CONFIDENTIAL
SECRETS OF BHAJANA

AN OVERVIEW OF
SRILA BHAKTIVINODA THAKURA’S
SRI BHAJANA-RAHASYA

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INTRODUCTION

During these next few morning classes I will explain some helpful points from Bhajana-Rahasya. This is a wonderful collection of verses and instructions by Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura. First, we will read the introduction by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada.

Srila Prabhupada writes, “I have seen Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura doing bhajana day and night.“ He knew how Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura used to do bhajana, because his eyes were not like ours. Our eyes can only see the material world, but Srila Prabhupada’s eyes were transcendental, and he could see the unmanifest, spiritual world as well. So he is telling us a little about how Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura used to do bhajana. We cannot understand these things by ourselves, but if Prabhupada and our Guruji have mercy on us, we can understand something.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Gosvami Thakura is bestowing his mercy through this introduction. He was always with Bhaktivinoda Thakura, and he writes, “This akincana has seen Bhaktivinoda Thakura in Svananda Sukhada Kunja in Godruma, and also in Jagannatha Puri. I have seen him doing his bhajana in a very grave and deep mood, with astasattvika bhava.” While performing his bhajana, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura would always remember the slokas that he collected in this book. Srila Prabhupada will explain these slokas and something about the moods contained in them.

ARCANA AND BHAJANA

First of all, Srila Prabhupada explains the difference between arcana and bhajana. Nowadays, about ninety-five percent of devotees think that arcana and bhajana are the same. But Srila Prabhupada explains that arcana and bhajana are not one and the same; there is a great deal of difference between them. We
can compare them to different levels of education. The education that we get in the lower classes of school is not the same as the education we get in the graduation classes, although both come in the category of education. So we see that there are different sorts of education; it’s not all the same. In the same way, there is a difference between bhajana and arcana.

To understand the difference, we must first understand the relationship between them. Bhajana means samagra-bhajana, the aim and object of the whole practice of bhajana. Arcana is bhajana anga, a limb of bhajana, and it is also a limb of uttama-bhakti, pure bhakti. Most devotees do not know all these deep meanings, and they think that bhajana and arcana are one and the same. The difference between bhajana and bhajana anga is the difference between the whole and one of its parts. Srila Prabhupada explains so many very deep things. We should try to understand this siddhanta, because unless we do, we cannot progress in bhajana.

THE KANISTHA-ADHIKARI

How can we tell whether devotees are performing arcana or bhajana? It depends on their qualifications. You know that there are three levels of devotees-kanistha, madhyama and uttama. Devotees are classified differently according to their adhikara or qualifications. First of all, Srila Prabhupada says that kanistha-adhikaris perform arcana. That is what has been prescribed for them.

In order to qualify even as a kanistha-adhikari, we must first have sambandha-jnana, knowledge of the essential tattvas and the relationship between them. Someone may think that he is performing arcana, but if he doesn’t have sambandha-jnana, it is not arcana. In fact, unless he has sambandha-jnana, he is not performing bhakti at all. Someone may be chanting harinama, doing sravanam, kirtanam, visnu-smaranam, arcanam, vandanam,
dasyam, sakhyam, atma-nivedanam. Still, unless he has sambandha-jnana, he is not even kanistha-adhikari. One is kanistha-adhikari as soon as he has a little sambandha-jnana, even if it is not full. Then he can perform arcana, but not bhajana.

Srila Prabhupada now explains more about the kanistha-adhikari. We have mentioned the difference between the prakata (manifest) world and the aprakata (unmanifest, spiritual) world. A devotee has kanistha-adhikara as long as he has no actual aprakrt realisation. That is to say, the paraphernalia that he uses in his service are all of this world, and he is also in this world, and his mind is also in this world. He has some sraddha (faith) by sadhu-sanga, by associating with pure devotees, but his realisation has not deepened yet. At this stage, his offerings and all his various types of service are in the category of arcana.

There are different ways of offering worship. We may use eight different articles, twelve different articles, or sixteen different articles: for instance padya (washing the feet), arghya (offering auspicious substances), acaman (offering sips of water), asana (sitting place), snana (bathing), vastra (clothes), bhusana (decorating), malya (offering garlands), and then arati by dhupa (incense) and dhipa (lamps), and offering naivedya (foodstuffs) and puspanjali (handfuls of flowers). When the kanistha-adhikari makes offerings of this sort, it is called arcana.

SERVICE IN AN INTIMATE MOOD

Srila Prabhupada writes, maryada mule bhagavata seva-arcana. Maryada means acting with reverence, according to regulations and standards, and not transgressing the laws. Generally, in the beginning a devotee worships Krsna with sambrahma-jnana or aisvarya-jnana. That means that he knows about Krsna’s opulences, and therefore has great respect for Him. He thinks, ‘Krsna is so high, and I am so low. I should have reverence for Him. He is our upasya, our worshipful
Deity. He is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and He has so many opulences, especially the six chief opulences. His form is saccid-ananda vigraha, and He is sarva-karana-karanam, the Cause of all causes. As for myself, I am a very little, insignificant particle of Him, always sinking in the ocean of maya. So how can I serve Him?

A kanistha-adhikari has the same reverential attitude towards his Gurudeva. He serves his Gurudeva thinking, ‘He is our Gurudeva. He so high, and I am so low.’ Sometimes he thinks, ‘I am doing service, and this is seva.’ He may be massaging his Gurudeva’s feet, giving him prasadam and everything, performing so much service for him. But actually this is not seva. Properly speaking, the kanistha-adhikari only has the adhikara to perform arcana, not bhajana. Sometimes we refer to that arcana as if it were bhajana, but it is not; it is arcana.

Next Srila Prabhupada talks about visrambha-seva, or service in an intimate mood. As the devotee progresses and realises more siddhanta, his sense of awe and reverence becomes less prominent it is still there to some extent, but he now has a more intimate sense of relationship with his Gurudeva and with Krsna. This becomes more important and more prominent than his awe and reverence. Now he can perform visrambha-seva, which is the highest stage. Service in awe and reverence is like the rays of the sun, but in visrambha-seva, the glaring intensity of those rays has been reduced. Visrambha-seva is like cool and refreshing moonlight; service in that mood is so pleasing and lovely. Those who are in visrambha-bhava serve with great affection, rather than with a sense of reverence. They think that they are on an equal level to their Gurudeva or Krsna. Service on that level is very high, much higher than the service of those who have more reverence. The third item in Srila Rupa Gosvami’s list of sixty-four kinds of bhakti-anga is priti-purvaka-guru-seva, to serve Gurudeva with a sense of intimate affection, free from awe and reverence.
Srila Prabhupada now explains more about the important difference between *arcana* and *bhajana*. *Arcana* is performed with the gross, physical body and the subtle, mental body. That means that the particular mood and mentality connected with the gross and subtle bodies are still more or less there. But in *bhajana*, the devotee’s particular mentality and physical conditioning are diminishing, and his *sambandha-jnana* and *aprakata* mood are becoming more prominent. Finally, when devotees like Rupa and Sanatana Gosvami perform *bhajana*, all connection with the gross and subtle body has disappeared. The *sarira* or body with which they are serving Krsna and His associates is the spiritual body. It is identical with the *atma* or soul.

This is the real difference between *arcana* and *bhajana*. In *arcana*, the gross and subtle material bodies are prominent, but in *bhajana* it is the spiritual body, the *atma*, which is serving Krsna.

Srila Prabhupada explains the same thing in a different way. In *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu* (1.1.12) (*from Sī Narada-Pancaratra*), we read:

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sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam tat-paratvena nirmalam
hrsikena hrsikesa-sevanam bhaktir ucyate
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“Being completely freed from all *upadhis* or material desires for designations, and being completely devoted to the service of the Lord, and pure of the clouds of *jnana*, *karma*, *yoga* and so on, one is able to serve Hrsikesa, the Lord of all senses, with all one’s senses—this is called *bhakti*.”

*Sarvopadhi-vinirmuktam*: when all the *upadhis* (material designations) go away, then *bhakti* actually becomes *bhajana*. We can see this in the moods of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Gaurakisora dasa Babaji Maharaja, Srila Vamsidas Babaji Maharaja and other great devotees. Outwardly they were
collecting flowers, and behaving just like ordinary devotees, like Vamsidasa Babaji Maharaja performing arcana to his Deities.

Srila Prabhupada established many mathas and established arca-vigraha, Deities, in them. He instructed his devotees to perform arcana, and sometimes he performed arcana himself.

Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami also performed arcana. But we shouldn’t think that their arcana is like the arcana of the kanistha-adhikari. No! They did not have any physical or mental conditioning. Their arcana is seva, and it comes directly from Krsna’s associates in Goloka Vrndavana. That is called suddha-sattva. When we receive this suddha-sattva, then we can do bhajana fully, and then we can refer to our service as seva. And as long as we do not have this suddha-sattva, all the activities we perform are bound to be arcana.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has written Bhajana-Rahasya for those who want to perform bhajana. In his introduction to the book, Srila Prabhupada also explains how to enter into bhajana, and how to perform bhajana. He explains the rahasya, the hidden secrets and confidential instructions regarding bhajana. He has tried to give everything. Unfortunately, he can’t give us everything, because we are unable to understand. Still, at least we can understand something about the beginning of bhajana, and that will help us to enter into it. We should also understand that Srila Prabhupada is explaining how to enter into bhajana from arcana.

**BHAJANA AT THE END OF THE NIGHT**

We have heard of asta-kaliya bhajana, remembering Radha and Krsna’s pastimes during the eight periods of the day and night. Srila Prabhupada now begins to talk about nisanta-bhajana, but we have to understand what he actually means when he talks about nisanta-bhajana. The Gosvamis have described the asta-kaliya-lila in Vraja. The first part of asta-kaliya-lila is nisanta-
lila, the pastimes at the end of the night, when Radha and Krsna are waking up. But these topics are too high for us to enter immediately. When Srila Prabhupada talks about nisanta-lila, there is a deep meaning behind his words. He means that we are conditioned souls, sleeping in illusion.

We were asleep, full of all kinds of anarthas and offences. In this condition we don’t know anything, but now we are waking up. This is what Srila Prabhupada means when he talks about nisanta-lila. By good fortune, we may receive ahatukikrpa, the causeless mercy of some qualified Vaisnava and of Gurudeva, as well as the causeless mercy of Krsna. By that causeless mercy we may obtain the association of a bona fide, qualified Vaisnava. Then the mood of serving Krsna will come into our heart. That is called seva-vasana, and it is given by guru. When it comes into our heart, we receive sraddha at once.

We have read in Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s Siksastaka that sraddha is of two kinds. The first brings about the desire to follow the rules and regulations of scripture. The second type gives rise to the desire to follow the spontaneous service of the residents of Vrndavana. This is what Srila Prabhupada means when he talks about nisanta bhajana; it is the end of the dark night of our material illusion.

If we receive sraddha, but we do not have good association, our sraddha will not develop further; it will dry up instead. That is why we should try to have good association in the beginning, the middle and the end of our devotional service. Unless we have sadhu-sanga, the holy name that we are chanting will also dry up. As our sraddha dries up, we will become less and less inclined to perform bhajana. This principle of having sadhu-sanga is essential for all kinds of bhakti.

In Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu, Srila Rupa Gosvami has given a list of sixty-four kinds of bhakti-anga, limbs of bhakti. The first item is to take shelter of a bona fide guru, and the second is to receive diksa from him. The third item is visrambhena guru-seva, serving the guru with intimate affection, and the fourth
is sadhu-vartmanuvartante: following the path established by the acaryas. Srila Prabhupada emphasises this item in particular. It means that we have to understand how Rupa Gosvami, Sanatana Gosvami, Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Narottama Thakura, Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura, Baladeva Vidyabhusana, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Prabhupada and our Gurudeva have performed bhajana. That is the path which must be followed; we will have to follow it.

LEAVING WORLDLY DESIRES

Srila Prabhupada has explained all these matters in this introduction, so we should listen patiently and attentively. Those who want to do bhajana like this should follow the instructions and example of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and all the previous acaryas. Now Srila Prabhupada explains that, to perform constant bhajana, we must become niskincana. A niskincana devotee is one who doesn’t have any worldly desires. Kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, and matsarya have all gone. Niskincana devotees completely follow the first sloka of Srila Rupa Gosvami’s Upadesamrta: vaco vegam manasah krodha-vegam. They have controlled anger, the urge to speak, and the demands of the tongue, the belly, the genitals, and the mind. They follow all the slokas of Upadesamrta. They also follow Sriman Mahaprabhu’s sloka (4):

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\begin{align*}
na dhanam na janam na sundarim \\
kavitam va jagadisa kamaye \\
mama janmani janmanisvare \\
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki tvayi
\end{align*}
\]

These Vaisnavas are called niskincana, akincana Vaisnavas. Niskincana Vaisnavas will understand all these instructions. And if we want to be niskincana Vaisnavas and follow the path which the niskincana Vaisnavas have followed, then we should understand all these instructions as well.
Our first business is to try to give up all bad sanga. That means we have to give up the associations of mayavadis, sahajiyas and all kinds of abhakta (nondevotees). We should especially avoid those who are diving into sense gratification, worldly desires and worldly activity. We must give up their association, otherwise their worldly desires will enter our hearts, and we will go down again. If we act according to these standards, then we can perform asta-kaliya-sadhana and bhajana.

