunas are numerous: bayasa (age), rupa (beauty) labanya (charm), saundarya (physical exquisiteness), abhirupata (lending one's beauty), madhurya (exceptional physical beauty), marddava (soft and sensitive) and so on. In madhurya rasa, bayasa is of four kinds : bayahsandhi, navyabayasa, vyaktabayasa, purna-bayasa.

Bijoy : Prabhu, pray enumerate the kayika gunas.

Gosvami: First the different types of bayasa, or age. The transition period between childhood and youth is called bayahsandhi; it is also known as kaisora. Childhood (balya) is also referred to as pauganda. Krsna's and His beloved girl-friends' formative years in bayahsandhi is an uddipana. Navyabayasa is navyauvana, or puberty. There is a slight swelling of breasts, restless eyes, a hint of a smile on the lips and a trifle change and perturbation in the mind."

At this point in the discourse, a vaisnava belonging to the Sri Sampradaya, or the spiritual line coming from Laksmidevi, and a sannyasi scholar of the Sankara school came to visit and offered obeisances to the deities. A Sri-vaisnava considers himself as a male servitor of the Lord; while a Sankara sannyasi absorbs in dry meditation of impersonal brahman. That meant that neither visitors were attracted

to the spiritual identities of a Vraja-gopi. Discussing madhurya rasa details in the presence of those who are attached to the male identities is a taboo, so Srila Gosvami and Bijoy curtailed their confidential discussion and selected an appropriate philosophical conversation with the visitors. After a while the pilgrims left for the siddha-bakula tree, Bijoy smiled knowingly and repeated his question to Srila Gosvami.

Gosvami: The symptoms of vyaktayauvana, or blossoming youth, are: well-formed breasts, three lines or wrinkles across the belly and the whole body bursting with lustre of youth. In purnayauvana, or full youth, the buttocks are abundant, narrow waistlines, the body radiates a bright complexion, the breasts are large and shapely and the thighs resemble the stems of banana trees. Some damsels, even though quite young, look to be in purna-yauvana because of early maturity and overall physical exquisiteness.

Bijoy: I have understood the different bayasas, what is rupa, lavanya, and so on ?

Gosvami: When a young girl looks beautiful and bright even without make-up and jewellery is said to possess rupa. Her body is very proportionate. Lavanya is best described by the lustre that sparkles from within a pearl, such is the charm and radiance of her bodily complexion. Saundarya means, where all the limbs and parts of the body are proportionate to each other, are delicate and graceful. Abhirupata means, the mystic potency to make others near at hand resemble oneself in bodily features. An aspect of a body's charm and beauty that is both inexplicably exquisite and the reason for it unknown, is called madhurya. The quality of shyness and intolerance manifest only when in contact with another very delicate and soft person is termed mardava, it is of three varieties: uttama, madhyama, kanistha.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, I have grasped the meanings of different gunas, kindly tell me about the other uddipanas like nama, carita, mandana etc.

Gosvami: The names of Sri Radha and Sri Krsna, which are saturated with sublime transcendental relish is called nama. Carita, or nature, is of two types: anubhava and lila. Anubhava begins where vibhava ends. Lila is eternal, ever-fresh and endless: caru-krda (sweet gamboling), nrtya (dance), venu-vadana (flute playing), go-dohana (milking the cows), calling the cows from the pasturing hills by their names, counting them etc.

Bijoy: Kindly describe caru-krda lila in more detail.

Gosvami: Caru-lila includes everything from rasa dance lila to playing with the ball --- unlimited captivating pastimes.

Bijoy: What is mandana ?

Gosvami: Mandana is of four types : vastra (clothes), bhusana (jewellery), malya (garlands) and anulepana (lotions, pastes and oils : anything smeared).

Bijoy: I have understood thus far; pray continue with sambandhi.

Gosvami: Sambandhi is of two varieties: lagna or samyukta (in connection with) and sannihita (contiguous, or in relation to). The sounds of flute, horn (vamsi, srnga) and singing, the fragrance of perfumes etc, the tinkling of jewelleries, impressions on sand etc, the vibrations of a vina, artistic displays and so on are all lagna-sambandhi. But of all the lagnas, the sweet melody of Krsna's flute is the most attractive.

The list for sannihita-sambandhi is endless: flowers and garlands that once adorned the Divine Couple; peacock feather; dust; rocks or anything else from Sri Goverdhana; the cows and calves; the cowherd's cane; flute; horn; seeing someone dear to Krsna; dust-cloud raised by homeward bound cowherd just before sunset; Sri Vrndavana-dhama; the residents, and others who take shelter, of Vrndavana-dhama; Sri Goverdhana hill; the river Yamuna; the site of the rasa dance and so on.

Bijoy: What is meant by others who take shelter of Vrndavana ?

Gosvami: Other living entities living in Vrndavanadhama: the birds, bumble bees, deer, the verdant bowers and groves, creep-ers, and trees, the tulasi plant; the laburnum flowers so typical of Vrndavana; the Kadamba trees and flowers and so on.

Bijoy: What is tatastha-uddipana ?

Gosvami: Moonlight, clouds, lightning, spring, autumn, full moon, the wind, the sky etc.

Bijoy fell into a thoughtful silence, pondering on the concept of uddipana. Srila Gosvami observed that Bijoy was absorbing the esoteric knowledge and seemed satisfied. Bijoy felt an inexplicable bhava wash over him as uddipana bhava mingled with alambana in his heart. Anubhava symptoms began to manifest in Bijoy's person. His body erupted in horripilation and in a choked voice he asked : "Prabhu, kindly shower me with your mercy, tell me in detail about anubhava, so that my understanding of Lord Krsna's characteristics, which were partially revealed in discussing His lila, is more complete."

Gosvami: Anubhava is of three kinds: alankara, udbhasvara and vacika.

Alankara is of twenty types and are manifestations of the inner feelings of the gopis of Vraja when they are still in the prime of youth. These alankaras are grouped under three headings: angaja, ayatnaja and svabhavaja.

angaji: (1) bhava (2) hava (3) hela.

ayatnaja: (4) sobha (5) kanti (6) dipti (7) madhurya (8) pragalb-hata (9) audarya (10) dhairya.

svabhavaja: (11) lila (12) vilasa (13) vicchitti (14) vibhrama (15) kilakincit (16)

mottayita (17) kuttumita (18) vivvoka (19) lalita (20) vikrta.

Bijoy: What is meant by bhava here ?

Gosvami: Actual bhava in madhurya-rasa is when the pristine, unaltered heartfelt feelings comes under seige of rati, or divine love; the bhava in question is the initial transformation. The unaltered, placid state of the heart is called sattva. When the cause for ecstatic transformations is implanted in the placid heart, its first stirrings is comparable to that of a seed of a plant, and it is here referred to as bhava.

Bijoy: Prabhu, kindly explain hava, hela and the rest.

Gosvami: In hava symptoms the neck is twisted and strained, and due to slight budding of bhava the eyes dialate and brows arch upwards. When hava explicitly indicates romance, it is called hela. `Sobha' means, beauty, youthfulness, desire for pleasure etc. which exude from, and become the subtle embellishments of, the body. The iridiscence of `sobha' when the passions of erotic love is being fuelled, is called `kanti'. When bayasa (age) bhoga (relish), desa (place) kala (time), guna (qualities) etc. stokes `kanti' to brilliance and wide-spread radiation, it is then called `dipti'.

Here, madhurya means, the delicate grace with which all endea-vours are executed, under any condition. Fearlessness and unhesi-tancy in making romantic overtures is called `pragalbhata'; the beloved is intrepid in making physical contact with her lover. When the beloved is modest in all conditions it is known as `audarya'. `Dhairya' means, the stable condition of emotions.

In this context, lila is the attempt to imitate the lover's way of dressing and acting. The typical ways the beloved moves her body in walking and in sitting, her hips, mouth, eyes etc. with the express desire for union with her lover, is called `vilasa'. If with sparse embellishments and dress `kanti' can produced, it is called `viccitti'; however, according to some authorities on the subject of `rasa' (spiritual humour), viccitti is the mixing of emotions of jealousy and apathy (ignoring the lover), when He is guilty (of being unfaithful), and the nayika feels that she has dressed-up in vain and only on the insistence of the sakhis (as she feels that her dress and make-up are burdens).

Just as the beloved is about to go to meet her lover, her exces-sive eagerness makes her confused and she wears the jewelleries and flowers in the wrong places, this is known as `vibhrama'. In `kilakincit, the nayika unnecessarily feels pride, yearing, weeping, intolerance, fear and anger while laughing. `Mottayita' is the romantic desire, produced by intense emotion and sparked off by remembering or receiving news from the lover. In intimate physical contact, during kissing and while He massages her breasts, although the nayika exults in her heart, externally, due to pride and shame (sambhram) she exhibits anger as if from pain, this is called `kuttamita'.

The unsympathetic attitude shown to the lover, influenced by nayika's arrogance and anger, is called `vivvoka'. The subtle charm created by her graceful movements and the versatile play of her eyebrows lends to her youthfulness, and is termed `lalita'.

Vikrta' means, when nayika tries to express her feelings which stem from shame, hurt, jealousy etc. through actions rather than verbally. Those were the capsuled informations regarding the different feminine attributes of the young Vraja damsels.

But besides these twenty, according to the spiritual authorities, there are two more: maugdhya and cakita. The attribute of `maugd-hya' is, to question the lover about things she already knows but pretends not to. Without a cause the nayika becomes extremely scared even in her lover's presence, this is known as cakita.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, I have understood the different varieties of anubhava-alankara, now kindly teach me anubhava-udbhasvara.

Gosvami: When the emotions, stirring in the heart, are manifest on the person, it is defined as udbhasvara. In madhurya-rasa, examples of this are: loosening or falling away of girdle, of the sari covering the upper torso, of the tied-up hair etc; stretching out; continous yawning; flaring of the nostrils; long sighs etc.

Bijoy: It seems that all these symptoms of udbhasvara can very well be included within `mottayita' and `vilasa', thus making it easier to be understood.

Gosvami: In spite of the likeness, they each nurture a specific `sobha', or charming lustre of youth, hence they are mentioned seperately.

Bijoy: Prabhu, please tell me about vacika-anubhava symptoms.

Gosvami: `Vacika-anubhava' is of twelve varieties : alapa, vila-pa, samlapa, pralapa, anulapa, apalapa, sandesa, atidesa, apade-sa, upadesa, nirdesa and vyapadesa.

Bijoy: Can you give a short and precis definition of these ?

Gosvami: Enriching speech with adulatory words is called `alapa'. Words expressed in sorrow is `vilapa'. A back and forth dialogue is `samlapa'. Useless and futile `alapa' is known as `pralapa'. To often repeat the same adulatory terms is `anulapa'. To explain one's own previous speech in a different light is `apalapa'. To send news about oneself to the lover living far away is `sande-sa'. To say things like : " He says exactly what I want to say", is `atidesa'. Instead of revealing one's intention through direct speech, to circumlocute is known is `apadesa'. Words of advice is called `upadesa'. To assert one's identity saying , " I am that person ", is `nirdesa'. And `vyapadesa' means, to reveal one's inner desire in a circumspect manner. These anubhava' symptoms are present in all the rasas or humours. But since they enrich nature madhurya-rasa pronouncedly, they are required to be men-tioned here.

Bijoy: Maharaja, what is the significance of delineating anubhava as a separate principle in the paradigm of rasa ?

Gosvami: The amalgam of alambana (the cause which gives rise to spiritual sentiments) and uddipana (that which stimulates rasa) produces a certain `bhava', or spiritual emotion, in the heart , and when this is manifest in the body , it is defined as `anubha-va'. In order to present a clear picture of the subject `anubha-va' had to be described independently.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, I am keen to hear about sattvika-bhava in madhu-ra-rasa.

Gosvami: I have already previously mentioned, in a general discussion on the principles of rasa, the eight sattvika transformations (asta-sattvika-bhava) like sveda (profuse perspiration), stambha (paralysis) etc; the same symptoms are present in madhu-ra-rasa. However in this rasa, the examples of `bhava' are different.

Bijoy: Kindly explain.

Gosvami: In Vraja-lila, the bhava of `stambha' for example, is aroused by harsa (mirth), bhaya (fear), ascarya (wonder), visada (grief) and amarsa (wrath). `Harsa' (mirth), bhaya, krodha (anger) produces `sveda'. `Romance' (horripilation) comes from ascarya, harsa and bhaya. `Svarabhanga', or loss of voice comes from visada, vismaya (astonishment), amarsa and bhaya. `Kampa' or shivering, is produced by bhaya , harsa and amarsa. Pallor (vaivarnya) is a result of visada, krodha and bhaya. Weeping (asru) is from harsa, amarsa and visada. Pralaya, or devastation and near-death, results from excessive pleasure (sukha) and lamentation (duhkha).

Bijoy: In madhura-rasa, are there different classifications among the eight ecstatic transformations ?

Gosvami: Yes ; earlier when discussing rasa in general, I grouped them under four headings : ghumayita, jvalita, dipta and uddipta. In madhura-rasa, uddipta (blazing) is further divided into sudip-ta (brilliant).

Bijoy: Gurudeva, you are very kind to me, your answers act as soothing salve on my parched heart. Kindly explain to me in what manner vyabhicari-bhava is situated in madhura-rasa.

Gosvami: There are thirty-three vyabhicari or sancari bhavas like nirveda (apathy) etc which I had described to you when speaking of rasa ; all of them exist in madhura-rasa with the exceptions of augrya (violence) and alasya (laziness). However, there are some amazing features in vyabhicari bhava of madhura-rasa.

Bijoy: I am eager to learn about them.

Gosvami: In sakhya and vatsalya rasas, Krsna's friends' love and His elder's love for Krsna (Krsna-prema), in other words, their sthaya-bhava of their own rasas is also

present in madhura-rasa and acts as vyabhicari or sancari-bhava, this is the first amaz-ing feature. Next is, that all the vyabhicari-bhava symptoms are not direct branches of the main trunk of madhura-rasa, hence vyabhicari symptoms such as marana (death) are also not counted in this rasa as its branch. Logically they are counted as gunas, or qualities, in this rasa. Thus the conclusion is, that rasa is the possessor (of qualities) and the vyabhicari symptoms are its qualities.

Bijoy: In what manner do the vyabhicari-bhavas arise ?

Gosvami: Nirveda (remorse, apathy) is born out of humility, argumentation, jealousy, dejection, anxiety and offence. `Dai-nya', or humility is caused by meloncholia, fear and offence. Glani (langour) is caused by worries, fatigue and love. `Srama', or fatigue comes from extensive loitering, dancing and love. Mada (illusion) is a result of excessive injection of honey, which also leads to loosing rational perception. Garva, or pride is caused by good-fortune, beauty, excellences and obtaining the highest desired shelter.

`Sanka' (anxiety) is produced by stealing, offence, cruelty from others, lightning, fearsome animals or a terrible sound. To see and hear pleasing things, to see unpleasant sights and hear dis-turbing words and sounds causes `avega', or trepidation, meaning: due to confusion in the mind one looses the ability to know what is to be done. `Unmada', or madness, comes from excessive happi-ness and from pangs of seperation. Apasmrti, or absent-mind edness is a result of a retaliating heart which is singed by deep sorrow, making that afflicted person see all things as having equal value or no value at all. Extreme worry and anxiety brings fever which in turn becomes `vyadhi' or sickness.

Moha (illusion) is the foolish streak in the heart which is catapulted by mirth, seperation and grief. As regards mrtyu, (death), it is not present in this rasa, only the attempts and preparations for it are seen in madhura-rasa. Even `alasya' (laziness) as such, is absent in madhura-rasa. But to pretend to be weak although one is strong or healthy is called `alasya' here, and it is present in subdued undertones in the opposition camp. Whereas jadya (inertia) is very much present and is evoked by seeing and hearing about one's worshipable, desirable object, also by seeing undesirable objects and by the pains of sepera-tion.

Brida or lajja (bashfulness) is set-off in the first stages of trysts or meetings, in not having engagements, in being praised as well as being ignored. Dissimulation or hiding of emotions (avahittha) is sparked-off by deception, shyness, generosity, fear and dignity. Strict discipline and seeing objects of previ-ous emotional value brings about smrti (rememberance). Vitarka (argumentativeness) comes from meloncholia and anxiety. Cinta (worry) comes from not obtaining the desired object and expecting the worst. Mati, or understanding, is a result of proper evalua-tion through discrimination. Patience (dhrti) is the steadiness of mind and is born of acquiring something of high value and of a lack of ill-fate.

The exultation one feels on seeing one's desired object and winning the desired object is called `harsa' (mirth). Autsukya (eagerness) comes from the urge to see and possess one's desired object. Violence is another name for augrya (ferocity)

and it is not present in madhura-rasa as I pointed out earlier. Intolerance and impatience due to censure, blame and insult leads to amarsa (anger). Asuya (jealousy) is hating another's good-fortune and so it is ignited by good-fortune and excellence. Light-headedness is synonymous with capalya (restlessness) and is caused by attach-ments and animosity. Exhaustion and fatigue produce nidra (sleep). Dreams and reveries are called `supti'(dreaminess) and awakening from slumber is `bodha', or perceptiveness.

So my dear Bijoy , that was the entire list of vyabhicari bhava symptoms , and besides these there are four more bhava conditions : utpatti (source), sandhi (confluence), sabalya (strengthening) and santi (pacification). The imminent possibility of bhava's appearance is bhava-utpatti ; the confluence of two bhavas is bhava-sandhi , the confluence of two characteristically similar bhavas is `svarupa-sandhi ' and the confluence of dissimilar bhavas is `bhinna-sandhi'. The mixing of many bhavas is `bhava-sabalya' and the disappearance of bhava is called `bhava-santi'.

Bijoy , after attentively hearing Srila Gosvami's dissertations , became fairly knowledgeable on vibhava, anubhava, sattvika bhava and vyabhicari bhava of madhura-rasa. His heart seemed to flood with feelings of ecstatic joy. But prema, or love of Godhead , was still undefined and not clear. He understood this, and fell at his guru's feet weeping. He said to his guru:" Gurudeva, kindly reveal to me if prema is still in an obfuscated and un-formed stage within my heart.

Gosvami : Tomorrow you will hear about the esoteric principles of prema you certainly know the ingredients that comprise prema, but prema has not yet blossomed to fullness in your heart. Sthayi-bhava, or permanent bhava , is prema, we have already discussed this topic in a general way. When you hear of its specifics within the radiance of madhura-rasa you will attain all-round perfection." With this Srila Gosvami embraced Bijoy, who immedi-ately prostrated himself and begged permission to leave.

Chapter 36 Madhura-rasa Continues.

Bijoy arrived at the Radha-kanta temple on time and his sprightly movements revealed his inner eagerness . He prostrated himself at Srila Gopal-guru Gosvami's feet. Srila Gosvami detected Bijoy's urgency within and began to speak on sthayi-bhava right away.

