

Disk 122, track 3, Lithuania, 28.07.2009, Manah-siksa, verse 7, lecture 1

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Hare Krishna. I am very glad to be back with you here at the Baltic Sea Festival. This is the seventh festival now, right? (Response from the audience: "Ninth") Ok, for me it is the seventh festival. Over these six years we have been reading one after another the verses from Srila Raghunatha Dasa Goswami's "Manah-siksa" and I have a suspicion that this years' seminar will be our last seminar dedicated to this topic. I'll read the seventh verse and will perhaps briefly touch on the remaining four.

Today I wanted to give a kind of an introductory lecture on this subject and explain why over such a long time we've analyzed just a few verses. Raghunatha Das Goswami is the *prayojana-acarya* of our *sampradaya*, he teaches *prayojana*, i.e. the highest goal of all our endeavors and aspirations. Explaining his contribution and why he is called the *prayojana-acarya*, in his "Jaiva-dharma" Bhaktivinoda Thakur describes how in his various works he has explained something extremely incomprehensible, namely, what is going on in the spiritual world. It is very difficult to understand this because we have the tendency of projecting our understanding of the material world onto the spiritual world and when we think that everything we have here in the material world will last forever we get scared and lose all desire to go to the spiritual world. Everything that is somehow or other related to eternity is very difficult to comprehend with our limited mind, which is programmed to perceiving the temporary world. In what way love is an eternal dynamic state and that it is in no way boring in the spiritual world, Raghunatha Dasa Goswami succeeded explaining in his works.

When we think about eternity we imagine a static picture: there is a spiritual world and in the middle of it there is God's monument and we are standing around it. People can understand what God is, but to understand what it means to exist eternity is much more complicated than simply to understand that there is God or even that I am spiritual in nature. Therefore, in his "Jaiva-dharma" Bhaktivinoda Thakur explains, in the same way Raghunatha Das Goswami has explained in his various works, the nature or essence of what is happening in the spiritual world. Naturally, for us it is very difficult to understand this. Therefore, Srila Prabhupada was not particularly concerned about translating his works into English language – it will somehow come by itself in due course. But of all these works the "Manah-siksa" stands apart and Bhaktivinoda Thakur explains that in it Raghunatha Das Goswami is telling us how a person can enter into this kingdom, the kingdom of *rasa* or spiritual *rasa* or the kingdom of love. He makes a unique, surprising and even shocking statement; he says that Rupa Goswami, having described the *rasa* and its nature, the nature of spiritual love, has not explained how to enter it. At first glance it is a very strange statement, because, first of all, Rupa Goswami is our *abhidheya-acarya*, he teaches the way or the method; secondly, if we take the "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu" and even "Ujjvala-nilamani" we will see that there he explains in great detail the practice of *sadhana*. Nevertheless, Bhaktivinoda Thakura makes this statement, "Rupa Goswami has not explained how to enter *rasa*, whereas Raghunatha Das Goswami has done so. Where? In his "Manah-siksa."

Why doesn't Bhaktivinoda Thakura explain in detail this statement and doesn't prove it? This, actually, may be the reason I have been speaking on the "Manah-siksa" all these years. In my opinion, the reason for this statement is that in it Raghunatha Das Goswami in a succinct and

encrypted form, in the form of the *sutras*, explains the main obstacle that awaits us on this way. He explains to us what this realm of spiritual affection or love is and explains what is preventing us inside from developing this affection, what is pulling us down. We have all come here to experience love; at the same time we know and we feel from our own experience, that something is not quite right. Sometimes people start going down to some other level, engage in psychology or yoga or the like and think it is going to help them to find love. Sometimes people leave for good. There are numerous ways of solving this problem, "Where to get this love? How to attain it?" But the uniqueness of the "Manah-siksa" is exactly in that it explains our own psychology which resists spiritual life, which prevents us and which a person must ultimately give up in order to attain that very spiritual experience which has been promised to us.

Therefore today I will not touch directly on the seventh verse and I will not even – and most likely I will not have time – describe the previous verses; today, as an introduction to the series of lectures we are going to have during this seminar or festival, I wanted to speak on some general provisions in terms of what differentiates the practice of *raga* or *raganuga-sadhana* from *vaidhi-sadhana*. I will be mainly referring to the "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu" of Srila Rupa Goswami and then I will explain how one is related to the other; the way Raghunatha Das Goswami's "Manah-siksa" supplements what Srila Rupa Goswami writes in his "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu".

Bhakti-yoga is a unique process, a unique method, for the simple reason that *bhakti-yoga* from the very beginning to the very end deals with human consciousness. On other paths a person is required to deal with his body, his breath, he must do *pranayama*, *asanas*; on some other paths of self-realization a person is told that he must perform austerities and austerity is also quite a gross method, which is not directly related to the consciousness: I restrain myself in certain things, I perform *tapasya*. But *bhakti-yoga* from the beginning to the end exceptionally deals only with consciousness because ultimately consciousness is the most important thing we have, we do not have anything else. On higher levels all other paths bring us to this, to dealing with our consciousness. But *bhakti-yoga* says that we can deal with our consciousness from the very beginning; from the first step; that there is no need for one to first purify his body or things like that; a person can work with consciousness itself. Because what is our body, ultimately? It is the reflection of our *bhava*. And what is *bhava*? *Bhava* is our mood. Krishna says in the "Bhagavad-gita" (Bg, 8.6): *yam yam vapi smaran bhavam tyajaty ante kalevaram* – a person acquires his body in accordance with the *bhava* or the mood he is in at the moment of death, and what we see in the mirror, is actually a reflection of that *bhava*, with certain adjustments that we have made in this life. That is what our *bhava* was like: slightly lop-eared, with the problems that we have. But ultimately it all depends on *bhava*. *Bhakti-yoga* is a way to change our *bhava*, our material *bhava* or the *bhava* of a lord. Our material *bhava*, our material mood, lies in the fact that I consider myself to be the lord; therefore, I am independent. A substantial part of the material mood is the desire to protect our independence, our separateness. *Bhakti-yoga* offers us a way to change this mood or *isvara-bhava* to the *bhava* of a servant, to *dasya-bhava*, to the mood of a servant, who by definition is always dependent, who considers himself to be a part of God and does not want to separate himself from God in any way.

Accordingly, there are basically only two ways to do this, two kinds or two forms of practices that allow a person to change his mood from the mood of an *isvara* to the mood of a *dasa* or servant. In fact, these two forms of practices are generally determined by the two reasons we have for performing any activity. *Bhakti* is a certain form of activity and in his "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu" Rupa Goswami explains these two types of *bhakti-yoga* in terms of the fact that a person has an impetus to two types of activities. I act – if we analytically approach it – either because I have some knowledge that explains to me that a certain type of activity is good, is useful, is right and I will eventually benefit from it and that is why I act. We do a lot of things

proceeding exactly from this, in the hope that all this is right, good and useful. Right? And there is another impetus for action. What? I just like doing and that's it! It does not matter whether it's good or bad, useful or not useless, whether it is going to bring me something or not – I like it and that's it. Why do people smoke? Because they like it. I do not know what they like about it but they do. You can explain to such a person, "This is good, this is useful if you don't do this ..." but all the same he likes it and he smokes. And a person either smokes or not. He doesn't smoke because he knows that's good and he smokes because he likes it. *Bhakti-yoga* also can be of two types. There are two fundamentally different approaches to our practice. Usually people start practicing *bhakti-yoga*, because they understand that it's good. As a rule, the first initial impulse which made us do it – although it could have been mixed – but as a rule, in any case we have no particular attachment to engage in spiritual activities. Ultimately, who has such an attachment? No one has specifically. Well, some have already trained themselves after twenty years, but in general, we have read the *sastras* and Rupa Goswami explains it: *yatra-raga-avapnatvat pravritir-upajayate sasenaiva sastrasya savaidhi bhaktir uccyate – vaidhi-bhakti* is when I have no particular attachment but I get an impulse to act because from the *sastra*, from the sacred scriptures I have faith in I have received this knowledge, it has come to me and I understand that it's good, it's useful, it's favorable. I read the "Bhagavad-gita" and Krishna doesn't have any sentiments there, He says (Bg, 7.14):

daivi hy esha guna-mayi
 mama maya duratyaya
 mam eva ye prapadyante
 mayam etam taranti te

Krishna says that "You won't get rid of *maya*, if you don't surrender to Me. Surrender and then I'll protect you, that's the only way, otherwise you will be in *maya*." And a person thinks, "How long can one be in *maya*?" Then Krishna says even worse, even more severely (Bhagavad-gita 8.66):

sarva-dharman parityajya
 mam ekam saranam vraja
 aham tvam sarva-papebhyo
 moksayisyami ma sucah

And one starts doing this because he understands: "I must surrender otherwise it's going to be worse." (laughter) Sometimes the various spiritual paths, the various religious schools make a caricature of this impulse in order to make a person do what he doesn't want to do by definition. And we know what we want to do, it's clear. What do we want to do? There it is, the whole world, and it's all for us, we want to enjoy in this world. But in order to force one, he is scared and told, "Surrender! Surrender!" And some do surrender; but others – in spite of being scared they don't get scared and despite everything they enjoy, but then they are frustrated and all the same take up some spiritual path. But in any case this is an impulse that ultimately comes from the scriptures and the key word for this impulse is the understanding that this is right, good and useful, that eventually everything would be nice, we have to suffer a little bit and then it will be eternal bliss, eternal vacation in paradise.

Raga or the other path, the path of attachment, is of a completely different nature; it is when a person does it because he likes it. Actually, our path is the path of attachment. In "Sri Caitanya-caritamrita" Chaitanya Mahaprabhu says, "the whole world follows the path of *vaidhi*", of course, it is a bit of exaggeration that the whole world follows the path *vaidhi*, but in general, if we put

aside some specific cases or technical details, the whole world to a greater or lesser degree, if it does something in the spiritual sense, it does it only out of fear or out of the understanding that this is needed, or for some other boring reasons.

Here comes Caitanya Mahaprabhu and says, "That's it! That's the end of it, it doesn't work, there is no point in all this." The only meaning of engaging in spiritual activities is to develop attachment. The key word for the other way or the other form of spiritual practice, *raganuga-sadhana*, is that I like it. I do this not because I have to, but because I like it. As for us, what do you think we are doing? Some of this and some of that. What we are doing is a mixed thing, right? On the one hand to some extent, due to the logic of the "Bhagavad-gita", the logic of the *sastra*, the explanations, the seminars, we do it because we have to, because we have understood, because that is the right thing to do; and on the other hand we also kind of like it, too, right? Everyone has his own different proportions of this "a little bit", but everyone has both this and that. Strictly speaking, what we do as long as we have not yet developed a strong attachment, a real, tangible attachment to Krishna, is always a mixed thing. Bhaktivinoda Thakura has done a very funny thing. Now I'll say something ... I'll initiate you into one of the controversial points of our *sampradaya* because Bhaktivinoda Thakur has made a very significant amendment even in what Rupa Goswami says. The devotees are not always aware of it. Because the way Rupa Goswami describes this in the "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu", at least on the surface, it seems that these are two completely different ways leading to different goals; and, initially, since the emphasis in the *Gaudiya-vaisnava-sampradaya*, in our *sampradaya*, was exactly on this, "I like it, this is what I want to do", Bhaktivinoda Thakur saw how all this had led to perversions; how those who tried to take up too early this path of spontaneous affection, what deplorable results it all led to.

Therefore, Bhaktivinoda Thakur said that actually there is only one way. Listen carefully, because this is directly related to what we do, so that we understand how to do it in the right way. Bhaktivinoda Thakur said that, actually we have a mixed qualification and this mixed *adhikar* forces us to do both things together, and sometimes people, especially outside of ISKCON, disdain it and say that there, in ISKCON, those neophytes don't understand anything, they're doing god knows what. We follow what Bhaktivinoda Thakur said and Srila Prabhupada restated; it was also restated and emphasized by Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati many many times, Srila Prabhupada said that again and again. He said that we follow *vidhi-bhakti* and we follow *vidhi* in order to develop or strengthen our *raga*. We have acquired a small affection, a small understanding of Krishna's attractiveness by the mercy of Srila Prabhupada, by the mercy of his followers; but to prevent this tiny spark from getting perverted or transformed into something ugly and for the purpose of bringing it up and strengthening it, we resort to the rules and the logic of the *sastras* explaining to ourselves all the time: "this is good, this is right, this is needed." In this sense despite of the feeling that our motive is exactly this "good, right, needed," it is a secondary motive and it serves only the auxiliary, the secondary purpose of ultimately developing in us attachment, strengthening and protecting it.