Otherwise it is not possible. No one can perform bhajana twenty-four hours daily unless he has left his worldly desires; has completely followed the first, second and third slokas of Upadesamrta; has followed Manah-Siksa from beginning to end; and is not an akincana Vaisnava. We can only perform asta-kaliya-bhajana when all kinds of desires and offences and anarthas have been removed.

If we want to serve Krsna, if we want to follow the disciplic path or way established by our gurus, we will have to give up all kinds of bhoga (material enjoyment), tyaga (false renunciation), and the association of all kinds of abhaktas. If we don’t give up this association, it will become an obstacle to achieving our aim and object, which is to serve Krsna. Those who are jnanis, karmis and yogis—even those engaged in misra-bhakti rather than pure bhakti—cannot have even a little ruci (taste) in their bhajana, so they cannot honour this book. But those of us who want to enter into Bhajana-Rahasya must honour it, and follow its instructions. This is what we have come for.

Some of you are here because you heard the teachings of your Gurudeva, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Maharaja. We have come here because we heard from our Gurudeva, Srila Bhakti Prajnana Kesava Maharaja. Some of you have come here after hearing from Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura. In any case, we have not come to fulfil our worldly desires. We have come for one purpose only, and that is to
serve Krsna. So if we want to serve, to engage in actual seva, we will have to give up all the unfavourable things that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura will explain later. We should read this book, and we should understand and practise everything that he is telling us. How can you preach, if you do not know all these things? You may try to preach, but what kind of preaching can you do?

WHAT IS OUR AIM AND OBJECT?

First try to understand all the instructions in this book. We must know what is the aim and object of our sadhana-bhajana. We must know whether we are only performing arcana, or whether we are actually trying to enter into bhajana. We may think that we are engaged in so much devotional service and so much preaching work, but we must be careful. If we are not trying to do bhajana, if we are not trying to enter into the realm of real bhakti, then all of these activities are karmanga. They are actually material activities.

We should learn all these very deep and secret meanings of bhajana. Only then should we try to help others. Otherwise, instead of helping others, we will sink down to their level.

DEEPER MEANINGS IN THE MAHA-MANTRA

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura points out that the Hare Krsna maha-mantra consists of sixteen names in eight pairs. These eight pairs of names correspond to the eight slokas of Sri Siksastaka. The significance of the first pair of names ‘Hare Krsna,’ is defeating ignorance and performing harinama with faith (sraddha). If one performs harinama with sraddha, avidya will go away. Avidya is the opposite ofvidya. Vidyameans to know Krsna, and avidya means to forget Krsna. This is expressed in the first sloka of Sri Siksastaka. The second pair of names is also ‘Hare Krsna.’ The meaning of this second pair
The third pair of names is ‘Krsna Krsna.’ In this third stage, we consider the quality or character of our *sadhana.* *Caitanya Caritamrta* explains that there are some obstacles in *sadhana,* so our *sadhana* should be pure, not loose or impure. There are two things which are very much opposed to *bhakti-sadhana.* The first is *stri-sangi:* men being attracted to women, and women being attracted to men. The second obstacle is association with those who are *abhakta: mayavadis,* materialists, and everyone else who is opposed to pure devotional service. We must develop a very chaste character, and give up all these ideas, activities and bad association.

**TASTE**

If we continue to chant *harinama* with *nistha,* then the fourth stage comes, and we begin to chant *harinama* with *ruci,* taste. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that there are two kinds of *ruci:* *vastu-vaisistya-apeksini,* and *vastu-vaisistya-anapeksini.* When we have the first sort of *ruci,* *vastu-vaisistya-apeksini,* then
if Thakuraji is decorated, we think, ‘Oh! Very good decoration!’ and we feel so happy. But if Thakuraji is not nicely decorated, then we don’t have so much taste. If a kirtana is going on without a nice rhythm and sweet tune, we will not have so much ruci for it. But if the rhythm and melody are good, and the mrdanga and karatalas are being played nicely, we appreciate it very much. This ruci is called vastu-vaishisty-apeksini.

The second type of ruci comes when we continue to chant harinama in vaisnava-sanga with sraddha and nistha. This stage is called vastu-vaishisty-anapeksini. At this stage, we are not so concerned whether Thakuraji is decorated or not decorated. If a kirtana is without good rhythm and melody, then we think, ‘No harm!’ And if the playing and singing are expert, then ‘Very good!’ We can say that Srila Gaurakisora dasa Babaji Maharaja’s ruci was like vastu-vaishisty-anapeksini. The same is true for Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. He did not see Jagannatha Deva in the way that we see Him. We see Jagannatha Deva as being not so much like Krsna. He has two round eyes, no beautiful hands, no flute, no crown and no peacock feather. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu did not see Him like this. When He saw Jagannatha Deva, He ran after Him, without external sense, to catch hold of Him. We will see that Jagannatha has two big round eyes, and that He is not so very beautiful, but Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu saw Him as saksad Vrajendra-nandana, directly Sri Krsna, the son of Nanda Maharaja. On another occasion, He heard a deva dasi singing Gita-Govinda: srita kamala kuca mandala e, jaya jaya deva hare. I can’t say whether the singer was a pure Vaisnava like Madhavi Devi; maybe she was, and maybe she was not. In any case, she was singing in the forest and Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu ran after her. This is ruci. Of course, we can’t compare Mahaprabhu with ourselves. He not only has ruci, but mahabhava and all the other ecstasies as well. I’m just giving this as an example of the difference between the two different types of ruci.
The fifth pair of names is ‘Hare Rama’ and at this fifth stage, **smarana** is also added. **Smarana** means remembering the pastimes of Krsna. In remembering these pastimes, we should know that there is an important difference between the pastimes in Vraja and the pastimes elsewhere. In Vraja, there is no **suddha dasya-rasa**, and no **suddha santa-rasa**. There is **santa-rasa**, but it is always covered. And **dasya-rasa** is also always mixed with **sakhyā** or **vatsalya**.

The sixth pair of names is also ‘Hare Rama.’ At this stage, our **ruĉi** for the material world will decrease. Our worldly desires will go away and our **ruĉi** towards Krsna will become solid, and very strong.

Now for the seventh pair of names, ‘Rama Rama.’ There is no Hare here; only Rama: ‘Rama Rama.’ This is **vipralambha**. The devotee will feel the mood of separation (**vipralambha-bhava**) here: ‘When will I have the service of Radha and Krsna?’ That desire will come at this stage. Then the eighth pair of names is ‘Hare Hare.’ At this eighth stage, **suddha-sattva** will manifest itself, and that gives gopi-bhava. Gopi-bhava will come.

**ACARYAS AND SAHAJIYAS**

This is a very brief summary of the regular and systematic way of progressing on the devotional path. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is giving us the instructions that he has collected from **Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu**, **Ujjvala-Nilamani** and all the other important books. He has also collected teachings and realisations from Srila Svarupa Damodara, from Srila Raya Ramananda and from Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu at the Gambhira. Srila Svarupa Damodara personally instructed Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, who in turn gave these instructions to Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has collected all of these instructions, and is passing them on to us. This is the regular way to develop gopi-bhava and that type of seva to Radha and Krsna in
Vraja. As long as we follow the *acaryas* and practise in this way, we are on the regular, approved path. We want to go on like this. It is not *sahajiya* to have greed to develop in this way, and to have that *gopi-bhava*, service to Radha and Krsna in that mood. Not at all it is those who are not following this systematic process who are *sahajiyas*. Our aim and last goal is Srila Rupa Gosvami’s mood.

If a devotee has a greed for this, it doesn’t matter in what condition he is at present, or whether he is following rules and regulations; if he follows this path, then he will surely achieve his goal. But we should know dearly that this can only be achieved by the association of a *rasika* and *tattva-jna* Vaisnava. Then the whole process will be managed by Krsna Himself and His associates. Our success depends on our having past impressions. Without them, we cannot realise these things.

Although this is the path Srila Bhaktivinode Thakura has given, many people ask me, “Why do you read *Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu, Ujjvala-Nilamani,* and the books of Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura? All of these books must be written by *sahajiyas,* because those who read them are all *sahajiyas.* So why do you read them?” Actually, this belief is false. The *acaryas* who wrote these books-Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami—are certainly not *sahajiyas*. They are the most authorised devotees, and they have described and explained our ultimate goal it is also not true that all those who read these books are *sahajiyas.* This is nonsense. Why should we not read these books?

Those who are qualified to read these books should read them. Qualified devotees will read *Vilapa-Kusumanjali, Vraja Vilasa-Stava,* “*Catu-Puspanjaliḥ*” (from Sri Stava-Mala) and many other important works by the Gosvamis and other bona fide authors. We do not become *sahajiyas* by reading these books. The *sahajiyas* are those who gallop through all these states and stages, without hearing from authorities, without
understanding properly, and without being qualified. And if someone comes to them, they at once give that person so-called siddha-deha, spiritual body, whether he is qualified or full of anarthas. These are the sahajiyas, not those who pass step by step through the various stages which Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has described, and which are laid out in Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is not a sahajiya, and neither is Srila Bhaktisiddanta Sarasvati, although he himself declared that he is Nayana Manjari. it is simply false to say that all those who read these literatures are sahajiyas.

Those who are qualified, and who progress systematically, step by step, should read all these literatures. This is the only way. The sahajiyas are those who do not follow the guidelines and the systematic path established by the acaryas. This is the main difference between sahajiyas and suddha Vaisnavas. We should try to be suddha Vaisnavas.

THE STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS

At this point someone may ask why Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has described the results of chanting in this way. His reply is that it has been given like this in Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu (1.4.15-16):

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\begin{align*}
\text{adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sango ‘tha bhajana-kriya} \\
\text{tato ‘nartha-nivrttih syat tato nistha rucis tatah} \\
\text{athasaktis tato bhavas tatah premabhyudancati} \\
\text{sadhakanam ayam premnah pradurbhave bhavet kramah}
\end{align*}
\]

This is the step-by-step process. Adau sraddha; it all begins with sraddha, and that faith makes it possible to have sadhu-sanga. Then we may ask, ‘From where has sraddha come?’ The answer is that sraddha comes from past impressions, which are the result of coming in touch with tadiya: people, places and things which have a direct relationship with the Lord.
Past impressions may have come from hearing about His name, His form, His qualities and His pastimes. Or we may have come in contact with Tulasi, Yamuna, Ganga, Giridhari, or the holy dhama – Vraja-dhama or Navadvipa-dhama. The contact may be knowing or unknowing, intentional or unintentional. In any case, coming in touch with any or all of the tadiya-vastu produces sukrti, and it is this sukrti which creates sraddha.

After sraddha comes sadhu-sanga. We will develop a taste to follow Vaisnavas, sadhus. But those who have no sukrti will not develop such a desire. I am speaking hari-katha here, and you are listening. But if someone has no past impressions, or they are making offences, or acting against the rules and regulations of bhakti, they will avoid this hari-katha. Even if they come and sit down here, they will either sleep, or they will be distracted by other concerns. The body may be sitting here, but the mind will be wandering here and there, thinking about so many problems. Only those with past impressions can appreciate sadhu-sanga. Actual sadhu-sanga means hearing and seeing how that sadhu is following the bhakti process, and trying to follow him internally and externally. When we have real sadhu-sanga, we will automatically practise all the nine kinds of bhakti, beginning with hearing: sravanam, kirtanam, visnu-smaranam, pada-sevanam, arcanam, vandanam, dasyam, sakhyam, atma-nivedanam. We will also automatically practise the five essential forms of bhakti that Lord Caitanya has particularly recommended: sadhu-sanga (associating with devotees), nama-kirtana (chanting the Lord’s holy names), bhagavata-sravana (hearing from qualified Vaisnavas), mathuravasa (living in holy places such as Mathura), sri murtira-sraddhaya-sevanam (serving the arca-vigraha with faith). If someone is reading Caitanya-Caritamrta with any qualified Vaisnava, if he is hearing and doing anusilanam-cultivating Krsna consciousness by following his teacher and previous acaryas – I think that he is sure to have lobha, greed. It will surely come.
Then bhajana-kriya comes. The devotee watches how Gurudeva and the Vaisnavas are performing their sadhana-bhajana. Then he will develop a taste to follow by performing sadhana-bhajana, not only for one or two hours, but for eight hours. In the end, he will try to perform sadhana and bhajana twenty-four hours daily. Then anartha-nivrtti comes.

DEVELOPING ATTACHMENT

If someone who is not free from anarthas comes to me, it would be absurd to reveal his siddha-svarupa, or siddha-deha (spiritual body). That is sahajiya. Those who are following these rules of Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, who are trying for this in the proper way, will not be considered to be sahajiya. But if anyone is not following the rules and regulations, and not passing through all these stages, then they are bound to be sahajiya. When nistha has developed, the mind does not go here and there. It has been established in sadhana-bhajana, and it is no longer fickle. Nistha means sthirabuddhi, steady, fixed intelligence. When nistha has developed, the devotee is not disturbed even when so many opposing elements appear. We can see this in Srila Haridasa Thakura’s life. The prostitute came to seduce him, but he remained fixed in his chanting and service. The Kazi ordered his servants, “Kill Haridasa Thakura by beating him in twenty-two market places.” They were trying to kill him, but he said, “Even if I am cut into hundreds of thousands of pieces, I cannot forget krsna-nama. I will have to chant, no matter what happens. I will certainly keep on chanting.”

