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Devotee: ... they're great devotees who are suffering in disease and old age. And I was wondering why this is so? Because I have read in some *śāstra*, for example, *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindu*, that by chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, by seeing the *āratī* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, that even the reactions to past sinful acts can be destroyed. So er?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Different stages, different graduation. There may be some stages where the past actions are being finished by suffering. And in higher stages we can see that may be when the soul is awakened and soul is connected with happy plane, ecstatic plane, the outward suffering is nothing to them.

Suppose a man, when sacrificing voluntarily for his country, he's feeling happiness, joy within. And externally, some sort of suffering. So many patrons they're offering their life for the cause of countrymen. So the external suffering is reduced to almost nothing. Internal joy is everything, something like that.

When in Kṛṣṇa connection, their soul is connected with plane of Kṛṣṇa, there they're feeling ecstatic sentiment life, and only on the surface some sort of bodily trouble cannot affect them much. Still it is shown sometimes to teach others. It is necessary through him to teach others, so Kṛṣṇa manages in that way sometimes.

yata dekha vaiṣṇavera vyavahāra-duḥkha, niścaya jāniha tāhā paramānanda-sukha
[visaya-madandha saba kicchui na jane, vidya kula, dhana-made vaisnava na cine]

[When you see a Vaiṣṇava of the highest order who seems to be suffering from material misery, you should know for sure that he is really experiencing the highest ecstasy. (When ordinary people see that a devotee has no material wealth of his own, that he is not enjoying the mellows of family life and has no important position in society, they think that he is suffering. They do not understand that a devotee takes no pleasure in wealth, women, and prestige, but takes transcendental pleasure in humbly serving the Lord.) Bewildered by sense enjoyment and puffed up with pride in their knowledge, education, birth, wealth, beauty, and so on, the ignorant people in general cannot understand the activities or position of a Vaisnava. (One should not think, however, that because a devotee does not consider these things important that he is therefore ignorant. A devotee simply cannot be understood in terms of birth, beauty, education or wealth.) A Vaiṣṇava, on the other hand never considers birth, education, and wealth to be important qualifications, but distributes the Lord's mercy to everyone, regardless of their social position.]

[*Caitanya-Bhāgavata, Madhya*, 9.240-241] & [within *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 5.19.5, Purport]
 & [*Gauḍīya Kaṅṭhahāra*, 3.49]

Caitanya Bhāgavata. Whatever you will find, troubles, of the Vaiṣṇavas externally, you can know it really that internally they're enjoying much happiness. Just as in the case of the soldier, the general, giving his life smilingly. It is possible. So some sort of happiness within, and externally some sort of pain. But that is negligible to them. In this way, you can think of that. But whether this country love is very small thing and God love, infinite love, is infinitely greater. The comparison should be drawn in that way. When country love can ignore the bodily misery, then God love can how ignore this bodily misery. Do you follow? This is negligible.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: So when one pure devotee, or one very elevated, sincere devotee is suffering, apparently there is some...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So we shall think that God is, that suffering is giving food to me first, the chance for serving Vaiṣṇava, and thereby the Lord will be highly satisfied. I have got a chance. A Vaiṣṇava is showing suffering, is in disease, and trouble in my head, trouble in my ... That is, it is meant by the divine arrangement to give chance to the lower section to serve, attend them. And then through that way you will be able to go inner and higher. Do you follow? The Vaiṣṇava will say, the minor Vaiṣṇava will say, that he's suffering, it is only to make me grace, to give me chance for service, it is really not so. We're to take it in that way. The Guru, Vaiṣṇava, whom we can stress that he's beyond this mortal influence, but still we find suffering.

That as Kṛṣṇa did. "I have got a headache, strong headache. Oh Nārada, give some medicine."

“What is the medicine, Lord?”

“Feet dust of My devotee, take it, take it. I’m suffering very greatly.”

Ha, ha, ha. That imitation only to give chance for me to serve. This should be our standpoint.

Devotee: Jagannātha also becomes sick, doesn’t He, after Ratha-Yatra.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Why? To give chance to the public to receive some special service.