This is the point, and, once again, this is a contradiction. If you go to Vrindavan, you will sometimes encounter these things, when we are accused of doing something wrong; that here we are either not practicing *raganuga* or we are improperly practicing it, and so on, in a word, god knows what. I recently thought about ... I don't know how it is here, in the Baltic States, but in Russia if you ask the devotees why they have joined ISKCON, for what reason, they will all quote one and the same name, "Audharya Dhama"; in 95% of the cases people say "I heard Audharya Dhama's lectures and I took to heart what he was saying." What does Audharya Dhama say? That there are Vedic scriptures which says that I should wish everyone good and people start wishing everyone good and then, unwittingly, start chanting Hare Krishna

(laughter). It all starts somewhat ... It is also a very controversial point, because sometimes when it comes to Audharya Dhama or similar preachers and that what they do is called indirect preaching, they get very offended. If you tell Audharya Dhama that he is an indirect preacher – for him that would be ... And in a sense it's a fact, because people, as I have said, wish good for some time and then start chanting Hare Krishna; they might not immediately start chanting Hare Krishna, but they will. Why? What does Audharya Dhama and people like him do? They generate faith in the *sastras* and thus give the initial *adhikar* so that a person can engage in *vaidhi-sadhana-bhakti*. Because ultimately, and this is something amazing – a person simply starts to have faith in the *sastras* because he feels that this is right, that this is good that it works – through Ayurveda, through yoga and the like and he develops this understanding that this is good. And this faith in the *sastra*, when he starts to further read the *sastras*, he inevitably understands that *sastra* is talking of what? Eventually *sastra* is talking of love of God and that love of God is useful for him. At first he can't understand ... Love of God is something highly impractical in the understanding of common people, so it is extremely difficult for him to understand but he does understand that, "Yes, it all works and yet, all these people whom I have trusted, these people who seem to know, all these psychologists, Vedic astrologers, they sit and chant Hare Krishna; maybe I, too, should chant Hare Krishna?" In this way *adhikar* appears and Bhaktivinoda Thakur explains in a very interesting way that even when a person does everything driven exactly by this, he starts hearing about Krishna, he starts chanting, and *raga* or attachment do appear in him. Now the only thing he needs is to remove the brakes, to understand what prevents him from developing this *raga*, to understand what he needs to get rid of so that this affection or the understanding that I like this becomes fully fledged.

How does this practice begin? Actually, it begins with hearing and with a very specific form of hearing. This desire to love Krishna comes when we don't merely hear about Krishna or even merely hear the "Bhagavad-gita", not merely about the greatness of Krishna and not even when we merely hear the Hare Krishna mantra, although it's all inside there; rather, our original attachment to Krishna, dormant within us, wakes up when we start hearing about how the living beings in the spiritual world are attached to Krishna. When we hear about how in the spiritual world all living beings love Krishna, especially in Vraja, how this love of Vraja removes all restrictions in the the living being relationship with Krishna; when we follow *vaidhi*, *vaidhi* means rules and regulations and we need rules and especially at the beginning. Bhaktivinoda Thakur explains that we need rules to fix up our *raga*, our perverted *raga*. We must somehow or other cure our attachment to material things or pleasures and for that we need rules. But at the same time time when we live in compliance with the rules, they restrain us inside. I know: this is allowed, this is not allowed, this is good, this is bad, God forbid ... and I come to the Deity and I'm afraid. As one devotee was telling that he was worshiping the Deities for the first time, he went into the altar in some temple in Ukraine, he was told to do *puja*, and he said, "More than anything else I feared Lord Caitanya. I went in there and I was trembling, I had no idea what I was doing there, God forbid do something wrong!"

This naturally accompanies this impulse, when I act on the basis of it being necessary, being good and I have certain rules, I'm afraid to breach these rules. We are explained how to worship the Deities, we don't know anything, we are told that we have to drip three drops here and we think, "God forbid I drip four! If I drip four everything will be spoiled and I'll go to hell!" And then we are explained that these three drops must be drunk like this, by no means like this or like that ... We were used to drinking god knows how and we think, "O my God, how fallen am I!" (laughter) But this creates a certain form or a certain mentality inside, a certain *bhava* and it restrains one's heart. One is afraid to overstep these rules, including in his relationship with God. On the one hand this is necessary, but on the other hand it is an impediment. Like, in other religions where adherence to the rules is brought to the absurd, it is said there that God forbid to

even say the word "God." If you have read some of those ... they write, "G" - dash - "d." God forbid you say the name of God in vain! It's us here who shout, "Krishna! Haribol!" with or without reason, "Gopal!" In Judaism it is said that you can utter the name of God just once a year! All year long you should set your mind in the right mood and then, when you are done, you utter it and then again all year long you can take a rest. Why? Because that is a natural consequence, and in Islam the rules are even stricter, God forbid there to say anything at all about God! You can't say anything at all about Him! As soon as you say something that's it, you immediately turn into an infidel, an apostate. I once talked with some Muslims who wanted to convert me and I said that, "God is joking in this way," they turned pale, they turned green and said, "God is joking? How can you say such a thing?!" They started shouting! Terrible! Why? Because this impulse or original reason for which people worship God is fixed, it puts their minds including in their relation to God, into a very rigid frame.

That is why Srila Rupa Goswami says that these are different paths, that one interferes with the other, that there is no such connection between them. But Bhaktivinoda Thakura, for reasons very well known to him, says that these are not different paths; that since our *adhikari* is a mixed one, if we understand that we follow the rules for one purpose: to develop attachment to God and that we have no other purpose in following the rules and we are well aware of and follow the rules not for the sake of rules but are aware that ultimately I need to fall in love with God and lose my head out of love for Him – if I understand this, then all these rules will help me. I do not eat meat not because it's bad, not because it is full of toxins; or I don't eat onions and everyone is asking, "Why not onions? It is a plant, isn't it?" or garlic or I don't drink coffee. Ultimately, the reason is only one, because all this will somehow on some subtle or gross level prevent me from developing attachment for Krishna. And I must understand this very well. Therefore, Srila Prabhupada told Harikesa Maharaj, sending him to Russia, "Go to Russia. If you have to drink vodka, drink vodka!" Srila Prabhupada himself, at 70 years of age, a person who had never in his life tasted meat, when he was going to America, he thought, "What if there's nothing else but meat?" And he said, "I was internally ready to go there and eat meat." Because this is not an end in itself, it is just a means. And because if a person, especially in the beginning, doesn't follow this, it will be very difficult for him to understand and appreciate even who Krishna is, not to mention feeling love for Him. But if, in order to serve Krishna, I have to drink vodka, I will drink vodka! Hare Krishna! (laughter) I'm not asking you to do it (laughs), I do not think you should start right after the lecture. This is a radical statement, but you have to understand the principle: that we follow the rules not for the sake of rules, but only because these rules must eventually help me to attain love of God. Why do we chant sixteen rounds? Like, people take a vow at the initiation: "I promise to chant sixteen rounds." And if they chant seventeen that's already a violation of the vow (laughter), "I musn't! I have taken a vow: no more than sixteen rounds!" Because again, this is that same mentality, a rule means "from here to here" without understanding what these rules are there for eventually. And after all, as a living being, I need only one thing – to attain love.

It was only Lord Caitanya who gave it, this is not to be found anywhere else, in no other *sampradaya*. If we take the Madhava-*sampradaya*, you can't find it there, although we proudly declare that we are Brahma-Madhava-Gaudiya-*sampradaya*. Well, it's not there, in Madhava-*sampradaya*! Go to Udupi, there they worship Krishna with love and devotion, and there's no one but Krishna. Even Balaram is ten kilometers away from Krishna. They are together, they love each other, but Krishna is in Udupi and Balaram is there, on the bank missing Him in separation. Not to mention Radharani being there, there no one even knows about Her, in Udupi. No one knows! About the *gopis* they say, "Well, those are *apsaras* from the heavenly planets, what do you expect from them?" And who is the best devotee? Brahma. Brahma himself came to Vraja and said, "There's something I do not quite understand here, I'm going

back. I'm going to worship Him from a distance." He said, "I want to be a blade of grass here in Vraja" and in the Madhava- *sampradaya* they say that he is the best devotee. What's Brahma called? He's called *viddhi*. *Viddhi* means a rule, a law. No one understood that previously and everyone said, "Well, yes, there is this Vraja-*lila*, but sometimes Narayana goes on a vacation, he goes to the village and when He spends His holiday there, this is called His Vraja-*lila*." What they don't understand in the other *sampradayas* is that they are the very essence of Krishna's heart, the very essence of God's heart. It was only explained by Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, that what God normally does when He is not tied to anything? – He loves and He wants to be surrounded by those who love Him. Therefore, we say that only God Himself could explain it. Krishna came, He revealed all this and no one understood anything and then He sat down and thought, "Why did I come? Was that in vain? It must be explained." So, He comes as Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu so that even stupid people like the Russian, the Ukrainians, the Lithuanians etc., can understand this, so that even they can understand it, because actually it is very difficult to understand. That God is tending cows is very difficult to understand! Because He is God, why should He tend cows? If He was studying the scriptures ... Like, the Jewish say that God is studying the "Torah" all the time, sitting and studying – He must somehow spend the whole eternity, so He is studying the "Torah"! And here come the *Vaisnavas* with their drums and say, "God is tending cows and playing the flute!" How is it possible to understand this? When Brahma is describing Purusha, God, he says: *sahasra sirsah purushah sahasraksha sahasra-pat* – God has thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, thousands of arms. Did you imagine that? Thousands of heads, thousands of eyes, thousands of legs, thousands of arms ... Wow! Dare not worship Him! You might get killed!

In the same way people transfer the ideas that somehow or other God must be something extraordinary, something absolutely bizarre or dreadful and those who engage in this – the gurus or the great yogis – should also be very extraordinary and dreadful, too. If he does not eat and doesn't drink – that's a guru, but if he eats and drinks then [??? 44:47]. People can't understand this and it is actually very difficult to understand. Caitanya Mahaprabhu explains that same complicated point - that God's beauty is His simplicity, that God does not do anything special. Well, sometimes Krishna kills some demon, when no one sees. When all the cowherd boys fainted Krishna allowed Himself to swell to an incredible size; well, He was curious about it but as long as no one sees. So, this Aghasura got choked up; then again He turned small, came out and said, "Come on, let's go, everything is fine with us!" Normally, Krishna does not do anything extraordinary: He goes to the pastures, he tends the cows and plays the flute. We call it a flute; actually, that's not even a flute, that's just an ordinary bamboo pipe (laughter). He has no jewelry, nothing, just common flowers, these are even rather splendid, His are just ordinary flowers that grow in the forest, these here seem to be some dahlias. What does he have on His head? – A peacock feather. That's it, there is nothing more – no tiaras, no crowns. That's God and who surrounds Him? Ordinary people. And what's so special about that? The special thing is that is God; and for them what's special is that they love Him and have nothing else, and that for Him they are willing to do anything.

Actually, this is the most difficult to understand. God is most extraordinary and when this most extraordinary God does nothing extraordinary that's the most extraordinary of all that He does. When the extraordinary does ordinary things that's the most extraordinary. This is the essence of what Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu has brought. He is an ordinary man, He walks on ordinary ground. When the demigods descend from heaven they do not touch the ground, they are called by a special word in Sanskrit because the demigods are disgusted. They are disgusted because what is dust? It's ashes, it's disintegration, it's death – and they are immortal; if they touch it, "Baaa!" But Krishna bathes Himself in dust and is happy! Krishna, when the *gopis* see Him ... Again and again the *gopis* say, "When we see Him coming back from the pastures all covered

with dust and His hair also covered with dust – He is entirely covered with dust, He is dirty, they say, we love Him; we love the One smeared with dust who has nothing so extraordinary about Him except for His extraordinary beauty and extraordinary love."

This is, actually, the point and the essence is that it is this thing that, in accordance with our philosophy, and only this that can fully satisfy the soul. The soul feels complete absolute satisfaction when it feels this love that nothing interferes with. Because any extraordinariness will interfere with love. What's the river that flows in Vraja? Yamuna, yes. It can be waded across. We sometimes think, "Yamuna, Yamuna ..." But it can be waded across! "Ganga - wow!" Yamuna is an ordinary river, most common. Everything there is very simple, but the essence is that eventually that's all a person needs. "Srimad-Bhagavatam" begins with that, *ahaituki apratihata yayatma suprasidati* – when a person feels this absolutely unmotivated, absolutely unconditional love, not based on anything, for which there is no cause except that it is the nature of the soul, the soul feels complete and absolute satisfaction such that it doesn't want anything else. When the soul experiences *bhakti*, it doesn't want anything else, it just wants more of this *bhakti*. All other positions in this world, whatever position we may achieve, all the time you want what? Something else. Nobody is satisfied. A man is driving a Mercedes and the people walking on the street think: "O, that's a cool guy, he's driving a Mercedes," while he's riding in the car and thinking, "They are fine. When I was going on foot, I was much better because no one was getting at me."

This *raganuga* or the desire for *raga* appears when we hear about what love binds Krishna and His devotees and we want exactly the same love. When we hear that there is a place where absolutely pure, absolutely honest and absolutely sincere people live who have no desire whatsoever to cheat anyone, in whose hearts there is nothing but love, who love Krishna and love each other and when we hear about this, we think, "I want to be with them." This is called *raganuga-sadhana*. Does someone want to be among such people who never cheat anyone, in whose hearts there is only one love and nothing but love, who love God and love each other? Does someone want to be with them? Does someone understand that there is nothing else we need? Actually, why do people join us? There was a sociological study that explained why people join this or that religious group, this or that sect. Now when asked people can say, "I like the philosophy," but this study proved that people join because they like the people here, because they feel good and that's it, philosophy follows after, no matter what the philosophy is – scientology? - let it be scientology, whatever. It can be any, even the most stupid philosophy. There are Mormons, has anyone read their philosophy? That's the strangest thing in the world! People join it, millions join it. Why? Because there they find something they haven't found anywhere else, because they find love, they find some people. In essence, Caitanya Mahaprabhu says that this is the goal of all our aspirations. The goal of all our aspirations is to eventually be together, together with these people and to no more want anything else.

When a person develops this stimulus he realizes: this is what I need, I want to be among such people and for this I am willing to do anything. If, to be together with such people I have to chant the same thing for two hours, I'll chant for two hours. If I have to chant for four hours, I'll chant! Because eventually nothing can replace love in the person, nothing can compensate the lack of this love. Now people, the farther they go from God, the more isolated they become. Everyone wants love, everyone wants association, everyone wants certain intimacy. That's the reason mobile phones are invented, to have intimacy, that's the reason the internet is invented and now people sit in the same apartment, husband in one room, wife in the other, writing to each other over the chat. Because the isolation is becoming greater and greater.

