

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

81.12.21.B_81.12.22.A

Devotee: Guru Mahārāja, it's difficult for me to conceive how such a person, you know, should be dealt with. I mean, how should I see him? He takes birth in Navadvīpa *Dhāma* yet he doesn't worship Mahāprabhu, externally...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Mahāprabhu instructs to Jagadānanda Paṇḍita: "You go to Vṛndāvana, show your respect from a distance, but don't mix with them closely."

So general respect we must have for this *Dhāma*, but not particular attention to the present inhabitants, not coming in close connection with them, but a distant respect. That should be our policy. Though outwardly we do not feel anything favourable in them, but still, the furthest connection of this *Dhāma* will bring some distant future goodness for them, which at present we can't feel and we can't get benefited by that. So from a distance we show some revered attitude but don't go closely to have their influence. Mahāprabhu asked Jagadānanda Paṇḍita when he stayed in Vṛndāvana. *vṛndāvana jayje nara lekhi atara* [?]

[*śīghra āsiha, tāhān nā rahiha cira-kāla, govardhane nā caḍiha dekhite 'gopāla'*]

["You should remain in Vṛndāvana for only a short time and then return here as soon as possible. Also, do not climb Govardhana Hill to see the Gopāla Deity."]

[*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, 13. 39*]

"Don't stay there for a long time, *govardhane nā caḍiha dekhite 'gopāla.'* To have a look of that Giridhari, don't try to climb up on the hill. And about the *vraja-vāsī*, from far off you will show respect to them but don't come in closer connection with them."

And Kavirāja Goswāmī has written:

paścimera loka saba mūḍha anācāra, tāhān pracārila doṅhe bhakti-sadācāra

["The people in general on the western side of India were neither intelligent nor well behaved, but by the influence of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī and Sanātana Goswāmī they were trained in devotional service and good behaviour."] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā, 10.89*]

Sanātana Goswāmī and Rūpa, they preached there the good conduct, *bhakti-sadācāra*, the devotee-like practices they preached there. Because they're all *mūḍha anācāra*, they're foolish and their practices were not very pure in Vṛndāvana. We find in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta - paścimera loka saba mūḍha anācāra tāhān pracārila doṅhe bhakti-sadācāra*. So, on the whole we come that they have got fortune so they have come in connection with that *Dhāma*, but at present that is not properly developed, so we cannot get any benefit by their association. But Your connection with Vraja *Dhāma* they have got, very meagre. In this way we should tread with them. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: Bhaktisiddhānta, one book I've been reading on Bhaktisiddhānta, he talks about *sumati, sumati*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: *Sumati?*

Devotee: Yes, a good disposition.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. That *sumati*, *su* means good, but good to its extremist sense must come in Kṛṣṇa devotion, Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

‘dvaite bhadrābhadrā-jñāna, saba-‘manodharma’ [‘ei bhāla, ei manda’,-ei saba ‘bhrama’]

[“In the material world, conceptions of good and bad are all mental concoctions. Therefore, saying, ‘This is good, this is bad,’ is a mistake.”] [*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā, 4.176*]

The calculation of good, bad, in this misconceived area, the wholesale is false. But good and bad in the real plane of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, both is good. The opposition party and the real party, both have got some good position, efficacy. In a good governed land the opposition party has got also some value. And the evil government, when in the land there is evil government is standing, so both parties are bad. So what is good and bad, the intrinsic value we must try to observe, what is the criterion of good and bad. And the exploitation and renunciation, both are bad. And service is good. And service is of two kinds, one calculative and another surrendered. Surrendered service is the highest type of service, and that is found in Vṛndāvana, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Slavery to the extreme, and gain also to the extreme. Service means to accept slavery. He’s so good that if we can have the connection of slavery to Him we will be saved, so good.

As much degree of slavery we will be able to accept, we may attain such height of goodness. It is quite reasonable. Otherwise we won’t have any entrance into that holy land, the holiest land. Holiest land, we can have admission only if we offer our service to the extreme point of slavery, then we can be admitted, entered into that area, land. And unconditional, slavery of course is unconditional. That must be very heartfelt. Then we may be accepted to that holy domain. But slavery in that domain, that is far, far better, than the mastery of this land of exploitation, that of reaction. Reaction is very, very bad. And in the middle, the land of renunciation, that is neither good nor bad, nothing, zero. That is zero, freezing point.