“I’m one of you.” He says, that, “I’m one of you. I also have sickness.”

This is all *līlā*. Kṛṣṇa. _____ [?]

...

Vidagdha-Mādhava: One last question? Our Swāmī Mahārāja was coming to America with such an exalted mission for Lord Caitanya, and he suffered two heart attacks on the boat. Also he was gored by one bull, or one cow. Right after taking *sannyāsa*, Swāmī Mahārāja was gored by one cow. He was hurt. One cow horned Swāmī Mahārāja.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: One cow?

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Knocked him down, and opened him, bleeding. You did not know? One cow attacked him.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: When? Before starting for America?

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Yes, just after taking *sannyāsa*.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Some wound, and bleeding?

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Yes, he was very dangerously wounded.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: I did not hear so long, this incident.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: So, I’m asking, in this situation, how are we to understand that Kṛṣṇa is, in His pure devotee, he seems to be being attacked by some obstacles, you know, very dangerous obstacles. So how are we to understand that? Of course the devotees they...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Two angles of vision: one, suppose he’s nothing, he’s ordinary man, so,

mukam karoti vācālam panghum langhāyate girīm
[yat kṛpā tam aham vande śrī gurun dīna-tāranam]

[“I offer my respectful obeisances unto Mādhava, Who is the Personification of transcendental bliss. By His mercy, a blind man can see the stars in the sky, a lame man can cross mountains, and a dumb man can speak eloquent words of poetry.”] [*Bhavārtha Dipikā, maṅgala stotram, 1*]

Kṛṣṇa entered him and through him did such wonderful work; one angle of vision.

The second, he’s a higher realised soul, but all his posing, failure. He has so many defects. He had a wife who was half mad, and stark mad his eldest son. And the second son he was an atheist, communist. And the third son he was an idiot. This is his physical paraphernalia. And he tried his best to trade successfully but he failed. Then his life was full of struggle. All these are show, that he’s one of the members of the mundane world, all may be hoax.

From another standpoint as I told, but still an ordinary *panghu*, cripple, but Kṛṣṇa’s divine will can dance him like anything. Both, his personal realisation, and also if not personal realisation, still, anyone may be used by the Supreme Lord to perform anything and everything. That is one angle of vision.

And even when higher realised soul, they sometimes show that. Mahaprabhu when going to Gaya, He showed fever, to teach His company they are neglecting those *brāhmaṇas* who are ploughing in the field. And to teach them He had fever. And what, no medicine is curing Him when He's going to Gaya.

Then He Himself told, "Take the feet water of these *brāhmaṇas* and that will cure."

Then what to do? They took the feet water of the *brāhmaṇas* that were apparently all cultivators. And by drinking that He was cured from that pernicious fever. He showed purposely, with some purpose He showed.

...

Devotee: *Prema-dhāma-devam eva naumi gaura-sundaram.*

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?]

Devotee: _____ [?]

Devotee: Mahārāja, would you like me to fan you? Your arms tired? Would you like me to do this for you?

Devotee: _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Nitāi Gaura Hari bol. Nitāi Gaura Hari bol. _____ [?]

Devotee: Thank you very much Your Divine Grace for seeing me and answering my questions. And I wanted to ask for your blessings that I may become a good servant of Kṛṣṇa. Because if you give me your blessings then I know I certain...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Kṛṣṇa and Mahāprabhu will make you a good servitor for him.

Devotee: I wish also for you to forgive me from the offences I have committed to you.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?]

Devotee: So Mahārāja, we will be leaving tomorrow and booking... (recording difficulties)

...

Badrinārāyaṇa: Well, we had a discussion before the devotees spoke to you, we had a discussion and we were wondering if he should tell you or not. But your questioning was so intense, so sharp, that he could not refrain from telling you.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Have you been given the addresses of Sudhīra Mahārāja and Mādhava Purī Mahārāja?

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Guru Mahārāja, can I ask a question?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?] you are creeper in a desert.

*āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām, [adarśanān marma-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo, mat-prāna-nāthas tu sa eva nāparah]*

["Kṛṣṇa may embrace me in love or trample me under His feet. He may break my heart by hiding Himself from me. Let that debauchee do whatever He likes, but He will always be the only Lord of my life."] [*Śikṣāṣṭakam*, 8]

There is separation, separation with desert _____ [?] creeper _____ [?]

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Guru Mahārāja, in *Bhagavad-gītā* one *śloka*, "A true *yogī* observes Me in all beings."

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?] an inductive process, ascending. You are trying to establish some relation with the _____ [?] control and the nervous system, both are foreign material. By the help of the material you want to have the highest spiritual realisation. How is it possible? It is jugglery. What is there in *yoga*? In *yoga* there is some Vasudeva, on the forehead. That comes to Godliness, spiritualism. Otherwise you will take the help, just of so many *āsanas* and so many other things. It is all concerned with physical, the air and your body. And they can combine a conspiracy to compel the supreme authority. What do you think? What is *yoga*?

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Well, there's also *bhakti yoga*, yes?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: *Bhakti yoga* is all right. Then, what is the trouble? Why you have any preference for *yoga*? Because that is a definite way promising you some definite result. Do you find that? *Saraṅgati* is uncertain, indefinite, to hanker after His sweet will? And by following the process of *yoga* you feel that you are going to control, you are going to solve the result? What good do you find in the *yoga*?

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Well, I was actually, was going to ask you that actually one who sees Kṛṣṇa everywhere and in everything...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: What is the connection with *yoga*? *Yoga* means reconnecting with Kṛṣṇa, that is all right. That is *yoga*. *Yogamāyā*, the central in-carrying current. To catch the central in-carrying current, *Yogamāyā*. It is taking us to connect with Kṛṣṇa, centre. That is *Yogamāyā*. And *Mahāmāyā*, out-carrying current. In-carrying current, out-carrying current. But what do you mean by *yoga*? This *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, *dhāraṇa*, *āsana*, all these things.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: One who is simply linked up with the Lord. *Yoga* means linked, linked up.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Link up. If you form an alliance with the nervous system of your body and _____ [?] outwardly affected. The authority will be affected by that. *Raja yoga* and *hatha yoga*. *Hatha yoga* only attempting with physical things. The *raja yoga*, something mental. *Yama*, *yama* means _____ [?] all these practices. To make oneself aloof from the material charm, charm of material life. *Yama*, *niyama*, *āsana*, *prāṇāyāma*, *pratyāhāra*, all these things. All concerning to this material, dealings with the material environment, *yama* means. To take out the self, to disconnect the self from the material bondage. But if we cannot have, we cannot establish any real connection with the spiritual, the material disconnection is not complete. *Āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padaṁ tataḥ, patanty adho 'nādrta*.

[*ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas, tvayi asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa param padaṁ tataḥ, patanty adho 'nādrta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*]

["O lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe austerities and penances to achieve the highest position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence is impure. Although they may rise to the level of impersonal Brahman realisation, they fall down from their position of imagined superiority because they neglect to worship Your lotus feet."] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.2.32]

We can climb up to the highest degree, the highest position of the negative side, the *abscissa*, we can climb up to, but if we do not have any visa then we'll have to come back anywhere in this plane. To establish connection with the agent of the visa area, that is what is most important. The agents, the *sādhus*, they're wandering here, and to connect with them and to secure a visa. And visa people will manage for us to secure a passport here _____ [?]

Devotee: Descending process.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, automatically. They will recommend. 'I want this gentleman to take our notation because this plane has got great respect for the other plane.' The *māyā* has got its fulfilment there. Whenever such news will come to the agents of the *māyā* that the other party is now wanting this man for

their utility there, they will succumb to that, give to us, agree to that. Because the authority knows that I am only a negligent part of the highest place, so we must abide by the order of the higher authority who has come with the visa. Something like that.

This is *Bhāgavata dharma*, and this *yoga*, this *varṇāśrama dharma*, all the other things, by our trial and dealing with the material things we can go up to that end of this country. And then if we cannot secure any visa, any entrance there, then what to do? Wait for some time here, that will be our fate. That is more independent, more fine, more sweet, than every place that holds superior position. This is only a perverted reflection, having no existence of its own, can't stand on its own leg. It is a dependent state. So this *māyā* state is always in obligation with that original state. Anyhow to have connection with that state, that is most valuable thing.

