

His Divine Grace Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhara Deva Goswāmī Mahārāja

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Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ... But when you go to serve the real world, that is Śivaloka. It is called Sadāśiva: the more original form of representation of Śiva there. And there, the Viṣṇu, that Śiva is also utilized for the first officer to serve for the, this mundane world, the misunderstood world. So Nārāyaṇa enters there, enters in one aspect, in one function, He enters there and manipulates through him. So if we're to look at the manipulator, then He's Mahā Viṣṇu, and where the inspiration is, has come and through whom it is working, then we find Śiva; the delegation of Mahā Viṣṇu come in Śiva. So that is an eternal post created at the bottom of this whole *brahmāṇḍa*, that is the misunderstood aspect of the world. The eternal position of an officer, where the delegation of Viṣṇu is there in the creation: in the management of this world. If we look at the inner function, there is Mahā Viṣṇu, and Mahā Viṣṇu is utilizing the highest representation of this *māyic* world, the *jīva* as a whole, searching after, it is incomplete, it is imperfect.

Whenever any Southern Indian people approached me when I was there in Madras, "Śiva is greater or Viṣṇu is greater?"

I used to point out to them this thing, that Śiva's type is a searching type, a penance, he's practising penances and searching after truth; he's not complete. But Viṣṇu is always full. Generally, Viṣṇu Avatāra is seen to be full with His own; not searching for any higher promotion or higher object. But Śiva is a type who is searching and inquiring and making penances to attain his end. So he's in want, but he's trying his utmost to eliminate his inner want. He's a type like that, seeking after truth, searching after truth, and making penances. But Nārāyaṇa, He does not do, He's such. He's full in Himself. Generally we see where so many, this solution, so many problems, none can solve, then at last they come to Nārāyaṇa, and He comes and solves the matter. His position is like that. He's self-contented, and He's the giver of the highest solution in the case of very intricate position, which cannot be solved by any other.

Devotee: Mahārāja, did Rāmacandra really do Śiva *pūjā*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, He did.

Devotee: Why?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: In a formal way, as He came as human being. Kṛṣṇa also in Dvārakā life, He also showed so many. Even the *brāhmaṇas* and so many observances of *varṇāśrama dharma* He did; He also served His Guru, He went to Gurukula, this is all in human way He wanted to:

*yad yad ācarati śreṣṭhas, tad tad evetaro janaḥ
sa yat pramāṇam kurute, lokas tad anuvartate*

["Whatever action is performed by a great man, the general masses imitate and follow. And whatever standards the great personality sets by exemplary acts, the whole world pursues as the right conclusion."] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.21]

*utsīdeyur ime lokā, na kuryāṁ karma ced aham
saṅkarasya ca kartā syām, upahanyām imāḥ prajāḥ*

[“If I do not perform duties, then, following My example, all the inhabitants of these worlds will renounce their duties and thereby come to ruination. Thus I will be the cause of social turmoil due to unvirtuous population, and in this way, I will be responsible for spoiling posterity.”]

[*Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.24]

What the higher personality does, the others follow, so,

*na buddhi-bhedam janayed, ajñānām karma-saṅginām
[yojayet sarva-karmāṇi, vidvān yuktaḥ samācaran]*

[“The scholarly proponents of the path of knowledge must not confuse ignorant, attached men by deviating them with the advice, “Leave aside action, and cultivate knowledge.” Rather, controlling their own minds, the learned should perform all the various duties without desiring the results, and in this way, subsequently engage the common section in action.”]

[*Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.26]

In *Gītā* it is, what you want, the answer given in *Bhagavad-gītā*. “If I do not observe all these things, the public won’t care to observe, and they’ll be lost. So, I have to do.”

So Rāmacandra, as He came here to teach a particular type of lesson to the public in this mundane world, and as mundane, He had to approach all the duties. Only in special cases He asserted Himself. Then He began the worship of the ocean, the person ocean. But the ocean did not care to come to Him, the sea. When just before the construction of the bridge from India to Laṅkā, He, to keep the honour of the sea, He fasted whole day, and He worshipped the deity of sea, and He wanted to ask her permission. But she did not care to come, to appear.

Then He asked Lakṣmaṇa, He ordered Lakṣmaṇa, “Oh, she’s not coming. Give My arrow and bow. I shall make the whole sea a dry pit, the whole water I shall draw out of her.”