Gosvami: Nectarean rati,or divine love , is the sthayi , or permanent , bhava in madhura-rasa.

Bijoy: What is the cause of rati's appearance ?

Gosvami: Rati is aroused by expressions (abhiyoga), object (vi-saya), noumenal (sambandha), haughtily adamant (abhimana) specific catalysts (tadiya visesa), comparison (upama) and self-manifest nature (svabhava). The causes have been listed in order of merit, hence 'rati' generated from svabhava is the 'rati' par excellence.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, kindly elaborate on these causes.

Gosvami: The manifestation of bhava itself is abhiyoga ; it is of two kinds : svakarttrka (self-implemented) and parakarttrka (implemented by others). There are five visayas : sound, touch, form, taste and smell. Sambandha is of four types: family (kula), beauty (rupa), qualities (guna) and pastimes (lila). Abhimana, means the adamant attitude one takes in demanding a particular object in preference to others even though they are more attractive. Feet impressions (padanka), pasturing (gostha) only within the limits of Sri Vrndavanadhama, and His beloved ones (tadiya priyajana) comprise tadiya visesa. Priyajana, or beloved persons, refer to those who permanently exchange mature loving emotions with Krsna.

Bijoy: That is now clear, what is upama gurudeva ?

Gosvami: When an object acquires a degree of similarity in any form with another object, then the former is upama to the latter. Svabhava, means the innate nature of anything which manifests itself independent of external causes; it is of two types: nisarga and svarupa. 'Nisarga' is purified habit, conception and intention that comes as a result of resolute discipline. Hearing, chanting etc Krsna's qualities, beauty and so on are exiguous aids that awaken nisarga. In other words, nisarga is the accumulation of determined adherence to discipline over many lifetimes. The sudden surfacing of intuition, or nisarga, from say sravana or kirtana is not its sole cause.

'Svarupa' is the self-perfected, beginningless and innate proclivity. Svarupa is of three varieties: krsna-nistha, lalana-nistha and ubhaya-nistha (attached to Krsna, to the gopi and to both). Krsna-nistha-svarupa is unattainable by demoniac persons, hence only obtainable by persons endowed with a divine nature, like demigods. Lalana-nistha-svarupa is self-manifest; even without hearing about, or seeing Krsna's beauty, qualities etc, it generates intense attraction for Krsna. When both krsna-nistha and lalana-nistha svarupa influence the svabhava, or nature it is known as ubhaya-nistha-svarupa.

Bijoy: Do these causes of sthayi-bhava fully express madhura-rasa?

Gosvami: The vraja - gopis' love for krsna is innate and self-perfected ; it does not blossom due to abhiyoga, visaya etc. However in many amorous pastimes these causes contribute dynamically. Rati, or the love, for Krsna of pure and liberated souls, who are sadhana-siddha (attained perfection through sadhana) and nisarga-

siddha sadhaka (attained perfection through nisarga), is awakened by abhiyoga, visaya, sandhi etc.

Bijoy: Prabhu, it will be easier for me to understand this complex concept with a few examples.

Gosvami: The rati, or love for Krsna alluded to here is exclusively obtainable in raganuga-bhakti. This specific rati is beyond the reach of vaidhi-bhakti as long as it is devoid of bhava. On the level of sadhana-bhakti, those devotees who develop lobha, or greed, for the vraja-gopi's quality of emotional endeavour to serve Krsna, gradually evoke rati from the six causes besides svabhava, but especially from the priyajana (beloved). A sadhana-siddha devotee can experience the swell of exhilaration inherent in lalana-nistha-svarupa.

Bijoy: How many types of rati is there ?

Gosvami: Three kinds : sadharani, samanjasā and samartha. Kubja is in sadharani rati. Because this rati is rooted in the desire for selfish enjoyment, so it is shunned. The rati of the Dvaraka queens is samanjasā-rati because it is evoked through the codes of marital conduct and tempered by social norms. The gopis of vraja have samartha-rati it transcends all social norms and religion. It is not that samartha is 'un-samanjasā'; according to absolute transcendental analysis it (samartha) is in all respects harmonious (samanjasā). Sadharani-rati is like a precious gem, samanjasā is like the touchstone gem and samartha is like the rarest of all gems - the Kaustabha gem, almost impossible to possess.

At this point, glistening rivulets ran down Bijoy's cheeks, he said in a choked voice --- " What a wonderful topic ! Prabhu I am eagerly waiting to hear about sadharani-rati . "

Gosvami: On seeing Krsna directly, in person, the rati that is generated by the desire to enjoy (sambhog-iccha) with Him is neither deep nor permanent ; because sadharani-rati lacks profundity, sambhoga-desire becomes its prime cause. Once sambhoga-desire scales down, sadharani-rati also loses intensity.

Bijoy: That leaves the two main ratīs, kindly explain them in some detail.

Gosvami: The pre-eminent rati, which in substance is rigidly conjugal (wife's affectionate claim over her husband) is evoked by hearing etc the qualities etc and is known as samanjasā-rati. However, sometimes when sambhoga-iccha arises independent of samanjasā-rati, then the different bhavas prompted by it, cannot captivate Krsna.

The truth is, sambhoga-iccha is an integral aspect of rati. The sambhoga-iccha inherent in sadharani and samanjasā-rati is self-ish and self-serving. Within the selfish desires to enjoy, is a streak of selfless, non self-aggrandising loving emotion, which when it matches the intensity and character of a specific sambhoga-iccha, it is then called samartha-rati.

Bijoy: I would like to clarify what is meant by 'specific', here.

Gosvami: Sambhoga-iccha is of two types: The desire to give pleasure to the senses through one's dear loved ones; and the desire to constantly conceive of means to offer pleasure to the dear loved ones. The former may be called lust because it seeks one's own pleasure. The latter is exclusively devoted towards enhancing the beloved's pleasure, hence it is dovetailed to prema, or love of Godhead. In sadharani-rati, The former desire is pronounced; but in samanjas-rati it does not have a strong presence. The latter symptom is the 'specific' nature of sambhoga-iccha in samartha-rati.

Bijoy: In sambhoga, or enjoyment, the exhilaration from touching the beloved must be very much a reality. Is this desire for pleasure absent in samartha-rati ?

Gosvami: Indeed, this desire is inevitable, even unpreventable ; yet in the hearts of those in samartha-rati, it is extremely feeble. When gradually this rati becomes resolute and powerful , it embraces sambhoga-iccha, and then rati and sambhoga-iccha merge together as one. Because this rati is capable (samarthyā) of superceeding everything else , it has been named 'samartha'.

Bijoy: Prabhu, what excellences crown samartha-rati ?

Gosvami: Whether it is due to one of the seven causes (previously discussed) like sambandha or tadiya, or due to rati's inherent nature, as soon as samartha-rati blossoms all impediments [like family, religious codes, patience, shyness etc] are extirpated from memory and it shines with blinding intensity.

Bijoy: How is it possible for sambhoga-iccha to merge with this spotless rati and acquire sameness of character ?

Gosvami: The samartha-rati exhibited by the gopis of vraja is meant exclusively for Krsna's pleasure. The self-enjoyment present in sambhoga is interpreted as a favourable disposition to augment Krsna's pleasure. Therefore , when sambhoga-iccha and samartha-rati merge, the amalgam is wonderful, and one of sublime beauty, which never allows sambhoga-iccha to assert itself independently. In samanjas, rati sometimes becomes covered over by the desire for self-pleasure.

But that is not all ; when samartha-rati matures it acquires the state known as maha-bhava, or the pinnacle of grand spiritual ecstasy. All the liberated souls are searching after this sublime state, and the five types of pure devotees obtain it, each according to his ability.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, what are the gradations in this rati ?

Gosvami: The Ujjvala-nilamani states:

"syaddrdhe'yam ratiḥ prema prodyan snehah kramadayam
syanmanah pranayo rago' nurago bhava ityapi." (Ujjvala.sthayi.Pr.59)

(Rati in madhura-rasa is indivisible, it deepens through con-flicting emotions (viruddha-bhava). It is then called prema, or love for Krsna. Prema gradually manifests its nectarean taste in varying degrees as sneha,mana,pranaya,raga,anuraga and bhava).

Bijoy: Is there a simple analogy to make for easier understand-ing?

Gosvami: Take, for example sugar-cane ; the gradations of prema is likened to the sugar-cane seed, the cane, juice, syrup or treacle, molasses, coarse sugar, sugar and sugar candy. Similarly , rati in varying intensity culminates in bhava; here bhava implies maha-bhava.

Bijoy: Prema is applied as a common appendage to all the differ-ent gradations of bhava although there are seperate terms for them, what is the reason for this gurudeva ?

Gosvami: Sneha,mana etc are the six consecutive levels of in-creasing pleasure in prema; hence the spiritual authorities refer to all of them as prema. According to the nature and level of each devotee's krsna-prema, Krsna reciprocates scrupulously .

Bijoy: What are the symptoms of prema ?

Gosvami: The analogy for prema in madhura-rasa is the loving emotion exchanged between an young boy and a young girl although they themselves are mutable and temporary but their feelings for each other is in destructible.

Bijoy: Are there different varieties of prema ?

Gosvami: Prema is of three sorts : praudha, madhya and manda. Praudha-prema is that type of love where the heart wrings with pain thinking of how to alleviate the heart - pangs of the be-loved waiting anxiously for the lover who is delayed. The love which enables one to bear the sufferings of the beloved is called `madhyama'. And that love which is intense but forgotten at specific times and in situations, or because of prolonged inti-macy it fails to evoke repulsion or attraction , it is called manda-prema. However, manda-prema is absent of emotions like dislike, apathy or neglect towards the lover.

Now I would like to formulate the concept of prema in simpler terms. Where there is an intolerance of the mood of seperation (vislesa) it is called praudha (mature) prema; when seperation is borne with pain it is madhya and where there are spells of obliv-ion or forgetfulness,it is manda-prema.

Bijoy: Prabhu, I have properly understood your explanations of prema. Kindly tell me more about `sneha'.

Gosvami: When prema reaches the peak of perfection and engulfs that very same

illumination of the lamp it had ignited (lamp symbolises the heart) , it is known as sneha. Here heart (citta) means the heart imbued with prema. So `sneha' acquires a brilliant form which melts the heart with bhava. Symptoms of sneha in its neutral condition is, that the beloved is never satiated even after continuously seeing the lover for any amount of time.

Bijoy: Are there different levels within `sneha' ?

Gosvami: The heart of the kanistha-snehi, or the third grader beloved in sneha, melts on the lover's physical contact; the madhyama's, or intermediate , snehi's heart melts immediately upon seeing the lover; and the srestha , or first grade , snehi's heart melts simply at the lover's mention. In fact, sneha is of two types: ghrta-sneha and madhu-sneha. Sneha which allots enormous emotional value (adara) on prema is called ghrta-sneha. Ghrta, or clarified butter , becomes very delectable when sugar or honey is added to it; similarly ghrta-sneha is extremely relishable when specific bhavas are mixed in as condiments. Ghrta-sneha by nature is cooling; but as adara is repeatedly added it thickens and becomes more concentrated --- just like clarified butter or butter fat, and so it acquires the same nomenclature.

Bijoy: What exactly is `adara' ?

Gosvami: Adara sprouts from gaurava, or respect. This makes adara and gaurava inter - dependent. Although they are present in rati, bhava etc , in sneha they find full expression , thus they are mentioned in this context. `Gaurava' means , when someone accepts a certain person as instructor and guide (guru) the emotion which manifests from such an attitude is called `sambhram' or awed-respect, which is synonymous with adara. Thus if `adara' is mentioned gaurava is automatically included.

Bijoy: Kindly explain madhu-sneha.

Gosvami: When sneha is infused with the feeling that the lover belongs (madiya) to (me) the beloved, it is known as madhu-sneha. This type of sneha is excessively nectarean and a melting - pot of many rasas, or spiritual humours. It has the properties to inebriate and it is torrid, thus having the characteristics of honey it is called madhu-sneha.

Bijoy: What is the purport of madiyahva, or to belong ?

Gosvami: Rati is displayed through two specific attitudes, or bhavas: I am His, and He is mine. In ghrta-sneha the former : I am His, is the bhava-rati expressed by the beloved ; in madhu-sneha : the latter bhava-rati, i.e He belongs to me, is pre-eminent. Sri Candravali's sneha is ghrta-sneha and Srimati Radhika's is madhu-sneha."

Bijoy quickly prostrated himself at his guru's feet at the mention of Srimati Radhika, then sat down and continued with his queries.

Bijoy: I like to understand the complexities of mana.

Gosvami: When sneha refines itself to the extent that it acquires a new texture in nectar, that is characterised by a firmer, less charitable or forgiving attitude, mixed with craftiness towards the lover, it is termed mana. Mana is of two kinds: udatta and lalita. The first, udatta-mana is further divided into two: due to simplicity of mind, which shies away from grappling complexities, the first udatta-mana is of generous disposition. The second udatta-mana fosters a unforgiving mood where the internal sentiment is a recalcitrant, leftist mood (bamyā) but which is masked by a grave and sombre exterior. Ghrta-sneha refines into udatta-mana.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, I feel more inclined towards lalita-mana, though I cannot explain the reason for it.

Gosvami: Lalita-mana is also of two sorts: kautilya-lalita and narma-lalita. The mana that independently latches on to the crafty designs of heart is called kautilya-mana. Narma-lalita-mana is full of sportive pleasantries and sprightly humour. Both varieties of lalita-mana comes from madhu-sneha.

Bijoy: What is pranaya ?

Gosvami: When mana is reinforced with 'visrambha', or firm faith, and cultivates the mentality of equality between the beloved and the lover, it is called 'pranaya'. 'Visrambha' is the innate nature of pranaya; it is of two types: maitri and sakhya. 'Vis-rambha' which is mixed with humility and meekness (vinaya) is called maitri-visrambha; while sakhya-visrambha is free from all fear and awe, it is dictatorial. However, 'visrambha' is not the instrumental cause (nimitta-karana) of 'pranaya' but its materi-al, or ingredient cause (upadana - karana).

Bijoy: Prabhu, I want to understand more cleanly the relation-ships between sneha,mana and pranaya.

Gosvami: In some cases pranaya grows out of sneha and later dons the characteristics of mana; while in other instances sneha transform to mana and then becomes pranaya. Thus mana and pranaya have different ramifications and causes. For this reason 'vis-rambha' is shown seperately. Udatta and lalita-mana nicely paral-lel maitra and sakhya-visrambha. And again they are delineated in pranaya as sumaitri and susakhya.

Bijoy: What are the symptoms of raga ?

Gosvami: When at the acme of pranaya even excess grief feels pleasurable, raga is born. 'Raga' is of two varieties: 'nilima' and 'raktima'. 'Nilima-raga' is further divided into: nili-raga and syama-raga.

That raga which by nature does not diminish and which overtly displays itself on the exterior and unilaterally cloaks all its other corollary bhava, it is known as nili-raga. This raga is seen in Sri Candravali and Sri Krsna. 'Syama-raga' is more

timid than nili-raga, and it is exhibited through dispensing medicine and nursing and so on, this raga is particularly difficult to sustain.

`Raktima-raga' is also in two variations : kusumbha and manjis-thonambhava. That raga which tenaciously adheres to the heart and swiftly escalates , as well as acts as a catalyst for releasing the brilliance of other ragas , it is called kusumbha-raga . In particular personalities kusumba - raga becomes steady and fixed. In nayikas who are in pranaya, this raga mixes with manjistha , in which case kusumbha occasionally wanes.

Manjistha-raga never wanes, it remains permanently steady (unlike nili and kusumbha). It does not require extraneous props, it is self - manifest and eternally perfected ; this crowning raga , shared between Srimati Radha and Sri Krsna , continuously accelerates. The conclusion is, ghrita-sneha, udatta-mana, maitra-visrambha, sumaitra-pranaya and nilima-raga etc embellish the natures of Candravali and Queen Rukmini in Dvaraka. While madhu-sneha, lalita-mana, sakhya-visrambha, susakhya-pranaya, raktima-raga are, in progressive intensity, manifest in Srimati Radhika. In Satyabhama, Queen of Dvaraka, these leftist symptoms are occasionally displayed.

As previously discussed, these differing bhavas residing in the belles of Vrndavana polarises them into contending groups. The changes influenced by the bhavas (bhavantara) , which engenders further factionalism and the innate variations within the numerous bhavas, are perceived by the learned devotees through experience and wisdom, which cannot be delved upon here.

Bijoy: Which bhavas are addressed by the word bhavantara ?

Gosvami: Sthayi-bhava in madhura-rasa, the thirty-three vyabhi-cari-bhava and the seven bhavas beginning with hasya etc add-up to the forty-one principal bhavas , these are referred to here as bhavantara.

Bijoy: `Raga' is clear to me, kindly describe `anuraga'.

Gosvami: When raga soars to heights of new, ever-fresh bhava which allows the nayika to perceive the lover always, at every moment, as novel and perennially unique, it is defined as `anuraga'. This sublime prema [anuraga] incessantly ascends through the realms of exchanges of trying to subjugate each other [nayaka and nayika], of transformations of the mind due to excessive romantic attachments and of even the desire to turn into inert objects ; in feelings of separation from the lover (vipralambha), it evokes Krsna's presence and the ecstasy thereof.

Bijoy: It was easy to grasp the concepts of nayaka and nayika trying to bring each other under control (vasibhava) and of wanting to be born as trees etc. Prabhu, kindly simplify prema-vaicittya, or the romantic transformations of the mind.

Gosvami: Vipralambha, or separation , is prema-vaicittya; you will know of this later.

Bijoy: I beg permission to hear about maha-bhava, the acme of prema.

Gosvami: Bijoy, my boy, in the realm of vraja-rasa concept , my comprehension is rather limited. What is my insignificant reali-sation next to the very lofty precepts of maha-bhava ? However, whatever I have learnt from Srila Rupa Gosvami's and Srila Vak-resvara Pandita Gosvami's instructions by their mercies , I will deliver to you . All conclusions are strictly in line with Srila Rupa Gosvami's ; perceive them as best you can simply by depend-ing on his grace. When `anuraga' scales to its absolute limit and remains fixed there, simultaneously is cognizant of itself and is able to manifest itself, that superexcellent `anuraga' is bhava, or maha-bhava.

Bijoy: Prabhu, I am an extremely lowly being and an ignorant enquirer. Kindly formulate the esoteric essence of the maha-bhava concept in a manner that is easily comprehensible to me.