Devotee: Guru Mahārāja, you mentioned that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta when he put on the *brāhmaṇa*’s thread that previously Jīva Goswāmī had written that one would have to take birth in the family of a *brāhmaṇa* to become a *brāhmaṇa*, but that some later *mahājana* would change the rule. Is this...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Jīva Goswāmī has written that ordinary *sādhus*, the *yogīs*, the *brāhmaṇas*, Śāṅkara, all these schools, they say that, “By the dint of our knowledge, the *yoga* and the devotion, we can destroy all the actions. But except, save and except, those actions that are being attached to this body to suffer, except this.” But the devotee school say, “No. The impurity for which this present attachment of the race, or anything, that also can be done away with by the influence of Kṛṣṇa *Nāma*.” *Prārabdha*, *prārabdha-karma*, that those *karma* that is already attached to be suffered or enjoyed in this body, that is *prārabdha-karma*. The other schools they think that without *prārabdha* that this body’s attached *karma* all other *karmas* may be finished. But the *bhakta* school says that by taking Hari *Nāma*, it is not possible by *yoga* and *jñāna* and other things, but by Kṛṣṇa *Nāma* one can get rid of all sorts of impurities, even in this

birth, in this body. This body is the outcome of previous good and bad actions, but this also is purified, the *prārabdha-karma*.

Now, the question is if the *prārabdha-karma* is purified then one comes to the highest birth of a *brāhmaṇa*. Jīva Goswāmī says that he attains the position of a *brāhmaṇa* body. But, a *brāhmaṇa* body, *brāhmaṇa* boy, until and unless he's given the sacred thread and *mantram* he's not considered to be eligible to do the work of a *brāhmaṇa*. *Brāhmaṇa* boy only when he's conferred with *upavit* [?] *saṁskāra*, then also he's eligible to worship Nārāyaṇa and do all other sacrifices what only the *brāhmaṇas* can do. So by taking the Name one is purified and becomes, attains the stage of a *brāhmaṇa* boy.

And Jīva Goswāmī says because we do not find any custom to give them sacred thread, so they must wait for the next birth. But Jīva Goswāmī admits that anyhow, whatever caste he may be, if he takes the Name of Kṛṣṇa then he discards the defects of his, of any other lower birth, and attains the position of a *brāhmaṇa* birth. It is admitted. It means he attains the position of a *brāhmaṇa* boy who has not been given any sacred thread. A *brāhmaṇa* boy until and unless he's given the sacred thread he is not admitted for the services of Nārāyaṇa and any other *yajñā*. So, there is no custom introduced here to give them sacred thread, consequently they're to wait for the next birth. That is the conclusion of Jīva Goswāmī.

But our Guru Mahārāja came with that, "When, no harm if they can be given sacred thread. The custom will be introduced. Custom may be introduced." He says there is no such custom... but that may be introduced. Our Guru Mahārāja came to introduce that thing what was not in vogue, because he said that the two things are being given indulgence by not introducing that usage. What? Why? Those that get the Vaiṣṇava initiation, they think that they're lower than *brāhmaṇa*. So they must be encouraged that no longer they're in lower position, they're fit to do all these services. They should also be encouraged. For that purpose, and another thing, the so-called *brāhmaṇas*, they're proud of their flesh consciousness, they come to think that this Vaiṣṇava *dīkṣā*, who has got Vaiṣṇava *dīkṣā*, they are lower than us. So they're committing offence to the Vaiṣṇava. So the *brāhmaṇas* and the so-called other higher castes, they should not be given the chance of committing Vaiṣṇava *aparādha*. And at the same time, those that are taking the Vaiṣṇava *mantra*, they also should not think themselves lower, that they're unfit to do the worship of the worthy body *brāhmaṇa* can do, they cannot do that. So for this two-fold help in the Vaiṣṇava society, this function, this usage, should be introduced. So Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Thākura he boldly came forward to introduce this system for which Jīva Goswāmī told that because that is not the usage, though qualitatively it is all right, but because there is no custom so they have got no other alternative but to wait for their next birth. Do you follow? Am I clear?

Devotee: Yes. Jīva Goswāmī he wrote that someone would come, did he write that someone would come and introduce?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. If any *mahājana*, if a great personage he'll come and introduce such custom, then it will be all right, no difficulty with rules of *śāstra*. The fact, it is all right. But none has introduced such custom so they have no other alternative but to wait. But if any *mahājana* comes and he begins such introduction, boldly, then it is all right from the standpoint of the fact, truth, it is all right. According to *śāstra siddhānta* it is not wrong, but only no custom, no usage, so again it is stopped. But if any *mahājana* comes and introduces such usage then it will be all right. And our Guru Mahārāja did that. He told, because two-fold disadvantages are found. The *brāhmaṇas* are committing offences against the Vaiṣṇavas, and the Vaiṣṇavas also think in their turn that they're very lower. They cannot attain, so the regular faith in the Name is

also being disturbed in them. So it must be introduced.