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

[“All the demigods and their exalted qualities, such as religion, knowledge and renunciation, become manifest in the body of one who has developed unalloyed devotion for the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva. On the other hand, a person devoid of devotional service and engaged in material activities has no good qualities. Even if he is adept at the practice of mystic yoga or the honest endeavour of maintaining his family and relatives, he must be driven by his own mental speculations and must engage in the service of the Lord’s external energy. How can there be any good qualities in such a man?”]

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 5.18.12]

Have you come in connection with this *śloka*? *Yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty*. If anywhere we can trace that faith in the Supreme Lord, in least. *Sarvair guṇais tatra*. Other demigods, representatives of any power of this world, they cannot but have their presence there. And *harāv abhaktasya kuto*, and if anyone has got no credit in the supreme authority, the favour of the demigods here can never be counted. Now it is, and now it will fly away. Do you follow?

So many qualities, main quality is faithfulness to the authority. And if that is there in anyone’s heart, then other qualities with their masters cannot but be there, reluctantly or within _____ [?] Because the highest authority’s representation is there. So they must attend the place. And if the ultimate authority is not represented, then all the partial representations, their presence has got no value. _____ [?]

Para bhakti sukrtair maha-jana [?]

The other qualities and their quality holders _____ [?] they have got no value, no reliability there. The paramount power has got any favour there, all will come, flock there. And if the paramount power is absent then the favour of this minor power has got no value. Any moment they will fly away.

Yasyāsti bhaktir bhagavaty akiñcanā, sarvair guṇais tatra samāsate surāḥ. The gods who represent other qualities of this mundane world, they cannot but attend that place where the highest authority is there. *Harāv abhaktasya kuto mahad-guṇā*. And if one is seen in want of his devotion towards Hari, the paramount power, then this _____ [?] however great qualities there may be, we cannot depend on them. They will fly any moment. *Manorathenāsati dhāvato bahiḥ*. Because their concern is always _____ [?] they’re always tending to that side, outside. That is their nature, out-carrying. They’re agents of out-carrying current, deserter. The agents of *māyā*, they’re hypocrites, they’re deserters.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: So Guru Mahārāja, our system is acceptance and rejection, accepting things favourable for Kṛṣṇa consciousness and rejecting those unfavourable things...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: That is included in devotion, not below.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: But if someone has some trouble concentrating his mind for chanting, or some problem, agitated by body or mind, *yoga* mitigates these, yes? But it should not be used?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: That will not be valuable, that way, intoxication. By his intoxication for the time being he can have some help of apparent concentration. But that is physical, material.

Devotee: Like Viśvāmītra Muni. For some time he meditated.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Meditation, this penance, they have got their respective results. But as climbing on the summit of that power, even one may be a demon, one may not be theistic.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: The reason many of Swāmī Mahārāja’s disciples have gone away is...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Even Śaṅkara, Mahādeva, he’s considered to be the highest attainment of all this *yoga, tapa*, etc. But still he’s not considered to be a *śuddha bhakta*. *Jñāna miśra, yoga miśra, karma miśra*, something like that.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Mahādeva is not *śuddha bhakta*?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja:

na tathā me priyatama ātmayonir na śaṅkaraḥ [na ca saṅkarsaṇo na śrīr naivātmā ca yathā bhavān]

[“Neither Brahmā nor Śīva are as dear to Me as you; My elder brother Saṅkarsaṇa is not as dear to Me as you, nor even Lakṣmī Devī. Even My own Self is not as dear to Me as you.”]

[*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.14.15]

Mahādeva says, “If you want to see, feel what is real devotion, devotion proper, pure devotion, go to Prahlāda.” Mahādeva saying to Devarṣi Nārada. “Go to Prahlāda. You can find pure devotion there. We have got our personal concern. Sometimes we jump in opposition with the paramount power of Nārāyaṇa. So our position is not reliable. Go to Prahlāda, *ananya bhakti*, exclusive devotion, you can find there.”