Gosvami: Srimati Radhika is the abode and shelter (asraya) of anuraga, and Krsna is its object and destination (visaya). Vra-jendra - nandana, Krsna, son of Maharaja Nanda , as the icon of srngara-rasa is the ultimate visaya; and Sri Radhika is the epitome of asraya-tattva. Her anuraga is Her permanent bhava or sthayi-bhava. Anuraga escalates to its pinnacle and becomes fixed and steady in Her; in this condition it becomes cognizant of Her most beloved lover, and in time manifests itself in sattvika-bhava like sudipta etc. Anuraga at this height reaches maha-bhava.

Bijoy: Oh how wonderful is maha-bhava ! O maha-bhava, the super-excellent maha-bhava ! I am so blessed that I was able to even slightly perceive its grandeur. It is the crown jewel of all bhava. Prabhu, kindly satiate my ears, if you may please give some examples of maha-bhava.

Gosvami: The Ujjvala-nilamani states:

"radhaya bhavatasca cittajatuni svedairvilapya kramat
yunjannadrinikunjarapate nirdhuta-bhedabhramam
citraya svayamanvaranjanjayadiha brahmandaharmyodare
bhuyobhirnavaragahingulabharaih srngara-karukrti." (Ujjv.n. sthah : 1/5).

(Vrndadevi says to Krsna --- " O enmaddened king of elephants who sports in the bowers on the hill slopes ! In Your eternal unmani-fest pastimes , Yours and Your Radhika's hearts melt in the radiance of maha - sattvika transformations . This drowns You both in inconsolable lamentation which then breaks down the wall of illusion that seperates You , and eradicates completely dis-tinctions between You . Both your hearts piteous lamentation at being seperated has completely brought you together, divesting your hearts of all segregation and delusions. That same artist, srngara - rasa in order to re-enact the same pastimes in the mansion of Brahma,or the material world, has coloured herself with the vermilion of ever - fresh and novel raga. And so your unmanifest pastime , in the form of endless variagated bhavas, is painted on the canvas of Sri Vrndavana , by the arrangement of yogamaya).

Bijoy: In whom does maha-bhava repose ?

Gosvami: Maha-bhava is unattainable by Krsna's queens in Dvaraka; it is manifest exclusively in the damsels of vraja.

Bijoy: Prabhu, what is the purport of this ?

Gosvami: In a relationship bound by nuptial vows where loving emotions are ruled by conjugal identities of husband and wife (svakiyatva) rati is samanjas, or befitting the vows of such relationship --- meaning , that such a relationship cannot accom-odate continuous exchanges which reach new heights in uncharted emotional realms only available in maha-bhava. While in Vraja, some ladies harbour in their hearts slight fancies of svakiya - bhava but their pre - eminent bhava is parakiya, or paramour. Rati is here samartha, thus when samartha-rati peaks, it is transformed to maha-bhava ?

Bijoy: Are there variations in maha-bhava ?

Gosvami: Maha-bhava is the crystallised form of the sublimest nectar which transforms all bhava coming in touch with it, infus-ing them with its innate nature. Maha-bhava has two variants: rudha and adhirudha. In rudha-maha-bhava all the sattvika-bhava corruscate with absolute brilliance . Each bhava is expressed in anubhavas. The anubhava of rudha-maha-bhava are: impatience flares up at the slightest delay ; emotions churn up in the hearts of those present ; a moment feels like aeons ; even when Krsna is satisfied the anticipation of future suffering brings grief ; although there is no delusion yet the self and the world fades into oblivion and moments are drawn out to seem like ages. Some of these anubhavas (feelings) are experienced also in samb-hoga and others in vipralambha.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, I beg you to expand upon these rudha anubhavas individually.

Gosvami: The first anubhava is due to vaicittya-vipralambha, or transformations in the mind from seperation. The feeling of seperation even in union; a moments seperation is unbearable. When the gopis were visiting Kuruksetra, they saw Krsna after a long interval. Greedy to feast their eyes, they felt that their eye-lids were unbearable burdens that blocked their vision of Krsna for fractions of a second , and in their anger and frustra-tion they cursed providence (Brahma) for creating eye-lids. Not seeing Krsna for even a moment is intolerable for His beloved gopis.

The second anubhava is exemplified by the kings,noblemen and queens present at Kuruksetra who were witnessing the expressions of bhava of the gopis. Their hearts were churned up and agitated with divine emotions. The third anubhava is described best by the feelings of gopis on the night of the rasa-dance which is as long as the nights in Lord Brahma's time calculation, but to the gopis it seemed to end all too quickly, less than even a moment.

The fourth anubhava is aptly depicted in the Srimad Bhagavatam verse (yatte sujatacaranamburuham) where the gopis deeply lament-that although Krsna's lotus-petal soft feet were placed on their breasts, their hardness hurt the delicate soles of His feet. The fifth anubhava is, when due to incessant remembrances of

Krsna, delusion cannot enter ; so both Krsna consciousness and the state of total oblivion of the self and of the external reality co exist in the consciousness , as a reality. The sixth anubhava is ksana-kalpatva , which Krsna describes in His conversation with Uddhava: " When I was in Vrndavana in the company of the belles of Vraja their nights were over in a moment; but when I left, their nights seemed endless like a kalpa.

Bijoy: I have understood rudha-bhava, kindly tell me in detail about the bhava par-excellence, adhirudha-bhava.

Gosvami: When the anubhava of rudha-bhava reach the summit and sparkle with extra-ordinary splendour, the loving emotions enter the realm of adhirudha-bhava. This wonderful bhava is of two hues: modana and madana. In maha-bhava, where the entire spectrum of sattika-bhava exchanged between nayaka and nayika scintillate inordinately, it is called modana-adhirudha-bhava. In modana bhava both Srimati Radhika and Sri Krsna are overcome with anxiety, fear and discontent. And their love touch heights of ecstasy unknown to even renowned ladies like Laksmidevi, Parvati and so on.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, I am eager to learn about the particulars of modana-bhava like , where it is concentrated ?

Gosvami: Modana-bhava is present only in Srimati Radhika's yutha (group) ; no where else. Modana alone is hladini sakti's (Krsna's internal, pleasure-giving potency) most favourite arena of pleasure. In viraha-dasa (the anguish of separation) modana converts to mohana. The magnificent brilliance of sattvika-bhava can actually radiate only when viraha is all-encompassing.

Bijoy: What are the anubhavas in the state of mohana ?

Gosvami: Sri Krsna swoons in the embrace of another nayika other than Srimati Radhika (this occurs in Dvaraka when He is in Queen Rukmini's embrace and remembers His amorous pastime with Srimati Radhika in the leafy bowers of Vrndavana); to admit severe hardship and grief wishing only for Krsna's happiness ; the material creation and even Vaikuntha is plunged into deep sorrow ; birds and beasts shed tears; willing oneself dead while yearning for Krsna's company and so covering the body with earth etc; spiritual madness and numerous other anubhava manifest in mohana-bhava. Srimati Radhika, the queen of Vrndavana is embellished with these anubhava. The super-excellent splendour of mohana-bhava manifest in Srimati Radhika is far more uncommon and wonderful than moha of sancari-bhava.

Bijoy: Prabhu, if you deem it appropriate then kindly elaborate what is divya-unmad-laksana, or spiritual madness.

Gosvami: It is an amazing and inexplicable condition of the mind. At a particular juncture, mohana-bhava enters a mental state very similar to bhrama, or delusion , -- this is called divya-unmad; there are different varieties like udghurna, citrajalpa etc.

Bijoy: I am keen to know about the different varieties of divya-unmad.

Gosvami: In divya-unmad , when many astonishing but helpless at-tempts are made , it is known as udghurna, or incoherence. Sri-mati Radhika was in the grips of udghurna after Krsna left for Mathura. Her mind numbed by the pains of seperation, at times she thought that Krsna was on His way back thus she hurriedly ar-ranged everything in the kunjā; sometimes as an outraged wife , She chastised the black cloud (mistaking it for Krsna) for infi-delity and so on.

Bijoy: Kindly explain citrajalpa and its variations.

Gosvami: When nayika meets her lover's intimate friend she dis-cusses many confidential matters with him, going through a range of emotions from garba (awed respect) to utkantha (excessive eagerness), such a conversation is termed citrajalpa. Citrajalpa has ten limbs: prajalpa, parijalpa, vijalpa, ujjalpa, samjalpa, avajalpa, abhijalpa, ajalpa, pratijalpa and sujhalpa. They have been delineated in the Bhramara-gita section of the tenth canto of Srimad Bhagavatam.

Because of innumerable inflections within the amazing range of bhavas, Citrajalpa is very recondite, but some of its aspects can be expressed. To narrate with gesticulations, induced by feelings of malice, envy and arrogance, about the inadeptness of one's lover is defined as `prajalpa'. To point out one's heart - throb's mistakes like cruelly, deceitful and fickle ways etc , and prove one's own sagacity , is called `parijalpita'. The nayika harbours deep hurt within, but externally she uses harsh and cutting remarks towards Krsna, are symptoms of `vijalpa'. When nayika describes Krsna's cheating ways , feeling jealous and respect at the same time, and yet she maliciously repines , it is known as ujjalpa.

To expose Krsna's ungratefulness with deep resentment and deri-sion , it is termed `samjalpa'. To accuse Krsna of hard-hearted-ness, lustiness and slyness and to enviously articulate one's inability to show attachment for Him , is called `avajalpa'. ` When Krsna rebukes even the birds, it is futile to grow at-tached to Krsna ', to think in this manner and lament about it is defined as `abhijalpa'. When the nayika is suffering from apathy she talks about how Krsna's deceitful ways bring only distress and about how pleasurable it would be to prattle about something else, is known as `ajalpa'.

In `pratijalpa', the nayika soliloquises aside , that Krsna's libidinous desires befit a pirate. So to go to meet Him when He is romancing with other women would be rash and foolhardy .But to the waiting messenger she replies respectfully. When the nayika , due to straightforwardness , is grave, humble and listless but enquires about Krsna with unrestrained eagerness, it is termed `sujhalpa'. That completes the list of citrajalpa.

Bijoy: Prabhu, am I eligible to hear about madana-bhava ?

Gosvami: When prema, the essence of hladini, grows exceedingly exultant due to

the full ascendancy of all the bhavas, it comes to be reknowned as the supreme bhava of all bhava --- madana-bhava. This madana-bhava reposes eternally in Srimati Radharani.

Bijoy: Is envy or jealousy present in madana ?

Gosvami: Irsa, or envy and jealousy , has a very strong presence in madana. Irsa, in madana-bhava, is directed even towards inert objects incapable of reciprocating envy. But equally famous are the glorifications of those, who due to constant association with Krsna, exude an aura or fragrance so familiar of Krsna. Srimati Radhika is envious of Krsna's garland of wild flowers, whereas She eulogises the tribal women (Pulindi) who were a long time with Him, are examples of this bhava.

Bijoy: In what conditions is madana-bhava seen ?

Gosvami: This multi-hued madana-bhava, manifests only in union, or samyoga-lila. Madana-bhava sports in diverse ways and in innumer-able shades in the eternal pastimes , or nitya-lila.

Bijoy: Are there any quotes from illustrious sages about how to ascertain madana ?

Gosvami: Madana-rasa is endless and unlimited. Therefore its complete movements and influence is unknown even to Krsna, the transcendental embodiment of madana. For this reason even Sukade-va Gosvami was unable to describe it in full, what to speak of Bharata Muni, the great preceptor of rasa-tattva.

Bijoy: Gurudeva, I just heard from you something quite astonish-ing. Krsna , the absolute repository of rasa and the complete enjoyer of rasa , is unable to know the full extent of madana-rasa. How is this possible ?

Gosvami: Krsna is rasa. He is endless, unlimited , omniscient and omnipotent. There is nothing which is unknown or unattainable for Him, nothing is impossible for Him. Due to His eternal and in-trinsic nature of being inconceivable and simultaneously one and different, eternally He is one and many rasas at the same time. As the icon of a single rasa , He is the supreme enjoyer who is absolutely self-complacent and self-satisfied. In this condition, no rasa remains seperate or independent from Him. Simultaneously, He is the source of many rasas. Hence, besides being the deity of one rasa, His many extroverted rasas mix with the single intro-verted rasa and forms a unique blend of rasa.

By experiencing His introverted (atmapara) and His extroverted (paragata) rasas , Krsna relished the ecstasy of lila. The para-gata rasa radiates and expands profusely, and regales as parakiya rasa. In Vrndavna, this expansion reaches full bloom. Thus, unknown to the introverted atmapara rasa, madana-rasa reaches its limit in the most blissful and rarified realm of parakiya - rasa ; in its purest form parakiya is present in the aprakata-lila (unmanifest pastimes) in Goloka. While in Vraja its presence is intruded upon by but a whisper of maya .

Bijoy: Prabhu, I am eternally grateful for the kindness you have shown me. I pray that you tell me in a precise nectar decoction from the ocean of madhura-rasa.

Gosvami: The differences of bhava in the damsels of Vraja are great wonders. They are outside the jurisdiction of debate and logic hence an analytical or critical delineation of them is not possible. The scriptures declare that Srimati Radhika's raga has manifested out of the matrix of purvaraga, or courtship. This raga blossomed to anuraga in a particular ambience and turned into sneha, which gradually delivered mana and pranaya. All these conclusions seem a little amorphous; but what is confirmed is that even when sadharani-rati reaches full maturity it is still in a hazy, fluid state.

Samanjasa-rati extends from sneha, mana etc upto anuraga. This already incandescent rati becomes radiant in samanjasa. In rudha, rati is ablaze and in modana etc it is a conflagration. Rati even upto this stage is still approximate, because it is known to flag or wane under specific time, place and circumstance. Sadharani-rati does not surpass beyond prema. Samanjasa is limited upto anuraga and samartha reaches mahabhava.

Bijoy: What is the extent of rati in sakhya-rasa ?

Gosvami: The narma-bayasya sakha experiences rati upto anuraga, but sakhas like Subala experience even mahabhava.

Bijoy: The symptoms of sthayi-bhava described by you earlier, are also present in maha-bhava of sthayi-bhava. Although sthayi-bhava is one and the same principle, then why is there disparity in rasa ?

Gosvami: According to the differences of creed in sthayi-bhava, dissimilarities of rasa also appear. Intimate and confidential matters are not displayed in sthayi-bhava. When samagri, or the ingredients that comprise rasa, are fused together the differences in creed manifest. Sthayi-bhava assimilates ingredients commensurate to its different levels of profundity, and after interacting with it, it attains the state of rasa.

Bijoy: In madhura-rati, do the differences of creed in the form of svakiya and parakiya exist eternally ?

Gosvami: Yes, this division is absolutely permanent, and it is just a matter of a difference in appellatives. If this difference is admitted as a terminological difference then rasa, including madhura-rasa, also comes under this category. Whatever eternal, innate rasa one possesses, it becomes his eternal creedal rasa. And concomitant to that, are his taste (ruci) application (bhajana) and perfection (prapti). Svakiya-rasa is also present in Vraja. Those who perceive Krsna as their husband, and identify themselves as His wives, possess ruci bhajana and prapti according to their status.

You must comprehend that the svakiya-bhava in Dvaraka is a manifestation of the

Vaikuntha principle ; while the svakiya of Vraja is an expansion from Goloka , -- there is a definite distinction. Or you may perceive this same truth as the svakiya-bhava which is related to the Vasudeva principle who is an integral part of the nature of Vrajanatha, or the Lord of Vraja, Krsna, and it is in its highest manifestation available in Vaikuntha."

Bijoy saturated with the ecstasy of prema fell at Srila Gosvami's feet crying profusely. He slowly got up and returned to his home.

Chapter 37

Bijoy was relishing bhava quietly in the innermost recesses of his heart as he walked into his guru's ashrama . He offered dandavats to Srila Gosvami and almost immediately began enquiring : " revered guruji , I have grasped the concepts of vibhava , anubhava , sattvika - bhava and vyabhicari - bhava . I have also understood the intrinsic nature of sthayi - bhava , but even after coalescing the former four ingredients with the latter I am unable to kindle rasa . Why is it so ?

Gosvami :- Bijoy , once you comprehend the real nature of the rasa specifically known as srngara , you will know rasa in sthayi - bhava .

Bijoy :- What is srngara ?

Gosvami :- When madhura - rasa reaches the state of extreme delectability it is described as srngara - rasa ; it is of two sorts : vipralambha and sambhoga .

Bijoy :- I am eagerly waiting to hear more gurudeva ?

Gosvami :- Whether the nayaka and nayika are together or apart , the preponderant bhava which is stirred up when They have to do without , or are restrained from , their most desirable and amorous exchanges like kissing , embracing etc., is called vipra-lambha - bhava . It is also the cause for enhancing sambhoga ; vipralambha means both seperation and absence .

Bijoy :- Prabhu , how can vipralambha be the cause of sambhoga's augmentation ?

Gosvami :- Just as a coloured cloth looks more gay when added an extra hue , vipralambha cause the re - upsurge of sambhoga . Without vipralambha , sambhoga cannot be nurtured .

Bijoy :- Are there many variations of vipralambha ?

Gosvami :- Vipralambha is of four kinds : purvaraga , mana , prema - vaicitrya and pravasa .

Bijoy :- Kindly explain these terms and their meaning .

Gosvami :- The type of rati which is generated in the heart of the nayaka and nayika by darsana (seeing) and sravana (hearing) before their actual meeting takes place , is called purvaraga . ` Darsana ' is of three types : seeing Krsna directly in person , seeing His picture and seeing Him in a dream . Sravana , takes place through glorifications , news from another sakhi or messenger , from a song and so on .

Bijoy :- What are the causes of rati ?

Gosvami :- Previously , I enumerated in general the causes of rati like abhiyoga etc. , these same apply as the causes for purvaraga .

Bijoy :- Between the Vraja nayaka and Vraja - nayika , in whom is purvaraga awakened first ?

Gosvami :- There is much to consider on this point . The ordinary woman is more shy than the ordinary man , hence the man seeks the woman . But since the woman's loving propensity is stronger she feels the stirrings of purvaraga earlier . According to the scriptures on devotional sciences , purvaraga awakens first in the devotee ; and later in the Supreme Lord , Himself . The damsels of Vraja are the most exalted of pure devotee , so their purvaraga emerge as the first exquisite flush .

Bijoy :- What are the sancari - bhava in purvaraga ?

Gosvami :- Vyadhi , sankha , asuya , srama , klama , nirveda , autsukya , dainya , cinta , nidra , prabodhana , visada , jadata , unmada , moha , mrtyu etc. are the sancari , or vyabhicari - bhava .

Bijoy :- How many types of purvaraga are there ?

Gosvami :- Purvaraga is of three varieties : praudha , samanajasa and sadharana . Purvaraga appearing in samartha - rati is called praudha . In this raga the nayika experiences lalasa (greed) leading all the way to mrtyu , or death . These conditions are experienced due to the excessive acuteness of sancari - bhava .

Bijoy :- Prabhu , I am interested to know these conditions , (dasa) .