I wanted to tell you some shocking news: in Vrindavan there is no Internet! Not in the earthly Vrindavan, there is already (laughter). In the spiritual. There is no Internet, no computers, there are only cows! Cows that are lowing, "Moo." Someone said they were sending SMS's in this way. But there is something different, there is love. Rupa Goswami explains exactly in this way, he says that when a person feels this *raga* or attachment that eternally lives in the hearts of the eternal associates of the Lord, and when a person wants, when he attains the desire to have exactly the same affection, this path is called *raganuga-sadhana*, when he has this one incentive and nothing else. He does everything in order to attain that affection, he looks and he follows in the footsteps of those who are around Krishna and serve Him. When he follows this and when he sees how much they love Krishna and what sacrifices they undergo for His sake, he tries to develop the same mood in his heart to some extent, that is *raganuga-sadhana*. Our earth is a wonderful, unique place. "Srimad-Bhagavatam" glorifies the earth, it says that another name for our body is *sadhana-deha*. The human body is the only body in which the soul can engage in *sadhana*. In all other states, whatever universe we are in, whatever planet we are on, we cannot change our *bhava*. Here on the earth, I can change my mood, because here, on the earth, there is nothing good and nothing really bad, either. The earth is a middle place. In heaven no one wants to change their *bhava*, everyone is too absorbed in pleasures. Neither do they in hell, they are too much absorbed in suffering. And here the predominant *bhava* is boredom, people can and want to change constantly, so we may develop the desire and the understanding of what we need, what *bhava* we need – only here on the earth, in no other place. When we hear how the devotees in Vrindavan love Krishna, we think, "Maybe I should also try? Hopefully, it will work out!" When we hear of these devotees who are absolutely free from any deceitfulness all of a sudden we too want to be free of it.

Let's see why all our *acaryas* say that the most amazing example of this love are the *gopis*. Sometimes we are shy to talk about the *gopis*, sometimes *gopis* is even a forbidden word in ISKCON, God forbid, *sahajiya*! But the *gopis* are amazing! Sukadeva Goswami glorifies them, Uddhava glorifies them! Uddhava, Brihaspati's disciple, came and bowed down to them. Brahma says, "I can not understand how they did it!" Uddhava says, "What did they give up? They gave up everything for Krishna! They gave up their relatives, they abandoned everything they had, all their attachments, and the last attachment they gave up was the attachment to their good reputation." Sukadeva Goswami says, "they gave up *arya-patha*." In Vedic culture, the most valuable thing a woman has is her chastity. There was a story from around 19th century, when the Muslims conquered Udaypur and the Muslim ruler wanted to enjoy that *raja's* wife. In order to preserve their chastity, the wife, along with all her maidservants and concubines, burned themselves, they entered into fire! Because there is nothing more valuable – of course, in our nowadays society no one knows what is valuable – but in Vedic society the most valuable thing a woman had was her chastity. If a woman was deprived of chastity, if some other man tried to touch her, she would rather die than live. The *gopis* gave this up, the *gopis* gave up everything and they didn't care what people would talk about them! They knew that they would be completely ostracized from society. They gave up everything and ran to Krishna. To comprehend this is extremely difficult. Rukmini could not give it up. She wrote a love letter to Krishna and said, "Krishna, take me." Krishna took her and Rukmini said, "Now let's go to the registrar." Rukmini wouldn't agree to live a single day with Krishna unless He had a *vivaha-yajna* performed. After that yes, as long as you want, but the first condition was to have a *vivaha-yajna*. If Rukmini was offered to "just stay with Him in the palace," Rukmini wouldn't want to, she would refuse. This is Dwaraka, this is *vaidhi-sadhana-bhakti*. In Vrindavan there are no restrictions: only love and nothing else! I just want to love and to be the like that. When a person feels the attractiveness of that love, he attains a certain qualification to engage in the *sadhana* brought by Caitanya Mahaprabhu. But then the problems start, because inside there are

obstacles that interfere with that and that's what we'll be talking about in our following lectures. Thank you very much!

It's getting late. If you have one or two questions ...

Question: Can it be that on our earth not only the middle level, the level of boredom is represented, but let's say, the experience of hell and heaven?

Answer: Yes, there is both heaven and hell, and they are impediments ...

Continuation of the question: A person who was driving through Congo, he had this crazy idea of driving through Congo ... He told me they were driving through the jungle and at one point a large crowd started chasing after them, mad with hunger and they wanted to eat them up and they barely escaped, they said that if the truck motor has gone dead that would have been the end of them.

Answer: Under such circumstances it is extremely difficult to engage in *raganuga-sadhana-bhakti*, that's an undoubted fact! (laughter)

Question: These people also have human bodies, they've been given human life but where are they going, that's hell!

Answer: There is both heaven and hell on the earth, and in the Eleventh Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" Krishna explains what heaven is and what hell is. He says that heaven is when the *sattva-guna* prevails, and that hell is when *tamo-guna* prevails and that's all. We see that there are places or rather human consciousness, there are species of human life, where the *sattva-guna* prevails and that is a heavenly state, a person feels good, he does not need anything and he has no impulse. And if *tamo-guna* prevails then he is also too absorbed by all this. But the earth is characterized by a certain balance, a certain mixture of all these things. If *rajo-guna* predominates, it is also very difficult, but if nothing particular prevails and most importantly, a person can hear all these descriptions from the Tenth Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" from the lips of the devotees, then he may develop the desire to also be one of them. And, of course, if those are cannibals they are not interested in that. When the consciousness is too absorbed in either inferior things or some more subtle pleasures, sophisticated, at the level of heavenly pleasures – both are impediments.

Question: I have a complicated question: how can a person who is enjoying understand that he is suffering?

Answer: He cannot. Until he has to go to the dentist. He cannot. If a person is enjoying too much he can understand that he is suffering only when these enjoyments come to an end. The problem of material enjoyment including *sattva-guna* in the material world is that sooner or later it all comes to an end. The problem of the heavenly planets is that in heaven the living beings can never understand that there is something wrong in there, everything is perfect there and they can never understand that they need something else. Indra cannot change his position and he sticks to his position to the last because what's the point, he likes it there, he feels good there! The problem starts when he senses the prospect of possibly losing this, that's the only way to understand that he is suffering. The problem with material pleasures is that they will sooner or later come to an end and when that end comes ... It is said that all the inhabitants of the heavenly planets wear a garland that never fades, and a few days before their death it starts fading and when that person sees this horror strikes him to the bones and he thinks, "That's it,

the end has come!" This is a sign, a message – when it fades that's the end. He falls down and together with the rain comes back here and [??? 66:06]. So the only way to understand that pleasure brings suffering is to be deprived of these pleasures, to understand that I have been fooled again.

Thank you, Srila Prabhupada ki! Jaya!

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Hare Krishna. So, we are trying to understand the "Instructions to the mind." In accordance with the *sankhya* philosophy, the mind is one of the sense organs called *antah-karana*. We have five external sense organs which collect information from the outside world. There is one internal sense organ that processes that information. However, this sense organ, *antah-karana*, or *svantah*, as Raghunatha Das Goswami calls it in the first verse, has one amazing quality: it does not obey us. All other senses more or less obey us. If I want to see something, I see it, if I don't – I look away. If I want to go somewhere, I go there, if I do not want to go anywhere, I stay in one place. Mind thinks what it wants, not what I want. Imagine if all the other senses had the same independence as the mind. I want to stay but my legs say, "We're going!" (laughter) Mind is like that, we can't tell it, "Think what you should be thinking of." Mind will be thinking what it wants to. It is always thinking of something because there is a certain program allowing it a certain independence which on the one hand is a blessing, because the mind is given to us so that it can prove something that even we don't believe in. The mind is constantly proving to us that we are God and deep down in ourselves we do not believe it, but the mind is proving it so nicely that willy-nilly we have to believe it. But this same circumstance is a curse for us because we can't so easily change that program.

Krishna says that depending on what the program in our mind is, we obtain our next body and at the time of death we cannot tell our mind, "Think about Krishna!" Even throughout our life we cannot do it, right? Has someone tried to tell his mind, "Think about Krishna?" We chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare and we tell the mind, "Think about Krishna!" And what does it think? What it wants. What it is attached to. Actually, the meaning of human life and the meaning of *sadhana* is to replace this program in the mind; to teach the mind to think of Krishna. And as I said yesterday, there are two ways to do this, basically two ways. One way is to explain to the mind that this is good, that this is necessary, that this is useful and the mind will reluctantly do what it has understood to be useful. We can logically convince the mind and therefore the *sastras* have their own logic and, generally, people like logic, various evidences, philosophy, when someone proves to us in detail that God exists, that Krishna is God, that you should think about Him ... We think, "Well, I'll think a bit about that in my spare time." This is one way and it works to a certain extent, but Caitanya Mahaprabhu says that this method is *abala*. *Abala* means deprived of power, having no power.

There is another way to change the program in our mind – it is to somehow or other instill it with desire, with attachment, because the mind thinks only of that it is attached to. We can understand very well what our mind is attached to. You can make a nice experiment: close yourself up in a room for a day and say aloud any thought that crosses your mind; record it and then listen to it. Or better yet, sit down and chant and listen to what the mind is thinking about. In Sanskrit, the word *raga* comes from the root *ranj* which means to color. The mind is colored in a certain way and our mind rushes to where its attachment is. Therefore, coming to this world, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu explained a unique form of spiritual practice following the attachment in the mind. The only problem is where to take this attachment from, how it can be attained. What is the answer to this question? Where can we get it? It can only be obtained from one who has it, right? Is it logical? Can we get it from someone who doesn't have it? No. We can somehow or other obtain this attachment from someone in whose heart it is very strong. Therefore, the

method of *raganuga-sadhana* is not meditation on Krishna, or rather not only on Krishna, but meditation on those who have affection for Krishna.

When we understand that I need the same love that lives in the heart of the pure associates of Krishna, when I realize that I don't need anything else, I start thinking about them. Thinking about them, I try to serve in the same way they serve. These attempts eventually lead to their bestowing this affection on me out of their mercy. Affection is causeless, it is the result of their mercy, which naturally comes to those who are trying to follow in the footsteps of Krishna's great devotees.

Yesterday I tried to explain this simple thing which is very difficult to understand – that all the problems in this world arise only from lack of love; that any problem we take, if we trace it to its root – be it a disease, old age, loneliness, the crimes that are committed here, be it violence, cruelty, spite – it's all the result of a single problem, lack of love. The *sastras*, in particular, "Srimad Bhagavatam" describe that there is a place in God's creation where there is no shortage of love, where there is an abundance of love. This place is called Vraja, Vrindavan. And since there is an abundance of love, there are no problems. This place is called Vaikuntha which means "a place where there are no problems." There are no prisons. Have you ever heard of a prison in Vraja? Sending someone to prison? There's no policemen. True, it is once mentioned that Nanda Maharaja sent a policeman to announce that "tomorrow we're going to Mathura to give presents to Kamsa." Actually that was not a policeman, that was some shepherd who sometimes played the role of a herald. There are no means of coercion. The most amazing thing is that there is no management even. None at all! Everything is done out of love and everything is so simple, everything sorts out by itself. The people there cooperate with each other and love each other because they all love Krishna. This is a society that we are trying to re-create to a certain degree or a part of which we want to be.

All desires other than the desire for love, appear in our heart due to lack of love. Our heart is empty and an empty heart gives rise to all other desires which generally don't make anyone happy. People go crazy because of these desires, people simply go completely crazy, perverted, distorted, they need respect, honor, money ... What do we actually need? Only love. When there is love, we need nothing else. When there is no love, we need everything else. And when we have everything else it is still not enough! You can have all the money in the world ... Vamanadev says that "Even if one is in possession of the entire world, it will still be not enough! He will start war with another universe and will try to conquer it." Because the greed in the heart is insatiable; when there is a vacuum in the heart due to the absence of God, that vacuum sucks in everything but it can't be filled because it's only God who can fill it. This desire to be near Krishna and love Krishna the way His devotees love Him without any deception is the beginning, it is the foundation of *raganuga-sadhana*. Most amazingly – and it is probably the most amazing thing in the world – the most amazing news that Caitanya Mahaprabhu brought us is that we can attain the same love, completely pure and absolutely selfless. This is the potential we can develop. It's not for nothing that the human form is called *sadhana-deha* – it's because *sadhana* means a certain practice through which we can achieve the goal, the *sadhya*. People in this world achieve amazing goals: some run very quickly, some jump very high, some swim very deep, some fly very high – people can do amazing things! They can sum, multiply and divide multiple digit numbers if they want. They can play chess and see twenty moves ahead. They can learn to read thoughts. Using various methods of *sadhana* we can develop amazing skills, a person can become a pianist, a virtuoso, a violinist – a person can become anything! A person can become an actor or imitate a barking dog – there are so many ways to engage one's human form of life. A person has a huge number of abilities and if I develop these abilities, I can almost reach perfection in practically each of them, I can do anything: bark like a

dog, roar like a tiger, but the most amazing thing is that I can learn to love Krishna the way He's loved in Vrindavan! This is the most amazing ability, which is given to us at birth and the *sadhana* we are practicing is supposed to bring us to the state in which the potential that's built-in in us fully reveals – complete, absolute, pure and selfless love.