When the goddess of the sea, she could understand this, she ran and fell on His feet.

In this way, He came in a human form, and to show to the public how an ideal king should go on in discharging his duty. He was conscious of that, so in a human way He behaved almost everywhere. So, once He worshipped the sea, worshipped many, worshipped Śiva also, and also gave respect to the *brāhmaṇas*, to so many, like a human being.

Devotee: Mahārāja, are Hanumānji and Gaṇeśa and Subraminia, are they *ātmās* or *jīvas*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Hanumānji is a devotee, *svarūpa-śakti*. His eternal abode is Ayodhyā in Vaikuṅṭha. And what you say, Hanumān, *svarūpa-śakti*.

Devotee: Gaṇeśa, Gaṇapati.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Gaṇapati, sometimes within him some function of Viṣṇu enters and works. Some delegation is found sometimes. But Gaṇapati means *binayaka* [?], that is the leader of the democratic party, *gaṇ* means many, and the leader of the many. Generally they’re miss-doers, *binayaka* [?]. They represent the voice of the people, voice of the self-seekers.

People are generally, fallen people in bondage they're self-seekers. And Gaṇeśa is the leader of them. So they're satisfied: when one is going to begin a good action, any good attempt, give some in way of bribe something they, 'Don't come to prevent my good attempt, I'm satisfying.' So in the beginning the *gana binayaka binakara* [?] whose nature is always to disturb the good people they're giving something. 'I'm giving this. You go off. Don't disturb me.' A disturbing element: that is Gaṇeśa. And also there is some, sometimes we see there is some delegated power in Gaṇeśa. In *Bhagavad-gītā* [chapter ten] it is mentioned.

"Wherever you'll find any power concentrated you may think that I'm there, that *vibhūti-yoga*. In this way, wherever any power, anything big, anything, greatness, you find extraordinary, you must think that My power in any way is there. And *tapasya* also, by penances they want to acquire some power, they pray, and I have to give him something. In this way!"

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: So Gaṇeśa is *jīva śakti* or *svarūpa śakti*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Gaṇeśa? Gaṇeśa is not *svarūpa śakti*. And the Kārttikeya he's also sometimes delegated power, because to kill a great demon the Kārttikeya was necessary, and peculiar, some potency to be attached there to make him successful in his campaign. Just as sometimes the leader of the party is given, is promised some reward. "Oh, you control your men. I'm rewarding you with this little thing, and you control your party." A form of bribe! So for the benefit of the people, and for the good administration, many things to be adopted by the administrator! Hare Kṛṣṇa. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari. Gaura Hari.

Devotee: Mahārāja, after Nṛsiṃhadeva killed Hiraṇyakaśipu, no one could approach Nṛsiṃhadeva to pacify Him except Prahlāda Mahārāja. Why couldn't Lakṣmī approach Him if Lakṣmī was His eternal consort?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: That was the, to make the position of Prahlāda Mahārāja unique, in the relation of service to Nṛsiṃhadeva. Lakṣmī Devī she withdrew herself and purposely told that. And apparently it was also convincing for the peculiar figure of Nṛsiṃhadeva.

Lakṣmī Devī she told that, "I'm afraid to approach Him. He's in a furious mood. But only this has been taken for Prahlāda's cause, benefit. So only Prahlāda can approach Him, and he'll find in a loving mood. Otherwise He's now in a furious mood, and approach from any other quarter will have a clash between His present mood and from any other mood from any other quarter. But this is meant only for Prahlāda, this furious figure. And Prahlāda's approach will be considerate and will be real path to the solution to minimise His anger."

That was a general common sense, and by that Prahlāda's devotion that was eulogised. And Lakṣmī Devī herself told that, "I'm afraid to approach Him when He's so much enraged." And only Prahlāda, and it was the nature, it was the truth, and thereby Prahlāda's position was enhanced as a devotee.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: So also in Rādhā-kuṇḍa Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Saraswatī Ṭhākura he spoke about Prahlāda Mahārāja from the *Bhāgavatam*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Not Rādhā-kuṇḍa. In Vṛndāvana he asked his *sannyāsī* disciple to explain about Prahlāda Mahārāja's *śuddha bhakti* from *Bhāgavatam*, and not to indulge in describing the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and *gopī* and others, because it is too high. We must begin from

the first plane of *bhakti*. Then that is above, *pūjāla rāgapāṭha gaurava bāṅge*. That is high, high.