Gosvami :- This has been discussed in Srila Rupa's Ujjvala - nilamani :

" lalasodvega jagaryatanavam jadimatra tu
vaiyagryam vyadhirunmado mrtyurdasa dasa " . (Ujj.nil.purva-raga . 9)

(The ten conditions of praudha - raga are : lalasa , udvega , jagaryya , tanava , jadata , vyagrata , vyadhi , unmada , mona and mrtyu .)

In praudha - raga all these conditions are also praudha , or mature .

Bijoy :- Gurudeva , kindly describe these conditions in detail .

Gosvami :- The intense yearning for one's desired object is lalasa . This is accompanied by eagerness , restlessness , dizzi-ness , heavy breathing etc. Udvega is defined as restlessness of the mind and is symptomised by long sighs , frivolity , stupor , anxiety , weeping , pallor , perspiration etc. Jagaryya means loss of sleep , this is accompanied by stupor , parchedness and sickness , or nausea etc. When the body becomes weak and emaci-ated , it is called tanava and its physical transformations are , debility , vertigo etc. ; some persons refer to tanava as ` vilapa ' .

Jadata or jadima means,the lack of discrimination between what is beneficial and what is harmful , inability to answer simple questions and weakening of the aural and visual senses . This is characterised by transformation such as sudden and loud outcry , stupor , long sighs , delusions and so on . When sobriety and deep thoughtfulness is disturbed and becomes unbearable , the condition is known as vyagrata ; in it are featured apathy , lack of discrimination , regret and envy . Not obtaining one's desired object leads to sickness of the heart and mind , where there is loss of bodily lustre and of fever , this condition of vyadhi is symptomised by chills , illusion , heavy breathing and so on .

To be absent - minded (because of being absorbed in thoughts of the lover) all the time , in every situation and everywhere, and because of it , to mistake one thing for another (thinking the tamal tree is Krsna) is described as madness , or unmada . Its symptoms are , hating the desired object (lover) , heavy breathing , viraha (fretting from seperation) , shortening of time etc. The blanking out of,or going against the normal flow of, awakened consciousness is called ` moha ' ; its anubhavas are immobility and falling down (when there is loss of consciousness) etc.

Even after sending messengers and letters the nayika is unable to arrange a tryst with her lover , the excruciating pain from cupid's arrow makes life unbearable for her and she is ready to quit her body , this condition is defined as mrtyu , or death . She hands over her favourite objects and momentos to her sakhis ; she experiences vibhava from uddipana such as , bumble - bee , gentle breeze , moon rays , kadamba flower , clouds , peacock and many more .

Bijoy :- Maharaja , kindly tell me now about samanjasa - purva-raga .

Gosvami :- Samanjasa - purvaraga is identical in character with samanjasa - rati , meaning the purvaraga which manifests just prior to the tryst (in samanjasa rati) . In fact , ten differ-ent conditions appear in gradual stages like , abhilasa , cinta , smrti , guna - kirtana , udvega , unmada in tandem with vilapa , vyadhi , jadata and mrtyu .

Bijoy :- I would like to have them elaborated upon , if you kindly do so .

Gosvami :- The nayika's yearning for her lover's company and the endeavours to fulfil that, is called ` abhilasa ' in purvaraga . The anubhava which embellish the nayika are : to beautify oneself with ornaments etc., searching for excuses to slip out and meet the lover , to exhibit her anuraga towards Him and so on . Here the condition of ` cinta ' means to meditate upon the means by which the nayika can meet her lover ; the symptoms displayed are : fastidiously changing and adding make - up and ornaments , heaving long sighs , staring fixedly etc. Remembering details about the lover either from hearing or from seeing Him , is referred to here as ` smrti ' ; and brings about shivering , physical numbness , pallor , heavy breathing etc.

To praise His beauty and other excellences is called ` guna - kirtana ' , its anubhava are : shivering , horripilation , choking etc. The rest of the six conditions of purvaraga namely : udvega (anxiety) , vilapa (lamentation) with unmada (madness) , vyadhi (feverishness) , jadata (inertia) and mrtyu (death) are the same as in samanajasa - rati .

Bijoy :- Prabhu , I have understood samanajasa - purvaraga , kindly describe the sadharana - purvaraga symptoms .

Gosvami :- This sadharana - samanajasa - purvaraga is very simi-lar to sadharani - rati . The anubhava here are six , touching upto vilap , and all of them are expressed subduedly . Since they are not complicated anubhava , I need not describe them . In purvaraga , love - letters and flower garlands are sent back and forth through young messenger boys (vayasya) .

Bijoy :- What exactly is meant by kamalekha , or love - letter ?

Gosvami :- Any missive which expresses love is a kamalekha , and is of two kinds : niraksara and saksara . Niraksara - kamalekha is a message of love on a red leaf with an etching by nails of a half - moon for example . It does not contain a written note using alphabets or words . While ` saksara - kamalekha ' is a written message sent between nayaka and nayika each describing in words , their individual condition . The writing is done with any red powder mixed with water , using musk or ink made from red - coloured flower juice . As paper , large leaves are used and fibres from lotus stems are utilised as strings to hold the leaves together .

Bijoy :- What are the stages of purvaraga ?

Gosvami :- Some authorities are of the opinion that in purvaraga the sequential progression of amorous conditions begin with revelling through the eyes [on seeing the object of love] , thoughtfulness , growing attached , becoming resolute , sleep-lessness , growing weak and feeble , apathy and detachment to-wards matter , overcoming shyness , developing madness , loosing consciousness and finally preparing for death . Purvaraga is common to both nayaka and nayika , but the nayika experiences it first and then Krsna .

Bijoy :- Gurudeva , please describe ` mana ' .

Gosvami :- ` Mana ' is that bhava which acts as a deterrent to the nayaka's and nayika's , ability to express even desirable amorous overtures like embracing , kissing and love talks etc. although they are in each other's company .

Bijoy :- Where does mana take shelter or support (asraya) ?

Gosvami :- ` Pranaya ' is the mainstay for ` mana ' . The rasa , or humour , called ` mana ' is not churned without the presence of pranaya ; but if mana should appear prior to pranaya it be-comes sankoca , or hesitant and inhibited. Mana is of two sorts : sahetu and nirhetu . When nayaka exhibits overt romantic disposition towards vipaksa (opposite camp) or tatastha (marginal camp) nayika , and pradhana nayika (Srimati Radhika) on seeing it or hearing about it becomes inflamed with envy (irsa) ; and when this irsa primarily evokes pranaya , then ` sahetu - mana ' arises .

According to ancient treatise [on rasa - sastra] bhaya , or fear , cannot be produced without sneha ; and irsa , or envy , is a product of pranaya ; so every nuance of mana is a revealer of prema between nayaka and nayika . The nayika who is embellished with an extremely amiable disposition and camaraderie is the one who at the slightest indication that her lover attached to her is making romantic advances towards another fair maiden , becomes very intolerant . Once in Dvaraka , Krsna was narrating to His queens the incident how He had presented Queen Rukmini with parijata flowers . Of the queens present there , only Satyabhama's heart was smitten with mana , not the others , because Satyabhama considered this show of love to Rukmini, who is her opposition camp , as vipaksa vaisistya - anubhava .

Bijoy :- Are there different grades of vipaksa - vaisistya - anubhava ?

Gosvami :- Yes , three : sruta , anumita and drsta . Emotional responses such as mana when evoked by hearing , say from a priya-sakhi , from the parrot Suka etc, it is called sruta - vipaksa - vaisistya . ` Anumita - vipaksa - vaisistya is also of three kinds : bhoganka , gotraskhalana and svapna . Signs of infidelity on Krsna's body or marks of love - making on the body of vipaksa sakhi is called ` bhoganka ' ; mistakenly addressing the nayika with vipaksa - sakhi's name is ` gotraskhalana ' ; and vipaksa - vaisistya which appear in Krsna's or Vidusaka's dream is ` svapna ' . When nayika directly sees Krsna engaged in love - play with the competing , or vipaksa nayika , it is termed as drsta - vipaksa - vaisistya - anubhava .

Bijoy :- ` Sahetu - mana ' is clear , kindly describe ` nirhetu - mana ' .

Gosvami :- Without any apparent cause when nayaka and nayika construe an imaginary reason to augment pranaya between them , it generates nirhetu - mana . Pranaya naturally leads to sahetu - mana and the loving exchanges of pranaya produces the emotional grandeur called nirhetu - mana . The latter may also be described as pranaya - mana . The panditas of antiquity have compared the nature

of prema , or love,with the capricious movements of a snake . This explains why mana between nayaka and nayika are of two kinds (sahetu and nirhetu) , with and without reasons . The vyabhicari - bhava predominant in this rasa is avahitya , or camouflaging emotions .

Bijoy :- In what way is nirhetu - mana abated ?

Gosvami :- This occurs on its own , without extraneous expedien-cies . As soon as hasya , or laughter , etc. intrudes , mana dissipates by itself . Whereas sahetu - mana requires reconcili-ation (sama) discrimination (bheda) , activity (kriya) , charity (dana) , humility (nati) apathy (upeksha) a change of rasa (rasantara) and so on , for it to actually subside . It is signalled by wiping the tears , laughter etc.

Bijoy :- Prabhu , I would like to have these terms like ` sama ' etc. further clarified .

Gosvami :- Sweet coaxing words to comfort the beloved is ` sama ' . ` Bheda ' is of two sorts : to show - off one's greatness through nuances and through gestures , and to be censured by the sakhis . Pretending to give away in charity objects like crown , jewellery etc. is referred to here as ` dana ' . To fall at the feet in humility is ` nati ' . When ` sama ' and other approaches to attenuate nayikas ` mana ' is unsuccessful , taking a reti-cient attitude is called ` upeksha ' . Others are of the opinion , that ` upeksha ' means to speak in inuendos and double entendre , intent on pacifying and humouring the sakhis .

` Rasantara ' means a change of mood , usually brought about suddenly , either by fear , laughter or grave concern and so on . It is of two kinds : yadrcchika and ` buddhi - purvaka ' . Rasan-tara which occurs on its own without the direct involvement of nayaka is yadrcchika , for example through natural causes and unexpected situations ; buddhi - purvaka rasantara is directly authored by the nayaka who uses His sharp wit and intelligence to exploit any situation to His advantage and converts the prevail-ing mood of nayika (mana) .

Bijoy :- Are there any other means to placate ` mana ' ?

Gosvami :- Yes , a particular place , a specific time and the sweet sound of flute can mitigate nayika's ` mana ' , even without the help of ` sama ' and so on . A light mana (laghu) is tack-led with little effort ; the medium intensity ` mana ' (madhyama) needs careful and concerted application ; and the serious or almost implacable ` mana ' (durjaya) demands immense patience and resourcefulness . Some of the invectives used as adjectives and appellatives for Krsna by the nayikas in ` mana ' are : unkind (vama) , perpetrator par - excellence of atrocities (durlila - siromani) , King of deceivers (kapata - raja) , Prince of perfidy (kitava - raja) , Master of guiles (khala - srestha) , the champion cunning (maha - dhurta) , hard - hearted (kathora) , shameless (nirlajja) , Ravisher of gopis (gopidharma - nasaka) , Kidnapper of women (ramanicora) , Lord of Lusty desires (kamukesvara) , thief (taskar) etc.

Bijoy :- What is prema - vaicittya ?

Gosvami :- Even when the lover is present , due to the nature of intense love distress is generated from the feeling of being seperated from the lover , this is called prema - vaicittya . The total saturation in amorous feelings numbs the heart and mind thus allowing the mind to be in the grips of a phantasmagoria which falsely construes a scenario where even though nayika is in nayaka's embrace , she feels He is not present , thus she pines for Him , this is known as vaicittya .

Bijoy : What are the features of pravasa ?

Gosvami : After nayaka and nayika spend time together , suddenly they are seperated by distance because of any one of them going away to a far place , or back to their individual homes , or even due to a change of rasa , this is described as pravasa. In prava-sa, which is a type of vipralambha , all the vyabhicari bhava symptoms of srngara-rasa are manifest with the exceptions of harsa, garva, mada and brida . There are two types of pravasa : buddhi-purvaka and abuddhi-purvaka.

Bijoy : Kindly explain these two pravasa .

Gosvami : Travelling far away to expedite one's responsibility and work , is called buddhi-purvaka pravasa . Giving pleasure and good instructions to His devotees is Krsna's duty and work. This pravasa is further divided into two : short distance and long distance travels. The latter has again three categories : past, present and future. In sudura-pravasa, or long distance travels the nayaka and nayika remain in touch with each other through sending news etc.

Pravasa , or travel , hence seperation , caused by other forces is abuddhi-purvaka-pravasa. This pravasa has many variations like divya, adivya and so on. There are ten conditions manifest in pravasa : worries, vigilance, anxiety, debility, paleness, delir-ium, sickness, madness, illusion and death. In pravasa-vipralambha these conditions also appear in Krsna. What is note - worthy is , that inspite of the different variations prema has and its numerous conditions, all of them cannot be enumerated here. But some authorised ancient treatises on rasa claim that karuna, or compassion, is a variety of vipralambha and as such requires independent mention, but since all its symptoms are included in pravasa, a seperates delineation is not essential."

Bijoy deeply considered Srila Gosvami's instruction on vipralamb-ha. He thought : " Vipralambha-rasa is not self-perfected (svatah-siddha) it is there only to nurture sambhoga, or relish. For the conditioned jiva, vipralambha mood of seperation specifi-cally appears to favourably cultivate sambhoga-rasa , but still vipralambha will always have a residual presence in the eternal rasa, otherwise variagatedness in eternal pastimes is impossible ."

Chapter 38 Analysing Srngara-rasa.

Bijoy sat composed, he concentrated on Srila Gosvami's words as he spoke on sambhoga-rasa in response to Bijoy's humble query.

Gosvami : We have already discussed there are two types of Krsna-lila : prakata (manifest) and aprakata (unmanifest). The intense pining from seperation (viraha) in vipralambha-rasa so far described are all in reference to prakata-lila. However, in all the eternal and perennial pastimes of Krsna with the gopis in Goloka Vrndavana like the rasa dance, there is no viraha, or seperation. It is narrated in the scriptures (Mathura-mahatmya), that Krsna sports in Vrndavana with the cowherd boys (gopas) and gopis. The word 'krdati', or is playing, or is sporting , has been used to describe Krsna's activities. Thus it is clearly understood that by the verb being in present continuous tense, it indicates continuity ad infinitum , i.e, eternal.

Therefore , in the aprakata-lila (unmanifest pastimes) in Goloka, or Vrndavana, Krsna's pastimes do not include sudura-pravasa-viraha, or seperation by long distances. Here only sambhoga-rasa is eternal, perpetual. The romantic exchanges like embracing, trysting and so on, between nayaka and nayika (as visaya and asraya) which They relish with immense exhilaration, when height-ens produces an unique decoction of rasa known as sambhoga. Sambhoga is divided into two sections : mukhya and gauna.

When sambhoga is in a dynamic and awakened state , it is called mukhya. Mukhya-sambhoga is further sub-divided into four : samk-sipta, samkirna, sampanna and samrddhimana. Sambhoga which ensues after purvaraga is samksipta; here due to apprehension, shyness etc. the nayaka and nayika enjoy brief and furtive kisses, em-braces and so on . The sambhoga which follows 'mana' is 'samkir-na'. Samkirna sambhoga is a blend of opposing tastes, much like a steaming cup of sugarcane juice : sweet but burning hot. The nayika is reminded of nayaka's perfidy, the marks of love-play with another nayika has given Him away. Yet the sweet relish of His touch and kisses keeps the nayika wanting for more.

Nayika's delight seeing her lover after He returns from a short journey (pravasa) is called sampanna-sambhoga. It is of two sorts : agati and pradurbhava. Coming back as a part of a daily rou-tine, like Krsna returning from grazing the cows as the gopis feast their eyes on Him, is agati-sampanna-sambhoga. The sudden or unexpected appearance of Krsna before the love-smitten and anxious nayika, is pradurbhava sambhoga. 'Pradurbhava' is most desirable and satisfying to the nayika.

Samrddhimana proceeds after sudura-pravasa. Controlled by inde-pendent forces which seperates nayaka from her lover gone far away, meeting each other is not always easily possible. Thus when this situation is reversed and the nayaka returns, nayika's joy is boundless, the bliss she savours is samrddhimana-sambhoga. This sambhoga is of two kinds : channa (covered) and prakasa (expresed) ; anyhow, these distinctions are not required to be elaborated upon

here.

Bijoy : Prabhu, could we go to the subject of gauna-sambhoga ?

Gosvami : Special pastimes of Krsna which appear in dreams are known as gauna-sambhoga. The dreams are of two sorts : samanya and visesa, hence gauna-sambhoga is also of two kinds. Dreams which were already described as part of vyabhicari-bhava is here referred to as samanya. Visesa-sambhoga is strangely similar to the condition called jagrata, or awakened, and is a part of sthayi and sancari bhava. This points to extra-ordinary parallels between visesa-sambhoga and jagrata-sambhoga. And just like mukhya-sambhoga this (visesa) has also same four divisions : samksipta, samkirna, sampanna and samrddhimana.

Bijoy: It is a little confusing how relish (Sambhoga) in samrd-dhimana sambhoga is possible, since dreams are not real, or what is dreamt is not actually happening.

Gosvami: By their nature, jagrata (awakened state) and svapna (dream state) are identical. An appropriate example of this is the case of Usha and Aniruddha. Usha was in Sonitapura in her quarters inside Vana's palace dreaming of enjoying Aniruddha's embrace who was at the time far away in Dvaraka , also dreaming of enjoying with Usha. The exact same thing occurs to Krsna and His beloved gopis. This is of course not possible for conditioned souls to experience. The direct and tangible proof of this is that , when transcendental, liberated devotees receive ornaments and other such paraphernalia in their dreams, they still have them even after waking up from sleep.

Svapna, or dream, is of two categories : jagarayamana svapna and svapnayamana jagara. The fourth stage in yopic perfection is samadhi; the gopis have superceded it and acquired the fifth level known as prema. Their dreams have nothing in common with ordinary dreams which are mundane and fictitious. The gopis dreams are transcendental , supramundane and in the realm of absolute reality. Thus Krsna's dalliances are so wonderful and unique that He gives pleasure (sambhoga) to His beloved ladyloves through a kalcidoscope of dreams.

Bijoy : What are the symptoms, or anubhava, of sambhoga-rasa ?

Gosvami : They are : scrutiny (sandarsana), garrulity (jalpa) sparsana (touching), blocking the way (vartma-rodhan), rasa-dance, sporting in the Yamuma, pleasure boat-rides, stealing flowers, demanding fictitious taxes (dana-keli), playing hide and seek in the forest groves, or kunja, drinking beverages made from honey, Krsna dresses-up as a gopi, shamming sleep (kapata-nidra), playing dice, tugging at the dress, kissing or drinking nectar from the lips, embracing, scratching with nail and erotic union in Nidhuvana (nidhuvana-ramana-samprayoga).