This is what we are looking for. What are people looking for in the material world? For Krishna. The ideal is sought after all the time, right? Radha and Krishna, right? Sometimes a person sees someone and thinks, "This must be Krishna!" If this creature is in a *sari*; and a person in a *dhoti* sees someone and thinks, "This must be Radha! I've found Her!" They are looking for it all the time; however, they are mistaken all the time. Just in a month it turns out that it was not Krishna, it was a demon who pretended to be Krishna. It wasn't Radha, it was a witch. But everyone loves, everyone is looking for the ideal, everyone wants the ideal and everyone wastes their lives in futile search for it without having any idea where to find it. The *sastras* say that there is a way to realize that ideal and to that end one should hear – hear with faith and in a certain mood. And above all, "Srimad-Bhagavatam." On the pages of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" people can meet Krishna. "Bhagavatam" is non-different from Krishna Himself.

That's why in his writings and books Bhaktivinoda Thakur has made a synthesis of these two paths. The first path is when I have faith in the *sastras*, when I'm convinced by the logic of the *sastras* and this is *vaidhi-sadhana-bhakti*. I start doing something – I get up early, I take a shower and murmur to myself, (a verse) "Those who come to the temple in the mornings are wise, that's what the mornings are for." (laughter and applause) Anyway, thanks to this logic I constantly make efforts and I have to give lectures everyday, God forbid I fail to hear a lecture one day, I immediately want to fall into *maya*, to escape somewhere. But when I get faith in the *sastras*, I get the desire to hear the *sastras*. At some point, hearing the *sastras*, I start hearing about Krishna and I think, "Wow, Krishna's there!" and I get a spark of attachment. Because it is through hearing that I'm imparted with desire. Bhaktivinoda Thakura speaks about this in a very interesting way in his "Kalyana-kalpataru", I think, *viddhi marga rata jani svadinatha ratna dane raga marga karan praves*. When a person gets attached to adherence to the rules of devotional service, beginning first of all with *sravanam*, the *sastras* say you should hear, hear and hear, *sravanam*, *kirtanam* and I do this because I have to, I hear because I have to; not because I want to, but because I have to. But if I get attached to this, if I hear someone who has an attachment and I get attached and I hear about Krishna over and over again, *svadinatha ratna dane* – I obtain the jewel of freedom, I do this not because I have to but because I want to. This *ratna*, this precious stone of freedoms, appears in my heart. *Raga marga karan praves* – and this becomes the reason I take to the path of *raga*, attachment to Krishna. As a result, as Bhaktivinoda Thakur says, "I attain the desire of *parakiya*, the secret love of God." This is the way.

Yesterday I explained this principle, Srila Rupa Goswami says: *virajantim abhivyaktam vrajavasi janadisu ragatmikam anusrita yasa raganuga cate*. He says that when a person wants to follow the *ragatmik*s, follow in their footsteps, *ragatmikam anusrita*, this path is called *raganuga*. In other words, *raganuga* is an abbreviation of "*ragatmika anuga*" following in the footsteps of the *ragatmik*s when I see how Yasoda associates with Krishna, how Nanda associates with Krishna, how Yashoda says, "Krishna, dance!" and Krishna starts dancing, how Yashoda takes up a rope and binds Krishna up and Krishna says, "Yes, I am yours!" Krishna was tied up by everyone – His friends tied Him up, Yasoda tied Him up, Radharani tied Him up. Krishna is God who is always tied up, tied up by love. Hearing about that I want to do these things; the most important word here is *anusrita*, to follow. Not to imitate but to follow. There is *anukaranam* and *anusaranam*. *Anukaranam* means imitation; *anusaranam* means following and the difference is that I start appreciating this love and I want to have the same love. I hear about Krishna, like in

nyaya it is said, *janati icchati karoti: janati* – a person knows, he hears and knows; *icchati* – he develops a desire, and then *karoti* – he starts doing. As we all know, advertisement can instill desire in us, advertising is a way to get us want what we don't want at all, what we don't need. So, when we get the desire to serve in the same mood, then that is *raganuga*. Not to imitate. I would like to say just a few words about the difference between imitation and following before we move on to the main topic. When I want to imitate someone, I want to become him, in essence, right? This is the essence of imitation. I want to become Srimati Radharani, I want to become Yasoda, therefore people sometimes dress like a *gopi*, they think: "I will now turn into one!" and they think, "This is *raganuga: gopis* wear *saris* and I wear a *sari*." Like, one *brahmacari* asked me: "Do you know how to put on a *sari*?" I said, "No, I don't." He said, "How is that? What are we going to do there, we'll go there but won't be able to put on a *sari*!" (laughter)

The essence of imitation is that I want to be an emulator. Essentially, I want to take the position of Srimati Radharani, I want to take the position of the *gopis* and Krishna doesn't like that. I emulate someone in order to gain the same potency, the same power, the same wealth that he has. Some people used to imitate Srila Prabhupada. One of his students started walking with a similar cane. Srila Prabhupada walked with a cane and he also started walking with a cane. Simple, tight? A person thinks, "I'll start walking with a cane and speaking with the same intonation." Sometimes we listen to someone who has this influence and authority and he starts thrusting himself and speaking with the same intonations, imitating him in his ways, laughing in the same way, he gets a cane or something. But inside there is envy. The reason for that is envy. I do not want to serve as they do, I do not want to attain the same mood, I want to enjoy the same position that they have.

This is actually the problem. *Sahajiya* is exactly in this, in a person's trying to attain the same position, imitating what these great devotees have. But in the "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu" Srila Rupa Goswami says, *nitya siddhasya bhava sya prakatyam hridi sadhyata – sadhya* or the goal of all my endeavors is *nitya siddhasya bhavasya*, getting the same *bhava* that the *nitya-siddhas* have; getting the same pure internal desire to serve Krishna that the Lord's eternal devotees have. This is the essence of this devotion. Therefore I should hear about them, think about them, meditate on them, and try to understand what their mood is. "Srimad-Bhagavatam", Canto Tenth, contains several songs of the *gopis*. Krishna enters into the forest and the *gopis* get together and start singing because they can't just speak in prose! They can speak about Krishna only in verses. They start talking of Krishna entering the forest, of the cowherd boys singing His glories, of His playing the flute, and they can't stop, they are narrating all this to each other. Or, when Krishna left the *gopis*, they sat down on the bank of the Yamuna and also started singing in separation from Krishna, and then when Akrura came to Vrindavan from Mathura, the *gopis* began getting together in small groups again talking about Krishna: "He is going to leave! He's going to leave! Akrura is called *akrura* and *akrura* means kind-hearted. Ironically enough, Akrura is the most *krura* of all, no one is more cruel than him!"

When we're reading this, we must feel the mood: here He is, Krishna. When Krishna left Vrindavan, only the *gopis* were crying, everyone else thought, "He'll be back soon!" but the *gopis* knew, "He will not come back", they had that presentiment. They followed Him, some of them standing still, unable to move, others followed and stared at the retreating chariot and the flag and the dust it raised, they were weeping. When we chant the mantra we should chant it like this, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare - "Krishna, You've left me!" Or like, Srila Prabhupada had a favorite godbrother, Akincana Krishnadas Babaji Maharaj. He was in the mood of *sakhya-bhava*. The *sakhas*, Krishna's friends, are joking with Krishna all the time, they're rejoicing all the time,

they're slapping Him on the shoulder and not only on the shoulder, sometimes below His back because they are friends. Do you know the way he chanted mantra? He was laughing all the time like this (showing): Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. That's called *raganuga-sadhana*, when I try to understand in what mood these devotees serve Krishna and I think of them, not only about Krishna Himself, but I think about how they serve Him and actually these devotees are Krishna Himself. These *nitya-siddhas*, devotees who surround Krishna in the spiritual world, these *ragatmika-bhaktas* are Krishna's personal expansions. Krishna thought, "Who is going to serve Me?" and He knew that He shouldn't hope for someone serving Him, "I'll have to serve Myself." This is *sakti-tattva*, His own energy, expansions of His own energy, He's emanating them and Krishna Himself becomes the servant of His own Self, His devotees, and He is associating with them. This *lila* is called love – He serves His devotees and the devotees serve Him. As the Upanishads say, *eko bahu syam* – Krishna has multiplied and everyone serves Him there, but it is Krishna Himself.

We can't enter the spiritual world until we have the same mood. What does it take to get to the Sun? Can we get to the Sun in this body composed of 80%water? We can but there will be left nothing of our body. The spiritual world is made of love and to get there and remain there we must also be made of love. Therefore, Srila Rupa Goswami defines the *ragatmikas* as those – and actually *ragatmika* means *raga-atmika*, those made of *raga*, of attachment to Krishna – he explains that *raganuga* means to follow in their footsteps, and then he gives a definition of who those *ragatmikas* are: *iste svarasiki-ragah paramavista tabhavet ??? 31:57. Ista* means the object of my desires, and when *svarasiki-ragah*, when the attachment to the object of my desires or to the God I worship – *istadev* means the God I worship – when my attachment to Him becomes *svarasiki*, which means extremely natural, spontaneous, when it becomes my nature, *paramavista-tabhavet* – my mind enters Krishna, my mind is completely absorbed in Krishna, my mind is like a blotting paper permeated with Krishna and there is nothing but Krishna, *tan-mayi abhavet bhaktih satra ragatmikoditah* – such *bhakti* that follows this particular mood is called *ragatmika-bhakti*. This is the very essence of whom we must follow.

Now the question is where to get this desire to follow them and who can we actually get this desire from; and I have already answered that question. But what does it all begin with? Who should it all begin with? With our attachment to Guru. Therefore, Raghunatha das Goswami, beginning his instructions to the mind says what? What is the first word? Has anyone memorized the first word after seven years? *Gurau* – this is *guru* in the plural form. *Guru* must teach us, or at least kindle in us the desire to get rid of our indifference to God. The chronic illness of the living being that we are all die from all the time is our indifference to God. *Isad apetasya viparyayo smritih. Isad apetasya* means indifference to God, we do not care. In essence, we don't care whether He exists or not ... If He gives us something – okay, I'll go and pray a little, will light a candle, if He likes so, I'll do anything, but, in general, we don't care about Him. This must transform at least into the desire for attachment to God, because otherwise I will have to take birth and die all the time. Like Hepatitis C, it is a chronic disease and people die from it. Similarly, we have this chronic disease for which no allopathic cure has been invented yet, there is no interferon yet which can cure our indifference to God. Hepatitis C destroys the liver rendering it useless. Indifference to God destroys all our consciousness, we are rendered useless, we get necrosis of the heart, our heart becomes dry. It is a disease and I must learn that from guru. In order to learn this from guru I need attachment to him. To be able to get it, I need attachment. I get everything from another person through a channel, I can get a lot from another person, but for that I need attachment for him. That is why we will now quickly, in the remaining few minutes, go through the previous six verses and tomorrow will start the seventh one.

1.

*gurau gosthe gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane
sva-mantre sri-namni vraja-nava-yuva-dvandva-sarane
sada dambham hitva kuru ratim apurvam atitara-
maye svantar bhratas catubhir abhiyace dhrita-padah*

This is the first prayer. Tears in eyes, Raghunatha Das Goswami is saying, "You fool!" That is, he does not say "fool", he says, "My dear beloved brother! My mind, my dear, please get attached. Get attached to guru, the one who can teach you attachment, because otherwise you will be getting attached to everything else." One cannot live without attachment. It can be either some painful, perverted attachment that pulls us down, or it can be an attachment that will be curing us, that will be giving us strength and happiness. He says *gurau* – get attached to those teachers, those people in whom you see some affection for Krishna. *Gosthe* – get attached to Vrindavan, although it is easy to get attached to Vrindavan, especially if we live somewhere in Lithuania or Riga; we think, "I'll go to Vrindavan! The sun is shining there!" But Vrindavan is not just a geographical place, it is a state of consciousness. *Gurau gosthe gosthalayisu sujane bhusura-gane* – he says: get attached to the place where pure devotees live, get attached to the pure devotees themselves, get attached to the pure people, to the *brahmanas*, to the *uttama-adhikaris*, to the *madhyama-adhikaris*, to the *kanistha-adhikaris* ... In other words, get attached to anyone who is somehow or other attached to Krishna. Even if someone has a tiny spark of affection you must get attached to him in order to obtain that spark of affection from him. If someone is just a *brahmana* and a *brahmana* means he follows the Vedas... Well, there's none left by now, thanks God, so there's nothing much to get attached to, but Bhaktivinoda Thakura says that we must have attachment even for the *kanistha-adhikari* because even he can teach us something, right? Sometimes we see some beginning *bhakta* who is all enthusiasm; it is radiating out of his ears, out of everywhere. And we think, "I, too, used to be like that, but now I'm a senior devotee, I now know the essence of devotional service. It is to criticize whoever comes to hand." But he says, "To anyone. Don't look down on anyone! Understand that you have no attachment whatsoever and if you can get attachment from someone, serve him! Anything that can give you some attachment, do it!" *Sva-mantre sri-namni* – I will serve all those who have some connection with Krishna because I know that by serving them I will be able to get something from them, too. And get attached to the *mantra* that your guru has given you. It is very difficult, because that mantra is something you have to chant three times a day. Some people say, "It's all *varnasrama*." Raghunatha Das Goswami says *sva-mantra* – you should get attached to the mantras, given you by your spiritual master, and to *sri-namni* – to the holy name that you have received from him, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. And what should I do for that? *Sada dambham hitva* – you should always give up you pride. *Dambham* means pridefulness, hypocrisy. Remember that you're a hypocrite and try to serve, then you will be able to feel that affection, you will be able to feel what that pure love is. Give it up all the time.