And the *sahajiyā* has taken down in this mundane *rasa* in Vṛndāvana. So to discourage them that, “What you are doing in Vṛndāvana, thinking you are *gopī* and Kṛṣṇa in this way you are doing, this is all false, wrong. This is all hell. You have created a hell in Vṛndāvana. So begin from ABC, the *śuddha bhakti*, Prahlāda, *śuddha bhakti*. Then go step by step to the higher devotional realm.”

And in the Śyāma-kuṇḍa and Rādhā-kuṇḍa, at that barrier, he himself used to explain *Upadeśāmṛta* of Rūpa Goswāmī and not any tenth canto, and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa *līlā*, but *Upadeśāmṛta* he explained himself there. And were the listeners, audience. Gaura Sundara.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: In which position are the teachings of Ṛṣabhadeva?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Ṛṣabhadeva? What part you want to learn?

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: That where are his teachings placed: in which devotional stage? Like you say Prahlāda is *śuddha bhakti*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: You give particular instance.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: Of his teachings?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Yes.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: Like, *nāyaṁ deho deha-bhājam nṛloke* [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 5.5.1]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: This is general *bhakti*. In Bhārata, in Ṛṣabhadeva, it is ordinary general *bhakti*. In Ambarīṣa also, maybe reckoned in *śanta rasa*.

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Mahārāja, we’re told that Bhārata Mahārāja who was attracted to the deer, he fell from the stage of *bhāva bhakti*. He fell due to attachment for the deer, but he was in that stage of *bhāva bhakti*, still he fell.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: It may be considered the lowest stage of *bhāva bhakti*. Or it may be considered that to give us warning it has been shown like that. Just as the Lord Himself sometimes comes to teach us, taking what is impossible, taking Him in him only to show. So *bhāva bhakti*, what to speak of *bhāva bhakti*, it has also been warned against that from *svarūpa siddhi* also one may fall down. Only in *vastu siddhi* they’re safe. When they attain *vastu siddhi* they’re saved eternally. Even in *svarūpa siddhi* there may be danger. Gradual, the fullest attainment, but not actually accepted, participating in it, in the real *līlā*.

Our fitness is imperfection but no recognition. Fitness before recognition is also dangerous. Something like that. When recognised you are safe. Before that, from fitness you may lose the chance of getting that. It may be possible. That is *svarūpa siddhi*. One has attained his highest position, but after that *vastu siddhi*, he gets recognition, entrance, by the higher sphere. “Yes, he’s one of us.” Admitted, then he works. They look after, the government will look after you. Otherwise you’re in individual consideration, something like that. That is also within the jurisdiction of *svarūpa śakti*. But in *svarūpa śakti* also there are divisions, higher, lower. So the recognition may be *vastu siddhi*. Formally it is told when one has attained *svarūpa siddhi* then where the Kṛṣṇa *līlā* in the *prapañca*, in the material sphere is going on, he receives a call from

there. And then he enters. He's allowed to have entrance into that *bhauma līlā*. And from some rehearsal and then he's taken in eternally. Something like that: the recognition, the rehearsal and recognition, and before that they, that government recommended rehearsal and the recognition his fate is uncertain.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: So Kṛṣṇa says, *tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma, naiti mām eti*.

[*janma karma ca me divyam, evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ
tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma, naiti mām eti so 'arjuna*]

[“O Arjuna, one who actually perceives My supramundane birth and activities enacted by My sweet will, does not undergo rebirth. After giving up his present body, he attains Me. Having become subservient to My divine pleasure (*hlādinī-śakti*) in the form of My revealed divine potency, such a soul achieves eternal devotional service unto Me.”] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 4.9]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So *'arjuna*.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: So before this *mām eti, tyaktvā dehaṁ*, so does that mean only giving up the body as in death, or giving up the bodily conception?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Body of different materials. This *deha* means this flesh body. Then the *sukṣma* body is also there. *Tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma, naiti mām eti so 'arjuna*. Who _____ [?] for whom it is told, *tyaktvā dehaṁ punar janma, naiti mām eti so 'arjuna*?

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: *Evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ*.

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: *Janma karma ca me divyam*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: *Evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ*. Oh! *Janma karma ca me divyam, evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ*.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: “One who knows Me.”