Bijoy : Guruji, apparently there is a difference between lila-vilasa (pleasurable pastimes) and samprayoga (erotic union), but which of these is more pleasurable ?

Gosvami : Lila-vilasa is definitely more satisfying and blissful than samprayoga.

Bijoy : What endearing names or expressions do the gopis use to address Krsna ?

Gosvami: Hey Gokulananda (O,bliss of Gokula),hey Govinda (O joy of the cows, senses), hey gosthendrakulacandra (O full moon of the royal dynasty of cowherdsmen), hey pranesvara (O Lord of the heart), hey sundarottamsa (O paragon of beauty), hey nagara-siromani (O crest jewel of paramours), hey vrndavana-candra (O resplendent moon of Vrndavana), hey gokula raja (O king of Goku-la), hey manohara (O stealer of hearts) and so on.

Bijoy : Prabhu, I understand that Krsna's pastimes are prakata (manifest) and aprakata (unmanifest), and they are both the same principle ; but what are the variations in prakata vraja-lila?

Gosvami : Prakata vraja-lila is of two varieties : nitya and naimittika. In Vraja, astakaliya-lila (eight three-hourly pas-times) is nitya ; while killing of putana etc and travelling to far places outside Vraja (sudura-pravasa) are naimittika-lila.

Bijoy : I can better comprehend this subject if you kindly explain a little more.

Gosvami : Two authorised versions on this subject are available. One is composed by the ancient sages and the other is compiled by the great Gosvamis ; which of these do you want to hear ?

Bijoy : I am attracted to hear the sage's version in sanskrit.

Gosvami : " nisantah pratah purvahno madhyahnascaparahnakah
sayam pradosartrisca kalastau ca yathakramam
madhyahno yamini cobhou yanmuhurtamitou smrtou
trimuhurtamita jneya nisantapramukhah pare "

(Lila, or pastimes, are divided into eight periods : nisanta [predawn], pratah [early morning], purvahna [forenoon], madyahna [midday or noon], aparahna [afternoon], sayam [dusk] pradosa [evening], ratri [night]. `Rati-lila' and `madyahna-lila' are six `muhurta' each, while the others are three `muhurta' each [one muhurta is equivalent to forty-eight minutes]).

Sadasiva, in the Sanat-kumar samhita (* A treatise on tantra found in sattvatpancaratra. Also consult Patalakhanda 52 in Padma Purana, leaving out certain sections) has ascertained different devotional services according to the time of day or of night. They are to be meditated upon (smarana) at particular times, as a part of ones bhajana.

Bijoy : Srila Gurudeva ! Am I privileged to hear those narrations by Srila Sadasiva, the world renowned exponent of bhakti ?

Gosvami : Hear attentively. Sadasiva said : " The young damsels of Vraja who pride themselves in being female protagonists in amorous pastimes of the parakiya mood

(paramourship) are very dear to Krsna. They manifest a plethora of transcendental spiritual sentiments for the sole purpose of giving happiness to Krsna, their most beloved lover. O Narada, you must perceive yourself, as you are in your spiritual identity [svarupa], to be among those young belles of Vrndavana who are steeped in parakiya sentiments and meditate in the following manner :- 'I am an enchantingly lovely adolescent maid of tender age. Knowing myself to be an eternal maidservant of Srimati Radhika, who is expert in various arts and refinements of how to please Krsna's senses, I find my greatest and perennial source of pleasure in uniting Sri Krsna with His dearest love, Srimati Radhika. Even if Krsna was to approach me with an amorous proposal to enjoy with me, I shall refuse, because relenting to it would tantamount to gratifying my own senses rather than Krsna's senses. I shall forever remain the maid-in-attendance to Srimati, the favourite of Krsna, and cultivate more affection for Srimati than for Sri Krsna and be eternally engaged in daily arranging for Their divine union, thus seeking to bring Them ineffable exultation'.

This way one has to remember his eternal service in transcendental Vrndavana in his spiritual identity; starting service from 'brahma-muhurta', or pre-dawn, right through to late night (nisanta to ratri).

Bijoy : What specific engagements are in nisanta-lila ?

Gosvami : Sri Vrndadevi said : "In the middle of Vrndavana forest, inside an enchanting leafy bower made of wishfulfilling desire trees, is a sanctum sanctorum decorated with precious gems and stones. The bower is surrounded on all sides by fifty other groves. Srimati Radhika and Sri Krsna lie on a bed inside the sanctorum, intimately embracing each other in sleep. In embrace they become so totally integrated as one, that even after ample sleep when the gaggle of different birds who under my command try to wake Them up with their sweet insistent chattering and singing, They are wont to separate Themselves from each other's embrace thereby terminating their stolen moments of bliss. So They remain as they are, fretting at the very thought of making an attempt to wake up.

Thereafter, she-parrot Sarika and her group of female parrots along with he-parrot Suka and his male parrot friends incessantly speak with each other trying to awaken the love-smitten Couple. Finally, the Couple stretch Themselves free from each other and sit up on the bed. The 'sakhis' approach the Couple and begin serving Them in accordance with their mood and time. Meanwhile Suka, Sarika and the other pet parrots continue their discussion with each other; once again overhearing their talks, the Couple abandon Their bed and prepare to leave. They are overcome with fear (bhaya rasa) and anxiety (utkantha rasa) as they hasten towards Their individual homes.

Bijoy : Kindly narrate pratah-lila.

Gosvami : Mother Yasoda wakes up little sleeping Krsna from His night's slumber. He lazily stretches out His body, brushes His teeth and rinses the mouth. Then with His mother's permission He goes to the goshala with Balarama, eager to watch the

cows being milked. Meanwhile, O Narada Muni, in Her own house Srimati Radhika is being woken-up from sleep by the sakhis. She gets up and rinses Her mouth, completes the morning ablutions and Her body is massaged with scented oil. She is then taken by Lalita and other sakhis and given a bath. The sakhis decorate and dress Srimati in jewelleries and fineries, smear Her body with perfumed pastes and oils, tie fragrant flower-strands entwining Her tresses and around Her neck. The sakhis render all kinds of service to Srimati so that She is completely satisfied. Approximately at this time Mother Yasoda sends for Her to come and cook for Krsna."

Surprised, Narada Muni asks : " Why did Yasoda send for Srimati when expert cooks like Rohinidevi was present ?

Vrndadevi replied : " O great sage ! I had heard from Katyayani-devi that Srimati Radhika had received a boon from the powerful mystic, Durvasa Muni. Sage Durvasa had blessed Her saying : 'O Devi ! By the power of my boon, whatever you cook will taste delicious and more nectarean than the ambrosia of immortality ; and who-so-ever eats, it will increase his longevity'. So, Mother Yasoda knowing about this boon, wants her son to eat Srimati's cooking. Because she is full of parental love and care for Krsna, Yasoda wants Krsna to have a long life and relish palatable food and so she daily calls for Srimati Radhika.

Srimati first takes permission from Her mother-in-law and then proceeds to Maharaja Nanda's house.

Krsna follows a similar morning routine. On the orders of His father, Krsna oversees the milking of some cows done by outside cowherd men. He returns with friends to the house and the serv-ants undress Him, oil Him properly and bathe Him.

They then dress Him in fresh dhoti, apply sandalwood paste on His body and garland Him with fragrant flowers. His wavy black locks are gathered in such a fashions that a wispy mop curls stylishly kissing His forehead, and it spreads a fancy fauna around the back of His neck. Indeed, He presents a delectable sight : beautiful tilaka in the shape of a moon on His forehead, bangles and bracelets on His wrists and forearms respectively , a neck-lace of pearls makes a diffused halo around His neck and on His chest, earrings designed like makara fish dangle from His lobes.

When He is ready Mother Yasoda calls repeatedly. At last catching hold His friends' hands Krsna follows His elder brother Balarama into the dining room. They all sit in a circle and eat a break-fast feast comprising of their favourite dishes. Through the meal Krsna jokes and makes His brother and friends laugh and enjoys Himself thoroughly. After the repast Krsna distributes tambula (betelnut and condiments packed inside the betal-leaf) made by the servants to His friends and lies down on the grand bed to rest, chewing tambula pan.

Bijoy : That brings us to the purvahna-lila, or forenoon pas-times.

Gosvami : Yes ; Krsna, wearing His cowherdboy's tunic, takes the cows and calves out of the palace gates to the grazing grounds. The affectionate and doting Vrajabasis follow behind Krsna to some distance, unable to bear separation from Him. Before leaving, Krsna touches His mother's and father's feet in respect, sends loving farewells to His beloved girl-friends with surreptitious and furtive sideglances and takes leave of everyone else who had followed Him with pleasing parting words. Surrounded by His friends the cows, Krsna enters the forests. Inside the forest Krsna plays with His friends for sometime. At the appointed moment He quietly slips away from the rest of the crowd along with a selected few priya-sakha friends. Suddenly Krsna is ebullient. He is on His way to a lover's tryst.

Bijoy : Madhyahna-lila already begins now ?

Gosvami : Meanwhile, after Krsna enters the forest and disappears out of sight, the smitten damsels are already pining for Krsna. On the pretext of collecting flowers for worship of the Sungod, Sri Radha and Her sakhis also enter the forest, eager to meet Krsna. Thus hoodwinking everyone Radha and Krsna rendezvous in the lush groves of Vrndavana forest. In joyous abandon They play many games, make amorous innuendos, flirt with each other and while-away precious stolen moments together.

The sakhis urge Radha and Krsna to sit on the swing while they swing Them and pass coquettish comments. Srimati steals from an unwary Krsna His flute, and makes signs to Her sakhis to hide it. Krsna runs from tree to nook to crannies, from one sakhi to another, trying to locate His flute. Sri Radhika and Her sakhis have a good laugh as Krsna goes begging for His flute. Finally after much fun and hunt they return His flute. Then Radha and Krsna followed by the sakhis, enter the spring-bower where spring season is in perennial bloom.

Each of them take large syringes and drench the other with vermillion water and different coloured waters. Sometimes they smear each others body with sandalwood, vermillion and many shades of fragrant pastes, as done in spring festivals. Radha always seeks out Krsna and Krsna Radhika, but Both also dally with the sakhis, as the sakhis especially like to colour Radha and Krsna. In this manner the Divine Couple along with the sakhis playfully pass their time in appropriate pastimes suiting Their mood, time and place while soothed by the gentle spring time breezes.

O most exalted among the sages (Narada), exhausted from such hectic dalliances Radhika and Krsna seek the cooling shade of a large tree and sit down beneath it on a majestic throne. Catching their breath They begin to drink honey-nectar. As the drink commences to take affect they feel inebriated, their eyelids droop shut and soon They go off into a light siesta. They are awakened by arrows of cupid, Their erotic urges are aroused and clasping each others hands They enter the inner sanctum of the grove. Overcome and almost debilitated by intense lusty desires They babble incomprehensibly and engage in amorous plays like do the king and queen of elephants in mating.

The sakhis are also intoxicated with the honey-beverage. Peering through sleepy, bleary eyes they stumble out of the sanctum through different exits wanting to leave the Divine lovers alone. Krsna, through the agency of His inconceivable potency, expands Himself in as many original Krsna's as there are gopis and begins to enjoy with each of them separately. Just as the concupiscent king of elephants cohabits with many she-elephants, likewise Krsna goes to the lake with Srimati Radhika and the sakhis to engage in erotic water sports.

Sri Narada Muni, impatient, interjects at this juncture and asks : "O Vrndadevi, how is it possible that in Nandanandana Krsna's nectarean madhurya-krda (conjugal pastimes), aisvarya (opulence) manifests itself ? ---- kindly dissipate my doubts."

Sri Vrndadevi replied, "O sage Narada, in Krsna reposes absolute and complete madhurya, or conjugal humour, which is His lila-sakti, or the potency through which He performs pastimes. Thus He is able to be simultaneously with the many gopa friends and sakhis, separately playing with each of them, via the agency of His madhurya-lila-sakti. So Krsna becomes absorbed in water sports, splashing water or jostling in the pond separately with each sakti. Thereafter the sakhis decorate Srimati and Krsna with fresh fragrant flower-garlands and sandalwood paste and escort Them inside a gem-studded room on the bank of the lake and seat Them comfortably on a beautiful throne studded with pearls and rubies.

I (Vrndadevi) offer them fruits and berries that I personally picked. Krsna eats first served by Srimati Herself and surrounded by the sakhis. Krsna then lies down on the grand bed decorated with streamers of flowers. Only a handful of sakhis busy them-selves preparing and offering pan, fanning, massaging His feet and so on. Krsna, luxuriating in their tender pamperings falls asleep thinking of Srimati Radhika, His most beloved gopi Srimati Radhika becomes happy and satisfied seeing Krsna sleeping contented, then together with the sakhis She relishes Krsna's remnants. But suddenly Srimati's mind goes elsewhere, She is unable to eat much. Just as a female cakora bird pecks at her food impatient to see the lotus-like face of the king of the night (moon-god), Srimati Radhika is beside Herself to again behold the blooming lotus-like countenance of Her beloved paramour, Krsna.

She hastens to the bedroom and stands awhile savouring with Her eyes Krsna's ruddy lips reddened by chewing pan and His tranquil handsome face. She returns to the sakhis, takes pan and distributes it to all the others. Meanwhile Krsna, dying of curiosity to know what the sakhis and Srimati are talking about, covers Himself with a sheet pretending deep slumber. The sakhis also think that Krsna is actually in siesta. So they freely talk about Krsna, His romantic exploits and other very confidential matters. They enjoy themselves laughing and joking. But somehow, intuitively they understand that Krsna is only pretending to sleep ; immediately they are shamed, they bite their tongue and look askance at each other.

Bashfully they sit quietly for sometime ; but soon they walk over to the bed, lift up the bedsheet covering Krsna, and playfully needle Him saying : "So this is how you sleep." They all start laughing --- time flits by in fun, jesting and resting.

They relocate themselves on to a large sprawling divan and sit down comfortably on it with an air of carefree exuberance. They decide to play a game of dice (pasa) and set down the rules ; the stakes are jewellery, clothes, kisses and embraces. Short while later Krsna demands Srimati's necklace stating He was the winner. Srimati fakes anger and begins to chastise Krsna for cheating. Krsna says : "O Devi ! If You are the real winner then according to the wager I have to kiss You, so be ready to comply." Krsna, desiring to behold Srimati's undulating eyebrows and Her embar-assed protestations, plants a decisive winner's kiss on Srimati's mouth.

Suddenly, Srimati and Krsna fall silent and listen to the verbal battle between Suka and Sarika parrots. As if this was a sign; Srimati and Krsna get up and prepare to go home. They leave their love-nest, Krsna bids farewell to Srimati Radhika and heads back to the cows. Srimati Radhika with Her entourage also walks away in the direction of the Sungod temple to offer worship. Once out of sight Krsna changes direction and attire and goes to the Sungod temple dressed as the priest. Krsna is not immediately recognised by Srimati or the sakhis. Unsuspecting, Srimati Radhi-ka and the sakhis request the priest to conduct worship and give offerings to the Sungod. Krsna recites several lines of a fictitious and fabricated mantra which sounds very comical. O Narada, the extremely intelligent and perceptive sakhis could easily detect the false vedic incantations and understand that the love-sick hero, Krsna, is unable to bear separation from Radhara-ni. They experience ineffable ecstasy and practically loose consciousness. Till half-past two in the afternoon these wonderful pastimes are enacted, after which Krsna goes back to join His friends on the grazing ground and Srimati and the sakhis return home.

Bijoy : Kindly continue with the next `kala' i.e `aparahna-lila', or afternoon episode.

Gosvami : Vrndadevi continued : " O Narada, Krsna meets up with His sakhas friends. He plays on His flute to call back the scattered cow herd. The flute is also meant to exhilarate the Vraja-basis' hearts and they become irresistibly attracted to the son of Narda Maharaja. So, playing His flute Krsna with His friends lead the cowherd back to Vraja. As Krsna nears Nanda Maharaja's palace, hearing His flute Nanda Maharaja and all the Vrajabasis rush out of their houses. The faint sound of Krsna's flute, the tinkling of cow-bells and the dust cloud raised by the weary hooves signalling the return of Krsna, sends the Vrajabasis yearning to see Krsna, hastening in His direction.

Srimati Radhika after returning home bathes and dresses up appropriately for the time of the day. She goes to the kitchen of Nanda Maharaja and prepares another feast for the fatigued and hungry Krsna. Then together with Her sakhis and with anxious expectation Radhika half-runs to the limits of Vraja and joins the ardent throng of Vrajabasis waiting to welcome Krsna. Krsna, on arrival, is greeted with

tumultuous fervor. He personally returns every Vrajabasi's greetings ; to some He smiles, to others He nods and yet to others He reciprocates with a meaningful glance. The senior Vrajabasis are treated with deference by Krsna, either with appropriate words or actions. To Nanda Mahara-ja, Mother Yasoda and Mother Rohini, Krsna offers prostrated obeisances. To Srimati His beloved gopi, and the sakhis, Krsna responds with modest glances.

Krsna then accompanies the cows and puts them safely inside their enclosures. Taking permission from His parents, Krsna and Balarama go to the house, bathe, change into fresh clothes and enjoy a small repast. By this time the last milking is to begin, so Krsna, eager to be there, goes to the cow shed.

Bijoy : That must be the end of aparahna-lila and beginning of sayam-lila (dust), gurudeva ?

Gosvami : Krsna milks several cows Himself and helps His father in supervising the milking of the thousands of other cows. At the end of the milking, Krsna accompanying His father is at the head of a large group of cowherd helpers carrying thousands of gallons of fresh milk. Returning home, Krsna sits together with His mothers, brothers, Balarama and enjoys a pre-dinner horsd'oeuvre (consisting of edibles which are chewed,sucked, licked and drunk).

Bijoy : Kindly describe pradosa-lila (evening).

Gosvami : Before Mother Yaosda has to ask for it, Srimati Radhika sends over a sumptuous dinner she cooked helped by Her sakhis. Krsna sits with His father, brother and others for dinner, praises the different preparations and quality of cooking while relishing the delicacies. Thereafter Krsna accompanies His father and entourage into the assembly hall where panegyrists and balla-deers are in waiting. Mother Yasoda makes a large package of all the food preparations sent by Srimati and gives it to the sakhis who had brought the dinner. A gopi by the name Dhanistha secretly adds Krsna's remanants in the package and then it is taken over to Srimati Radhika's house. The sakhis offer everything to Sri-mati, she in turn distributes Krsna's remanants to all the sakhis and they sit together and relish every morsel. The sakhis dress and prepare Srimati Radharani for Her nocturnal tryst with Krsna.