This is nistha. No matter what kind of problem comes, the devotee remains steady. When Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was a young married man, he kept trying to escape from his home to join Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. His mother wanted his father to tie him up, but his father said, “It’s useless, No one can check a devotee whose heart has been taken
by Krsna. “This is called nistha. We will have to judge by our barometer in what stage we are. Do we have sraddha, or has actual sraddha not appeared yet? Or are we at the stage of nistha, or ruci? Have our anartha gone, or are they still with us? We can easily know what stage we have reached by the symptoms. We’ll have to try to come at least to the stage of nistha. After this stage, ruci appears, and after that asakti comes.

There are two kinds of asakti. One is attachment to sadhana, and the second is attachment to sadhaniya, the object of our sadhana, namely Krsna and His associates. There are no hard and fast rules regarding which comes first, but usually the devotee develops attachment for sadhana. Mahaprabhu asked Srila Haridasa Thakura, “What is your sickness? Why are you not taking mahaprasada?” Haridasa Thakura replied, “I am sick, certainly. But my sickness is that I cannot complete my three lakhs of harinama. My body is healthy. The trouble is with my mind and heart. And that’s why I’m not completing my three lakhs of hari-nama daily.” Can we try like this? We should fulfil our vow to chant with a strong spirit, “I must complete my chanting. Whether I remain alive or I lose my life, I will have to complete my chanting.” If we are chanting with this determination, first of all namabhasa will come, and after that gradually, little by little, we will come to the stage of asakti.

After this bhava will come. To achieve bhava, we have to receive suddha-sattva from the hearts of ragatmika-ksrna-jana, the associates of Krsna in the spiritual world. That bhava can be in dasya-rasa, or in sakhyo-rasa, or in vatsalya-rasa. Or, if the devotee has greed for madhurya-rasa, and is performing the appropriate sadhana for it, then suddha-sattva will come from some gopi.

Next is the stage of prema. But this cannot appear in this body. It can only come in our next life, somewhere in the material world where prakata-lila is going on. Then the sadhaka will take birth in the womb of a gopi. Prema can be achieved in that body, through the association of nitya-siddha devotees. Otherwise it is not possible.
ASSOCIATING WITH DEVOTEES

Those who are not following this process are the actual sahajiyas. Srila Rupa Gosvami has described this process, and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is illuminating it further. Later on, we will try to translate Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s book into English. It will be very, very useful, like Madhurya Kadambini, Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu-Bindhu, and Ujjvala Nilamani. It seems to be no more than a short booklet, but it’s very forceful. Those who want bhajana will have to go through it.

Those who have no sraddha cannot have a taste for sadhu-sanga. A sadhu may come to someone who has no sraddha, and say, “Oh come on! Come on! I will give you everything. I will give you all my mercy." But that faithless person will pay no attention, even if Brahma himself or Srila Sukadeva Gosvami comes. If Srila Rupa Gosvami came and said, “Listen to me. I will teach you Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu.” The faithless person would say, “Who is he? He’s cheating me." But those who have sraddha will have so much ruci for sadhu-sanga. They will put everything aside, and they will come at once to hear, as you are doing.

You are giving up your countries; you are giving up your families; you are giving up all kinds of comforts and material happiness. You are doing parikrama without shoes, without so many conveniences, and coming here at four o’clock. This is a good sign. It means that you have some sraddha. If you did not have sraddha, then you would not have come. There may be anartha, but still, some taste has come. sraddha has come. So don’t be hopeless. This is a very hopeful sign that we will be successful in the end. We must have asa-bandha, hope. We should have very firm and very strong faith that we will have this one day. Until that time, we will continue our sadhana-bhajana without stopping, and we will try to follow these steps very strongly. Sadhu-sanga bale haya bhajanera siksa. If we associate with sadhus who have a taste for bhajana,
then we will get bhajana-siksa, instructions on how to perform our own bhajana. If the sadhu-sanga is not bona fide, then kick it out “I want bhajana.” This must be our determination. So sadhu-sanga bale haya bhajanera siksa. If we are getting the association of some guru or Vaisnavas, but we are not receiving bhajana-siksa, and we are not learning how to surrender our heart to Krsna, then we cannot go on. That is why bhajanera siksa sange namamantra-diksa.

THE HOLY NAME AND DIKSA-MANTRAS

If we associate with a Vaisnava who gives us bhajana-siksa, the next stage is nama-mantra-diksa. Here nama means ‘Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna’ and sri krsna caitanya prabhu nityananda—these names, And nama-mantra means gauraya svaha, or klim krsnaya, or govindaya. This is what we mean by mantra. It means nama, and nama-mantra both. Nama refers to the maha-mantra, and that can be chanted at all times, but there are some rules and regulations and maryada for chanting mantra. Its purpose is simply to purify our chanting of nama. That’s all. It is to increase our taste, and to help us develop our realisation of the svarupa of nama.

Chanting nama-mantras will help us to realise how Krsna’s holy name is rasamaya, pure rasa; how nama is suddha, completely pure; how nama is full of all kinds of pastimes of Krsna with the gopis, and with Yasoda Ma and the sakhas. Everything is there, but don’t think that we can realise all this by chanting krsna-nama alone. We must chant nama-mantra as well, if we want full understanding and realisation of what is in the Hare Krsna mantra. We can explain Krsna to some extent, but what about Hare Krsna? We can give thirty-two different explanations of the Hare Krsna maha-mantra. Someone says, “Eighty-four different explanations?“ Maybe. If Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came, He could explain it in eighty-four different ways, or even more than that. Everything is in
the Hare Krsna maha-mantra: every aspect of sadhana and love of Krsna, milana (meeting) and viraha (separation). Everything is there, from the beginning stage of sraddha, to the last perfection of maha-bhava. And nama also contains all the varieties of prema, like sneha, mana, pranaya, raga, anuraga, bhava, mahabhava, modana and madana. Everything is there. All the pastimes of Krsna are also present in His name. That is why Srila Svarupa Damodara and Srila Raya Ramananda were tasting everything by chanting.

Here Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura summarises all the steps. He tells us that if we follow all these rules and regulations in our bhajana, and if we pass through all the stages that he has described, anarthas will go away and bhava will come in our hearts. Suppose that we are doing bhajana like this, and bhava has not yet manifest. If in the meantime we are engaged in asat-sanga, then pratistha (desire for name and fame) and kutinati (hypocrisy) will appear, and we will fall down. It is not that we will just fall down; these obstacles will make us fall down. So we must try to be very careful about this.

**STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT – AVOIDING BAD ASSOCIATION**

In Bhajana-rahasya, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has shown very systematically how a sadhaka can achieve krsna-prema. No one can achieve krsna-prema unless they adopt this way, and proceed step by step along the path that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has shown us. He has just quoted this sloka:

\[
\text{adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sango ‘tha bhajana-kriya}
\]
\[
tato ‘nartha-nivrttih syat tato nistha rucis tatah
\]
\[
athasaktis tato bhavas tatah premabhyudancati
\]
\[
sadhakanam ayam premnah pradurbhave bhavet kramah
\]

(BRS 1.15-16 & Caitanya-Caritamrta, Madhya 23.14-15)
A devotee may be close to achieving bhava, but if he has association with stri or stri-sangi, then he will fall down. Stri does not only refer to women. For men it refers to women, and for women it refers to men. Men and women are both restricted from associating with the opposite sex. If we have the desire for women (or for men), for wealth, or for name and fame, then we can fall down even from the stage of bhava; so we must be very careful. If we want to ascend on this regular path, beginning with sraddha, and progressing to nistha, ruci, asakti and bhava, then we should try to avoid these impediments very carefully from the very beginning.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura instructs us to be very careful to give up all material association (asat-sanga). We should also give up the bad association of our materialistic mentality. This is most essential. Even if other people don’t understand the dangers of bad association (kusanga), we should avoid it very carefully.

Sastra explains dearly how carefully we should avoid kusanga. Suppose you had to choose between kusanga on the one hand, and lions, tigers and crocodiles on the other hand. Which would you prefer? Or suppose that on one side there is the worship of demigods, and on the other side a huge fire. Ramanujacarya warned his followers strictly against demigod worship. He said, “If you were about to perish in a great fire, but you could take refuge in a nearby temple where people were worshipping the demigods, don’t try to protect your life. Don’t enter that temple. It would be better to die in the fire.” We should prefer to die, rather than accept bad association. We should prefer snakes, or lions and tigers, because they are less dangerous than kusanga. We should try to be very careful to avoid all bad association.

The same warning applies to all sorts of kusanga: the desire for name and fame, the association of lusty people, the desire for wealth, or any material association or desire. There is no permanent harm if you are dying in a fire, or being eaten by
tigers, snakes and wild beasts; this will not destroy our impression of bhakti. But the association of lusty women or men, or pratistha, or wealth and material desires can uproot our impression of bhakti. So this kusanga is most dangerous.

The difficulty is that these different forms of material association are very sweet. Or rather, externally they seem to be very sweet. Actually they are not sweet at all; they are very dangerous, like slow poison. So we should try to avoid them very carefully.

Sometimes, many male and female devotees gather together in association of Vaisnavas just to select husbands and wives. This spirit is also very dangerous. By some good fortune, after lakhs and lakhs of births, we have now come into the association of Vaisnavas to practise bhajana. We shouldn’t spoil this opportunity for ourselves, or distract other devotees and try to pull them away from their bhajana. Some devotees have special abilities which make them particularly vulnerable: for example, those who sing very sweetly, those who can give class very nicely, and speak very rasika-katha, and pujaris who can worship and dress the Deities very beautifully. They should be very careful, otherwise they will go down at once.

It is Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura who is giving all these instructions. If we want to do bhajana, we must follow him, because he is the Seventh Gosvami. He is instructing us from his experience of his own bhajana-sadhana, and he is telling us that we should do bhajana, without showing others that we are doing bhajana.

FOCUSING ON SADHANA-BHAJANA

Even namabhasa, the reflection of the pure holy name, can burn to ashes all kinds of sinful reactions, and all kinds of anarthas. Try to take the name of Krsna very purely and very affectionately, without any worldly desires. Follow this bhakti-sloka of Rupa Gosvami (BRS 1.1.11):
anyabhilasita-sunyam-jnana-karmady-anavrtam
anukulyena krsnanusilanam bhaktir uttama

Emphasise sadhana-bhajana and stay focussed on it. If you are always preaching, but not practising sadhana-bhajana, then your preaching will be like karma. Instead of making progress on this path, you will go down. When you have understood and realised all these teachings of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and the gurus in our disciplic succession, then you can preach something. You must be able to give it to others as a postman delivers a letter, without changing it, and you must not be involved in avidya or material activities. Then you can preach. But if you don’t know anything, what can you preach? Certainly we must try to fulfil Mahaprabhu’s instruction to do good for others: janma sarthaka kari’ kara para-upakara. But first you should realise something in your own heart, and then you should preach if you are qualified for preaching. Otherwise your preaching will only be karma, and it will drag you down. A devotee may establish twenty centres throughout the world, and always be going here and there to manage them. But what will all his preaching and management accomplish if he is not doing any sadhana and bhajana at all, if he has no time to read all these Vaisnava literatures, and if he has no time to associate with advanced Vaisnavas? We should try to follow Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura and preach as he has preached, as Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura has preached, and as Srila Bhaktivedanta Svami Maharaja and our Guru Maharaja have preached. We should follow them and act as they have acted.

CLEANSING THE MIRROR OF THE HEART

We should follow the instructions of Siksastaka as Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is explaining them. We should do this sincerely, with great respect and honour, and with all our heart.
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura now explains that the eight *slokas* in *Siksastaka* correspond to the eight periods of Krsna’s daily pastimes. In Krsna’s *asta-kaliya-lila*, there are eight different kinds of pastimes: *nisanta-lila* at the end of night; *pratahlila* in the morning; *purvahna-lila* before noon; *madhyahna-lila* at midday; *aparaha-lila* in the afternoon; *sayahna-lila* in the evening; *pradosa-lila* before mid-night; and *nakta-lila* in the middle of the night. These eight different kinds of *lila* correspond to the eight *slokas* in *Siksastaka*.

If we are performing *sadhana-bhajana* but we see that we are not making proper advancement, then we should admit that there is some fault, and we should see where this fault lies. The fault may be in ourselves, or it may be that our association is faulty. We have to see where the difficulty is and act accordingly. If we think that the fault is ours, then we should try to reform. Or, if we see that we are not progressing further because our association is not good, then we must give up that association. We need the association of pure Vaisnavas. Sometimes our false ego prevents us from having the association of qualified Vaisnavas, and in that case we should give up that false ego as well.