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Where is it, eleventh canto?

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: *Bhagavad-gītā*, fourth chapter [ninth verse]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Fourth chapter.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: *Janma karma ca me divyam...*

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: In what connection it is told? *Janma karma ca me divyam, evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ*. *Tattvataḥ* means there is wrong thing. It is *tattvataḥ* in word word but there are so many stages, *evaṁ yo vetti tattvataḥ*. *Tato mām tattvato jñātvā, viśate tad-anantaram*.

[*bhaktyā mām abhijānāti, yāvān yaś cāsmi tattvataḥ
tato mām tattvato jñātvā, viśate tad-anantaram*]

[“Only through love and devotion can I be understood as I am. Thereafter, fully understanding Me, you can merge into My entourage.”] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 18.55]

Tattvataḥ, realisation, knowledge about the reality, that knowledge of different stages and strata, planes of knowledge. We’re to cross that, and accordingly our leaving there can enter in another layer: first layer, second layer, third layer, in this way. That is also within him. So formal and material, or substantial consideration everywhere to be traced: division, sub-division, sub-sub-divisions. As much as we’re minute we can find them, the minutest difference between them. Hare Kṛṣṇa. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol.

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Mahārāja, are there any examples given? Of course it is an undesirable thing, but are there any examples given for instruction of devotees who may have fallen from *svarūpa siddhi*? Are there any such examples given for instruction?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: *Svarūpa siddhi*. Fallen, but that fall is also very temporary, it may be. We may take the case of Viṣṇu Chita who is even recognised as *parśada bhakta*. But there also we find such thing. Do you know the story of Viṣṇu Chita?

Devotees: No.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Viṣṇu Chita was a priest in some temple in the south. He was a *brahmacārī*. He very scrupulously engaged himself in the service. One day suddenly two girls came there to see the temple, and one of them was very much charmed with the beautiful figure of Viṣṇu Chita. And she told her elder sister that, “I’m charmed by the beauty of this *pūjārī*. I can’t leave the place. You go.”

Then, how to live there? They approached, both of them approached the priest, he was the manager also. “She wants to serve in this temple for some time. She’s charmed by the atmosphere of the temple and she wants to render service to the Deity.”

In a simple way Viṣṇu Chita accepted. “Yes, if she likes so the service of my Lord she may remain here.”

Then, she’s trying to entice the devotee, but devotee does not care. In this way, some time passed. Suddenly one day in a rainy season with his wet cloth so closely mixed with his body that perhaps her, anyhow her body attracted suddenly the attention of Viṣṇu Chita, and gradually they had some illicit connection. And so much so that when the girl thought that the man is under her clutches she left the temple. And the man, leaving the service of the Deity followed her. And she went to her own place, home, Śrī Ranganatham. And the man Viṣṇu Chita he also gave the charge away to the temple proprietor and went away.

Then after some time that girl rejected him. “I don’t want you.”

But he can’t leave her. “Oh, take some money or something, otherwise I won’t allow you to enter my room.” What to do, he’s trying.

One day that gentleman he’s lying on a veranda of some householder. He’s trying to sleep but can’t sleep, the mosquito is disturbing, and he’s that way, disturbed way, he’s passing the night.

And at that time Ranganatham and Lakṣmī Devī They were out on a night tour, throughout the streets if Śrī Rangam. Lakṣmī Devī asked Ranganatham, “Who is that man? Why he’s lying there and tolerating mosquito bites in very miserable condition?”

Then, “Oh, you don’t recognise him. He’s Our old servant of that particular temple, Viṣṇu Chita.”

“Why he’s in such deplorable condition?”

Then Ranganatham described the whole thing. “Such and such things happened.”

“You are very cruel. Give something to the man, and he may enter the room of that girl.”

“What can be given?”

“The golden *pañcapatram*, the golden spoon.”

They aroused Viṣṇu Chita. “Oh, man you are suffering, you are very poor. Take this thing. This is valuable thing, you take this.”

Then he did not care, he’s mad in his own way, did not care who’s giving to him, when the God with a golden spoon, or very much joy. And he went to the door of the girl and pushed: “Yes, I have brought something valuable. Open the door.”

Then she opened the door and found this is this. “How; where have you got it?”

“I have got it, some gentleman has given it.” Anyway, passed the night perhaps!