Bijoy : Gurudeva, I am keen to hear the ratri-lila (nocturnal pastimes).

Gosvami : Sri Vrndadevi said : " I (Vrnda) send a sakhi (duti) to Srimati Radha. In consalation with the duti, who confirms the movement of the moon, whether it is in the waxing or waning fort-night, Srimati Radha dresses in colours and jewelleries compli-menting it. She then accompanies Her sakhis to the bank of the Yamuna and enters the love-grove decorated with a gem-studded throne and bed, and shaded by leafy bowers of desire trees. Mean-while Krsna sits in the assembly, sees different entertainers perform and listens captivated to the haunting strains of the `katyayani-sangita'. In appreciation He offers money and gifts to the satisfaction of the performers and sits on the throne to receive worship from the

general public. Tired, He is escorted by Mother Yasoda to His bedroom.

After Mother Yasoda puts Krsna to bed, she leaves the bedroom. Krsna waits awhile before He quietly slips out of the room and heads straight for the love-grove on the Yamuna banks, yearning to meet His beloved. Thereafter Srimati and Krsna enter the forest with the sakhis, play with them and watch variety performances of songs, dances and dramas by them. Later, till half-past two in the night, Krsna participates in the rasa-lila dance. Finally, exhausted and wishing to be alone together, Srimati and Krsna vanish unnoticed from their midst and enter Their love-grove. Inside, They lie down on a beautifully decorated floral bed and perform intimate pastimes while being served by a select group of few confidantes."

Bijoy, thus I have narrated the `asta-kaliya-lila'; it contains every detailed inflections and subtleties of rasa. Whatever I have earlier described about rasa-tattva is included in these esoteric pastimes. Now, perceive and ascertain from this your specific proclivity, position, time, place, relationship etc, and launch into your devotional service."

The extremely learned and elevated Bijoy after hearing these topics went into a trance-like state. Tears flowed incessantly down his cheeks, his body horripilated constantly and he made a feeble attempt to speak inspite of his voice being choked by overwhelming spiritual emotions. He lay slumped, at Srila Gopal-guru's feet for sometime oblivious of the external world. Then slowly he got up and gingerly made his way back to his home. From this day on Bijoy could think of nothing else but rasa, as it welled up in his heart in constant waves.

Chapter 39 Analysis of the Eligibility of Participating in Pastimes.

Bijoy has grown totally apathetic towards material life, he is listless and seemingly perturbed. When he goes for darsana of Lord Jagannatha he is unable to stem the upsurge from within of spiritual emotions. The subject of rasa in general was already known to him, but recently he gained proper comprehension of madhura-rasa along with its sthaya-bhava, vibhava, anubhava, sattvika-bhava, vyabhicari-bhava and so on. Different bhava in different times at random took control of his heart and submerged him in ecstasy. This went on for days. He felt helpless; inept at negotiating the eruption, rampancy, ramification and metamorphosis of bhava, he went with tearful eyes and fell at Sri Gosva-mi's feet.

Bijoy lamented : " O Srila gurudeva ! In spite of learning every-thing from you I am incapable of controlling myself and so I cannot properly place myself in the Lord's pastimes. Therefore kindly impart the appropriate knowledge and methodology by which I may learn to do so." Gopal-guru Gosvami's heart pulsed with joy observing Bijoy's symptoms. He thought to himself that it was the very nature of Krsna-prema to project extreme ecstasy as dolour and pain as rapture. Aloud he

said : " You must adopt the correct means to enter Krsna's pastimes."

Bijoy : What is that means, gurudeva ?

Gosvami : Srila Radhunathadasa Gosvami writes in the second slika of his book `Manah-siksa':

"na dharmam nadharmam srutigana-niruktam kila kuru
vraje radha-krsna-pracura-paricaryamiha tanu
sacisunum nandisvara-patisutatve guru-varam
mukunda-presthatve smara paramajasram nanu manah" (Ms: 2)

[My dear mind ! Please do not perform the religious activities prescribed in the Vedas, nor the irreligious works forbidden by the scriptures. The ultimate conclusion of the entire vedic literatures is that the Divine Couple, Sri-Sri Radha and Krsna, is the Supreme object of worship, and that loving service to Them is the most relishable experience of all. Therefore, O mind, engage yourself fully in serving Them with love and devotion. Always meditate on Lord Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the son of Mother Saci, with the understanding that He is absolutely non-different from Sri Krsna, son of Maharaja Nanda. Dear mind, meditate as well on Sri guru, who is a dearmost devotee of Lord Mukunda, Krsna.]

The purport is that the devotee must not squander precious time in determining the distinctions between vedic dharma and adharmam [religiosity and irreligiosity], instead he must discard the hair-splitting logic and stipulations in the scriptures and fully apply himself with lobha, or greed, to execute raganuga bhakti, or spontaneous devotional service, to Sri Radha and Sri Krsna in Vraja, where there is a plethora of spiritual chores. Service must be rendered in the spiritual mood of Vraja. If there is a problem as to who can explain the aim of such a mood of service, its solution is : the Supreme Personality, Lord Caitanya, Lord of the heart, appeared in the womb of Mother Saci in Navadvipa dhama, which though equal in very respect to Vrajadhama is covered Vrndavana, He is non-different from the son of Maharaja Nanda, Krsna, - never doubt this truth.

The devotee should never commit the mistake in thinking that The Supreme Lord appeared in Navadvipa dhama to exhibit an unique and distinct mode of worship and meditation as a part of His pastime in His particular incarnation, so as to make Him the puramour of Navadvipa, hence the devotee is obliged to reject the path of worship in the Vraja mood.

Gauranga is Krsna Himself, thus anyone who has taken initiation into Deity worship and has taken shelter in meditating on Him and on His mantra [Gaura-mantra] independent of Krsna mantra, Then his worship must never be disturbed by anybody. And for those on the path of rasa-bhajana, He (the Supreme Lord) is to be exclusively worshiped and served as the beloved of Srimati Radhika (Radha-ballabha). He (Lord Caitanya) is the object of bhajana and meditation because He has appeared as the sole guru of Vraja-rasa. Remember Lord Caitanya's pastimes as a part of your worship before you do everything else, because they are stimulants that evoke asta-kaliya krsna-lila smarama (meditation on the eight periodic

pastimes of Krsna). Realise that your guru on the path of rasa-bhajana is non-different from a Vraja-yuthesvari (group leader) or sakhi. You can enter in Krsna's Vraja-pastimes if you follow these steps in bhajana.

Bijoy : Guruji, I have now understood that I must relinquish attachment for scriptural logic and renounce all other paths in order to single-mindedly pursue relevant devotional service in Krsna's asta-kaliya pastimes in the spiritual mood initiated by Lord Caitanya and executed under the guidance of guru who is a sakhi. But how do I fix my mind in implementing this line of action ?

Gosvami : Steadiness in one's resolve comes in two ways : from distilling comprehension about the object of worship (upasaya-pa-riskrti) and from distilling perception about the worshipper (upasaka-pariskrti). You are knowledgeable about the principles of rasa, hence you have accomplished upasaya-pariskrti. There are eleven tendencies pertinent to upasaka-pariskrti, you have cultivated most of them, all you need is the ability to sustain them.

Bijoy : Kindly enumerate and delineate them.

Gosvami : The eleven tendencies are : sambandha, bayasa, nama, rupa, yutha, vesa, ajna, vasa, seva, parakastha-svas and palya-dasi-bhava.

Bijoy : What is meant by sambandha ?

Gosvami : Sambandha, in this context, is the foundation. At the time when the sadhaka was cultivating his sambandha, or relationship with Krsna, this same matures to perfection at the stage of spiritual consummation. Those who worshipped Krsna as 'Lord and master' later become His servitors in dasya-rasa; those whose natural affection for 'Krsna' was in the protective and paternal mood of that of a parent for a son, they become a vatsalya-rasa devotees. Devotees who loved Krsna as their beloved husband become the queens of Dvaraka in 'svakiya-rasa.

In Vraja, santa-rasa is absent; dasya is diffident. Sambandha is established in tandem with and according to the devotee's taste (ruci). Bijoy, you possess a feminine ethos plus a parakiya ruci, or taste, for the paramour mood, hence you are subservient to the Queen of Vraja. Your sambandha-bhava is : 'I am Srimati Radhika's maid-servant's assistant ; Srimati Radha is my proprietress and mistress, and Krsna is Her Lord and beloved master : therefore the beloved of Srimati Radha (radhaballabha), Krsna, is the Lord of my heart'.

Bijoy : I have heard that the great preceptor Srila Jiva Gosvami was in favour of sambandha in svakiya-bhava, is that true ?

Gosvami : None of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's followers are bereft of pure parakiya-bhava. Srila Rupa Gosvami is the foremost exponent and preceptor of parakiya-rasa. He has unequivocally propagated suddha-parakiya-bhava : Srila Jiva Gosvami and Srila Sana-tana Gosvami fully contribute to this mood and

philosophy. Srila Jiva Gosvami has never exhibited in his personal bhajana any preference for svakiya-mood. But he took note of the fact that some devotees in Vraja were patronising the svakiya mood. At the stage where samartha-rati is slightly flavoured by samanjava-rati it transforms to svakiya-bhava of Vraja. Thus for those who at the time of establishing sambandha with Krsna is even slightly influenced by svakiya-tendency, later on worships in that mood.

Srila Jiva Gosvami had two groups of disciples, one subscribing to parakiya bhava, the other to mixed svakiya-bhava. Therefore Srila Jiva Gosvami gave different instructions taking into consideration the dissimilarity in ruci among his disciples. This fact is unambiguously conveyed in his composition of the sloka : " svecchaya-likhitam kincit" and so on.

Bijoy : However, I am convinced by unassailable facts that according to the pristine Gaudiya view, pure parakiya bhajana is preponderant. The topic of sambandha is clear to me, kindly define bayasa.

Gosvami : Based on your relationship, or sambandha, with Krsna a wonderful personality manifests, of that of a beautiful damsel of Vraja; conducive to it, and compatible with her service, a age is fixed. The period between ten and sixteen years is known as kaisora, or adolescence, this is your bayasa. You start at ten and gradually with service you reach the age of sixteen. The Vraja-gopis do not experience the ages of childhood and youth i.e. between birth and ten years of age (balya and pauganda) nor old age (vrddha). You must consider yourself a `kisori', or young maiden, feel and imbibe within you her sentiments.

Bijoy : Gurudeva, I have already received a name but I would like to have a clearer understanding of `nama'.

Gosvami : After hearing descriptions of services and of different sakhis whatever and or whoever compliments your ruci, or taste, accordingly you take the name of that maid-servant of Srimati Radhika. You must understand that the name which is given to you by your guru after he has tested your ruci is your permanent name. Your name will give pleasure to all the sakhis.

Bijoy : Kindly speak about `rupa'.

Gosvami : You are a captivatingly beautiful young maiden, hence your perfected form (rupa) has been ascribed to you by your guru after ascertaining your taste (ruci). For, how is it possible to serve Srimati Radhika as Her maid, without possessing an incon-ceivable spiritual form ?

Bijoy : I desire to know more about yutha.

Gosvami : Srimati Radhika is the yuthesvari, or group mistress, par excellence. You must be an assistant to one of the eight principle sakhis of Srimati. Your gurudeva has assigned you according your ruci, in Sri Lalitadevi's group. On the instructions of Sri Lalitadevi and together with yuthesvari you will serve Krsna, the personification of lila, or transcendental pastimes.

Bijoy : Maharaja, what sort of devotees join Sri Candravalidevi's yutha ?

Gosvami : Incalculable good fortune, accumulated over innumerable lifetimes, inspires a person to nurture the desire to serve under a yuthesvari, thus all fortunate souls are admitted into Srimati Radhika's yutha. Sri Candravali and other yuthesvaris too are conscientious and eager to serve and help accomplish Sri Radha and Sri Madhava's pastimes . Although they are the opposite camp (vipaksa) , they have embraced this bhava (vipaksa) in order to enhance and nourish rasa. In truth, Srimati Radhika is the only yuthesvari , She embodies the spiritual sentiment of Sri Krsna's variagated transcendental pastimes. Each devotee develops his spiritual sentiment in compliance with his eternal service.

Bijoy : What is guna in detail ?

Gosvami : Whatever be your service, you automatically cultivate artistry and acumen in executing your type of service, similarly your guru ascertains your qualities (guna) and dress code keep-ing in mind your taste and service.

Bijoy : What is meant here by ajna ?

Gosvami : There are two types of ajna : nitya (eternal) and naimittika (obligatory). The most compassionate sakhi, who is your guru, instructs and orders (ajna) you on performing your eternal service (nitya-seva), which you are duty - bound to execute unquestioningly, whatever be your actual responsibilities in the astakaliya - lila. However, sometimes, depending on the situation, a contingency arises and you receive additional be-hests, these are naimittika-ajna and must also be performed meticulously.

Bijoy : Kindly elaborate on vasa.

Gosvami : Permanent residence (vasa) in Vraja is vasa. You take birth in a designated village within Vraja as a gopi and later marry a gopa (cowherd boy) from the same village. However, being magically drawn by the magnetic song of Krsna's flute you seek shelter of a sakhi and take up residence in a cottage in one of the idyllic groves belonging to sakhi, on the bank of Sri Radha-kunda. This form of residence, perfected and honed by your par-ticular sentiment, is `vasa' to you. Your parakiya-bhava is your eternally perfected spiritual emotion (nitya-siddha-bhava).

Bijoy : How is seva defined in this context ?

Gosvami : You are Srimati Radhika's obedient assistant, serving Her is your only service. If Srimati sends you to meet Krsna in a solitary place and Krsna makes romantic advances at you, then you graciously circumvent it, because remember always that you are Srimati's maid-servant and as such you are not free to render service to Krsna without Her consent. You must maintain equal affection towards both Sri Radhika and Sri Krsna, although you should be eager to cultivate the

mood of loving servitorship more to Srimati Radhika than to Krsna: in essence this is `seva'. Your specific asta-kaliya duties and chores to Srimati Radhika is your seva. You will find details of your type of seva in Srila Raghunathadasa Gosvami's `Vilapa-kusumanjali', he has written this book in pursuance of Srila Svarupa Damodara Gosvami's diary.

Bijoy : How to recognise parakasthasvasa ?

Gosvami : Srila Raghunathadasa Gosvami has defined this quality of the highest form of assurance and hope (parakasthasvasa) in two slokas from his `Vilapa-kusumanjali'.

"asabharairamrtasindhumayaih kathancit kalo mayatigamitah kila sampratam hi tvancet krpam mayi vidhasyasi naiva kim me pranairvrajena ca vararu vakarinapi na natha gokulasudhakara suprasanna-vaktraravinda madhurasmita he krpardra yatravaya viharate pranayaih priyarattatraiva mamapi naya priya-sevanaya"
(V.K.102,100)

Meaning, O ravishingly beautiful Sri Radhe ! I am passing my days and nights in torment, with the singular hope that I may obtain the ocean of immortal nectar, so kindly shower Your grace on me. For, if deprived of your mercy, what use are my life, residence in Vraja, or even servitorship to Krsna ? O moon of Gokula (Krsna) ! Your lotus-like face is always iridescent with a charm-ing smile. O embodiment of compassion ! The place where you always take Srimati Radhika to for your amorous pastimes, kindly also take me there so I can serve Your beloved.

Bijoy : What are the characteristics of a palya-dasi ?

Gosvami : Again Srila Raghunathadasa Gosvami has aptly described the qualities of a palya-dasi, or a maid-servant who is fully maintained by the employer, in his `Vraja-vilasa-stava':

"sandrapremarasaih pluta priyataya pragalbhyamapta tayah
prana presthavayasyayoranudinam lilabhisaram kramaih
vaidagdhyena tatha sakhim prati sada manasya siksam rasaih
yeyam karayatiha hanta lalita grhnatu sa mam ganaih" (V.v.s.29)

Means, the one (sakhi) who is steeped in the humour (rasa) of intense love, and because of it has turned intrepid and impudent, daily arranges for a lovers union between her most beloved Sri Radha and Sri Krsna, thus enhancing Their pastimes. Being wise and crafty, she teaches her dearset girl-friend, Srimati Radhika, about rasa as well as about the art of mana (feined pique or resentment of love), may that sakhi, Lalita, accept me as one of her team and treat me as her palya-dasi.

Bijoy : How does the palya-dasi conduct herself with the other followers of Sri Lalitadevi ?

Gosvami : Srila Raghunathadasa Gosvami has inducted all of Srila Svarupa Damodara Gosvami's teachings in his writings, hence these esoteric details are available in Dasa Gosvami's writings. Again in `Vraja-vilasa-stava' your question is

answered :

"tambularpana-padamardana-payodanabhisaradibhir-
vrndaranyamahesvarim priyataya yastosayanti priyah
pranapresthasakhikuladapi kilasankocita bhumikah
kelibhumisu rupamanjarimukhastha dasika samsraye" (V.v.s.38)

The prana-prestha group of sakhis always keep Srimati Radhika (Queen of Vrndavana) fully contented with their loving service by supplying Her with tambula, massaging Her feet, bringing water, setting-up secret meetings with Her paramour and so on. But I desire to take shelter of those maid - servants of Srimati, who have acquired in their service to Her a more unreserved and unhesitating attitude than the prana-prestha sakhis . Prominent among these maid-servants are Rupa-manjari and others and I am proud to have them as my siska-guru in devotional service.

Bijoy : How must I behave with other principle sakhis ?

Gosvami : This also has been properly indicated in Srila Raghuna-thadasa Gosvami's 'Vraja-vilasa-stava' (sloka 30)

"pranayalalita-narmaspharabhumistayorya vrajapura-navayunorya ca kanthan
pikanam

nayati paramadhastaddivya ganena tusthya prathayatu mama diksam hanta seyam
visakha "

" The one who is the organiser of Sri Radha and Sri Krsna's ecstatic amorous sports and whose mellifluous voice shames the spring songs of the kokila bird (cuckoo), may that Sri Visakha-devi be merciful and teach me the art of music". This is the attitude you have to cultivate towards all the other sakhis.

Bijoy : Gurudeva, what should be my attitude towards the members of the opposite camp (vipaksa)?

Gosvami : The following sloka conveys Srila Raghunathadasa Gosvami's opinion on this issue :

"sapatnyocayarajyadujjvalarasasyocaih samudvrddhaye
saubhagyoddhatagarvavibhramabhrtah sri-radhikayah sphutam
govindah smaraphullavallavavadhuvargena yena ksanam
kridatyesa tamatra vistrtamahapunyanca bandamahe" (V.v.s.41)

"In order to nourish and augment Srimati Radhika's romantic feelings, or srngara (for Krsna), some sakhis have become competing wives or lovers (sapatnya) possessing qualities like good fortune (saubhagya), oddity (udbhat), conceit (garva), perplexity (vibhrama) and so on; Krsna engages in amorous pastimes with them for short periods : I repeatedly offer my glorifications and obeisances to these damsels of Vraja, Sri Candralidevi being chief among them". This attitude should be maintained towards the opposite party and at the time of executing your specified devo-tional service you may laugh, mock or jest with, according to who is present.