This is the first verse and he starts precisely with *gurau*, with the fact that we can get some attachment to God from guru, because only he can open the prison of our mind. We are now in the prison of the mind and what are we trying to do when we try to study the scriptures on our own? We think, "Why do I need a guru? I can read myself!" Right? "I can read the books and I can memorize the verses! I will pronounce them with a Russian accent but it does not matter." Like, the Russians say "*BHagavad-gita*" - "but that's not so important, I'll learn them!" But the mind is a prison and in this way I want to imprison Krishna back in the prison of my mind. Kamsa also wanted to imprison Him. But guru can destroy the prison of the mind, this is the the point. Guru can give us limitless things for, we are now the result of the limited, our mind is

limited, our body is limited, our judgment is limited. Guru can sweep away all these things and in this way give us the opportunity to get in touch with the limitless Krishna. This is the point, the first thing I must do is to start developing all these attachments to the spiritual objects and to those who embody the spiritual energy here, in the material world. In the material world there are carriers of the spiritual energy and, in one way or another, these are all the Vaisnavas, Vrindavan itself or the Holy *Dham*, the holy name, the *mantra* that is given to us by the spiritual master, and most importantly – it is our spiritual master himself. Any attachment to them can give me the understanding who Krishna is. Next:

2.

na dharmam nadharmam sruti–gana–niruktam kila kuru
vraje radha–krsna pracura–paricaryam iha tanu
saci–sunum nandisvara–pati–sutatve guru–varam
mukunda–presthavte smara param ajasram nanu manah

Then he is saying, "Do not think either about *dharmā* nor about *adharmā*, do not think about all these things, do not think whether it's right or wrong. Follow your heart, try to follow the attachment, do not bother or entangle in various details." This does not mean that from now on I must look down on *dharmā* or practice *adharmā*. The spirit of this verse is best represented by Madhavendra Puri. What does he say when he says goodbye to his *dharmā*? Does anyone know that remarkable verse? He says, "Farewell, my prayers", *sandhya-vandanam bhadram astu*. *Bhadram astu* means "be healthy, my prayers, live long, but without me!" *Sandhya-vandanam bhadram astu* – he says, "I respect you very much." *Bhavato bhoh snana tubyam namo* – I bow down before you with great reverence, o my bathings that I have to perform three times a day. *Bho devah pitaras ca tarpina-vidhau* – o, all of you demigods and ancestors, I bow down to you as well, I really love you. *Naham ksamah ksamyatam* – forgive me, please. In other words, in the spirit of great humility he says, "May I not follow *dharmā*? (laughter) May I not pay attention to it?" Not with disdain, "I have risen above this, I am up there, and this is down here." Not that I have become so great that I don't have to follow anything. No, he says, "I have great respect for it all, both *dharmā* and *adharmā*, i.e. I do not respect *adharmā*, I avoid it, but that is not the point. Excuse me, please." He says *na dharmam nadharmam sruti–gana–niruktam kila kuru vraje radha–krsna pracura–paricaryam iha tanu* – may I just constantly worship in my mind Radha and Krishna in Vraja? Just sit there, stay there all the time and think about Them.

Then he says that everything else – and now listen carefully, because we have heard what follows many times: we have to get attached, we have to get attached ... Yesterday after the lecture I was asked, "Get attached to guru, get attached to Nityananda, get attached to Radha-Krishna, get attached to Vrindavan ... How can we get attached to all this simultaneously? What should I meditate on – on Nityananda, on Radharani or on Vrindavan? Or maybe on something else?" He says, "All this is somehow or other related to Krishna, you should meditate on Krishna." If you think about guru, who is he? One who's dear to Krishna. Why do you think of him? Because he is dear to Krishna, because he has a relationship. If you think of Caitanya Mahaprabhu, who is He? Krishna Himself. Who is Nityananda? – He is Balaram and there is no difference, there is one single devotion and it all leads to Krishna.

Sometimes in the other *sampradayas* – like, near Delhi there is a splendid temple of Swami Narayana, in London there is also a Swami Narayana temple, people there also kind of worship Krishna, but they worship Swami Narayana and they say, "The most important is Swami Narayana", they forget about Krishna. Krishna is there somewhere, Ramachandra is there, Shiva is there but ahead of all of them is Swami Narayana. But Caitanya Mahaprabhu came and said, "Krishna. Krishna in Vrindavan" and everything else should help us focus all our efforts on

Krishna in Vrindavan. The Tenth Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" – no need for anything else. Raghunatha Das Goswami is saying here, "I have to understand that all my other attachments and all my other practices must bring me there, to Vrindavan, and give me affection for Krishna." Then ... We are going very quickly, we have a few minutes left:

3.

yadiccher avasam vraja–bhuvi sa–ragam prati–janur
yuva–dvandvam tac cet paricaritum arad abhilaseh
svarupam sri rupam sa–ganam iha tasyagrajam api
sphutam premna nityam smara nama tada tvam srnu manah

Yadiccher – if you want, *avasam* – to live, *vraja–bhuvi sa–ragam prati–janur* – life after life in Vrindavan with affection, if you want to take birth in Vrindavan and to take birth not as a pig or a monkey, but a *bhakta*, who lives there and is attached to it, *yuva–dvandvam tac cet paricaritum arad abhilaseh* – and if you want be constantly willing to serve this ever young couple of Vrindavan, what should you do? Whom should you remember? *Svarupam sri rupam sa–ganam iha tasyagrajam api sphutam premna nityam smara nama tada tvam srnu manah* – listen, foolish mind, if you want to know how to live in Vrindavan, remember how Rupa Goswami and Sanatana Goswami lived there. Let this picture stand before your eyes of Rupa Goswami sitting under the Ter-Kadamba and writing the "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu." It is said that when Rupa Goswami wrote about the meeting of Radha and Krishna under the Ter-Kadamba, Ter-Kadamba would be covered with flowers, no matter what the season was. Rupa Goswami radiated such *bhava*, such love, such power, that the tree could feel it and it would rejoice. When Rupa Goswami wrote about the separation of Radha and Krishna, then all the leaves of Ter Kadamba would fall off and it would turn bare, its leaves would fall down like tears. Raghunatha Das Goswami says here, "Remember those great devotees who lived in Vrindavan and how they lived, think about them, read about them, hear about them, about how they lived!" How each night they would sleep under a different tree so as not to get attached, although they were already unattached to anything, all they had was just a *kaupina*; anyone who met them would rejoice. In his days, Sanatana Goswami was dear to everyone, he was called "the big *baba*" because he was everyone's guru. Everyone approached him, served him; he had a soft heart; everyone knew they were writing amazing books in Sanskrit but still they were simple and kind-hearted. Raghunatha Das Goswami says, remember them all the time, remember them with love, remember how these eternal inhabitants of Vrindavan lived so that you also learn to live there, in that land.

These are the first three verses, where everything needed is said, in which there is everything required for attaining attachment to Krishna. Further on, in the next four verses Raghunatha Das Goswami starts explaining what prevents us, what alienates us from all this, what destroys our attachment:

4.

asad–varta–vesya visrja mati–sarvasva–haranih
katha mukti–vyaghrya na srnu kila sarvatma–gilanih
api tyaktva laksmi–pati–ratim ito vyoma–nayanim
vraje radha–krsnau sva–rati–mani–dau tvam bhaja manah

Na srnu – don't listen to anything else, do not go to the internet, "Please, he says, my mind, I beg you, do not go to the internet and do not see the news because it will distract you!" Because you will be thinking about this news, you will be seeing it in your dreams and you will be engaged only in this because your mind will be completely absorbed by this stupid news –

someone has killed someone – well, okay, it happens. The mind is attached to all this. And if it is attached, then its intelligence will be completely stolen. *Asad-varta-vesya* - like a whore all this news steal our mind, and, I beg you, don't listen about liberation, don't listen to all these stories, do not. Don't listen even about Lakshmi and Her master who live in the spiritual world! Don't listen even about them, because you'll want to get somewhere else and you will get to the wrong place and you'll regret it but it will be too late. *Na srnu* – he says there is a certain discipline which we must undergo because in our heart there are these latent germs of attachments that prevent us. During our long existence in the material world we have acquired numerous different attachments that are sleeping like seeds inside our consciousness; when we hear about something that somehow or other arouses these attachments, we water these seeds and the attachments grow in our heart again and again, new weeds! And the very attachment that we need gets suffocated by these weeds. This hearing is the water we are pouring onto them and, depending on what we are listening about, respective attachments will grow. Therefore, he says, "Please have a little patience, then you won't have the desire to hear any more about that, but in the beginning, please, do not go to the internet, I'm really asking you, if the relationship with Radha and Krishna is dear to you. And don't listen about this *mukti*, don't read "Conversations with God" by Donald Neal Walsh, I'm begging you, please don't, the attachment to Krishna in the heart will die; that will be the outcome of all this."

5.

asac-cesta-kasta-prada vikata-pasalibhir iha
 prakamam kamadi-prakata-pathapati vyatikaraih
 gale baddhva hanye 'ham iti bakabhid vartmapa-gane
 kuru tvam phutkaran avati sa yatha tvam mana itah

Then, after this, he is speaking of the strongest attachments we have, of the attachments that we start to encounter when we are seriously engaged in spiritual practice, when we chant: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. The *samskaras* of our past lives come alive within us and say, "Listen, why do you need all this? Why? Let's enjoy this world!" - *Kama!* Ahhh! This is our curse! This attachment to sex is the strongest *samskara* which has remained deep within us and it's such a sticky thing that will be haunting us. This is our birthmark, our misfortune, our disease. A person is striving for Krishna, but the flesh is saying, "Where are you going, my dear, you're not going to escape from me, don't rush, do not run! Stay here!"

Like there was a well-known torture that the heterodox monks in the Franciscan monasteries were subject to, the torture of freedom. The prisoner of conscience would be placed in a basement, and then, after some time, the wards would pretend to have forgotten to lock him up. He would sneak out at night, thinking, "Is it really freedom?" He would come out, sneak through the night yard and he would see a ladder against the monastery wall; he would climb it and then he would suddenly hear the gentle voice of the holy father, "Where are you going, my dear? Did you want to run away? There is no need!" This was done to crush their will.

It is the same with us; some attachment appears in us, we want to break free, we want to break out of these shackles: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare but suddenly we hear the gentle voice of our *kama*, "Where are you going? You want to run away? Come here, don't do that, please, you are all right here with me! Where are you going?" This is what suffocates us. Raghunatha Das Goswami says that when these thugs attack us – lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride, envy, *kama*, *krodha*, *mada*, *moha*, *lobha*, *matsarya* ... The madness *mada* is pride ... When all of them, headed by *kama*, attack us what should we do? When they grab us by the neck, when they

entangle us by some stupid efforts, we should cry out, "They are killing me! They're robbing me! They're strangling me!" We should call the police, we should call the devotees! Those who serve the *bakabhid*. What do these desires cause us ... Why is Krishna called here *bakabhid*, the one who ripped in half the demon Baka? Baka is a crane, here in Lithuania, there are many cranes. The *bakas*, the herons or cranes sometimes stand still and meditate with closed eyes, they perform *tapasya*. As soon as a frog jumps past they "bum!" and then meditate again. This is cheating. What happens to us as a result of these desires is that a person turns into a hypocrite. One part of his mind, of his consciousness, says: "I want to go to Krishna, I want to go to the spiritual world, I want to serve!" And the other part of his mind says what? "Where are you going? Wait, you feel good here, don't do it!" This internal fight divides us and we are faced by this. As long as this *raga* is not strong inside, we face this and it's a terrible thing. We feel like a hypocrite and therefore Raghunatha Das Goswami advises us, "Cry out, call for help! Let the devotees come and then tell you, 'Where are you going? Where do you want to go? What do you want to find there? There's nothing good in all that.'" As soon as the devotees come, it immediately becomes somewhat easier, right?

There's a wonderful story. One devotee was distributing books on *sankirtana* and his legs somehow as if by their own will brought him into a quarter of New York, the red light district, where people exercise a certain type of profession. At the time he used to be a frequenter of that district and somehow as if by itself his mind led him there, he thought, "I must distribute books there, I must save them, Lord Caitanya came to save the most fallen." When he saw that, puhhh! He reached into his pocket, looked at what he was given at the *sankirtana*, he knew he had enough and that's it! It was absolutely impossible, *kama* completely seized him inside, his legs were going by themselves and he forgot everything, he didn't care about anything. At that very moment he suddenly heard the squealing of brakes; a truck came to a stopped next to him, Jayananda Prabhu looked out of it and said, "Hay you, Haribol! Where are you going? (laughter) Do not do that!" He said, "I felt such a relief at that very moment, I realized, 'Krishna loves me, He would not let me do that!'"

So, Raghunatha Das Goswami says, "At that very moment when it is already late, remember the devotees near you and that if you do all this, then somehow or other you won't be with them. Call them and they will save you, they can save you from all these thugs."

6.

are cetah prodyat-kapata-kutinati-bhara-khara
ksaran-mutre snatva dahasi katham atmanam api mam
sada tvam gandharva-giridhara-pada-prema-vilasat
sudhambhodhau snatva svam api nitaram mam ca sukhaya

Finally, the last thing; this is our last year verse and it is about the next obstacle; even when a person has defeated his *kama* inside, hypocrisy still remains inside, *kapata* and *kutinati*. Since we are short of time I will probably say a few words tomorrow and I will move on to the last obstacle. This year's seminar is amazing because we have to overcome one last obstacle, the last thing that separates us from the spiritual realm. I'm sure we'll overcome it together and will break into it in a gay crowd straight from the Lithuanian festival and shout, "Haribol!" (shouts of "Haribol!" and applause) Thank you very much.