We should begin by trying to do *bhajana* according to the first *sloka* of *Siksastaka*:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-mahadavagni-nirvapanam} \\
\text{sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranam vidyavadhu-jivanam} \\
\text{anandambudhi-vardhanam prati-padam purnamrta-svadanam} \\
\text{sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri krsna sankirtananam}
\end{align*}
\]

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains the significance of this first *sloka*. *Ceto-darpana-marjanam* means that by performing *bhajana* and chanting *harinama*, our *anarthas* go away. Then *maha-bhava-davagni-nirvapanam*: chanting the holy name removes all *klesas* (sufferings), including all stages of development of sinful reactions: *prarabdha, aprarabdha, kuta* and *bija*, as well as the ignorance (*avidya*) which is the root cause of
sinful activity. Then sreyah-kairava-candrika-vitaranam: all kinds of auspiciousness (subha) begin to appear. After that, Krsna’s name is realised in the form of vidya-vadhu-jivanam. Krsna’s name is non-different from Krsna, who is Himself the beloved of Srimati Radhika. Srimati Radhika is the final, topmost vidya: mahabhava svarupini sri radha thakurani (Caitanya-Caritamrta, Adi 4.69). Vadhu means wife or consort, and Srimati Radhika is also the topmost vadhu. This means that vidya-vadhu is Srimati Radhika Herself. Then who is vidya-vadhu-jivanam? Jivanam means life and soul, and Radhika’s life and soul is Krsna. Vidya-vadhu-jivanam is therefore Krsna Himself, and krna-nama is also the beloved of Srimati Radhika. One of Her forms is bhakti. This explains why Krsna’s name is seen as vidyavadhu-jivanam.

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura presents a doubt which should be resolved. If a devotee adopts all these practices, then his jiva-svarupa manifests its sampurnarupena nirmalam, completely pure spiritual form. Now, the jiva is extremely minute, so we may think that his svarupa-dhurma and his ananda must also be very minute. But Mahaprabhu says, anandambudhivardhanam: “sankirtana increases the ocean of bliss.” How can this be? The answer is that, as long as the jiva has not taken full shelter of the lotus feet of Krsna, then his dhurma and ananda are minute. However, when the jiva takes shelter of the Lotus feet of unlimited Krsna, then his dhurma and ananda also become unlimited and infinite. So it is correct to say anandambudhi-vardhanam.

At that time, by the mercy of Krsna’s svarupa-sakti, a pleasure-giving potency (haldini-vrtti) comes into the heart of the jiva: haldini-sara-vrtti. By the help of that potency, the ocean of krna-prema expands in ever fresh and new ways, and the jiva relishes rasa: prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam. He tastes dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhurya-rasa. Don’t think that only Krsna’s ananda is unlimited, and that only He tastes all the rasa. No. The jiva also tastes rasa, as Krsna does. He is part of
Krsna, so he can also taste the seva-rasa. He can relish the beauty of Krsna. Even though the devotee doesn’t want any ananda, still ananda comes, lakhs and lakhs of times more than he wants. If we have some musk, the aroma will come into our nose, even if we don’t want to smell it. We are bound to smell it. And just as musk always spreads its perfume, similarly there is always pleasure in Krsna’s association, so how can we avoid pleasure when we are with Him? Pleasure will come, even though it is not our intention to have it.

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura presents another doubt to be resolved. Any desire (anyabhilasa) other than bhakti is an obstacle. But if the jiva tastes pleasure while performing bhakti, then that bhakti will go away; so how can a jiva taste the pleasure of bhakti, either here or in Goloka Vrndavana? It seems that the pleasure of devotional service opposes the purity of devotional service. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura resolves this doubt as follows. It is true that we find pleasure in serving Krsna. However, sarvatma-snapanam. Krsna-prema is so pure, and purer than pure, that there is actually no sense gratification in it. For example, we see that the gopis meet with pleasure, even when they don’t want it. Some of the gopis, like Rupa Manjari and Rati Manjari, don’t want to meet with Krsna and play with Him, or to have vilasa with Him. But Srimati Radhika wants this to happen, and She arranges their meeting with Krsna. They don’t want any pleasure, but the pleasure comes automatically, and they can’t avoid it.

**THE SPIRITUAL BODY**

Try to practise bhajana following the first sloka, ceto-darpana marjanam, in the way that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has told us. Then we should follow the instructions of the second sloka, namnam akari; and then the third sloka, trnad api sunicena. After that we should practise bhajana according to the fourth
sloka, and then in the fifth stage—corresponding to the fifth sloka, ayi nanda-tanuja—our siddha-svarupa or siddha-deha will appear. Those who are trying to develop their siddha-deha without following this process are sahajiya; and those who are following this process are not sahajiya.

The fifth sloka describes the appearance of the siddha-deha at this stage (Siksastakam 5):

\begin{verbatim}
ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram
patitam mam visame bhavambudhau
krpay a tava pada-pankaja
sthita-dhuli-sadrsam vicintaya
\end{verbatim}

What is that siddha-deha? In this fifth stage, the devotee may not see it vividly, but he can realise it to some extent by the grace of his Gurudeva. “This is my original spiritual form, this is my name, this is my eternal service,” and so on. Some people deny that we should follow this process: “Oh, my Guru Maharaja told me that we should stay as we are, and continue doing book distribution and our other services. We shouldn’t bother ourselves about siddha-svarupa, and bhava and prema.” This denial is completely against Gaudiya Vaisnava siddhanta. If someone thinks in this way, and does not try to attain the perfectional stage, then he is not following the process of bhakti as Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has presented it. And if any newcomer goes to a babaji Gurudeva, and the babaji at once gives him sahajiya-bhava, his so-called siddha-svarupa, then he is a sahajiya. Both these courses of action are completely wrong.

What is our siddha-deha? It is radha-palya-dasi, the form of a maidservant of Srimati Radhika. This is the best siddha-deha. And we will attain it by following all these principles. We can’t make progress on this path—what to speak of reaching the goal—if we don’t understand these instructions, and we don’t follow this process; or if we have another understanding and we follow some other process.
When we reach the sixth stage, which Mahaprabhu describes in the sixth sloka, it means that we have come to the platform of bhava-avastha. Suddha-sattva comes at that stage. This is actual siddha-deha. Don’t pretend that you have come to this stage before it manifests itself naturally. If an unqualified person artificially imagines that he is in his siddha-deha, he will fall down. Some people simply imagine that their siddha-deha has appeared, without following this authorised process, and without coming up to this stage of real siddha-deha. They are sahajiya and they are falling down. If we want to be siddha, then we have to develop the qualities and character of a siddha. We must try to follow in the footsteps of devotees like Srila Haridasa Thakura, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Bilvamangala Thakura.

When our siddha-deha has appeared, we will first know our name, then our form, and then our qualities and associates. If we go on chanting and remembering, and keeping the association of bona fide Vaisnavas, then Krsna’s name will appear as Krsna Himself. At that time we will realise Krsna’s form, and our own form as well. All the qualities of Krsna and Srimati Radhika and Their associates will become manifest, and so will our own qualities. After that, all of Krsna’s pastimes will appear within our heart automatically, like a garland, one pastime following after another, without any effort on our part.

First of all, we should remember the slokas of Siksastaka and perform kirtana and smaranam. Then asta-kaliya-lila will gradually appear in our heart. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that if we follow these steps systematically, in order, krsna-prema will develop automatically. That is why we should try to understand these instructions and follow them carefully. If we do, then we will lose all our desire for the goals of material existence: dharma, artha, kama and moksa. We will completely lose interest in any kind of liberation or material happiness.
Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has explained something very important in connection with this first period of Krsna’s pastimes: we must know what is the aim and object of our life of sadhana and bhajana. We must have greed, a strong desire, to do bhajana. Only then will our bhajana start. If we don’t intend go anywhere in particular, then where will we go? If I sit on a train or an airplane without a ticket, not knowing where I want to go, where will I end up? We must know the aim and object of our bhajana, and then sadhana can begin. Otherwise, it is not possible. We cannot achieve the sadhya, the final goal, if we have no idea what it is, or what is the sadhana, the means to attain it. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that the aim of our sadhana and bhajana is radha-dasyam. There are many kinds of radha-dasyam, so he explains more specifically. We especially want radha-dasyam in the service of Srila Rupa Gosvami, and under his guidance. That is the radha-dasyam that we want. Now that we understand what our goal is, we can take up the process to achieve it. And the process is to practise bhajana-sadhana as we have been describing it.

There is a great deal of difference between sadhana and bhajana. I have already explained something about this in previous classes. First I explained about arcana and bhajana. Arcana is different from bhajana, but arcana also makes us think of bhajana, and leads to the practice of bhajana. Therefore we must give up any practice of arcana which does not lead us to bhajana. Similarly, if we practise sadhana without knowing what the ultimate goal is, or without desiring to attain it, that type of sadhana cannot take us to bhajana. So our practice of sadhana should also lead us into bhajana.

There are three stages of bhakti: sadhana-bhakti, bhava-bhakti and prema-bhakti. Even when we are practising sadhana-bhakti, we should know that the goal is bhava-bhakti. Bhava-bhakti
begins when \textit{suddha-sattva} comes into our hearts by the mercy of Radha and Krsna and Their associates and pure devotees. On the platform of \textit{bhava}, we will just get a faint glimmer (\textit{abhasa}) of \textit{prema-seva}. When we come to the stage of \textit{prema}, then it will develop in full, through the progressive stages of \textit{prema}, \textit{sneha}, \textit{mana}, \textit{pranaya}, \textit{rga}, \textit{anuraga} and \textit{bhava}.

**CHANTING THE HOLY NAME**

In \textit{Bhajana-Rahasya}, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains the hidden content of \textit{Sri Siksastaka}. The daily pastimes of Krsna take place in eight periods (\textit{yama}), which together make up twenty-four hours. These eightfold pastimes are all contained in the eight \textit{slokas} of \textit{Siksastaka}. So also are \textit{sambandha}, \textit{abhidheya}, and \textit{prayojana}. The eight stages of \textit{sadhana-bhajana} (\textit{sraddha}, \textit{sadhu-sanga}, \textit{anartha-nivrtti}, \textit{nistha}, \textit{ruci}, \textit{asakti}, \textit{bhava}, and \textit{prema}) are also to be found in the eight \textit{slokas} of \textit{Siksastaka}.

Those who have not yet achieved \textit{bhava} cannot yet realise their \textit{siddha-deha}, spiritual body. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura tells us that we should try to practise \textit{sadhana}. He explains that there is a difference between \textit{arcana} and \textit{sadhana}, and again between \textit{sadhana} and \textit{bhajana}. We must understand this and realise what the difference is. If we do not realise this difference, and if we do not adopt the proper procedure, we will not be able to give up our offenses and progress nicely. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura now gives some guidelines to follow while chanting Hare Krsna \textit{nama}. For example, he explains what we should think while we are chanting. I want to try to explain this, because so many devotees have asked many questions about how to chant.

**KRSNA AND HIS HOLY NAME**

The \textit{Upanisads} and \textit{Vedas} tell us that Krsna is unmanifest (\textit{avyakta}) and beginningless (\textit{anadi}). We also know that \textit{omkara
is identical with that nirguna-brahma aspect of Krsna, but that
Krsna Himself is far superior to omkara. Krsna is:

\[
\text{janmady asya yato 'nvayad itaratas carthesv abhijnah svarat}
\text{tene brahma hrdaya adi-kavaye muhyanti yat surayah}
\]

(Srimad-Bhagavatam 1.1.1)

There are three aspects of that Bhagavan, or Parabrahman. They are Brahman, Paramatma and Bhagavan. Krsna is Svayam Bhagavan, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Paramatma is a part of the sat and cit aspects of Krsna, and Brahman is only cit, and is a reflection of Krsna. In the syllable om there are three letters: a, u and m. The letter a represents three names: Hare, Krsna and Rama. This letter a is Krsna; the letter u is Srimati Radhika, His potency; and m is the jiva. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura gives some explanation of the meaning of the Hare Krsnamaha-mantra. When we chant Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare, we are calling out, Hey Hare! Hey Krsna! Hey Hare! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna! Hey Hare! Hey Hare! Hey Hare! Hey Rama! Hey Hare! Hey Rama! Hey Rama! Hey Hare! Hey Rama! Hey Hare! Hey Hare! Hey Hare! Hey Hare!

As I explained yesterday, the maha-mantra contains eight pairs of names and thirty-two Sanskrit letters in all. Each name that we chant has its own separate and distinct meaning. In fact, each Sanskrit letter of each name has its own separate meaning. We should always try to remember the different meanings and guidelines that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Rupa Gosvami have given us, and which we find in the Agni Purana. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura especially have given very deep explanations, through which we can realise all the varieties of Krsna’s pastimes.

When we chant Hare Krsna, it is like chanting: Hey Radhe! Hey Krsna! Hey Radhe! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna! Hey Krsna!
Radhel Hey Radhe! Hey Radhe! Hey Radhe! Hey Radha-Ramana! Hey Radhe! Hey Radha-Ramana! Hey Radhe! Hey Radha-Ramana! Hey Radhe! Hey Radhe! Hare means Radhe, Krsna means Krsna, and Rama means Radha-Ramana. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has explained what we can think and remember when we chant the name Radha-Ramana. We should always remember all these meanings and guidelines. And there is one thing that we should particularly remember at all times: nama nami abhinna - there is no difference between the name and He who is named. Krsna’s name is Himself Svayam Bhagavan. We should not think that the name Rama or the name means this or that. The name Krsna is Krsna Himself. The name Rama is Rama Himself. The name Radha-Ramana is Radha-Ramana Themselves.