The purport of this teaching is, you execute devotional service with reference to

`Vilapa-kusumanjali' and you conduct yourself according to the instructions in `Vraja-vilasa-stava'. The pas-times described in `Visakhananda'-stotram' must be the standard you desire to emulate when meditating on the asta-kaliya lila. `Sri Manah-siksa' has laid down a systematic procedure for you to enter into and become absorbed in Krsna's pastimes, simply follow it. Discipline your bhajana according to the `bhava', or mood, expressed in `Svaniyama-stotram'. Srila Rupa Gosvami has elaborated upon the principle of rasa (rasa-tattva), as because this responsibility was given him by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. Therefore his writings do not delve on the detail workings of rasa within the process of devotional worship and service. This aspect was compiled by Srila Raghunathadasa Gosvami from Srila Svarupa Damodara Gosvami's diary. All followers acted on the orders of Lord Caitanya, they each took up responsibilities allocated to them by the Lord.

Bijoy : Gurudeva I am very curious to know what responsibilities were given to whom, by the Lord.

Gosvami : Lord Caitanya instructed Srila Svarupa Damodara to disseminate the process of bhajana in rasa (rasa-upasana). Accordingly he composed his diary on rasa-upasana comprising of two sections : antahpantha (esoteric) and bahihpantha (exoteric). The esoteric process was entrusted to Srila Raghunathadasa Gosvami as amply exhibited in his books, and the exoteric rasa-upasana was allocated to Srila Vakresvara Pandita, which is the treasure of our spiritual lineage. This exoteric rasa-upasana was passed on to me by him, and from me to Sri Dhyanaandra who has compiled it in a book, of which you are the fortunate recipient.

The task and potency to propagate the glories of the holy name was given to Lord Nityananda and Srila Advaita Acarya. The Lord chose Srila Rupa Gosvami to explain the principle of rasa. Srila Sanatana Gosvami was responsible for delineating the principle of vaidhi - bhakti, the relationship between vaidhi-bhakti and raga-bhakti and the subtle truths for ascertaining the differences between manifest and unmanifest Gokula. To Srila Jiva Gosvami via medium of Lord Nityananda and Srila Sanatana Gosvami, the Lord ordered that the principles of sambandha, abhidheya and prayojana be properly analysed and annotated. In this manner the chief followers of the Lord set out to execute their assigned mission.

Bijoy : What responsibility was allotted to Srila Ramananda Raya ?

Gosvami : Lord Caitanya instructed Srila Ramananda to broadcast the glories of rasa-tattva, but which He anyway accomplished through Srila Rupa Gosvami.

Bijoy : Did Srila Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya have a specific duty?

Gosvami : Srila Sarvabhauma was responsible for teaching the philosophy of devotional service and surrender, which he passed on to Srila Jiva Gosvami through one of his disciples.

Bijoy : What responsibility was given to the preceptors of Gau-diya vaisnavism in general ?

Gosvami : It is incumbent upon them to inspire faith in humanity towards devotional service to Krsna as enunciated in the process introduced by Lord Caitanya. For some preceptors, the Lord created a process of rasa-kirtana (chanting and singing of rasa compositions) and asked them to preach it as well.

Bijoy : What instructions were given to Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami and Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami ?

Gosvami : Srila Raghunatha Bhatta Gosvami was told to promulgate the pre-eminence and glories of Srimad Bhagavatam. Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami carried the responsibility of detecting and exposing aberrant philosophies and practices that adulterated the teachings of pure srngara-rasa, simultaneously he was to ensure that vaidhi-bhakti was not looked down upon and unnecessarily criticised nor shown undue disrespect.

Bijoy : Did Srila Prabadhananda Sarasvati, uncle and guru of Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami, have an assignment from the Lord ?

Gosvami : Yes, he had to establish and exhibit to the world that the esoteric path of loving devotional surrender which is steeped in the sentiments of Vraja, was the acme of spiritual realisation.

Bijoy felt great exultation hearing about these illustrious personalities and how they became humble instruments to unfold the Supreme Lord's munificent plans to alleviate human suffering for all times to elevate everyone to the highest realisation of the self and of God. Bijoy came to the conclusion that by hearing the pastimes of Vraja one naturally develops greed (lobha) for more, which gradually elevates one to sampattidasa, or attainment of the ultimate goal.

Chapter 40 Sampatti-dasa, or The Perfected State.

Bijoy wanted to clarify this point about sampatti-dasa, so he enquired from Srila Gosvami :

Bijoy : Gurudeva, how many intermediary stages are there between when the acolyte is attracted to hearing (sravanam) and when he attains the stage of perfection known as sampatti=dasa.

Gosvami : There are in all five dasas, or conditions, which may be designated as stages : sravana-dasa (hearing), varana-dasa (accepting), smarana-dasa (remembering), bhavapana-dasa (conducting) and sampatti or prema-sampatti-dasa (attaining the ultimate goal, love of Godhead).

Bijoy : Kindly describe sravana-dasa.

Gosvami : When a person develops faith in hearing Krsna-conscious topics we may say that his interest for the inane and mundane has decreased, concomitantly his desire for the esoteric has increased. Hearing Krsna-conscious topics means to hear from a devotee in a more elevated position than the hearer. As explained in the Srimad Bhagavatam : (SB4 :29 :40)

"tasmin mahan-mukharita madhubhic-caritra-piyusa-sesa-saritah paritah sravanti ta ye pibanty avitrso nrpa gadha-karnais tan na sprsanty asana-trd-bhaya-soka-mohah".

[O King ! If one gets the chance to hear from elevated saints topics of Lord Krsna's qualities which is like a flowing river of nectar, and drinks from it with single-minded absorption and faith, then hunger, thirst, fear, lamentation, illusion and other such unwanted detriments will never be able to assail him.]

Bijoy : What is the quality of hearing when some materially engrossed people occasionally hear Krsna-conscious topics ?

Gosvami : There is a gulf of difference between by a person who is constantly attracted to the external nature and a person who is looking inwards towards the real self and towards the Supreme Lord (bahirmukha and antarmukha). Hearing about Krsna for the bahirmukha persons (materialists) occur by chance, not because of sraddha, or faith. However, such hearing is bhaktyunmukhi-sukrti, or piety due to devotional inclination, which will beget sraddha in some later life. The quality of hearing which occurs when the hearer is endowed with faith (sraddha) is the one referred to in this discussion as hearing Krsna-conscious topics from a devotee (sravana-dasa) . Sravana-dasa is of two types : krama-suddha (in proper sequence) and krama-hina (haphazard).

Bijoy : Kindly explain the differences in these two sravana-dasa.

Gosvami : Hearing different pastimes of Krsna which are not related and in proper sequence, is known as `krama-hina'. Hearing with an irresolute, inadvertent mind also disallows the hearer to find proper connections between pastimes, which results in curbing the flow of rasa. Whereas, when Krsna-lila is heard in proper sequence and with resolute intelligence, then it becomes conducive for evoking rasa. The eternal pastimes of asta-kaliya and the periodical (naimittika) pastimes such as Krsna's birth etc., when heard separately is known as krama-suddha-sravana. On the path of bhajana, this krama-suddha-sravana is essential.

The sweetness and relish of pastimes are manifest through krama-suddha-sravana, and the hearer's latent `raganuga, or spontaneous devotional predilection is aroused. The hearer thinks : `Oh, how wonderful is Subala's sakhya-bhava (fraternal humour), I wish to serve Krsna in that mood of camaraderie exhibited by Subala'. This tendency is called lobha, or greed. To sincerely pursue the devotional sentiments of the residents of Vraja with lobha, is described as `raganuga bhakti'. I gave an example of sakhya-rasa, similarly in the other three

rasas beginning with dasya, raganu-ga-bhakti finds full expression. You are eligible for srngara or madhura rasa by the mercy of Lord Nimai, the Lord of my heart, hence you have developed lobha inspired by the service of Vraja - damsels, and this lobha has brought you to the path of attainment. In essence, the instructions of the guru to his disciple is sravana-dasa.

Bijoy : At what level is sravana-dasa complete ?

Gosvami : When the devotee perceives Krsna-lila as eternal he completes sravana-dasa (the level of hearing)./ Because Krsna-lila is on the platform of pure transcendence it is enchanting, and so the devotee becomes eager to enter into it. The guru demonstrates to his disciple, who is still a sadhaka (in ragatmi-ka bhakti), the eleven different bhava, or tendencies and sentiments, I earlier enumerated (like sambandha, bayasa etc). When the disciple's mental make-up tunes into the ecstatic dynamism of Krsna-lila, sravana-dasa is said to be consummated. His lobha and ruci is then uncontrollable and he is promoted to varana-dasa.

Bijoy : What are the symptoms of varana-dasa ?

Gosvami : The heart's attraction for Krsna-lila is linked by the chains of the eleven bhava. The disciple's heart becomes inundated by spiritual emotions, he comes weeping and throws himself at his guru's lotus-feet. At that moment, guru exhibits his sakhi form and the disciple displays his form as the maid-servant of his guru-sakhi. The disciple-turned young cowherd - maid is yearning to serve her dear Lord, Krsna ; and the guru is a beautiful Vraja - damsel who has already attained the highest perfection. The disciple gives expression to his bhava at this juncture in the following sloka from `Premambhojamakarandakhya - stavara-ja'.

"tvam natva yacate dhrtva trnam dantairayam janah
svadasyamrtasekena jivayamum suduhkhitam
na muncaccharanayatamapi dustam dayamayah
ato radhalike muncainam naiva tadsam" (sloka 11+12)

[O Radhike ! This most despicable and fallen soul throws himself at Your feet. Holding straw between the teeth I impetrate you, shower upon this disconsolate wretch the immortal nectar of servitorship at Your feet and thereby resuscitate me. The kind-hearted never abandons those who are surrendered to them, thus compassionate as You are do not forsake me, a soul surrendered to You. I am anxious to serve the Divine Couple in Vraja under the shade of Your lotus-feet].

This mood of surrender permeates the devotee's devotional fervor in varana-dasa. Now, the guru-sakhi makes his disciple reside in Vraja, instructs him to meditate on, and remember Krsna-lila, to take full shelter of chanting the holy name and then he gives him assurance that soon his heart's desire will be realised.

Bijoy : Kindly elaborate upon smarana-dasa.

Gosvami : Srila Rupa Gosvami states in the Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu:

"krsnam smaran janancasya prestham nijasamihitam
tat-tat-katharatascau kuryadvasam vraje sada
seva sadhaka-rupena siddha-rupena catra hi
tadbhava lipsuna karya vrajalokanusaratah
sravanotkirtanadini vaidhabhaktyuditani tu
yanyangani ca tanyatra vijneyani manisibhih" (Brs.Pur.2.Lah: 150- 152).

(Always remember Krsna and His confidential associates and fix your consciousness on Their subject while residing in Vraja. If residence in Vraja is physically not possible then do it in your mind. Those who have developed 'lobha' in ragatmika-bhakti must emulate the activities of vrajabasis and externally engage in service as a sadhaka while internally as a siddha, or a perfected soul. According to spiritual preceptors the essential accessories of vaidhi-bhakti such as sravanam, loud kirtanam and so on, are still most suitable for cultivating raganuga-bhakti).

Before Srila Gosvami could explain the purport of these verses Bijoy eagerly interjected, asking : "Gurudeva what is meant here by 'kuryadvasam vraje sada' ?

Gosvami : Srila Jiva Gosvami has stated that the devotee should reside in Vraja in body. If he cannot be physically present then he must dwell in Vraja in his mind, --- even mental residence in Vraja accrues the same result as being there in body. The devotee must always remember and meditate on Krsna and the sakhi he emulates, knowing that he (in his siddha-svarupa) is her maid-in-attendance in Vraja for executing chores in the love groves (of Radha and Krsna's pastimes). As a sadhaka, or practitioner, the devotee in his gross body must perform sravana , kirtana and so on though they form the limbs of vaidhi bhakti . But having acquired the eleven bhavas (of upasaka) the sadhaka evokes in meditation his spiritual identity as a perfected vraja-gopi and executes his specific duties which are allocated to him by his sakhi leader, in Krsna's pastimes. The sadhaka must maintain and discipline his life on earth according to scriptural norms and nourish his siddha-dasa (spiritual identity) by spiritual 'bhava'. Such an arrangement will ensure a growing distaste for things and subjects not pertaining to Vraja.

Bijoy : Gurudeva, I desire to understand this system in detail.

Gosvami : The purport of 'vrajabasa', or residing in Vraja, is to live in solitude with consciousness steeped in transcendence and in spiritual emotions (bhava). Chanting the holy name the designated number of rounds while meditating on practical devotional service in the asta-kaliya-lila is essential. Always alert that one's activities do not neutralise or deprecate one's spiritual practices; thus all works will be carried out taking this fact into consideration and also that they must be conducive to devotional service.

Bijoy : (Receiving these instructions somewhat gravely, he said :) Srila gurudeva I have understood this, but how do I steady the mind ?

Gosvami : The mind becomes automatically equipoised as soon as the devotee

attains raganuga-bhakti; because, due to attachment and attraction for bhakti the the consciousness naturally strives towards everything that to him signifies Vraja. Concomitantly, due to a lack of interest in mundane matters his consciousness shies away from materialism. But if there is fear of reprisals and hindrances to progress on this path, then one should immediately repeat the previous process. Once the mind and consciousness is fixed then nothing can unsettle it.

Bijoy : Kindly reiterate that process.

Gosvami : Confining himself to a solitary place and repelling the attacks of material attractions, the devotee must spend some time daily chanting the holy name with bhava, or proper spiritual sentiments . Gradually this time period should be increased. Finally when the devotee begins to feel a wonderful bhava continually engulfing him, then any fear of impediments or disturbances are scared to come near him.

Bijoy : How long must this period last ?

Gosvami : Till as such time when all distractions vanish as well as the faintest possibility of the post-distractive situation repeating itself disappears.

Bijoy : Gurudeva, kindly clarify what you mean by chanting the holy name with bhava.

Gosvami : To begin with, chant the Lord's name with simple joy in your heart; add attachment (māmata) to joy (ullāsa) and include firm faith and conviction (visrambha). Chanting in this manner will gradually purify your spiritual emotions and attractions till finally suddha-bhava, or pure spiritual emotion, manifests. Bhavapana-dāsa commences from this point. In the state of smāraṇa, or remembrance, bhava is interpolated and not spontaneously evoked. In the 'bhavapana-dāsa', suddha-bhava appears by natural course and is known as 'prema', or love of Godhead. For the worshipper, different conditions and levels of 'nistha' manifest in this particular sequence. There is also a specific condition in the sequence called upāsya-nistha, or nistha regarding the object of worship.

Bijoy : What is this upāsya-nistha sequence (krama) ?

Gosvami : If one is keen on attaining prema when it is in full bloom (asankucita-prema-dāsa), then he must follow Srīla Raghuna-thādaśa Gosvami's advice in the 'Manah-sikṣā':

"yadiccheravasam vrajabhūmi saragam pratījanuryuvadvandvam taccet
parīcaritumaradābhilāseh
svarūpam śrī-rūpam saṅgamīha tasyagrajāmapi sphutam premna nityam smāra
namah tada tvam śrnu manah" (Ms.3)

Meaning, if you desire to live in Vraja with proper spiritual sentiments (rāga) and eternally (birth after birth) serve the Divine Couple of Vraja, i.e. to serve Them not as a married couple but in the parakīya mood, or as a lover and paramour, then remember with deep affection Srīla Svārūpa Dāmodara Gosvami, Srīla Rūpa and

Srila Sanatana Gosvami along with their followers, and worship them as your guru-sakhi. The purport of this verse is, that when one worships the Divine Couple in svakiya-rasa (sees Sri Krsna and Srimati Radha as husband and wife) it ultimately culminates in samajasa-rasa. This prompts the spiritual emotions (bhava) for serving to become stultified and constrained (sanku-cita). Therefore Srila Svarupa, Srila Rupa and Srila Sanatana exhort us to worship in the parakiya mood which is sans any constraint. Even when the sadhaka (in the stage of smarana and before) is interpolating suddha-bhava in bhajana, then it must be done with suddha-parakiya-rasa. Because parakiya-bhava when interpolated in bhajana matures to parakiya-rati and finally to parakiya rasa. The eternal and permanent rasa of Vraja's apraka-ta-lila (unmanifest pastimes) is parakiya.

Bijoy : Are there different levels of purification (suddhi - krama) in asta-kaliya-lila bhajana ?

Gosvami : Srila Rupa Gosvami has detailed all the variagatedness of rasa in asta-kaliya-lila in his 'Ujjvala-nilamani', try to understand the purport of this sloka : "atalatvadaparadvadapto' sau durvigahatam sprstam param tatasthena rasabdhimadhuro maya".(Ujj-n:gaunas.prah-23)

(Lord Krsna's pastimes are absolutely transcendental and hence they are unfathomable and unlimited. They are unfathomable to the conditional souls because it is impossible for them to penetrate through the covering of material energy and comprehend the pure supra-mundane truth (suddha-aprakrta-tattva) that lies beyond the shroud. They are unlimited because spiritual humour (rasa), the essence of Krsna-lila, manifests itself in a kaleidoscope of proliferating diversities --- thus impossible to supercede. However, if a devotee having attained the aprakrta-bhava (tran-scendental sentiments), meaning he is situated on the perfected stage (siddhatattva), tries to describe these pastimes then due to the discrepancies and inadequacies inherent in any language or words, these narrations come out impure, incomplete and imper-fect. And even when the Supreme Lord Himself is the speaker, still the audience and readers are unable to perceive His speech due to their consciousness being contaminated by maya or by materialism. Under these circumstances the shoreless ocean of rasa cannot be crossed. One may remain on its shores and try to relish and distribute but a more drop from it.

Bijoy : Then how is it possible for us to attain this transcen-dental spiritual humour, or rasa ?

Gosvami : Nectarean rasa is unlimited, incomparable and inaccess-able ---- the same as Krsna-lila. However, our Supreme Lord, Krsna, has in particular two boundless qualities : omnipotence and willfulness --- doing as He pleases. That which is immeasura-ble, unlimited and inaccessible He can facilely make it available to limited confines of this material nature. Although this mate-rial nature is insignificant and base, yet the Lord desires to bring down into this material plane His most relishable spiritual bhava. Thus His eternal and ambrosial pastimes has descended to the mundane realm. Vraja, the transcendental and absolute abode of the Lord has appeared within this material creation. It is not questionable

as to how it descended and how it continues to remain , because the workings of the inconceivable potency is incomprehensible to the stunted intellect of humans and demigods alike. Krsna's Vraja pastimes are the manifestations of His supra-mundane and most elevated pastimes --- this is what we have received, we have no cause for lamentation.