Question: Thank you for the lecture, I was especially happy to hear that the mind is not controlled by us.

Answer: I do not think I said anything new.

Continuation of the question: In my service I have to communicate with a large number of people and I have made the observation that the life of non-devotees, that is they deal with their fates and life situations in a somewhat simpler way. With the devotees everything is so complicated though it should be simpler because Krishna consciousness is simple for the simple. Just an example, some everyday issue with the devotees, for example, someone hanging a towel on the wrong rope, turns into an existential crisis, you know, they start an ideological conflict. Why is that?

Answer: The devotees are very subtle people (laughter). The *karmis* are rude. What does it matter where the towel is hanging? The devotees ... the more we chant the subtler we get, the easier it is to hurt us.

But speaking seriously, is not easy to be a devotee because the ideal we have is very high and all those who join, in some way or another all recognize this ideal and they want to somehow or other recreate it in their lives which is difficult because there is a sad abyss between the ideal and the reality. Therefore, respectively, on the one hand sometimes our society becomes very cruel or harsh, because we start judging everyone by this ideal. From the point of view of this ideal everyone is god knows who and god knows what. And the result is that everyone is a rascal or something like that. Have you noticed the number of rascals we have here, it's simply amazing! There is a nice and a very sincere person until he becomes a devotee; everyone takes care of him and thinks, "What a sincere person, what a nice person!" God forbid he becomes a devotee! Immediately everyone starts judging him in a different way, speaking in a different way.

In other words, because of this high ideal and a certain lack in the preaching of humility – and preaching of humility is something to be done all the time, practically every day, because humility is our highest spiritual ideal and practice – inside people do get somewhat unsatisfied. Because if I am humble inside, I can easily accept my condition and I always know that I there's always hope for me, never mind what state I am in; never mind what state I have degraded to Krishna is still better and kinder and He can raise me from any state. But if I am not humble, if I am prideful and I am in this society where I am constantly being judged, my pride is constantly being pricked from all sides, it becomes very difficult. There was a comic article on the two disadvantages and two advantages that are to be found in the various religious groups or currents; I read it once and forgot about it but I was recently reminded of it. I don't remember the details but the point is that it told of the Hare Krishnas and that in the Hare Krishna society there are two great advantages. The first is the philosophy which explains everything, absolutely everything, and the second advantage is facility of travelling around the world, because you can always find where to stay overnight without having to pay for a hotel. These are the two big advantages. And there are two disadvantages, the article dealt with everyone very fairly, and I don't remember the second disadvantage, but the first one was the worst relationship between its adherents. Unfortunately. I do not know how true these assertions are, for some places this is true and it happens exactly for this reason, because of the high ideal and the lack of preaching humility. We should by all means preach this high ideal without lowering it but at the same time we should preach that one's greatest merit is humility, then our relationship will be good. Otherwise a towel or God forbid a *dhoti* hanged in the wrong place will turn into ... It will turn into a reason to leave Krishna consciousness. "I'm fed up! My *kaupina* is hanging on the wrong rope! Come on!"

Question: It's a big question, but in the lecture you mentioned about false attachment to Guru. There is a proper attachment to Guru and there is a false one? Can you say at least a few words about the false one?

Answer: In a nutshell, false attachment to Guru is the attachment based on pride when I am trying to be proud of myself; but since I, by myself, am nobody and unfortunately, I am well aware of that, I start being proud of my Guru, so as to join in and bask in his glory. This is how a cult appears and how can it be recognized? By our offensive mentality, by the fact that while praising someone, we are continuously criticizing everyone else. It's a sign that my attachment is false and that it's based on pridefulness. I'm not satisfied by just praising someone, I have to criticize all the rest and in this way rise above the others. By glorifying my Guru I am actually glorifying myself without being actually attached to my Guru, I am attached simply to his image, which seems so powerful to me, I want to be like him or at least to get closer to him, I want to be near Guru. I need my Guru only because I want to somehow get close to him and thus obtain some extra power. This Guru has many other followers and I can now willfully cross some people out of the *darsan* list, just because I don't like them, just because they haven't explained to me why they are going to him and have not reported to me. In other words, on the basis of certain proximity a person starts glorifying and glorifying the Guru and everyone thinks, "What a *guru-nistha*!" That *guru-nistha* gets stronger and stronger and he starts controlling the others. Everything is based on one's own self, on attachment to one's own self. I do not want to serve the way my Guru serves but I want to get some of his influence and power by means of some cunning tricks.

Thank you very much. Srila Prabhupada ki! Jaya!

Disk 122, track 5, Lithuania, 30.07.2009, Manah-siksa, verse 7, lecture 3

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Hare Krishna. Let's read together the Sanskrit of the sixth verse, where we stopped yesterday:

6.

are cetah prodyat–kapata–kutinati–bhara–khara
ksaran–mutre snatva dahasi katham atmanam api mam
sada tvam gandharva–giridhara–pada–prema–vilasat
sudhambhodhau snatva svam api nitaram mam ca sukhaya

The sixth and seventh verses are speaking of subtle problems. The fifth verse was describing the gross problems that haunt us like a birthmark or a disease – lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride and envy. The sixth verse is saying that at some point a person starts realizing that he is a hypocrite and this awareness of his hypocrisy inside is burning him. This fire of repentance is tormenting him. *Kapata* and *kutinati*.

Before we dwell on it in greater detail, I would like to say a few words about the very mechanism of *anartha-nivritti*; about how a person in the process of chanting and devotional practice gets rid of all *anarthas*. The most amazing thing in our practice is that a person can feel affection for Krishna even before the *anarthas* are gone from his heart. He can, to some extent, feel the attractiveness of Krishna and the love for Krishna and that attractiveness of the love for Krishna will be his driving force. From the very beginning we feel some shadow of this attractiveness in the holy name, in the *kirtan*, in the association with devotees, at the worst, in *prasadam*. But, somehow or other, everyone feels that there is something special in this, that *prasadam* is not just potatoes, but it's *prasadam*, that there is a special taste; that the holy name is not just some sounds that we've heard many times in our life, but that there is something more behind it and that "Srimad-Bhagavatam" is not just a book but it hides some secret. However, because of the *anarthas* that live in our hearts, this attachment is subtle and almost intangible, the *anarthas* are gross and they rule inside. But the mental problems that have accumulated in our mind overshadow Krishna from us and don't allow us to fully feel His attractiveness. Sometimes we feel it and we think, "Maybe I'm imagining it? Maybe it's some kind of a mirage?" Tears fill the eyes, *kirtan* is going on and immediately the mind starts rationalizing, "Nothing special, it will go away!" And it goes away, that's a fact! This kind of practice, when a person is nevertheless driven by taste and he wants to strengthen that taste in himself, but nevertheless there are forces within that repel him from that; this practice is called *ajata-ruci raganuga-sadhana* or *ajata-raga-raganuga-sadhana*, when attachment has not yet appeared in our hearts but still it is there, we are already driven by the desire to attain that attachment; although we haven't yet experienced that attachment as such the desire to get it is already there.

At this point one must start serving. *Bhajana-kriya* means serving and serving means I do not what I want. As long as one has not started to serve, he will never fully realize the internal problems he has. He's got used to them, he's merged with them, he can't see them and he thinks, "Well, in general, I'm a good person, basically. Well, I have some small weak points that those who envy me manage to see in me. But generally I'm a good person."

But if I start serving and serving means serving with one's physical body, when I do something that I may not really want to do – I get up early, I go to the temple, I associate with these pure devotees – and serving also means hearing. These two things help me to deeper look into my

own heart, because when I do something, that I generally don't want to do, these thoughts start appearing, emerging from somewhere inside. I'll be noticing these thoughts and simultaneously I'm listening to what the *anarthas* mean and I start seeing them in myself. I start noticing that all these problems I have heard of in the lectures about Krishna are there, in me. Storms start rising in the mind and people say, "What's that? We've been promised cloudless happiness ..." We've been told that, right? Remember? "Chant Hare Krishna and be happy!" A person encounters these problems face to face, storms rise in his mind, resistance rises in the mind and in a sense the entire logic of our spiritual life reminds a session of *japa*, because in the beginning, when we sit down and start chanting we have some desire and the mind is relatively peaceful. We chant and it is even somewhat enjoyable: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. But then, after a few rounds we want to jump up and start going around Tulasi, we start cutting our rounds and storm rise. Similarly, in the beginning, when a person begins his devotional service, he feels relieved, everyone feels a great relief, "Finally, thank God, I've found what I've always been looking for, all my life! I am here and I am not going anywhere anymore!" Hare Krishna.

But at some point the problems come up and that is why it is very important to actively serve. Srila Prabhupada would always emphasize: one must serve, one must serve, because if I do not serve, nothing will happen. People sometimes think that "I have been serving now for ten years but it seems that I'm farther from the goal of devotional service than I was at the very beginning." The reason for that is very serious. Actually, we've gone a great way, but the practice of devotional service is like the churning of the milk ocean. The "Mahabharata" and the Eighth Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" describe the story of how the demons and the demigods decided to cooperate and how they began churning the milk ocean. They were taxed, sweat was streaming from their bodies and they had lots of problems... And, most importantly, the first thing that came up was poison. The churning of the milk ocean is the churning of our mind. We take the holy name and start churning our mind: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Again and again we are churning and churning and poison comes up to the surface. This is the *kalakuta* poison. *Kalakuta* means terrible poison, black poison, dark poison. And we think, "It wasn't there before! I used to be a better person!" Right? It was there, don't worry, it has just become a part of us. And thank God that it has come to the surface. At that point, when the poison was already threatening to destroy everything around, including all the demons and demigods, Lord Vishnu came up with a good advice, He said, "Call Lord Siva and ask him to drink this poison." In our life we must also call someone to drink this poison, who is that? (Maharaj is showing something, probably pointing at himself) We call him and say, "Drink it, please! This is our *mahaprasadam*." (laughs) He drinks it up and his throat turns black from that poison.

But the point is that the *anarthas* that come to the surface in the process of our practice must go somewhere and we must give them to someone usually it is some Vaisnava, who helps us to digest all this and get rid of all this. Once again, that is why it is very important to serve. *Bhajana-kriya tato 'nartha-nivrttih syat* – if a person is engaged in *bhajana-kriya* or *bhajan*, he's doing something, then *anartha-nivrttih syat* – the *anarthas* will gradually come out. Therefore, in the "Bhagavad-gita" Krishna tells Arjuna, "Fight, Arjuna!" He doesn't tell him, "Speculate. Sit down and speculate a bit, Arjuna." He says, "Go and fight" because spiritual life is a battle, it is labor, it heavy but gratifying labor and the person who takes to this path must be ready for that labor. The driving force of this is exactly service; when I serve, serve, serve, somehow or other force myself to serve, notwithstanding that I do not want to.

At some point, when the gross *anarthas* gradually go away – and they don't go away immediately. Yesterday I talked a little about the most terrible *anartha*, attachment to sex, to

sexual pleasures, that has been long trailing behind us, it is very sticky dirt, very sticky. But at some point even they go away or at least calm down, they slightly let us go, saying, "Okay, we let you free, all right!" But here we realize that I don't want to serve Krishna! That still, despite having no more desires, I want them to be there. I still want to be the lord, to have my wishes fulfilled, not His. That is called hypocrisy. Hypocrisy means the state in which I know that I am Krishna's servant, I know that I depend on Him, but I still want to be independent. I know that in one way or another I must serve all the same, but I don't want to serve, I want to serve myself. This is *kapata* or deception, hypocrisy, duplicity inside, it turns into *kutinati*, diplomacy. *Kutinati* means backbiting, cruelty, too, the offenses we commit. These are two things that haunt the devotee on his spiritual path.

Anyway, this is one of the last bastions of our independence, we still want to be the lord, we don't want to give. Therefore, deception is in a sense the antonym of love. "Srimad-Bhagavatam" begins with these words, *dharma projjita-kaitavo 'tra paramo nirmatsaranam satam* – here, in this book there will be no cheating, there will be only love, there will be no *kaitava*, no *cheating*. Cheating means selfish desires, wanting something for ourselves, including the desire for *moksa*. Sometimes the devotees don't realize that basically they have joined Krishna consciousness because they wanted liberation, because they are fed up with everything. "I'm tired, I'm fed up!" That is the last and the greatest deception – the desire for liberation, when we think, "Okay, well, if I have to chant Hare Krishna I'll chant Hare Krishna, provided I get liberated!" And when the devotee thinks, "I'll give up everything here and go to the spiritual world!", that's also the desire for liberation! In essence, we care nothing about Krishna, but we want to be in a nice place where the sun is shining all the time; therefore, Krishna warns: there is no Sun or Moon in that world, don't hope for a vacation. But we want to get into some nice place, where we are not going to suffer, where our body is not going to give us troubles, where other living beings are not going to give us troubles, where natural disasters are not going to give us troubles. This is the desire for liberation, whereas by the nature we are servants of God, although we don't want to serve. Yes, we do want to get liberated, we are willing to do anything for that, but we don't want to serve!