*brāhmaṇānām sahasrebhyaḥ satra-yājī viśiṣyate
satra-yājī-sahasrebhyaḥ sarvva-vedānta-pāragāḥ
sarvva-vedānta-vit-koṭṭhā yā viṣṇubhakto viśiṣyate
vaiṣṇavānām sahasrebhyaḥ ekāntyeko viśiṣyate*

[“Among many thousands of *brāhmaṇas*, a *yajñika brāhmaṇa* is best. Among thousands of *yajñika brāhmaṇas*, one who fully knows *Vedānta* is best. Among millions of knowers of *Vedānta*, one who is a devotee of Viṣṇu is best. And among thousands of devotees of Viṣṇu, one who is an unalloyed Vaiṣṇava is best.”] [*Hari-Bhakti-Vilāsa*, 10.117] + [*Bhakti-Sandarbha*, 117]

That he is a devotee of Viṣṇu he is superior to *crores* of ordinary *vaidāntik brāhmaṇas*. A practical *brāhmaṇa* is better than a birth *brāhmaṇa*, practical means one who commits, who performs *yajña*, etc., worships Kṛṣṇa. And those that worship with material things, one who can worship with the help of his consciousness, he will be preferred, given more preference, *vedānta-vit*. Then the *vedānta-vit* they think that their goal is non-differentiated consciousness, so if one can have the idea of differentiated consciousness, then he will hold the higher position than *crores* of such *vaidāntik brāhmaṇas*, those who are suffering from the disease that spirituality means non-differentiated Brahman. So Viṣṇu *bhakta*, who can see the Personality in consciousness, they will be far more superior. And *viṣṇubhakto sahasrebhyaḥ ekāntyeko viśiṣyate*, and amongst the devotees who regulates themselves according to *śāstra* and calculation, they’re of lower order, in *Vaiṣṇava*. And those that can have exclusively surrendered to the service of the Absolute Entity with the inner most love and faith, they’re dependable, they’re of the highest order.

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Devotee: When the disciple isn’t in the physical presence of his Guru, is it the same for him, his physical presence?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: What’s the question?

Devotee: When the disciple is not in physical presence of a Guru, is it as, you know, as um spiritually benefiting, as being, you know, apart?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Any spiritual difference?

Devotee: Yes, any spiritual difference?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Being physically together and being many miles away, any difference in the spiritual condition or not? He’s asking.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: We can get benefit only through *śraddhā*. Guru’s position should not be considered as mundane. He should not be identified with his mundane appearance. Only through *śraddhā* we are able to approach him, from far off also. But still of course by physical vicinity we can get the chance of hearing from him, and also many practical dealings that may help us about the knowledge of Vaiṣṇava *sadācāra*, what should be the conduct of a Vaiṣṇava. All these things we can have some sort of conception. But *śraddhā* must be there. Physical

closeness or distance, in both cases *śraddhā* or faith, respectable faith, must be there. And in the lower stage that physical nearness has got some more efficacy. By his movements, by his talks, instructions, we are to learn the spiritual etiquette, and also many spiritual ideals also may be cleared, ideal thoughts. Physical vicinity will be useful in the lower case, lower stage, but *śraddhā* must be there, that is faith. Otherwise we may commit offences. Physical nearness if devoid of faith then that may be the cause of offences against Gurudeva.

Sometimes senior Godbrothers may be very useful in helping our dealings to Gurudeva, for the beginners. His conduct may not be very clear and helpful always, so in that case some senior Godbrothers may come to help us, to explain his movements and do away with the differences.

*īśvarāṇām vachaḥ satyaṁ, tathāivacharitaṁ kvachit
teṣāṁ yat svavacho yuktaṁ buddhimāṁs tat samācharet
[Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, 10.33.31]*

The instructions of the great personages are always true, but their conduct, their practice may not be always useful to the beginners. *Vachaḥ satyaṁ, tathāivacharitaṁ, acharitaṁ*, not always may be useful, but their words are always useful, instructions, but not their practices always. So, fair understanding persons will accept those practices that are backed by his words, *svavacho yuktaṁ buddhimāṁs tat samācharet*, they will accept them also, because from his higher stage he may do something that will not be useful in my stage.