Once Vallabhacarya came to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in Puri, and asked the meaning of Krsna’s name. There were so many elevated devotees in Mahaprabhu’s assembly at that time, including Sri Svarupa Damodara, Sri Raya Ramananda, Sri Advaita Acarya, Srila Nityananda Prabhu, Sarvabhauma Bhattacarya, Srila Rupa Gosvami, Sikhi Mahiti and many others. But Vallabhacarya thought that he was superior to all these associates of Mahaprabhu. There was a reason for this. Previously he had defeated all the mayavadis in India, and as a result, many learned Vaisnavas had performed his abhiseka. (Later on, in Vrndavana, he met a young boy called Srila Jiva Gosvami, and Vallabhacarya had to admit that this boy was more learned than he was.)

Anyway, all of Mahaprabhu’s devotees were assembled there, and Vallabhacarya asked, “What is the meaning of Krsna’s name?” He kept on asking this question, because he wanted to present his own scholarly interpretation. Mahaprabhu replied, “I don’t know the meaning of the Krsna name. I only know that Krsna is Yasoda-nandana and Syamasundara. I don’t know any other meanings at all.”
THE GLORIES OF HARIKAMA

The *sastras* explain that we may remember and meditate on mantras and harinama, but it will go in vain if we don’t understand the meanings of the mantras and the prayers contained in them. Of course, it will not go completely in vain. There will be some result, such as liberation from birth and death, *samsara-mukti*, but we will not get *ksna-prema*. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura also reminds us of this important point.

When we are chanting the holy name, we should try to remember the glories of *harinama* which Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Jiva Gosvampipada have written in their books. When we chant *Hare*, we should remember that it means the Personality who steals Krsna’s mind. Srimati Radhika steals the heart and mind of Krsna, and controls Him. And we should remember how She controls Him. When She goes to cook at Nanda-bhavana, Krsna always follows Her. We can remember the sweet pastimes that take place then, and how Srimati Radhika takes the mind and heart of Krsna and controls Him in all Their various pastimes. And we can remember how our Gosvamis have described and explained these pastimes. So when we chant *Hare Krsna* in this way, all these pastimes can come into our hearts.

When we chant *Krsna*, we can remember how Krsna attracts the heart and mind of Srimati Radhika, and we can remember all the pastimes in which this has been shown. This is for advanced devotees. Those who are not so advanced should pray, “Oh, I am so offensive! I’m so wretched! I cannot conquer all my offence and *anarthas*.” They should pray like this and weep, and after that, they should chant as I’ve described.

REGULATIONS FOR CHANTING

In his *Harinama-Cintamani*, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has quoted Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami’s instructions and
realisations. We should try to know and understand all these things, remember the meanings that they have given, and follow their instructions. This is called nirbandha, following the rules and regulations for chanting. I have told you that the harinama maha-mantra is taken from Caitanya-Bhagavata. Srikanth Mahaprabhu instructed all the devotees in Navadvipa. All of his students assembled before Him and said, “We will not study again with any other teacher. If you are just going to chant harinama, then we will follow You and practise in the same way as You.” Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu then said, “You should chant and remember this mantra with nirbandha: Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna, Krsna Krsna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.” Nirbandha means that there are some rules and regulations for chanting. We should try to understand all these principles and practise them, otherwise krsna-nama will not give all the fruits that He can give. That nama cannot lead us to Goloka Vrndavana if we chant without knowing and understanding fully. It will only check birth and death, and give mukti. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu told the devotees that they should have four particular qualities:

\[\text{trnad api sunicena taror api sahisnuna} \\
\text{amanina manadena kirtaniyah sada harih}\]

We should be as humble as a blade of grass, and as tolerant as a tree. We should not want honour for ourselves, but we should offer all respects to others. And then Mahaprabhu also gave some nirbandha (regulations for chanting). If we follow these instructions, we can develop our sadhana-bhakti into bhava-bhakti, and then into prema-bhakti. After that, we can go to prakata Vraja, the place where Krsna’s pastimes are going on in the material world. There we can associate with the nitya-siddha gopis, and then that prema can develop further to sneha, mana, pranaya, raga, anuraga, bhava and mahabhava. To achieve this, we must be in Vrndavana, under the guidance of a
vaishnava-guru like Srila Rupa Gosvami, or someone in his line, and we must follow these regulations while we are chanting.

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains these regulations. The first is that our beads (mala) should be made from real tulasi, and the mala should have the shape of a serpent. This means that the biggest bead should be at the beginning, and the beads should gradually get smaller and smaller. This is called sarpakrtih, the shape of serpent. Or we can say that the mala is like the shape of a cow’s tail. We shouldn’t touch the beads with the second finger. Some devotees shake their beads or swing them while they’re chanting, but we shouldn’t do that.

Here are some simple directions that we have to follow while we are chanting. Chant from the biggest bead to the smallest bead, and when you come to the end of a round, turn the beads around and chant back again from the smallest bead to the biggest bead, and so on. Don’t cross over the head bead, and don’t touch your beads with the left hand.

While we are chanting, our minds should not be going here and there. Don’t allow your mind to be fickle, always thinking of one thing after another. No. Just think of Krsna, and Krsna’s pastimes, and the meanings of Krsna’s names. If you cannot do that, then in your mind you can do parikrama of Govardhana, Vraja-mandala, Vrndavana Dhama, or other holy places.

There is a special type of regulation called manasa-sanga-harinama. This means that at the time of chanting, our mind should be fixed, not on zero, but on Krsna’s name, the meanings of Krsna’s names, and Krsna’s pastimes. All of Krsna’s pastimes are in His name. Mana-samyoga-sauca-pavitra. Pavitra means being pure inwardly and outwardly. It is easy to purify ourselves externally by bathing, but we cannot purify our hearts with water. This is only possible by always remembering krsna-katha, hari-katha in the association of pure devotees. Our hearts and minds will become pure when all kinds of worldly desires go away. This takes place through constant chanting and remembering, and through mauna, not
talking about worldly matters. This happens especially when we are in sadhu-sanga, and under the guidance of guru and Vaisnavas. Gradually, our mind will become free from unwanted things. There will be no disturbance at all, and no obstacles in our chanting and remembering.

THE GAYATRI-MANTRA

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura also explains that we should meditate on the meaning of the diksa-mantra (which is sometimes called the nama-mantra). We should understand this as well, at least in the more advanced stages. Many different groups of people in India chant gayatri: smarta brahmanas, mayavadi sannyasis, bhaktas and suddha-bhaktas. They all chant the same mantra, but they understand gayatri or omkara in different ways. Some think that the sun-god himself is Bhagavan, and they remember the sun in their meditation: om bhur bhuvah svah tat savitur varenyam bhargo devasya dhimahi. Dhimahi means that they are meditating, and their meditation is: “The sun is the greatest of all He is the supreme personality, Parabrahman. He is tad-vastu. May he become manifest within our heart.”

This is the understanding that the mayavadis and smarta brahmanas have when they chant the gayatri-mantra. The Saivites understand it in a different way. They think that Siva is Parabrahman and that savitur refers to Siva, so they meditate on Siva, and pray that he should come into their hearts. All Indians chant this gayatri-mantra, whether they are Saivites, mayavadis, smarta brahmanas or bhaktas, but they all understand it in different ways.

We should hear and accept the meaning of gayatri from Srila Jiva Gosvami. Savitur varenyam. The sun is worshipful, but who is the sun? Here it is Krsna who is addressed as the sun, and bhargo devasya means krsnyabyahargah, the power of Krsna. This is a prayer to para-sakti, hladini-sakti-sara, Srimati
Radharani Herself. So *bhargo devasya dhimahi* means that we are meditating on Srimati Radhika, and praying that She will come into our heart as She is. But Srimati Radhika is always with Krsna, and with all Her *sakhi* friends: Lalita, Visakha, and all the others. Sridama and Subala and the other cowherd boys are also there, but somewhere far away. Nanda and Yasoda are in their homes. So everything is contained in this *mantra*.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura gives these guidelines on how to chant our *mantras*, how to chant *harinama*, and how to remember Radha and Krsna, and Their associates and pastimes. This is called *nirbandha*. We may already be practising like this, but not regularly and systematically. We should try to adopt all the processes that Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura has given us if we want to advance in our *sadhana* and *bhajana*.

**AVOIDING DISTRACTION**

When you are chanting and remembering the Hare Krsna *mahamantra* or your *diksa-mantras*, don’t be restless, thinking, “I have to go there. I have to do this. This person has come from very far away, so I want to see him before he goes away again. Let me chant very quickly to get my rounds finished, and then I will take care of all this business.” Don’t be restless like this. Don’t chant with your mind on business, in Chicago, in Calcutta, or in Bombay. Don’t chant like this. You should set aside at least some time to chant and remember Krsna’s names, qualities, associates and pastimes very quietly and calmly. We have left everything for Krsna’s name, so we should try to develop our realisation of Krsna’s name. This is the main and most important problem. If we have any other problems, they can all be solved in this way. I think we should have only one problem: “How can I have *krsna-prema, vraja-prema*?”

Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that if we are attached to any worldly things, we cannot be peaceful and steady—which means that we cannot fix our minds on our chanting. So we
need asakti. We should have no asakti, no attachment to worldly things of any sort. We should aspire to be like Srila Haridasa Thakura. He was chanting and remembering Krsna’s nama, and following all these regulations. A king sent a very beautiful young woman, about sixteen years old, to disturb him, but Srila Haridasa Thakura was avyagra, undisturbed. He had no attachment to beauty, wealth, reputation or anything else. The young woman heard him chanting harinama for three days and three nights, and then she also became like Haridasa Thakura. This is an instance of being avyagra.

We cannot allow our mind to be attracted to anything else if we want to do bhajana. Suppose you have a family, and you are attached to your child. Then if your child is so sick that he may die, you cannot do bhajana. That is why Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, and many others became akincana (free from all material desires) and niskincana (without material possessions). Srivasa Pandita was a householder with a home, a wife and children. But do you know how he acted? Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu and His associates were chanting and dancing one night at Srivasa Pandita’s house. During the kirtana, Srivasa Pandita’s son died. His wife and family members were grief-stricken, but he told them, “If you weep now and disturb Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s kirtana, I will jump into the Ganges and drown myself.” Can you act like this? If you can, then krsna-prema will come. Unfortunately, we are not like this. We desire so many things, and our minds are always fickle.

**BECOMING STEADY**

King Janaka was also steady, like Srivasa Pandita. Once he was practising bhajana when someone came and set fire to his palace. Everything was burning, and a minister came to Janakaraja and said, “Come on! Come on! You must run away from here. Everything is on fire. Come on, if you want to save
yourself”. He heard the warning, but he was chanting and remembering, and he didn’t pay any attention. He thought, “I will have to die at some time, so why should I be disturbed?” Later on, the fire died down. His ministers came back and found him still sitting there and doing his bhajana. Pariksit Maharaja was the same. When the serpent came, Pariksit Maharaja fixed his mind on Krsna’s pastimes and Krsna’s svarupa, and the serpent could not even touch him. These devotees were not at all flickering or unsteady in their practice. We must aspire to chant harinama like this.

Our Gaudiya Vaisnava practice depends on chanting both the Hare Krsna maha-mantra and the gayatri-mantras or diksa-mantras (nama-mantras) as well. We must chant brahma-gayatri, guru-mantra, guru-gayatri, gaura-mantra, gaura-gayatri, krsna-mantra (gopala mantra) and kama-gayatri. When we chant these mantras, we must know Their meanings. On whom are we meditating? To whom are we offering the mantras? Who is Gurudeva? We chant krsnanandaya dhimahi. This means that he fulfills the desires of Krsna and of Krsna. Krsna means Srimati Radhika, so our Gurudeva is fulfilling the desires of both Krsna and Srimati Radhika. How does he do this? When we know all these things, we will be successful in chanting and remembering these mantras. Otherwise, our mind will always be distracted by thoughts of other things, and it will be moving restlessly here and there.

We should find that devotee whose mind is controlled in this way, and we should try to take shelter of him. Then we should practise this whole process in his association, and under his guidance. In this way we can progress in Krsna consciousness. It is not possible otherwise. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains how we should chant. Sometimes while we are chanting Krsna’s names and remembering His pastimes, a worldly person may come, and we start chattering with them about worldly matters here and there. Sometimes devotees have their hands in their beadbags for the whole day,
and yet at the end of the day, they haven’t chanted a single mantra properly. We may chant Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna with our hands in our bead bags, and still not make any real progress at all. We should not chant like this. If we do, we will not get krsna-prema, even if we chant for lakhs and lakhs of births. We won’t even get bhava, and what to speak of krsna-prema. In fact, we won’t even come to the level of nistha if we chant like this. We should try to come to the level of nistha, and then ruci and asakti. And when at last we come to the level of bhava, we can chant ands remember without disturbance.