There was a Vaisnava in the Madhava-*sampradaya*, an *acarya*, who had a disciple. The disciple constantly approached him with the words, "Let's discuss the 'Vedanta-sutra'". He loved the "Vedanta-sutra", because it speaks of liberation. His master would tell him, "Go to the cows and take care of them." He would say, "Well, I'll do that if you say so." But then he would come back from the cows and say, "When are we going to discuss the 'Vedanta-sutra'?" The master would say, "No, take care of the cows!" Because once again, the driving force is service and even *go-seva*; serving the cows is a most powerful means of purification. Ask Madhava Maharaja to tell you about it, he will tell you. Simply by their presence cows purify; when the person serves, cleaning the cow dung, he becomes purer, his heart becomes purer because with cows even the cow dung is pure, even the cow urine is pure. All elevated devotees drink that urine every day to get purified. On my way here I was told a story about how Madhava Maharaj was evaporating in some entrance 20 liters of cow urine and since then the whole entrance has been smelling; however, interesting enough, the whole entrance was purified and all the people stopped being drunkards and started speaking of God. (laughter) Because the cow has special properties. That is why the guru would say, "Go, go and serve the cows! Clean the cow dung! That's what they're doing in Vrindavan! What are you going to do when you get to the spiritual world? Only that! You're not going to do anything else! Do you think you'll go there on a vacation? No, there will be *go-seva*!" So, he would serve the cows, performing *go-seva*, but in his mind he would keep thinking of the "Vedanta-sutra", *moksha*, *mukti* ... Eventually, Krishna did not know what to do, because on the one hand He had to save him and on the other hand he does not want to save himself. So, at some point the Deity from the nearest temple came to

him and started slapping him on the face, "How long can this go on? You're serving and serving but all the while you're thinking of liberation! How long?" Red-faced he came to his guru, the guru understood everything and said, "Well, do you want to discuss the 'Vedanta-sutra'?" The disciple said, "No, Brahman Himself came to me and slapped me on the face! What 'Vedanta-sutra'? I've got it all now!"

Because the nature of the soul is service and love is service. Love is nothing else but service, patience and humility. When one loves, he naturally wants to serve. When a mother loves her little baby ... In Hindi there is a saying that "my son's urine is sweeter than the water from the Ganges." She cares for the child, she is humble. Love means humility, love means patience, love means the desire to give, love means all these things, but it is very difficult for us to understand all this, because we always want something for ourselves, it might not be much but for yourself, if not in this world let it be in the next world, but for ourselves. This is the deception that Raghunatha Das Goswami is speaking of in the sixth verse. There is a wonderful verse in the Eleventh Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" describing this; Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself says:

na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isha kamaye
mama janmani janmanishvare
bhavatad bhaktir ahaituki twayi

There is another nice verse in the Eleventh Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" (11.14.14) where Krishna speaks to Uddhava about the devotees, He glorifies the devotee:

na parameshthyam na mahendra-dhishnyam
na sarvabhaumam na rasadhipatyam
na yoga-siddhir apunar-bhavam va
mayy arpitamecchati mad vinanyat

My devotee doesn't want *parameshthyam*; *parameshthyam* means he does not want to become a powerful demigod, *mahendra-dhishnyam* – he does not want to become Indra and rule the planets. *Na sarvabhaumam* – someone may say, "I don't need heavenly planets, I'll rule here", he doesn't want power over the entire earth. *Na rasadhipatyam* – he doesn't want mystical powers, *na yoga-siddhir* and *apunar-bhavam* – he doesn't even want liberation – he doesn't want all this, he doesn't want liberation from re-incarnation, he is willing to take birth again and again. The only thing he wants is to serve; he wants love.

That's the root of the problem that this sixth verse is speaking about, that's *kapata* and *kutinati*; we turn into hypocrites and want something for ourselves all the time and we try to conceal it. Gaur Govinda Maharaj said in a lecture, "how is *kapata* manifested?" One is sitting and *prasadam* is being distributed. He is sitting in front of the *prasadam* and he wants to eat, he is served some, then they come again, he wants some more, he's asked, "Would you like some more?" He says "No, I've had enough." What does he really want? Fame, he wants people thinking of him in a certain way. Therefore, in the Eighth Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" the Earth herself says that "I can bear any burden; the only thing I can hardly bear is the cheaters, it's hard with them, anyone else I can bear. With liars it's difficult." Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur has written a nice song about that. He says that a Vaisnava is simple, he doesn't try to cheat: if he wants to eat, he eats, no problems, that's Okay – twice, three times, five times – it doesn't matter, let him eat, the important thing is not to cheat, not to pretend to be someone else. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada says: *sarala kara nija mana* – if you want to

serve Gaura, Caitanya Mahaprabhu, there is one condition only: *sarala kara nija mana* – you must make your mind *sarala*. *Sarala* means simple, you must take and untangle it. There are many convolutions in our mind and they have entangled there. We need to straighten them a little so that there are not too many convolutions. You must become simple. *Kutinati chadiya* – you must give up all the hypocrisy you have and *bhaja gaurara-caran* – just worship Gaura. Just worship, there's no need to pretend, there's no need to do anything: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Then he says, "Such a person cries out, '*Guara ami! Gaura ami*'" – Gaura is mine, Gaura is mine! Gaura belongs to me, Gauranga is mine! He does not say, "You shouldn't cry out." Sometimes the devotees also cry out "Gauranga!" You can cry out, but the point is not to just cry out loudly. He says *gaurara acar gaurara vicar laile phala phale* – what will bring us fruits is reflection on how Lord Gauranga behaves and what Lord Gauranga lives for, His example and His thoughts, His feelings. Lord Gauranga came to this world and He came to teach us how we should live. *Gaurara acar gaurara vicar laile phala phale* – the result, the fruit will come exactly when when we read "Sri Caitanya-caritamrita" trying to understand the mood that inspired Gauranga. Precisely the mood, the *bhava* that was behind all His actions, behind everything else, and not just cry out. You can also cry out but not too loud, so as not to scare the people away.

This is the sixth verse. The seventh verse is also very important because even when I have driven deception out of my heart, all the while there remains one last thing. There is no cheating anymore, and it seems that I want nothing for myself, but still I want a little bit of something and that a little bit is the subject matter of the seventh verse. Let's repeat it together:

7.

pratisthasa dhrsta svapaca-ramani me hrdi natet
katham sadhu-prema sprsati sucir etan nanu manah
sada tvam sevasva prabhu-dayita-samantam atulam
yatha tam niskasya tvaritam iha tam vesayati sah

It is an important verse and I think it's very important that we reflect on it. *Pratisthasa dhrsta svapaca-ramani me hrdi natet* – he says, "In my heart there is a dancer, in my heart dances *svapaca-ramani*". *Ramani* means a woman of easy virtue, a harlot; moreover, she has special dietary preferences, *svapaca*. *Svapaca* means she loves to cook dogs. *Svapaca-ramani me hrdi natet* – in my heart there is a dancing whore, who is, moreover, a dogeater. And *dhrsta* means she is absolutely shameless. The name of that *svapaca-ramani dhista* is *pratistha-asa*, the desire for respect, honor, fame, the desire to stand out. And then he goes on saying, *katham sadhu-prema sprsati sucir etan nanu manah* - "Think for yourself, my dear mind, whether *prema* which is pure by nature, will touch your heart, if there is this untouchable woman dancing? Woman from a lower caste?"

Perhaps the most interesting word here is *dristha*; well, there are a lot of interesting words here, we'll see further on what he advises us in order to get rid of that woman, how to quickly drive her out of our hearts. But *dristha* means that she's shameless. This actually means that all the rest have already gone away; by virtue of the holy name we drive out of our hearts all the *anarthas*: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Bhaktivinoda Thakur explains that if a person chants the holy name, no ghosts will stick to him. So, we are driving them away, we are chasing them away and finally they are all gone, but she, the shameless one, it's all like water off a duck's back, we are driving her away but she's staying!

This is the last thing, this shamelessness; she's dancing there because there is plenty of space, everything else has gone, she is alone, she's dancing her concluding dance, her cancan, *svapaca-ramani* – she's dancing in our hearts. Actually, this is the last thing we have to deal with. Bhaktivinoda Thakur explains that the very last demon, or rather the last but one, strictly speaking, he is the last but one in chronological order, the last was Vyomasura who was stealing Krishna's friends and hiding them in a cave, he did that on that very day when Akrura came to Vrindavan in the evening to take Krishna away and just before that they were playing these games with Vyomasura. But a day or two before Keshi broke into Vrindavan with a joyous neigh and a high tail hovering in the clouds. This is the very demon Raghunatha Das Goswami is speaking here of – ambition or the desire for honor when a person has expelled from his heart everything else, but he wants to be distinguished for his devotional service. A person says, "Look how well I know the scriptures! Ahhh! Haribol!" Or he says, "I am a great preacher, now I'm going to save everyone by my preaching! Now I'm going to speak!" When this concept of oneself appears inside a person, of how great he is, how renounced he is, what a preacher he is, what a remarkable devotee he is, how unparalleled he is, how he can enlighten everyone, how he has that power ... In other words, a person starts deeming himself to be a spiritual master or guru. And as we are going to probably discuss tomorrow, this last *anartha*, in accordance with Sanatana Goswami and with the "Hari-bhakti-vilasa", is the root of all other *anarthas*. If we don't drive it away, everything else will come back. This merry woman that's dancing in the heart will call back all the others, "Come on, come on!"

Raghunatha Das Goswami says, "As long as she is there, *sadhu-prema*, pure *prema* will never touch the heart, there will be no love in the heart, because it will remain desecrated". This desire to be great ... "I didn't become great there, so I will become great here!" And Krishna provides all opportunities. Have you noticed that here it's much easier to become great than anywhere else? Here a person can very easily become a minister. We have lots of ministers, lots of presidents ... Like, people sometimes are surprised, "President?!" Here it takes nothing to become a president, not to mention a spiritual master – it's easy. I was talking with Prahlanananda Maharaj, for six years before my eyes he's been trying to get a diploma of a yoga instructor of the Aengar first degree, he's been passing exams after exams ... Once he told me that "to become a *jagat-guru* is much easier than to become a yoga instructor of the Aengar school, first degree!" Because Krishna is very generous, He says, "If you want, here you are!" One devotee told me that, "in my life I wanted to be great three times: at first I wanted to be a great athlete – that did not work; then a great military – that also did not work, and then a great devotee – and here it all worked!" There are no problems here. This is when a person has not outlived some childish desire for recognition, the desire for honor, the desire to get attention, to be in the center, which is there in all of us. This persisting childish desire is the last to remain in our hearts and it torments us inside, it desecrates us, it desecrates everything else that we are doing, the heart remains desecrated.

There is a nice story in this regard from the life of Francis of Assisi. He had a disciple who was extremely handsome, who came from a noble family and who had given up all his wealth, his name was brother Mosseo. Everyone loved him, but inside him this desire for recognition was still alive. And a person is ready to do anything! A person is ready to perform austerities, feats, he's ready to preach anywhere, to renounce anything, just to get that. This is the last thing which people are ready to do great sacrifices for, that is why it is so easy to confuse one for the other. At first sight it seems that look – this person has all the virtues, but inside he's driven by this desire, the desire for recognition, ambition.

Francis was watching this Mosseo and he saw: he is a nice and sincere person but he has that thing inside. For Mosseo it was particularly hard when the mendicants would walk in tatters and on the sides of the street there would stand people laughing at them and the boys would throw stones. But then, as always, Francis would begin to speak and the people would stand motionless and start listening to him and their hearts would change, they would start crying. Once in the same way they came to a town and again a crowd gathered, as always and again the people started inquiring of Francis, listening to him open-mouthed. Eventually, when they were gone, Mosseo could no longer keep it back and said, "Why? Why are people always coming to you? Why are they always asking you? Why are they crowding only around you? Why are they listening to you? Why only to you?" Francis was surprised at first, he did not quite understand and he asked, "What do you mean?" He said, "I want to ask: why is everyone listening to you and why is everyone obeying you? Everyone is listening only to you! You are not so good-looking, not so learned, not so elevated ..." He meant that "I am good-looking, I am learned, I am above you ..." Francis gave him good advice, he said, "because the Lord, who sees all and knows all, did not find among the sinners a greater and worse than me. He has chosen me to show by my example, that we ourselves are worthless, but God can do anything! That's why!"

When this envy ... Envy appears because of this *pratistha-asa*, the desire for *pratistha*, the desire to be distinguished, to show off, the desire to show that I am special, I am exclusive and the best. Everything else comes as a result of that. Therefore, if we look, true spiritual culture always teaches humility. Humility is the password through which a person can feel Krishna to some extent. If we look at the Vedic culture, from the very beginning the Vedic culture explained to people that everything is not done by us, it's done by God! The Vedic culture is an amazing thing, there are many achievements! All achievements are anonymous, no one puts any signatures. What a mass of great people were there, most of the names we don't know; what a great number of holy men there were – we don't know their names, history has not preserved them, they did not want to. Gopal Bhatta Goswami – practically, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu made him His successor, He sent him His *asana*, His *kaupina*, His *bahirvas*, this is still preserved in the temple of Radha-Raman; Radha Raman Himself came to him in response to his prayers. Gopal Bhatta Goswami asked Krishnadas Kaviraj, "Don't say a word about me! I do not want. Don't's say a word about me!" We practically know nothing about Gopal Bhatta Goswami! The greatest *acarya* in our *sampradaya*, essentially, the next one after Caitanya Mahaprabhu, His successor. He said, "I do not want. I don't need anything!" Because this very position, this position of so to speak "*guru*", if someone starts to be aware of himself as a guru, consider or imagine himself to be a *guru*, then that's the end of his spiritual life. Love is out of the question! The only thing left in the heart is vanity.

Now, since this is a problem and the more Kali-yuga evolves, the more this problem also deepens, the word *guru* in Hindi, although initially *guru* meant a master and everything good, now in Hindi it's almost a swear word. Besides everything else guru also means a trickster. If it can sometimes be said about a person that, "Oh, he's a guru!" what is meant is a 'trickster.' Because this spiritual vanity is a very dangerous thing and it can haunt us up to the very end.