Prahlāda says, “Yes.” He also denies, “That sometimes I want to fight with Kṛṣṇa, some demonic element is in me. And what I do that is also something like passive things, this meditation and others. But no active service in me. Go to Hanumān.” In this way, going up.

Vidagdha-Mādhava: Guru Mahārāja, so the westerners I think what’s missing is that they’re trying to get a higher taste, some experience that’s going to give them some reassurance that they are actually practising the proper path. The westerners are impatient for some higher taste.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Westerners are impatient to get something within their fist.

Devotee: Very quickly.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Its nature is just the opposite. It is opposite. If you think you have got, then you are deceived. When you think ‘I am nowhere,’ you will find He’s just on your side. So to increase the positive side, to catch Him, that is useless. I told many times, try to increase the negative side. Then you will have Him on your side. So *jñāne prayāsam udapāsya* [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 10.14.3], when you will come to realise that all your acquisition is no qualification to attain Him. Only His grace, and grace comes to the humble. But they’re puffed up with their own quality, capacity, grace does not descend there. As a master you will capture Him, He’s a property and you are the possessor of the property, give that idea to the burial ground. That is no *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is helplessness, and the necessary feeling for the purpose of Him. I’m nothing, I’m nowhere. Your grace is everything, I have got no right. And the right which is asserted by the devotees, that is also of a negative character. I’m the most wretched, so I’m the highest candidate of Your grace. That is an appeal in the negative side.

ye yatha patita haya, tava dayā tata tāya, tāte āmi supātra dayāra

[Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says: “Your grace is given in accordance with the necessity of those who really deserve it. In that consideration, I have some claim. I am fallen of the fallen, the most fallen, so I have some claim to Your grace.”] [*Gītāmālā, Yāmuna-bhāvāvali*, 19]

This way.

Badrinārāyaṇa: So *anartha nivṛtti* is always there Mahārāja?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: *Anartha nivṛtti* means the elimination of the external elements in us which gives us hope that I shall make me a king, those things, give up our dependence on those things. Those promising friends. God save me from my friends, or so called friends, that are giving hope that I shall make you a king, to disperse them all, wholesale, forever. I don't want your help, you go away.

Try to realise the negative characteristic of our real self. We're potency, not owner of the potency. We're potency itself, not owner of the potency, so always dependent on the owner. That will be our position, real position. The substance and the potency. Potency is dependent on the substance. And to think that we're substance, that is the wrong with us, the possessor of potency, no. We're infinitesimal part of His potency, and the potency also not of the first class; third class potency. An infinitesimal part of the third class potency of the substance, that is our real position. So when we're in our highest realisation, we're also to be adjusted in the third class potency section, to work there.

Svarūpeṇa vyavasthitih. The *mañjarī* class, the *sakhī*, *prana sakhī*, all these things here. The Nanda, Yaśodā, the *sakhā*, there is also different groups. And the new recruits will have a particular position in *sākhya rasa*. Always under the guidance of the main *sakhā* of any one, either in the retinue of Subala, or Śrīdāmā, or Mādhumaṅgala, and they are in *sākhya rasa*. Nanda, Yaśodā, the *vātsalya rasa*. Anyone in helping hand of Yaśodā or Nanda, in this way. There he will draw the maximum *rasa*. If misplaced, then he will have to fast, half fed, no capacity.

So 'ham. We must eliminate exhaustively from us the spirit of *so 'ham*, 'I want something big.'

We're one of many and where your real position is to be adjusted when you are free, from there only you can get your first highest benefit. He's misplaced, you're dead, you're nowhere, you're cast aside. Your body as proper food, this something is poison, something is too much rich, so your body will thrive only with the particular type of food. If you want to eat like elephant, you are gone, or like tiger. Your food will be limited to a particular position.

muktir hitvān-yathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitih

[“Liberation is the permanent situation of the form of the living entity after he gives up the changeable gross and subtle material bodies.”] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 2.10.6]

Internally adjusted you have got your particular position. If you can realise that then you have got that _____ [?]

.....