And then in the temple that was missed, and it was reported to the king, and the king gave a beat of drum in the town. “Wherever it will be found you’ll be in danger: if anyone has found it, just put it, produce it to us.”

Then when they also got the news it will be dangerous to keep it, then that girl gave it that, “This man has given it to me.”

He was put into the prison.

Then Ranganatha He gave a dream to the king as well as to the highest priest that, “I have given it to him. He was My old servant in that temple. I have given him a reward. He won’t be punished.”

Then of course he was released and then he came to his former senses. “What have I done? I was so and so and I have come down to such a mean position.” Then he roused, like Ajāmila, and went away to his own service.

In this way some higher position it is shown that even from high position we may fall. We must not boast of our position, must not be proud of our high position. Always be careful. Always be in a prayer mood, praying mood. What am I? A tiny soul! The *māyā* is so extensive, endowed with so much power, but only our hope is the grace of Guru, Vaiṣṇava. Always be in want, and prayerful mood we should try to pass our time. Hare Kṛṣṇa. We may not commit to the feet of those higher advanced people by coming, indulging in discussion of their pure character, to take them down in the – to make the object of our – to satisfy our curiosity. But the necessity for which we’re trying to draw, to get, their grace may be gracious to us.

Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol.

Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol. Gaura Haribol.

Devotee: It is said that Lord Gaṇeśa removes impediments from one’s devotional service. One time someone asked Swāmī Mahārāja Śrīla Prabhupāda about this and he said, “Well, give me a hundred thousand dollars a month and I will start immediately his worship.” What are some practical things that we may do to remove some of these impediments that we have?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What does he say?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: I’m not sure.

Dhīra Kṛṣṇa Mahārāja: About Gaṇeśa removing impediments.

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Gaṇeśa removes obstacles in our service.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I can't follow.

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: He said Gaṇeśa – to worship Gaṇeśa, Gaṇeśa *pūjā*, a devotee may do that, to remove obstacles, impediments in his service. So can we do that?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: In a particular case it may be granted when a devotee's found by his Guru that he's got much affinity towards Gaṇeśa. Then he may ask him, "Do it and pray to him that in no time he can release you and to help you to the way of Viṣṇu." Just as we're told,

*yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi, yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya, tat kuruṣva mad arpaṇam*

["O son of Kuntī, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you offer in charity, and whatever austere vows you may keep - do everything as an offering unto Me."] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 9.27]

Whatever you are much engaged with you can't get out from there. Try to connect it with the Supreme, and do it for some time, then it will vanish. Whatever you have got some affinity to particular work you try to work in that way, but the result you be very particular to devote it to the centre. And then in no time you'll get relief from that particular tendency which is an obstacle, *ānukūlyasya saṅkalpaḥ*. It will come under this jurisdiction, Kṛṣṇa *karmārpaṇam*. I've got particular affinity for particular duty, and that duty may be some time given attached, and only to connect it towards the centre, and in short time I'll be relieved of that tendency. With this idea that may be provided, timely. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Devotee: I was meaning, what are some other practical general things that we can do to remove some of these impediments and troubles we have in devotional service?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What does he say?

Aranya Mahārāja: He's asking, what other things can be done to remove – what other activities can be performed to remove the *anarthas* or the obstacles to devotional service?

Akṣayānanda Mahārāja: Not just Gaṇeśa *pūjā* but any other thing.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Anything, Gaṇeśa *pūjā* affinity, or Śiva *pūjā*, or whatever it may be. I'm captured by particular interest, and if I want to get out of that particular interest that should be connected with the Absolute. And then in the shortest time I'll be relieved of that.

*yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi, yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat
yat tapasyasi kaunteya, tat kuruṣva mad arpaṇam*

["O son of Kuntī, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer in sacrifice, whatever you offer in charity, and whatever austere vows you may keep - do everything as an offering unto Me."] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 9.27]

In *varṇāśrama dharma* they're worshipping the deity Durgā, all these things.

Pita tat karma phalam sri krsnaya samapita mastu [?]

The connecting link in this way, and when that will be more purified then, *yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi*, whatever he's doing, direct towards Kṛṣṇa.

Tusme tuste priyatam pundarikakha [?]

The connection is given in this way, and that will be more and more clear and direct, and then, *sarva-dharmān parityajya* [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 18.66], he will come to that stage that he can give up all conceptions of duties for the service...

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