Don’t chatter so much about worldly things. You have given up so much enjoyment and convenience in order to chant krsna-nama. Now you have come here, but you are chattering here and there while chanting: “She did this. He did that. He is a bogus person, because he did this.” Devotees who are talking like this are not thinking, ‘Who am I? How is my Krsna consciousness?’ and they are not chanting harinama continuously. Devotees who are always criticising others cannot have anything, no matter how much they chant. They won’t even get free from birth and death. We should chant without being disturbed, and with tolerance. We should keep chanting continuously, remembering the meanings of the holy names. Hare means that Radhika steals the heart and mind of Krsna. The name Krsna has so many different meanings. Rama means Radha-Ramana. The name Govinda is full of meaning too. All of these names are so full of many, many pastimes. We should try to learn them, understand them and realise them. If any sickness comes, or if any problems come, be fixed. Don’t be perplexed. Remember Krsna’s name.

FOLLOWING AUTHORITIES

Srila Gopala Guru has written a very short book about the meanings of the holy name and the nama-mantras. In this book he has given the process for chanting nama-mantra, and he
has also explained how to perform *arcana*. He has combined the *pancaratrika-vidhi* with *bhagavata-vidhi*. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura has also written instructions on how to perform *arcana* and *sadhana*. At the same time, we also have the instructions of Srila Svarupa Damodara, Srila Raya Ramananda, all the Six Gosvamis and Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami Their *paddhati*, the path or process that they have given us, is *bhava-paddhati* and *bhagavata-paddhati*. They have shown how to combine these paths according to our qualification. At our present level of Krsna consciousness, we should always try to follow all the guidelines and regulations that these authorities have given us. There is a great deal of difference between *bhava-seva* and *arcana-paddhati*. In the beginning we must perform *arcana*. Later on, when we have some realisation of our spiritual form, *bhava-seva* will be more prominent. The emphasis changes as we progress. In the beginning, performing *arcana* is more important, and later on, when we have developed more, our *seva* through *bhava* will be more important. We should try to follow Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami in all these matters.

We can perform *arcana* to Radhaji, Gadadharaji, Gauraji, Nityanandaji, and Lalita, Visakha, Citra, Campakalata, Rupa Manjari, Yamuna-devi, and Giriraja Govardhana. We can perform *arcana* to any or all of them, and when we do so, *bhava* will develop. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Srila Rupa Gosvami and all the other *acaryas* performed *bhava-seva*. *Bhava-seva* is actually preferable in Kali-yuga. If we are worshipping *sri vigraha*, someone can steal the Deity, but no one can steal the Hare Krsna *maha-mantra*, or any other *mantra*. People can disturb our worship of the Deity, but no one can disturb our performance of *harinama*.

In conclusion, we should try to follow Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, especially by reading this *Bhajana-Rahasya* in the association of Vaisnavas, and by performing our *bhajana* according to his instructions. This book gives *bhajana-paddhati*, the proc-
We are all servants of Krsna. This is our svarupa, the original nature of every jiva in this world. This truth is stated in the Vedas, in Mahabharata and Ramayana, in the Upanisads, in the Vedanta-sutras, and in Srimad-Bhagavatam. Our Srila Rupa Gosvami has explained it in his books, and so have Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Jiva Gosvami and all their followers. Srila Krsnadasa Kaviraja Gosvami has presented the same conclusion in his Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta. They have all explained that we have come from Krsna’s tatastha-sakti, His marginal potency. Some people maintain that we have fallen down from Goloka Vrndavana or Vaikuntha, but this is not true.

We can understand that the seed of a tree contains the trunk, branches, flowers and fruits of a new tree. Similarly, our svarupa contains all aspects of our eternal form and service: our name, our form, dress, personality, and what type of service we can offer to Krsna. Actually, the example of a seed is not exactly right. It is better to say that all these aspects of our original nature are present within our svarupa as potency. They are covered at present, but when maya’s covering is cleared away, then the jiva’s svarupa appears, along with his spiritual name and service to Krsna. Everything becomes clear. Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains how this takes place.

**SRI SIKSASTAKA AND OUR BHAJANA**

The first sloka of Siksastaka tells us about the first period of Radha and Krsna’s daily pastimes, and this corresponds to
the first stage of bhajana. To come to the point of performing bhajana, we must have performed some auspicious activities (sukrti), either knowingly or unknowingly. As a result of that sukrti, we gain the association of bona fide Vaisnavas. When we have that association, the desire or tendency to serve Krsna (krsna-seva-vasana) may develop. However, in order for this to take place, we must have impressions in our heart, either from past lifetimes, or else by our present association. By sadhu-sanga, by the association of bona fide rasika Vaisnavas, this potency to serve Krsna may come in the hearts of even drunkards and other fallen and wretched persons.

All sastras explain that we cannot achieve this through reason, logic or any kind of mental exercise. Krsna Himself has told us this, and so have His associates, such as Srila Vyasadeva, Srila Sukadeva Gosvami, and Srila Narada, and then later Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, and all the other acaryas. So we must accept this fact, without any logical argument, and without any mental exercise. Krsna-seva-vasana, the desire to serve Krsna, may appear in someone’s heart even while the heart is still full of so many anarthas and offences. Then we develop faith (sraddha) in sadhu, guru and sastra. After that, we become eager to know, “How may I have krsna-bhakti? How may I serve Krsna?” This is vasana. Vasana means the tendency to serve Krsna, and the development of faith in sastra, guru and Vaisnava. That is the significance of the first sloka of Sri Siksastaka.

**KRSNA’S DIFFERENT NAMES**

The second sloka of Siksastaka is:

namnamakari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis
tatrapita nityamithah smarane na kalah
etadrsi tava krpa bhagavan mamapi
durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah
“O my Lord! Your holy name alone can render all benediction upon the living beings, and therefore You have hundreds and millions of names, like Krsna and Govinda. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies, and there is no hard and fast rule for chanting these holy names. O my Lord! You have so kindly made approach to You easy by Your holy names, but unfortunate as I am, I have no attraction for them.”

_Namnamakari bahudha nija-sarva-saktis._ Caitanya Maha-prabhu is praying to Krsna, “O Bhagavan! It is Your name alone can bestow His mercy on the _jivas_ so that all kinds of auspiciousness (_mangala_) may appear.” We see this is so when we consider the lives of great devotees like Ajamila, Bilvamangala, Valmiki, and Jagai and Madhai. At first–they were very wretched, but by good fortune they heard Krsna’s holy name from the mouths of qualified devotees. Srila Haridasa Thakura and Srila Nityananda Prabhu saved Jagai and Madhai by chanting the holy name in their ears. The _visnudutas_ came to Ajamila, and made him a great devotee. Naradaji taught Valmiki how to chant the name of Rama, and it was Narada’s mercy which enabled Prahlada Maharaja to become a great devotee, although he was the son of a very great demon.

The fallen _jivas_ have turned away from Krsna, but Krsna’s holy name has all the necessary potency and power to turn them towards Him again, and to give them His _seva_. It is for this reason that Krsna has manifested Himself in so many _svarupas_, all with their various names. _Namnamakari bahudha_. He is called by so many names: Brahman, Paramatma, Allah, Jagannatha, Narayana, Visnu, Rama and many more. We Gaudiya Vaisnavas call Him Krsna, and even in His Krsna aspect He has so many names: Radha-Vallabha, Radha-Govinda, Radha-Kanta, Radha-Ramana and so many more. Why are there so many different kinds of names? Because Krsna is unconditionally and causelessly merciful. He has seen
that there is no one name that everyone can accept, because the living entities are not all on the same spiritual level. For example, there are many people who cannot accept the names Radha-Ramana, or Gopijana-Vallabha. Many karmis (fruitive workers) are pious or religious, but they misunderstand the pastimes of Radha and Krsna, and they think that Krsna is not a chaste person. Besides that, there are many smartas (caste brahmanas), as well as drunkards and other wretched persons. There are many different kinds of people who want to worship the Supreme Lord, and they may accept the name Bhagavan.

Whatever stage people are in, there is a corresponding aspect of Godhead whose name they can accept. Some think that Bhagavan has no shape, attributes or qualities, and that He is nirvīsesa, nirakara brahma. For these people, Krsna presents Himself as Brahman. They cannot have faith in names such as Rama, Krsna, Hari, Radha-Ramana and Radhanatha, because they think that these names are related to maya: ‘Oh, nirakara brahma is now covered by maya. That means that Rama and Krsna have appeared through the action of maya.’

Krsna has manifested many names and many varieties of pastimes according to the different stages of spiritual development of all the various kinds of living entities who have turned their face from Him (bahirmukha jivas). What would have happened if He had only taken the form of Krsna, and manifested His pastimes with Radha and all Their associates in Vraja? I think that out of many lakhs and lakhs of people, only a few rare souls would take this name. We can look round us here, and think, ‘Oh! There are so many persons chanting Hare Krsna, Hare Krsna.’ But in the context of the whole world with its crores and lakhs of people, we are a tiny minority. And even in this tiny minority, not everyone is bona fide. It is only rarely that someone will chant in a bona fide way. That is why Krsna has manifested such a variety of names.
AUSPICIOUS POTENCY

*Nija-sarva-saktih.* Mahaprabhu tells us that Krsna has invested all of His potency in His names. But we should understand that Krsna has not invested all of His power in all of His names. He has invested the qualities of Brahman in the name Brahman. In Rama’s name He has invested the qualities of Rama, but not all of the power of Krsna Himself. Similarly, the potency of the names of Vamana, Varaha, Matsya, Kurma and Parasurama are like the potency of their *svarupa*. These names are not invested with all of the potencies of Krsna’s name.

*Niyamitah smarane na kalah.* There are no rules and regulations in taking Krsna’s name. This means that there is no instruction not to chant at night, or when we are going to sleep, or while taking *prasadam*. There is no rule that only very elevated, rich people can take the name, and poor people cannot. There is no rule that only *brahmanas* can take the *nama*, and no one else can. You can take *hari-nama* when you are going to school; there is no restriction. You know that there are certain religious activities which are performed at the *sandhya* (sunrise, midday and sunset), and then only after taking bath. There is a special time reserved for these rituals. You cannot perform them at eight or nine at night, or without taking bath. But there is no such restriction regarding the time that we take *harinama*.

*Durdaivam idrsam ihajani nanuragah.* Unfortunately, we have no taste for chanting. We have no *anuraga*, no *sraddha*, *nistha*, *ruci*, *asakti*, *bhava* or *prema*, what to speak of *sneha* or *mana*. We have nothing. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu is praying, “I am so fallen that I have no *ruci*. But You are all-powerful. So please bestow Your mercy on Me.” We should understand what our *durdaivam* (misfortune) actually is, and then we should try to give up all the *anarthas* and obstacles to our devotional service. There is another point that we must also understand. Even though we talk about giving up *nama-aparadha* and *seva-
aparadha, we cannot do so by our own power. We are helpless. We have no power to become free from offences by our own effort. We can only do so through bhakti, through the power of Krsna’s name, or by the mercy of Krsna’s associates. Still, we should know what these anarthas are, and what effect they have on our service.

**SAMBHANDHA, ABHIDHEYA AND PRAYOJANA**

Not everybody knows that we have a relationship with Madana-mohana. Perhaps you know this now through sadhusanga. That Madana-mohana is Krsna, and knowledge of the relationship is called sambandha. The relationship is that we are servants of Krsna. When we serve Krsna according to this relationship, and He accepts our service, He is called Govinda. The process of serving Govinda is called abhidheya. Abhidheya means process or means, and there is no process superior to the service of Govinda.

The ultimate result of devotional service is pure love for Krsna. This is prayojana. Krsna is controlled by pure love, and when He is controlled by the gopis’ prema, He is called Gopinatha. Common devotees think that Gopinatha is the Lord of the gopis. But the name Gopinatha really means that the gopis are Krsna’s natha. He is controlled by the gopis. The gopis are Krsna’s prana, His life and soul; that is why He is Gopinatha. I am just giving some hints about this. It is like Siva’s name Ramesvara. Some people think this means that Siva is the Lord of Rama, but actually it is the other way around. Rama is the isvara of Siva. And when Siva appears he is not the controller of the gopis. Rather, gopis are the isvara of Siva. In the same way, the gopis are Krsna’s life and soul and everything. Krsna’s life and soul is called His natha. The gopis are the natha of Krsna, and therefore He is called Gopinatha. Our prayojana is to offer service which will control Krsna in this way. But if we do not give up our anarthas, we
cannot have a very strong relationship with Madana-mohana. Without that relationship, we cannot have the service of Govinda, and then we cannot make Gopinatha our Gopinatha.

The beginning of this process is to take shelter of Sri Sacinandana Gaurahari and Sri Nityananda Prabhu by worshipping Them, and by chanting the names Sacinandana, Gaurahari and Gauranga Hari. Then, when our sadhana is matured, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu will give us His darsana as conjugal Radha and Krsna combined. All this is possible only in our sampradaya, and not in any other. It is only by Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s mercy that we are coming in the line of Srila Svarupa Damodara, Srila Rupa Gosvami and all Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu’s other associates. They are telling us that we should worship Mahaprabhu as Sacinandana Gaurahari. Why Sacinandana? Because Sacinandana is the son of Mother Sacidevi, and He is as soft and merciful as she is. That is why we should worship Him and chant the name of Sacinandana Gaurahari. By His mercy we can enter into sadhana and bhajana.