Bijoy : If prakata-lila (manifest pastimes) is same in principle and substance as aprakata-lila (unmanifest pastimes), then how is gradual promotion in it possible ?

Gosvami : There is no doubt that they are non-different; that which is manifest here is present in the transcendental realm as source and in completeness. However, to the conditioned soul under the influence of material energy the perception of these pastimes goes through a process of gradual elevation according to the level of purification of his consciousness. In the initial stages of lila-smarana (meditating on pastimes) the sadhaka's perception is clouded and by the time he reaches the stage of bhavapana-dasa his consciousness and perception is free from contamination.

Bijoy, I am openly discussing these topics with you because you are an eligible sadhaka. In smarana-dasa if the sadhaka puts in long and sincere hours of sadhana and his sadhana includes concerted endeavours usually practiced in bhavapana-dasa, then even in smarana-dasa the sadhaka experiences the symptoms of bhavapana-dasa. The turbidity of perception that persists in smarana-dasa when completely purged ushers in bhavapana-dasa. In smarana-dasa, the more one earnestly cultivates pure devotion (suddha bhakti), then out of causeless mercy, suddha-bhakti increasingly blossoms within his heart. Pure devotion is the only activity which is able to attract Krsna, thus by Krsna's mercy the contamination of consciousness in smarana-dasa is gradually dissipated. The Srimad Bhagavatam states :

"yatha yathatma parimrjyate'sau matpunyagatha-sravanabhidhanaih
tatha tatha pasyati vastu suksmam caksuryathaivanjanasampra yuktam "
(SB.11/14/26).

(Translation, in Chapter Eleven).

The purport is, that by being in constant touch with transcendental subject matter --- i.e. with Krsna-lila, through hearing, reciting and remembering (sravana, kirtana and smarana), atma (the soul) the seer, becomes increasingly purified . To that same degree, Krsna-lila the object of viewing, and Krsna-lila's supra-mundane nature, also gradually manifests to the seer's vision. A similar idea is found in Brahma-samhita :

"premanjanacchurita bhakti-vilocanena santah sadaiva hrdaye' pi vilokayanti
yam syamsundaramacintyagunasvarupam govindamadipurusam tamaham
bhajami" (Bs.5/38).

(I worship the primeval Lord, Supreme Personality of Godhead Govinda, who is Syamasundara, the dark complexioned, beautiful, Krsna endowed with inconceivable potencies; He is perceived within the heart by pure saintly souls whose eyes have been smeared with the salve of unalloyed devotion and love for

Him).

In bhavapana-dasa the sadhaka receives transcendental vision and at that time he is able to see his sakhi-guru and yuthesvari (team head mistress). Even though the sadhaka sees Krsna, the Lord of Goloka, until and unless he is promoted to sampatti-dasa where both his gross and subtle material bodies are terminated, his vision is not uninterrupted and contiguous. In bhavapana-dasa the pure soul, jiva, develops control over subtle and gross material bodies. When Krsna completely showers His mercy upon the sadhaka, a situation arises where due to it, as an extraneous consequence, the sadhaka's relationship with this material world is totally severed. Another name for bhavapana-dasa (apana-dasa) is 'svarupa-siddhi', or attainment of one's original, spiritual identity. In sampatti-dasa, vastu-siddhi occurs, or securing the state of ultimate and absolute reality, Krsna.

Bijoy : In what perspectives are Krsna's name, beauty, qualities, pastimes and dhama (abode) perceived when vastu-siddhi occurs ?

Gosvami : I am unable to answer that question. When I attain vastu-siddhi I will see and tell you about it. And when you reach the state of sampatti-dasa, only then will you comprehend it. In fact, the contingency to understand then disappears, because when you perceive directly, on first hand, your queries will automatically subside. For example, in bhavapana-dasa, i.e. with svarupa-siddhi, whatever is experienced by the devotee, it is futile to disclose it to others, because the audience will be incapable of grasping it. Srila Rupa Gosvami has described the symptoms characterising the devotees who have acquired svarupa-siddhi, in his Bhakti-rasamrta-siddhi :

"jane cejjatabhave'pi vaigunyamiva drsyate
karya tathapi nasuya krtarthah sarvathaiva sah dhanasyayam navah prema
yasyonmilati cetasi antarvanibhirapyasya mudra susthu sudurgama" (Brs.Pur.3/29
and 4/12)

(If on external scrutiny, a devotee who has just began to experience the inchoate stages of bhava is found guilty of misconduct, he must never be censured because he has completely abnegated all contact with matters not related to Krsna : this is his crowning success (as a human being) and he is glorious in every respect. Those devotees whose hearts are flooded with the first stirrings of prema, or love of Godhead, are truly blessed. Their activities and conduct are beyond the ken of scholars and theologians. Only the most fortunate living entities are graced by 'prema' which remains inaccessible to the philosophers and professors of scriptures).

Bijoy : If this is true then why is there an attempt to describe Goloka in scriptures like Brahma-samhita ?

Gosvami : The elevated pure devotees (at the time of svarupa-siddhi) and Lord Brahma and other demigods (on the occasion of seeing the Lord by the Lord's causless mercy [krpa-darsana]) sometimes try to express their emotions and experiences in stavas (prayers) and stutis (enlogies). But due to the inadequacy of

mundane languages their descriptions are brief and so to the lesser percipient souls they remain obscure and cryptic. However, these discussions are not indispensable to devotees. You have to simply worship and meditate on the manifest pastimes of Krsna that He has so mercifully revealed. That will bestow you with all-round perfection. The sincere worshiper perceives Goloka in Gokula within a very short time. Whatever is in Gokula is indeed in Goloka, because Goloka and Gokula are non-different. Whatever a materialist is able to see, is a product of maya, or illusory energy; at the time of svarupa-siddhi this aberration is removed. Lord Krsna exhorts all to remain contented with their levels of perceptions according to their eligibility, and continue to sincerely engage in bhajana. To Those who follow His advice, He gradually purifies their consciousness by His mercy and gifts them with transcendental vision".

Bijoy felt as if the pall of looming doubts had completely cleared. Living peacefully on the sea - shore, in a solitary bhajana-kutira, he practiced meditation on Krsna-lila while harmoniously applying his eleven bhavas in their connection. Meanwhile, Brajanatha's mother passed away due to cholera. Braja-natha accompanied his grandmother to their ancestral home in the village. In Brajanatha's pure heart blossomed sakhya-prema (love in friendship). On the strength of his bhajana (bhajana-bala) Brajanatha was fortunate to reside on the banks of the holy Ganga in Navadvipa-dhama and associate with many elevated vaisnavas.

Bijoy discarded the dress of a householder and simply wore a kaupina, or loincloth, and bahirvasa, or loose upper garment. He survived on maha-prasada and madhukari (sanctified food offered to the Lord and daily collection of food by begging at different houses) and spent his days in chanting the holy name. His daily routine was, he slept a little at the sametime Sri Radhika and Sri Krsna had Their sleep ; ate prasadam after They had eaten and in Their waking hours he busied himself with appropriate devo-tional service. Sometimes he danced, sometimes cried and at other times he gazed at the ocean waves and burst into peels of laughter. Who could fathom his bhava mannerisms in bhajana, excepting himself ?

His spiritual name now is Nimaidasa Babaji. He completely avoids trivial talks and never lends his attention to mundane prattles. He is very humble, a paragon of virtues and steadfast in his bhajana. If anyone offers him maha-prasada, or kaupina and bahir-vasa, he accepts them only when required, otherwise he declines. When he chants the holy name tears stream down his cheeks, his voice chokes and his body erupts with horripilations. Very soon his bhajana became perfected. Lord Krsna by His mercy promoted him to enter into His unmanifest pastimes (aprakata-lila). The body he had used as a vehicle to perfect his bhajana, was interred in the sands of the ocean shore, just like Srila Haridasa Thakura's was. Hare Krsna.

The mercies of guru, Krsna and vaisnavas
Was the bulwark of my (humble Bhaktivinode's) strength
As I wrote solicitously the 'Jaiva Dharma' in gaudiya prose
Completing it on the auspicious day in maghi-purnima (full-moon).

In the four hundred and tenth year of our Lord, Sri Caitanya . His dhama Navadvipa, the isle of Godruma the pastoral woods of Surabhi-kunja hugging the sacred Ganga Provided the setting, the source of inspiration for this book. Those fortunate souls seeking shelter of Lord Caitanya Who advented in Kaliyuga to alleviate jiva's pain and delusion May they read `this book with heartfelt devotion For one who has no iota of faith In Lord Gauranga, the munificent Godhead, To them I promise if they should read this book, Dry empiricists and mundane philosophers, all seekers of liberation Will never find Krsna, the ultimate spiritual goal. But the faithful devotee is crowned with success As he worships and serves the pure pastimes of Vraja.

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prodivities ; gradations of sattvika-bhava; rati and sattvika-bhava ; are sancari-bhava and vyabhicari-bhava the same --- their variations ? Are there differences in bhava according to the different devotees ?

CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT :-

- Analysis of sthayi-bhava ; two types of sthayi-bhava : mukhya and gauna ; mukhya-rati is of two kinds : svartha and parartha ; suddha-rati is of three kinds : samanya, svaccha and santa ; santa-rati is of two types ; discussions on the four principle rati (rasa) dasya,sakhya,vatsalya and madhura. Analysis of the seven subordinate rasa ; the numerous variations of bhava in Krsna bhakti ; the differences between attraction (rasa) is uninterrupted and inconceivable ; bhava in spiritual humour (rasa) is of two types : cintya and acintya ; who is eligible for entering rasa ; lecturing on the Bhagavatam as a profession is an aparadha.

CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE :-

Analysis of santa-rasa : uddipana, anub-hava , sattvika-bhava and sancari-bhava ; two types of santa-rati : sama and sandra ; insufficient description on santa-rasa in mundane literatures ; analysis of dasya-rasa ; two types : sambh-rama and gauravapriti ; Krsna's svarupa as visaya in dasya-rasa ; in dasya-rasa how many kinds of servants does Krsna have ? What are their varieties and Their names ? Analysis of sakhya or preya rasa ; alambana, uddipana, anubhava, sattvika-bhava and vyabhi-cari-bhava in sakhya-rasa ; its sthayi-bhava ; what are visrambha and pranaya ?

CHAPTER THIRYT :-

---- Analysis of vatsalya rasa ; Krsna's svarupa as visaya in vatsalya-rasa ; asraya, uddipana, anubhava, sattvika-bhava, vyabhicari-bhava, sthayi-bhava in vatsalya-rasa ; Balade-va's vatsalya is mixed with priti ; Yudhisthira's vatsalya is a mixture of priti and dsakhya ; Ugrasena --- sakhya mixed with vatsalya ; Nakula, Sahadeva, Narada etc. have sakhya mixed with dasya ; siva,Uddhava, Garnda etc have dasya mixed with sakhya ; analysis of madhurya-rasa : The acme of bhakti rasa and the most confidential of srngara-rasa ; alambana and sthayibhava in madhu-ra-rasa ; vipralambha and sambhoga ; purvaraga, mana, pravasa ; placement of the subordinate bhakti rasa ; comparison between the principle bhakti-rasa and the sub-ordinate bhakti rasa ; compati-ble and incompatible rasa (mitra and satru); combining of compat-ible rasa ; their ramifications ; when can a subordinate rasa become angi (the body) ; rasa-abhasa ; conflicting rasa (virodha); contrary rasa harmoniously exist in adhirudha-mahabhava ; uparasa, anubhava, aparasa.

CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE :-

---- Confidential queries on ujjvala-madhura-rasa ; mundane man woman relationship is a perverted reflection of madhura-r asa ; Krsna is the sole enjoyer ; the exchanges of rasa between the Enjoyer and the one who is enjoyed ; alambana in madhura-rasa ; only those pure devotees who are singulary surren-dered to Krsna are eligible for madhura-rasa ; what is rasa ? The differences between suddhasattva and misrasattva ; how does the heart become illuminated with suddhasattva ? In madhura-rasa Krsna embodies two roles : pati and upapati ; the esoteric mean-ing of parakiya-bhava, or upapati sambandha ; The pre-eminence of

parakiya-bhava ; the distinctive features of pati, upapati, svakiya and parakiya ; the queens of Dvaraka are in svakiya and the damsels of Vraja are in parakiya ; the placement of gopis in the aprakata-lila ; Mathura mandala in this world, the venue for the prakata-lila, is Goloka , the venue for aprakata lila ; both prakata and aprakata lila are eternal ; the eligibility required in Goloka darsana ; devotees in the awe and reverential mood of worship (aisvaryapara) are non-eligible for Goloka darsana ; comparisons between Goloka and Vraja ; Goloka is free of the imaginary mundane impressions of the earthly Vrndavana.

CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO :-

---- Queries regarding Krsna's energies , svakiya and parakiya-bhava ; Krsna's different roles as nayaka (hero): dhirodatta , dhiralalita , dhirasanta , types of nayaka: daksina, satha, dhrsta ; the five kinds of assistants of nayaka: ceta,bita, vidusaka, pithamaraddaka and priyanarma-sakha ; varieties of duti : svayam and apta ; gopibhava ; Krsna as paramour of the gopis ; the excellences of paramour relationship ; the three types of gopis : sadhanapara, devi and nityapriya ; yauthiki and ayanthiki -- the two sub-divisions of sadhanapara gopi ; kama-gayatri is eternal ; the upanisads take birth in Vraja ; nitya-priya gopis possess eternal parakiya-bhava : chief amongst them are Srimati and Sri Candravali ; the names and relationship among the nityapriya gopis ; Why the Srimad Bhagavatam refrains from mentioning the gopis' names ?

CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE :-

- Srimati Radhika surpasses Sri Candravali ; Srimati Radhika's svarupa : sixteen srngara, twelve abharana, twenty-five excellences , extraordinary fortune line in Her hand ; she has five types of sakhis : sakhi, nityasakhi, pranasakhi, priyasakhi and parama-prestha-sakhi ; the super excellent symptoms of the gokula gopi ; the varieties of nayika : mugdha, madhya and pragalbha, and their sub-divisions ; total number of types of nayika ; the eight kinds of condition : abhisarika, vasakasajja etc; their three categories according to their Krsna-prema : uttama, madhyama and kanistha ; the characteristic features of uttama etc; three kinds yuthesvari : svapaksa, vipak-sa and tatastha ; another three categories according to differences in good fortune : adhika, sama and laghuvi ; then another three divisions : prakhara, madhya and mrdvi ; sub-divisions : of adhika : atyantiki and apeksiki ; further divisions of duti ; duti's anuraga towards nayaka is abhiyoga --- three types : kayika, vacika and caksusa ---- their sub-divisions ; details about aptaduti.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR :-

Special features of sakhis ; vama and daksina : their identifying symptoms ; sakhis as messengers (duti), sakhis as nayika; two types of messages to Krsna : sanke-tika and vacika ; sub-divisions of duti and their activities ; nitya-sakhi --- their categories ; the four types of gopi : svapaksa, suhrdpaksa, tatastha and pratipaksa --- their characteristic features ; reason for jealousy among the yuthesvari ; cause for taking sides ; Candravali's role in nourishing Srimati Radhika's prema.

CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE :-

The three kinds of uddipana in madhura-rasa : kayika, vacika and manasika ; age factor (bayasa): their divisions and their features ; the different physical attributes

and qualities of the gopis ; Krsna's two major characteristics : anubhava and lila ; further divisions of lila and anubhava ; three types of anubhava further sub-divisions of twenty varieties of alankara : bhava,hava,hela etc; twelve types of vacika anubha-va ; sattvika-bhava and sancari-bhava in madhura rasa ; reasons for sancari-bhava to be aroused its four states.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX :-

---- Sthayi-bhava in madhura-rasa; the causes of rati's appearance : abhiyoga, visaya etc seven in all ; fur-ther sub-divisions of the cause svabhava : nisarga and svarupa ; rati is of three types : sadharani , samanjas and samartha ; samartha-rati is par excellence ; symptoms of prema and its divisions : praudha, madhya and manda ; sneha is of two types ; further sub-divisions sneha : adara and gaurav , madiyatva; mana is of two kinds : udatta and lalita ; pranaya : maitrarupa vis-rambha and sakhyarupa visrambha ; relationship between sneha, mana and pranaya; symptoms of raga; two types of raga : nilima and raktima sub-divisions of raga ; symptoms of anuraga --- its varieties ; mahabhava -- its symptoms ; rudha-mahabhava; anubhava in mahabhava and its descriptions ; adhiruddha-mahabhava : modana and madana ; anubhava conditions of mohana are ten; citrajalpa mohana is also of ten types ; symptoms of madana-mahabhava ; the differences between svakiya and parakiya are eternal.

CHAPTER THIRTY-SEVEN :-

The svarupa of srngara-rasa; discussions on vipralambha and sambhoga ; what is purvaraga --- its causes ; purvaraga of asraya-tattva; sancari-bhava in purvaraga ; three varieties of purvaraga : praudha, samanjas and sadharana; in praudha are ten conditions starting with lalasa to mrtyu; saman-jasa purvaraga symptoms ; sadharana-purvaraga divisions and sub-divisions; mana and its asraya; means of reducing mana ; prema-vaicittya, pravasa : buddhipurvaka and abuddhipurvaka ; ten conditions of pravasa.

CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT :-

- Discussions on sambhoga-rasa ; absence of vipralambha in duraprasava in aprakata-lila ; two types of sambhoga : mukhya and gauna ; four kinds of mukhya-sambhoga; sub-divisions of sampanna-sambhoga ; gauna-sambhoga ; prakata-lila : nitya and naimittika ; asta-kala -lila.

CHAPTER THIRTY-NINE :-

---- Procedure to enter lila ; the gaura-nagari mood is to be rejected ; Krsna-bhajana according to Lord Caitanya's instructions ; the methods for stabilizing the mind ; upasaka-pariskrti and upasya-pariskrti ; the eleven tendencies for upasaka-pariskrti : sambandha, nama,bayasa etc ; the sadha-ka's attitude towards the principle sakhi and the vipaksa sakhi ; Lord Caitanya's allocation of duties to the Gosvami .

CHAPTER FORTY :-

---- The five spiritual conditions of a sadhaka beginning with sravana-dasa till sampatti dasa ; types of srava-na-dasa ; varana-dasa ; smarana-dasa -- its gradations : medita-tion while chanting with bhava ; bhavapana (apana) dasa ; attain-ment of

svarupa-siddhi in apana dasa ; sampatti-dasa ---- vastu-siddhi occurs.