[?]

He has got such spiritual power that little defects may not harm him in any way in the practice, little defects in practice may not harm him. So *īśvarāṇām vachaḥ satyaṁ*, their instructions should always be followed, but their conduct not always. Only those conducts, practices, that are in consonance with his instructions, they should be accepted by the fair-minded beginners. *Teṣāṁ yat svavacho yuktaṁ*. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: Guru Mahārāja, I had one question about...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Do you follow what I say?

Devotees: Yes, I understand. Yes Mahārāja.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Am I clear?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Very clear.

Devotee: We shouldn't try to imitate those who are very advanced.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Not imitate but follow, not imitation but to pursue. Not *anukaraṇa* but *anusaraṇa*. *Anusaraṇa* and *anukaraṇa*, one is imitation and another to follow the footsteps. These things are different. What did you say?

Devotee: Well my question was that, is there a fixed number of living entities or does Kṛṣṇa always expand the number of living entities? Does He increase always?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What does he say?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Is there a fixed number? *Jīvas, jīvātmā*, is there a certain number fixed, or Kṛṣṇa can create more, expand the number? Generally we are told *asankhya*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, we think it as *asankhya*, innumerable.

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Immeasurable.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: There was a question that whether *jīva* is free? If Kṛṣṇa is omniscient then how *jīva's* action can be free? Do you follow? Kṛṣṇa is omniscient, God is omniscient, He knows everything, so the future of the *jīva* also. Then *jīva* is compelled to retrace that way then how he is free if it already fixed? Do you follow?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Yes.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: This naughty question. One Doctor of Philosophy put me this question in U.P. Allahabad. Ultimately he joined our Mission, that Kapoor jī in Vṛndāvana.

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Oh yes, O.B.L. Kapoor.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Oudh Bihari Lal Kapoor. He put me this question. Then I put another question to him, God is free or not? He said, "Yes." And He's omniscient. How you can harmonise with the omniscience and free will of God? I put this question. If He's omniscient He knows his future and he must go by that fixed road, then how he can be free? So *jīva's* freedom, and he's also part of the freedom of the Lord, and his knowledge and understanding also a part of the Supreme. - But if it is innumerable then how God is omniscient? If He does not know what is the number of the *jīva* soul then how He can be...

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: All knowing.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...in a position of omniscience? He does not know, God does not know? So we are in the plane of limitation and counting. The laws and rules of the world of Infinite is something more. So He knows everything, He knows Himself. And also sometimes it is stated that He cannot finish Himself, both such characteristics going on. He knows Him, and also it is mentioned in *Bhāgavatam* that His potency is also not of less importance. Sometimes He Himself cannot measure the utility and capacity of His potency. That is also infinite. His every aspect is infinite.

So that is peculiar thing, peculiar thing that is not to be harmonised in our limited brain. The *adhokṣaja*, the ways and nature of the Infinite cannot be understood by our puppy brain, puppy brain. We must be conscious of the fact. And so, the *Bhāgavatam* has repeatedly requested us not to go to measure the Infinite. But submit to your own respective duty, you'll draw more benefit thereby. Don't go to measure the immeasurable. That is loss of energy. That is not possible for you. So if you get some insinuation from within that avoiding for inquiry into the Infinite, mind your duty what is attached to you, you'll be more benefited thereby. And this is not your department. That will be wild goose chasing. It is impossible for you to measure the Infinite, so why waste of energy.

Jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.14.3]. Be satisfied with the knowledge that you have come to Him, He's such and such, and one drop is sufficient to inundate you wholly. One drop of nectar is sufficient to inundate the whole Earth, of your, infinite of your conception.

Why do you bother only for knowing, knowing, knowing? It is immeasurable. So your inquisitive tendency is not very wholesome. Try to utilise you in the service of Him. Wherever you are posted try to give you wholly there, dedicate you there in your located position, and then from there you will benefit yourself to the highest degree. *Jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva jīvanti.*

Jñāna sunya bhakti - eho bāhya āge kaha āra ["This is superficial; go further." *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 8.59*] *Jñāna-miśrā*, inquisitiveness, that is adulterated *bhakti*, devotion, not devotion proper. There inquisitive characteristic is predominating, that sort of service is adulterated service. "I shall do something, I can create something," this is *karma-miśrā*. "I can contribute something." This egoistic feeling: that is *karma-miśrā*. And, "I should know everything," too much curiosity to know everything, that is *jñāna-miśrā*.