We all have anarthas to a greater or lesser degree. However, as long as we have anarthas, our relationship with Madana-mohana will not be strong. Then we cannot serve Govinda, and what to speak of controlling Gopinatha with our service. For this reason, Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura is kindly and mercifully telling us to be careful and to avoid all these anarthas. He explains that there are four kinds of anarthas: svarupa-bhrama, asat-trsna, hrdaya-durbalya and aparadha. Anyone who does not understand all these anarthas is bound to make offences to bhakti, to Krsna’s name, to sadhus, to Vaisnavas, and to their guru. It is sure to happen, so we must be careful.

**KNOWING TATTVA**

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura goes into more detail about the first type of anartha, which is svarupa-bhrama, misconcep-
There are four essential \textit{tattvas} which we must know to take up devotional service. These are \textit{para-tattva} (the Supreme Absolute Truth), \textit{jiva-tattva} (the living entities), \textit{maya-tattva} (the illusory energy) and \textit{sadhya-sadhana tattva} (the supreme goal and the means of obtaining it). \textit{Svarupa-bhrama} is the combination of all the misconceptions about these four \textit{tattvas}. First of all, \textit{para-tattva} refers to the Supreme Truth, the Supreme Reality, who is Krsna Himself. It is essential that we know who is \textit{para-tattva}. So many people are confused and ignorant about this. Is \textit{para-tattva} Brahman, Paramatma, Visnu, Rama, or Krsna? They don’t know. Some people say that Sankara is \textit{para-tattva}, or that Durga is \textit{para-tattva}. They have no conception that Krsna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Actually, there are so many stages of \textit{para-tattva} and the highest is \textit{krsna-tattva}.

The next aspect of \textit{svarupa-bhrama} is the misconception about who we are and what is our \textit{svarupa}. We have to know who we are. That is \textit{sva-tattva}. We are \textit{jivas}, individual living entities. So \textit{sva-tattva} is \textit{jiva-tattva}. The next question is, “Who am I? Who is \textit{jiva}?“ Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains that \textit{jiva} is \textit{krsna-dasa}, the servant of Krsna. This is our \textit{svarupa}. We are eternal servants of Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead.

We must also know \textit{maya-tattva}. Sometimes we become confused as to what is \textit{maya}, and what is \textit{bhakti}. We are ignorant. We may say, “Oh, Haridasa Thakura was chanting three \textit{lakhs} of \textit{harinama}, so I should follow him and do the same.“ But there is a difference between his chanting and ours. All of his chanting was \textit{aprakrta} (spiritual). If we chant three \textit{lakhs} of names, I think that one or two names will be \textit{namabhasa}, and the rest will all be \textit{namaparadha}. Sometimes we are in \textit{maya}, yet we think that we are out of \textit{maya}. But we should not be hopeless. Always be hopeful, because we have taken the \textit{asraya} (shelter) of \textit{harinama}, \textit{guru} and Vaisnavas. As long as we have \textit{sadhu-sanga}, and continue to chant Krsna’s names and remem-
ber His pastimes, all of our anarthas can be vanquished in time.

Now we come to sadhya-tattva, which is the ultimate goal, and sadhana-tattva, the means by which we attain the goal. We must understand what is our sadhya, because until we do, we cannot know what is the sadhana by which we can attain the sadhya. The goal is service to Radha and Krsna. This is the supreme goal, and it is far superior to any other. And the topmost service to Radha and Krsna is gopi-prema, service in the mood of the gopis. If the gopis mercifully give their krpa, then we can enter into Vraja, and serve Radha and Krsna in the mood of the gopis. Without their mercy, no one can attain this goal.

**OUR ACARYAS GAVE RAGANUGA-BHAKTI**

In order to know sadhya and sadhana-tattva, we must first take shelter of Srila Sanatana Gosvamipada, to whom Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has given all these tattvas. Then, in order to gain more and more superior knowledge, we must take shelter of Srila Raya Ramananda Prabhu. Otherwise we cannot know what is sadhya and what is sadhana. Mahaprabhu asked Sri Raya Ramananda to explain the perfection of life. Sri Raya Ramananda first began from varnasrama-dharma. Then, going beyond varnasrama-dharma, he spoke about being situated on the platform of Brahman: brahma-bhutah prasannatma. Then he recommended bhakti mixed with karma, then bhakti mixed with jnana. After that he came to the point of suddha-bhakti, and then he discussed different levels of spontaneous love of God or raganuga-bhakti.

Devotees often misunderstand these topics. They think that it very rare to find anyone qualified to be a devotee on this level. “In the whole future of the world, there will never be anyone who is qualified to take up raganuga-bhakti. And certainly, no one will be qualified in this birth.” They offer
pranamas to raganuga-bhakti from very far away, thinking it very removed from any devotional service that we can possibly perform. But this is not correct. Srila Raya Ramananda and Srila Svarupa Damodara come after Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu in our parampara. They are raganuga devotees, and so are all those who follow in their footsteps. Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and all the acaryas in our disciplic succession have followed Srila Rupa Gosvami, who is a raganuga-bhakta. They all gave raganuga-bhakti. All the acaryas following in the line of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu have come only to bestow their mercy by giving raganuga. Our acaryas' mission was not to give vaidhi-bhakti, because that had already been given by previous acaryas like Ramanuja, Madhvacarya, Visnusvami, Nimbaditya and so many others. Krsna Himself, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, has come in the form of Caitanya Mahaprabhu to give bhakti-rasa, and there is no question of bhakti-rasa without raganuga-bhajana. The acaryas in our disciplic line before Srila Madhavendra Puri taught vaidhi-bhakti. After Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, devotional service means raganuga.

If anyone reads Sri Caitanya-Caritamrta, or any of the books of Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami and Srila Rupa Gosvami, greed for vraja-bhakti will surely develop. It is sure and certain. We know that the personified Vedic mantras, the sruticaris, all had greed for that. That is why they performed raganuga-bhajana, and became like the gopis. This is the highest sadhya (goal): to have the asraya (shelter) of the gopis, and to serve Krsna like them. Among the gopis, Lalita and Visakha are most important, but we cannot have their mood. The very highest sadhya for us is to have the mood of Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami, and to serve Radha-Krsna Yugala-Kisora, following in their footsteps. We can only have this by developing the mood of Srila Rupa Gosvami, by his mercy. That is sadhya and sadhana.
This is how Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura explains svarupa-bhrama: it is a combination of all these different misconceptions about tattva.

**WORLDLY DESIRES (ASAT-TRSNA)**

The next type of anartha is asat-trsna, which means anyabilasita, the desire for something other than Krsna’s service. We will fall prey to asat-trsna as long as we are deviated from Krsna and His service, and as long as we have no tattva-jnana. There are four kinds of asat-trsna, namely: (1) desires for material enjoyment in this world; (2) desires for enjoyment in the higher planetary systems; (3) desires for mystic perfections and (4) the desire for liberation. Sometimes devotees become confused and think that they are performing service for Krsna, when they are actually acting on their own behalf. For example, we may want to be rich. A confused devotee may think, ‘I am so poor that I cannot worship Krsna. A pair of Radha-Krsna Deities costs at least two thousand or three thousand rupees in the market place. But I am too poor to pay that much money, so how can I worship Krsna? Let me pray to Krsna that He will mercifully give me wealth so that I can serve Him nicely.’ Or he may think, ‘I would like to give a very big feast for four hundred people, but if I have no money how can I serve the Vaisnavas?’ People with this mentality cannot understand how to serve Krsna, or how to serve the Vaisnavas. Srila Rupa Gosvami and Srila Sanatana Gosvami served all the Vaisnavas, as well as Krsna and His associates. But they were akincana, without any worldly possessions. They served without a single paisa. We cannot really please anyone with money. Even so, we want money, a beautiful wife, beautiful and intelligent children, and big, big palaces. We hanker after so many worldly possessions.

We also want siddhis. There are eight kinds of mystic perfections. For instance, Durvasa Muni had these vibhuti, mys-
tical opulences. Whatever he told anyone would become a reality. If he told someone they would die, they would die at once. If one had already died, and he told them, “Get up, get up - they would immediately come to life. Many sadhus have different vibhutis. They can walk over water, fly in the air, and perform many other miracles. Citraketu had no sons, but Narada Muni blessed him to have a son, and he had one. Such sadhus can satisfy whatever desire you may have, even up to the point of mukti, liberation from this world of birth and death.

OFFENCES

There are also four kinds of aparadhas. First of all, there are ten kinds of krsna-nama aparadha, offences against Krsna’s holy name. Then there is sevaparadha. This includes the thirty-two kinds of offences against the Deity, as well as offences to our Gurudeva and to the holy dhama. There are many kinds of dhamaparadhas. The third category is offences to cit-kanesu, other living entities. All jivas are krsna-dasa, so we should not make any kinds of offence to them. Lastly, there are offences to tadiya, which means bhaktas. If we want bhakti, we should be very careful not to make any offences to any devotee. Actually, this doesn’t just apply to devotees; it applies to all jivas. Try to avoid offences to any jiva. Don’t criticise any jivas, even if they are not performing bhakti. Don’t even criticise people who are actually opposed to bhakti.

We have to be very careful. Some people think, ‘I am a very good servant, but the devotees around me give me so much trouble. I am alright; they are the ones who are making so many problems, and that is why I want to give up their sanga. I don’t want their association any more.’ This attitude is not correct. If troubles come, or if problems come in our bhajana, we should think ‘It is not due to others. It is due to my own fault, or else to my past impressions and activities.’

We must learn to be very tolerant. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu
teaches us to be sahisnuna, as tolerant as a tree. We cannot achieve bhakti if we are not tolerant. We must tolerate the behaviour of others. We may think, ‘Oh, I want to go to the forest. Then other people will not bother me any more.’ But there are difficulties everywhere. If you go to the forest to get away from everyone else, then wild animals will come. Tigers will come to trouble you. Maybe there won’t be any tigers, but you will be sitting under a tree and a branch will fall on your head. What will you do?

BHAVA AND PREMA—SVARUPA-SAKTI

In the fifth sloka of Siksastaka, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{ayi nanda-tanuja kinkaram} \\
\text{patitam mam visame bhavambudhau} \\
\text{krpaya tava pada-pankaja} \\
\text{sthita-dhuli-sadrsam vicintaya}
\end{align*}
\]

Here Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that if we have sadhu-sanga somehow or other, either knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, then we will get sraddha. As a result of sadhu-sanga we engage in devotional activities: sravanam, kirtanam, smaranam, pada-sevanam, arcanam, vandanam, dasyam, sakhyam, atmanivedanam. After that we may realise our atma-svarupa, our spiritual form. “Who am I? Who is Krsna?” We already have some idea who we are; we are krsna-dasa. Then at the stage described in this sloka, we will find out what type of krsna-dasa we actually are, that is to say, in which rasa we are eternally situated: dasya, sakhya, vatsalya or madhurya. We will also realise all the aspects of our identity which are needed for our service: our name, form, siddha-svarupa, siddha-bhava, where we live, what our service is, what our relationships are with the other eternal servants and so on. All of this becomes manifest to us. And when we realise it, even to a small extent, all kinds of anarthas disappear.
Krsna’s pleasure-giving potency is called *hladini-sakti*, and the essence of this *hladini-sakti* is *bhakti*. All of the activities that we perform in *bhakti* are possible only by the grace of *svarupa-sakti*. *Svarupa-sakti* is the potency which manifests the real form of Krsna and of the living entity, as well as all of Krsna’s pastimes and our own devotional activities. All of our chanting and remembering—even that we are doing—is all a manifestation of *svarupa-sakti*. Now, in this fifth *sloka* of *Siksastaka*, we hear about the appearance of the *svarupa* of the *jiva*, by which the *jiva* can perform his eternal service to Krsna. This is the essence of the *hladini-sakti*.

**THE SYMPTOMS OF BHAVA**

If a jiva is fortunate enough to reach the stage of *bhava* by performing *sadhana*, his pure condition manifests itself. *Bhava* is also known as *rati*, and there are symptoms by which we can tell that *rati* has appeared:

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ksantir avyartaka-kalatvam viraktir mana-sunyata
asa-bandhas samutkantha nama-gane sada-rucih
asaktis tad-gunakhyane pritis-tad-vasati-sthale
ityadayo ‘nubhavah syur jata-bhavankure jane
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(*Bhakti-Rasamrta-Sindhu* 1.3.25-261)

It is the appearance of these symptoms which shows that *rati* has appeared, at least to some extent.

The first symptom is *ksanti*, forbearance or tolerance. When *rati* or *bhava* comes in the heart, the devotee remains calm and quiet, even in the face of suffering and opposition which would disturb an ordinary person. We should judge our condition by the symptoms we exhibit. At our present stage of development, if we meet any opposition we become furious, so we can see that we do not have this *rati* yet. When we have *rati*, or *bhava*, we will remain undisturbed no matter how
many obstacles there are. Hiranyakasipu and his demonic servants created so much trouble and disturbance for Prahlada Maharaja, but Prahlada remained quite peaceful. Srila Haridasa Thakura was beaten in twenty-two market places, and he was tormented so much by others; yet he continued to perform his bhajana calmly and quietly.

Avyartha-kalatvam means that the devotee will not waste even a moment of time. He is always chanting, remembering and performing service for Hari, guru and Vaisnavas. That is called avyartha-kala.