Pure devotion, "Whatever given to me I am satisfied and I want to engage myself wholly in that point. Then that will be the best utility of my own self in the universe. Other tendencies are futile, not only futile, but it is injurious, it is losing my time, wasting my time." This is pure *bhakti*. This is pure *bhakti*. *Jñāna-sunya-bhakti, śraddhā* proper, faith proper gives inspiration only to that.

*karmaṇy evādhikāras te, mā phaleṣu [kadācana
mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr, mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi]*

["I shall now describe *niṣkāma karma-yoga*, the path of selfless action. You have a right to perform your natural prescribed duties, but you are not entitled to any fruits of that action. You should neither act with desire to enjoy the fruits of your work, nor, as a result, should you be attached to neglecting your duties."] [*Bhagavad-gītā, 2.47*]

Never allow yourself to go into the calculation. Engage yourself deeply and deeply. *Mā phaleṣu kadācana mā karma-phala-hetur bhūr, mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi*. When we enquire, we are surcharged with the spirit of enquiry, then that means some sort of doubt is there and attachment for the result, and the consequence. The underlying spirit under enquiry is that our attachment with the fruit, with the consequence of the work. *Mā phaleṣu kadācana*, whether I am doing, it will benefit some tasteful result to me or not. So that is anti slavery spirit. We must do our duty within the limit, within the limit.

And also we may be given the chance of leadership also, just as Guru, his function is always there, inspires you to do, to look after. Though that is also service, absolute service, one who has come to recommend and teach us what is absolute service, he's also in the service, in the proper service. But still, we have to do something on behalf of Kṛṣṇa, to look after the welfare of so many, and what line will suit which man, and also sometimes to punish them, sometimes to accept their services for himself: these things done but only inspired by Kṛṣṇa. They say this is abnormal, and in their normal position the Guru is also a servant, he's also serving Kṛṣṇa by showing leadership to so many. He's more conscious with his connection with the upper world when serving.

"Because Kṛṣṇa wants me to punish this man for this purpose I do. Not for punishment, nor for showing my superiority to him that I am punishing him, but Kṛṣṇa wants me to, I can't help. For His service I am to show that I am greater than him, I am controlling him, I am doing so many practices, that is to show my, that I am his master."

This is, all these things are the effect of the serving spirit to Kṛṣṇa. So in every work he's fully established in service. And service requires that he should be, he should guide, he should master over many; only for the service it may be necessary. Otherwise service, the duty, if He

wants me to read a book, a scripture, then it is devotion. But, if to satisfy my curiosity I read the same book, that *Bhāgavatam*, that won't be *bhakti*, won't be devotion. I hear the lecture of Guru, Vaiṣṇava, with the object that I should get some benefit and I utilise it for some purpose to satisfy me, that won't be devotion, *ādaḥ arpyeta paścād kriyeta*.

[*sā cārpitaiva satī yadi kriyeta, na tu kṛtā satī paścād arpyeta*]

[“Devotional services must be first offered to the Lord, then performed; not performed and offered afterwards.”] [Śrīla Śrīdhara Swāmī]

I am hearing, I am listening to the words, the instructions of *sādhu*, Guru, for what purpose? Who will be the beneficiary? Kṛṣṇa. That sort of crude conception must be there. I'm not entity at all. The entity is He. I'm subservient. Whatever I shall earn it goes to Him. That sort of basic idea there should be in the devotional work, good or bad. Good or bad, whatever I acquire that will go to my Master. I'm not independent entity at all. I'm not the recipient. Slave.

Vikritasya yata paso [?] I'm just a domestic animal. The master he may do as he feels. He may sell me. The master may sell a domestic animal, the horse, or cow, and get the money and may utilise it in any way he likes. The domestic beast may not have any complaint there, nothing to say against the master. So think yourself in that plane, *vikritasya* [?] *śaraṇāgati*, surrender means of such quality surrender. Surrender of this type, that the owner of a domestic animal, a dog, a cow, a horse, I'm like that. He may utilise in any way He likes. That is the ideal of *śaraṇāgati*. We should conceive ourselves to be so much subordinate, to the Absolute Will. As much as we can realise this, the necessity of such submission, we gain, we are gainer, in the negative side. Try to increase your helplessness, the negative side. Then you'll be nearer, nearer to the positive. The more the negative the more you can draw the positive. *Bhakti*, devotion proper is of such type, surrender, *dainya*. I'm nowhere. I'm helpless to the extreme. And that will draw the sympathy of your Guardian, your Master, so much.

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