Virakti: he is detached from worldly things. Very sweet and charming worldly things may present themselves, but the devotee is completely detached from them. Even if he is offered the very best of worldly beauty, charm and enjoyment, with great reputation and wealth, still the devotee is not charmed by them, and he has no attraction or attachment for them.

Mana-sunyata: the devotee has no desire personal reputation, and doesn’t want others to praise him. Asa-bandhah means to have a very strong hope to have prema-bhakti to see Krsna, and to serve Krsna. “In this life, or in some other life, I will surely have the darsana of Krsna and serve Krsna. I will achieve this, and I will not allow any obstacle to stop me. This is asa-bandhah. However, this does not mean that the devotee is passive and quiet. On the contrary, he has samutkantha, great eagerness: “When wilt I have this? What should I do?”

Nama-gane sada rucih: he is always very attracted to do harinama. Even if he is doing sravanam-kirtanam twenty-four hours daily, he will not be at all sleepy or lazy. Then asaktis tad-gunakhyane means that he has a very strong taste for speaking hari-katha. He always likes to glorify Krsna and His associates, such as Sukadeva Gosvami, or the associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, such as Srila Rupa Gosvami. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Prabhupada was always speak-
ing hari-katha. He used to speak hari-katha, krsna-katha and mahaprabhu-katha even to a dry stick. And I have seen a Vaisnava who was praying, “gopinatha, mama nivedana suno,” even when he had a fever and a temperature of 104 or 105 degrees. That was Narottama Prabhu, who later became Bhakti Kamala Madhusudana Maharaja. Instead of moaning and groaning, he continued to pray continuously, and recite so many stivas and stutis.

Pritis tad-vasati-sthale: the devotee always wants to live in the dhamas such as Vrndavana, Navadvipa or Srila Puri-dhama, where Bhagavata pastimes have been performed. There are so many places in Vraja. Sometimes the devotee likes to be at Radha-kunda and Syama-kunda or at Giriraja-Govardhana; sometimes at Manasa-Ganga or Kusumasarovara; sometimes at Mana-sarovara or Bandiravana. Sometimes he likes to be in Vrndavana at Seva-kunja, or Dhirasamira, or Vamsivata, or Gopisvara-Mahadeva. Sometimes, like Srila Rupa Gosvami, he wants to be in Nandagrama or Varsana. And there are so many other pastime places besides.

These are the nine different anubhavas, or symptoms which show that someone has reached the stage of bhava. If anyone claims to have reached the stage of bhava, but he is not showing these symptoms, no knowledgeable devotee will take him seriously. We should try to develop these symptoms ourselves, but not artificially. We will only come to this stage if we stay in the association of Vaisnavas, and always hear hari-katha. Then it may come. However, if we do not stay in the association of devotees, our anarthas will not go away, and we will not come to this level.

**SADHU-SANGA**

We have lived here for the whole of the month of Kartika, going here and there to so many places of Krsna’s pastimes. But some of the devotees have not been listening like this.
They have been with us, but they have not been listening to the *hari-katha*, or hearing nicely. They have been sitting with the other devotees, but their minds have been going here and there. This is not the way to have the association of Vaisnavas. *Sanga* means that we always follow the devotees, to see how the *sadhu* is performing his activities, how he thinks, how he worships, and how he meditates. We want to adopt his way of doing things, and we want to chant and remember like him. This is *sadhu-sanga*. Are we listening to his *hari-katha*, and his teachings, and are we following them? If not, then it is not *sadhu-sanga*. Those people who have not listened very attentively and respectfully, have not actually had *sadhu-sanga*; that is my opinion.

We should try to have the association of devotees by acting in the way I have described. Sometimes we may not be near any *sadhu*. In that case, we should read the books of our Gosvamis and think that we are associating with Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Svarupa Damodara, Sri Raya Ramananda and the other great personalities. And I am sure that they will be very kind, and bestow their mercy on us. We should never allow our minds to be fickle, never.

**SVARUPA AND SVARUPA-SAKTI**

After this, *bhava* appears:

\[
\text{suddha-sattva visesatma prema-suryamsu-samyabhak}
\text{ rucibhis-citta-masrnya-krd asau bhava ucyate}
\]

*(CC, Madhya 23.5 & BRS 1.3.1)*

“*Bhava-bhakti* is a special manifestation of *suddha-sattva*. In other words, the constitutional characteristic of *bhava-bhakti* is that it is a phenomena entirely constituted of *suddha-sattva*. It is like a ray of the sun of *prema* and it softens the heart by various *rucis* or tastes.”
We can tell whether bhava has developed fully by observing whether the symptoms of bhava are fully present. If they are not, then we can understand that bhava has not yet fully developed.

Now we need to understand something about the nature of visuddha-sattva. It is visuddha-sattva which allows us to feel something of the moods of the sakhas and other associates of Kṛṣṇa, to feel something of vatsalya-bhava, or madhurya-bhava. Suppose we are performing raganuga-sadhana, and the mood of one of the Vraja-vasis comes into our heart. It may be the mood of Yasoda, or the mood of Nanda Baba, or the mood of one of the sakhas like Subala or Sudama, or the mood of one of the gopis like Rupa Manjari or others. This is visuddha-sattva acting in our hearts.

When this happens, there are two things working. On the one hand, we have our svarupa, our eternal, spiritual identity, which is in our atma, our very self. On the other hand, something is imparted to us by Kṛṣṇa’s svarupa-sakti, or hladini-sakti.

Our svarupa contains all the potencies of prema. Everything is there in seed form, like the seed of a banyan tree. A banyan seed contains all the potency to become a very big tree, with fruits and flowers. Everything is there in the seed. At the same time, the seed also needs earth, water, sunshine, warmth and air. These are all necessary if it is to grow. If the seed gets no water or air or rays of sunshine, it will not even sprout, and what to speak of developing into a full-grown tree. If the seed is to grow into a tree, both are needed: the potency from within the seed, and the right conditions outside. Similarly, to develop bhava, we need both the potency of the atma-svarupa, and also the action of svarupa-sakti.

**STHAYI-BHAVA AND PREMA**

In the next stage, rati or bhava becomes sthayi-bhava, when the devotee is firmly fixed in one of the five primary rasas. After
sthayi-bhava has appeared, other types of bhava or ecstasies also appear: sattvika-bhava, anubhava and sancari-bhava. These meet and mix together in proportion, and become bhakti-rasa. It is very rare to come to this stage.

When the devotee tastes bhakti-rasa, he always weeps:

\[
\begin{align*}
nayanam \text{ galad-asru-dharaya} \\
vadanam \text{ gadgada-ruddhaya} \text{ gira} \\
pulakair \text{ nicitam} \text{ vapuh kada} \\
tava \text{ nama-grahane} \text{ bhavisyati}
\end{align*}
\]

This sixth sloka of Siksastaka describes the stage of bhava or rati. If a devotee is weeping, but bhava has not yet developed, and the heart is not melting, then it is only imitation.

After the appearance of bhakti-rasa, prema comes.

\[
\begin{align*}
yugayitam \text{ nimesena} \text{ caksusa} \text{ pravrsayitam} \\
sunyayitam \text{ jagat} \text{ sarvam} \text{ govinda-virahena} \text{ me}
\end{align*}
\]

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu prays, “When will that day come when a moment will be like so many yugas, because of separation. Tears will always flow from my eyes, and the whole world will appear completely void and empty. When will that be?” We cannot come to the level of prema in this lifetime. It is only possible if we go to prakata-lila, where Krsna is performing His pastimes in the material world. The definition of prema is as follows:

\[
\begin{align*}
samyam \text{ masrnita} \text{ svanto} \text{ mamatvatisayankitah} \\
bhavah \text{ sa} \text{ eva} \text{ sandratma} \text{ budhaih} \text{ prema} \text{ nigadyate}
\end{align*}
\]

(CC, Madhya 23.7, BRS 1.4.1)

Samyan masrnita svanto. The heart melts, and the devotee feels intense mamata towards Krsna and His associates. Mamata means ‘mineness’ or possessiveness. There is so much possessiveness in relationships between worldly people, between husband and wife, mother and son, father and son, or between beloved friends.
Similarly, when *prema* appears, the devotee feels this *mamata* very strongly towards Krsna and His associates. At that time, the *prema* becomes thicker and thicker, and the devotee feels more and more *ananda*, blissful ecstasy.

\[
\text{aslisya va pada-ratam pinastu mam} \\
\text{adarsanam marma-hatam karotu va} \\
\text{yatha tatha va vidadhatu lampato} \\
\text{mat-prana-nathas tu sa eva naparah}
\]

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu recited all these *slokas* in the mood of Srimati Radhika. This is now the last *sloka*. Srimati Radhika says, “Krsna may embrace me, or He may give me up forever. Of course, He cannot give Me up forever. But He may embrace another *gopi* in front of Me. He may act as *lampatah*, a debauchee, or whatever He chooses. In any case, He is still my *prana-natha*. He and no other is always My beloved, and will always be so.”

**WHY MAHAPRABHU APPEARS**

Now Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura glorifies Siksastaka. He explains that Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appears in this world only once in a day of Brahma, in the same *divya-yuga* in which Krsna appears. Krsna comes first, followed by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu. I have already explained that there are four reasons for His appearance. First of all, *yuga-dharma-prati*, He establishes the *yuga-dharma*. The second reason is to preach the chanting of the holy name. Thirdly, *anarpita-carim cirat*: Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu comes to bestow *vraja-prema* on the *jivas*. The fourth reason is to taste (CC, *Adi-lila* 1.6):

\[
sri-radhayah pranaya-mahima kidrso vanayaiva-
svadyo yenadhuta-madhurima kidrso va madiyah
\]

These are the four reasons for which Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared, but His special purpose was *radhayah pranaya*
mahima, to taste the moods of Srimati Radhika. This is why Krsna came as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, assuming the mood and beauty of Srimati Radhika to taste Her love Himself, and to give krsna-prema to all the jivas. And the medium by which He gave all of this was krsna-sankirtana. In other yugas, the yuga-avatara gave harinama, but not vraja-prema, not the highest moods of madhurya-bhava. This is the speciality of this yuga, the special purpose for which Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu appeared.

THE GLORIES OF SRI SIKSASTAKA

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu comes only once in a day of Brahma. He appeared only about 500 years ago, in 1486 AD, on Phalguna Purnima, when everyone was chanting the Lord’s holy names. His father was Jagannatha Misra, and His mother was Sacidevi. He performed so many pastimes in His childhood. In His paugandya age, He went to Sanskrit school, and after that He defeated Kesava Kasmiri, a very learned person from Kasmira. In His kisora age He married Laksmipriya, and then Visnupriya. After receiving harinama from Isvara Puripada in Gaya, He began to chant the holy name with everyone, and performed nagara-sankirtana here and there, especially in Srivasangam. All of Bengal was full of harinama-sankirtana. It was like a flood.

At the age of twenty-four, Mahaprabhu went to Katva, accepted sannyasa from Kesava Bharati, and gave up all His worldly relations and connections. For six years He walked throughout the whole of India-Bengal, Orissa, Maharastra, Mathura, Vrndavana, Kasi and Bihara—and preached. After that, He took up residence at the Gambhira in Puri. He cut down all false philosophical conclusions (kusiddhanta), and He established the philosophy of acintya-bhedabheda-tattva.

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu remained in Jagannatha Purl for eighteen years. As time passed by, His prema became thicker
and thicker. He fulfilled His three desires in Gambhira with Sri Svarupa Damodara, Sri Raya Ramananda and some others, and in so doing, He preached all over In He did not write any books Himself, but He inspired and empowered Srila Rupa Gosvami, Srila Sanatana Gosvami, Srila Jiva Gosvami, Sri Kavi Karnapura, Srila Svarupa Damodara, Srila Raya Ramananda, Srila Gopala Bhatta Gosvami and many other devotees to write many, many books.

In the end, He wrote these eight slokas of siksastaka, and He used to taste these eight slokas with Sri Svarupa Damodara and Srila Raya Ramananda in the Gambhira—always weeping. Sometimes He used to become like a tortoise, with His limbs withdrawn into His body. At other times, His body would become very long. He always used to think that He was in Vrndavana. Sometimes He would jump into the sea, thinking it to be the Yamuna. Sometimes He moved here and there in the very deep forest, seeing it as the forest in Vrndavana, and when He saw the sand dune named Cataka Parvata, He thought it was Govardhana.

We should try to hear this Siksastaka daily. We should always chant and remember and try to pray to Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu to bestow His mercy on us so that we can understand all these truths and principles.

CONCLUDING INSTRUCTIONS

Those who are very fortunate will take the essence of our whole parikrama, namely hari-katha. Please do not return with empty hands and empty hearts. After today we will go to our various destinations. I request you not to go away empty-handed. Please take all these teachings with you and try to perform bhajana like this every day. I know that when you return to your homes, you will have to engage in your worldly business. Still, please do not forget all this hari-katha, and all these teachings. I am praying to Radha-Krsna and to all the
gurus in our disciplic succession—to my guru, and to all the other gurus—to please bestow their mercy on us, so that we may be qualified to understand and realise all this.

*Sri Gaura Premanande Haribol!*
WELCOME!

The Gaudiya Vedanta Samiti holds programs, where discussions on Krishna consciousness take place, accompanied with traditional bhajan-music. You can also get more literature from us. Please contact us at any of the addresses given below:

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