A few years ago I was at the Kumbha Mela and it's the best fair of spiritual vanity. It is indeed a fair and the gurus are the most important there. The gurus gather there and respectively all the others are their followers. Their gurus ride on silver thrones, they sit like this on elephants. Recently even the elephants are out of fashion – on jeeps; they put the silver throne on top of the jeep and there on it sits the guru. The throne is decorated with precious stones ... This is a very sad thing, because actually we must understand that if I'm a true devotee I should not expect honor. Moreover, if I am a true devotee, I will expect to be reproached by the others.

Madhavendra Puri writes about it, he has written an amazing verse where he says, "Let other people think that I've gone mad; let my friends think I've got totally confused; let my relatives say I'm a complete fool, an idiot, let those who know the Vedas consider me just some proud fool. Let them do so! Let the others think of me anything!" And actually, if a person is a true devotee, people do not like that, they don't like when a person lives a life of complete and absolute devotion, people are scared, they start chasing him, they start reproaching him, "He's a fool, he's a rascal, he's a pretender!" This is something important that we must remember. Raghunatha Das Goswami gives – I'll say a little more about this – a recipe, he says *pratisthasa dhrsta svapaca-ramani me hradi natet* – that *svapaca-ramani* – this shameless whore is dancing, *katham sadhu-prema sprsati* – how can then pure *prema* touch my heart? *Sucir etan nanu manah* – think for yourself: how can the pure touch the impure? My heart becomes untouchable because this woman there has cast off all restraint. So, he gives a recipe – listen carefully to this recipe because it actually is something very important – how a person can protect himself from this problem: *sada tvam sevasva prabhu-dayita-samantam atulam* – you must constantly serve, *sevasya*. *Sada-tvam* – you must always serve. Whom? *Prabhu-dayita* – the servant of the Lord. Not Krishna, but the servant of the Lord: *prabhu-dayita-samantam* – the best of the servants of the Lord, *samanta* means 'a general'. *Yatha tam niskasya tvaritam iha tam vesayati sah* – then very quickly, *tvaritam* means very quickly, that woman will be banished from your heart.

In other words, the recipe that Raghunatha Das Goswami is giving, is a very important one: to expel that woman from the heart there is one cure – association with the devotees, association in the process of service with the understanding of their greatness. When internally I'm with them I understand what true devotion is, who I am and what the scale of my so-called "devotion" is. Because everything else can be imitated in one way or another, this pretense or desire for honor is rooted very deeply and can reach very great extents. The "Hitopadesa" is instructions to the people and it starts with a very instructive story about a tiger. Its meaning is exactly to learn to distinguish a true *sadhu* from a bogus *sadhu*. The tiger represents the bogus *sadhu*. He's standing on the banks of a lake and there is an innocent traveler passing by. So, the tiger says, "Come here, my dear, come, I've got a bracelet. I've repented all my sins, yes, I didn't use to be a vegetarian but now I am! I'll give you a golden bracelet!" And the tiger is speaking amazing things and naturally a person gets suspicious, "To go or not to go? Some tiger wants to give me a bracelet ..." The tiger says, "Fear not!" He says a curious thing, listen carefully, the tiger can teach us a lot. He says that there are eight virtues, eight kinds of religiosity. These are performing sacrifices, study of scriptures, distribution of donations, performing ascetic feats – these are the first four; then the fifth is truthfulness, patience, forgiveness and lack of greed. So, he is explaining to that traveler, "Look at me – you can imitate the first four: you can perform sacrifices, you can perform penance, you can study the scriptures, you can give a donation – all this you can do with a contaminated heart, the last four are impossible to imitate! It's impossible to pretend to be truthful!" It's a cheater who's saying that and he is kind of exposing himself. Look – the tiger is speaking very truthfully. Sometimes it's a very dangerous thing. It's impossible to pretend to be patient, it's impossible to pretend to be able to forgive and it's impossible to pretend to have no greed. This is what the tiger says and the meaning of this statement is that even this can be imitated; even these qualities do not serve as criteria, actually. If we want to know the true criterion for understanding who is a *sadhu* and who is not a *sadhu*, then it's not enough to just listen to what the person says himself, by all means we need to look at him and look at the way he associates. The criterion that Raghunatha Das Goswami is giving here is very important, it is that a person should not internally deem himself to be a *guru* and this means that he must always seek higher association. He must always consider himself to be a disciple.

In the life of Gaurakisora Das Babaji there was a story, when a young man came to him and tried to somehow serve him but then the young man was bored and he ran away from him and went to Puri. After some time he came back, this time in the robes of a *sannyasi*, in *babaji-vesa*, and he was accompanied by some *mahant*, the prior of some temple. The *mahant* introduced himself, "*Babaji*, this disciple of yours has come to you, he's become an elevated devotee, please accept him. In Puri he served Haridas Thakur and chanted three *lakhs* of holy names: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare." Gaurakisora Das Babaji looked at him closely and said, "I do not recall having such a disciple. No, I don't remember, I have never had such a disciple." Then he looked again and said, "Actually, I don't consider anyone to be my disciple in this world, because I myself have failed to become a disciple; so, since I have failed to become a disciple myself, how can I teach someone else?" Because the only thing we can teach someone is how to become a disciple. How can I consider myself to be others' teacher or a preacher, or a lecturer, or anything like that unless I have learned to be a humble disciple, without considering to be such? He said, "Go away, I do not want to see you!"

It is actually a very essential criterion. In his "Kalyana-kalpataru" Bhaktivinoda Thakur speaks about that: ??? 54:23 *amita vaisnava ey buddhi hoyle amanina haba ami pratisthasa asi hridaya dusibi haya baniraya gami*. He says that if a person considers himself a Vaisnava, if a person simply considers himself inside a Vaisnava, that person will never become humble. He thinks, "I am a Vaisnava." Sometimes we also have this pride inside, we don't eat meat, right? We don't take intoxications, nor do we eat garlic. There are many other reasons to be proud. Bhaktivinoda Thakur says that if a person thinks in this way, if a person considers himself a Vaisnava or a holy person ... We sometimes say, "we are holy persons"; sometimes we don't say so but we think so or we expect others to say so. We are so saintly! Right? Everyone is saintly. Bhaktivinoda Thakur says, "He'll go to hell, because Krishna is in the heart and He knows everything." Krishna knows what he thinks of himself. Such a person *haya baniraya gami* – will go down, will go to hell. *Nija srestha mani ucista dani* – such a person starts distributing the leftovers of his *prasadam*, *mahaprasadam*. Therefore, concluding this song, Bhaktivinoda Thakur says *taisi siyatava tokiba sarbada* – please let me always remain *sisya*, a disciple. Let me never consider myself anyone else. *Na layba puja kara* – and never want any *puja*, respect or honors, because that's what can eventually expel everything else from my heart.

In this sense Srila Prabhupada is a very good example for all of us. Srila Prabhupada, although he was a spiritual master and an *acarya* and he played that role anyway, he constantly taught, and above all by his example, that we should not strive for this; we should strive to be a disciple. I'm always, by nature, a follower and a servant, I'm never a master, never! He repeatedly showed that and there is an amazing letter, I recently discovered it, it touched me very deeply. It's a letter Srila Prabhupada wrote to his spiritual brother Bhagavat Maharaj. He wrote it approximately in the early 70's or late 60's, when he already had a couple of dozen temples around the world, when he was successful, when he had temples in Hamburg, in Tokio, in Los Angelis, in New York, in San Francisco, i.e. from America to Japan, everywhere in the world there were temples. Not that many but there were. So, this letter – listen carefully, because this contains a very important recipe for all of us. This letter was written after he read the statutes of the organization of that Bhagavat Maharaja. He writes, "I attentively read your statutes and I noted that it is said there that you are going to have *acaryas* and that there are going to be *acarya*- successors and the way the *acarya*-successors are to be appointed." He writes as if casually, he says, "But actually, as far as I remember and understand, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, our spiritual master, never did that, he never spoke about that. And of course, I

understand, now all my spiritual brothers have turned into *acaryas*, therefore it's a very sensitive topic, I'm not going to dwell on it, but I just wanted to say that he never actually said anything about that." Further on he writes, "What did Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada want us to do? To cooperate with each other." Because it is only in that cooperation that a person can step over that biggest problem, that last problem, that separates him from the spiritual realm.

Therefore, at the very end of that letter Srila Prabhupada writes, "Let's work together, I have temples, come on, send your preachers, you will be preaching in my temples, that doesn't matter, we'll send you visas, whatever, that's what Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada wanted! He did not want us to become *acaryas*, he wanted us to remain servants and serve the mission, and not to be *acaryas*." Finally, he writes, "I read the statutes of your organization with great interest and in the third paragraph on page 19 it is written that a person can become a member of your society. May I become a member of your society?" An ordinary member of your society. This is what Srila Prabhupada writes. Once again, he's got temples all over the world, he is an *acarya*, he's got disciples, followers, people from the west, a triumph ... He says, "May I become the last member of your society? Take me, please, enroll me." Although it is the last thing, we can see how it works even on some earlier stages of our service, how it prevents us from appreciating other people, prevents us from cooperating. This idea that I am a preacher, that I can do something, that I can teach someone actually destroys our society. As long as we don't banish this thing from our hearts through devotional service to the other devotees, as long as we don't take this service to other devotees and turn it into our daily nourishment, on which we subsist, we'll never be able to achieve anything in devotional service. This is the last and most important obstacle that we must constantly be aware of, this obstacle on our path of spiritual life.

Tomorrow I'll focus on it in a little greater detail, on what consequences it leads to, on how it gives rise to other problems. However, this was a small introduction to this subject matter. Thank you very much. Srila Prabhupada ki! Jaya!

Question: Thank you for the lecture. Can I ask a question on the sixth verse? I haven't accommodated the seventh one yet. The sixth verse says that one of the *anarthas* is the desire for personal liberation, deliverance from suffering. My question is whether it is the same desire when a person, due to some unresolved problems in life, some suffering, joins the Krishna consciousness movement and tries, under the guise of following the process, to merge his individuality with the general stream, to be like everyone else, hoping that all together, in bulk, we'll be delivered to the spiritual world without actively revealing our individuality. This is everywhere, I myself have it and I constantly face it. That is, can some social group with such motivation personally worship the Supreme Personality of God, I mean precisely the Personality ...

Answer: No, that's impersonalism. It's clear that the desire for liberation turns into impersonalism and impersonalism is the desire for spiritual suicide or leveling one's individuality. Love is always unique, all the devotees in the spiritual world are absolutely unique, even the cows in the spiritual world have each their own names and Krishna chants the names of his cows on beads. He's got special beads and He calls each cow by name. When we try to merge with something, mostly we don't even want to merge with the crowd, we want to merge with some wall, a person huddles in a corner and thinks, "Now I'll merge here so that no one notices me, God forbid." But love means the desire to do something, and to do something special so that Krishna is pleased; not that I am pleased, not that everyone else is pleased but so that Krishna is pleased. This is clearly impersonalism, impersonalism means deception, we

are speaking of love and we have come for love's sake but we want liberation, we want to get rid of suffering. This is deception, what else can I say? That's a fact.

Question: Listening to you, I noted that the mind completely disobeys us. And previously I've heard a lecture, that the mind is like a puppy, it's running here and there and we must just pull it back a little and that was inspiring. It's a kind of contradiction ...

Answer: The mind can be controlled; if the mind was completely out of our control then there would be no point in all this, then we would put down everything and go away. The mind is controllable, that's the point, and why are we giving instructions to the mind? So that it obeys us. It's another matter that it does not obey completely and Raghunatha Das Goswami appeals to it as if it were an animate being. In the previous verse he says, "Look, you yourself are burning due to this, you yourself are disgusted by being a cheater! Look, why are you bathing in the urine of this big ass? Why not bathe in the ocean of Krishna-prema, both you and I will be happy."

In other words, appealing to it as if it were some independent entity, he captures the fact that the mind is not completely subservient to us, but this does not mean that it is not controllable at all. To some extent we can control it and the more we practice devotional service, the greater the degree to which we can control it. Actually, this is what the practice of devotional service consists in – in telling our mind to do what should be done and it, reluctantly at first, with a creak, slowly-slowly starts doing it. We just have to understand that it still has some things of his own and they will remain almost until the end. That's the last thing, the desire for honor, the desire to be distinguished, the desire to prove that I am a special devotee. We must be aware of this and see it in ourselves. But when we completely drive out all these vices from there, the mind will be not just like a puppy, it will be like a trained dog. You will tell the dog to do something and it will do it, it won't go like this. So, the mind can be ... It's a fact that as we chant, the mind gradually becomes more ... The mind does not obey us when the modes of passion and ignorance prevail over it. Already in the case of the mode of goodness the mind is much more relaxed and manageable, it's easier to communicate with it. When the material modes completely go away from it, the mind becomes silken. So, it's not a problem, do not be upset.

Question: Raghunatha Das Goswami is describing here the *anarthas* and the way they kind of evolve from one another and here, in the seventh verse he says that love cannot enter the heart if there is this desire for honor, for being distinguished, vanity. But by the example of Lord Gauranga we can see that He went around distributing love to everyone and people didn't performed any *sadhana*, i.e. they didn't go through the method of purification, *anartha-nivritti*. In the same way it is said that a person can get love, *bhakti* does not depend on any *anarthas*, on anything at all. Sukadeva Goswami says at the end of the 33rd chapter that first love enters the heart and then all *anarthas* go away. That is, it turns out that for *sadhana-bhakti* ... Raghunatha Das Goswami urges everyone to take to the path of *rati*, love, then everything will go away?

Answer: There is *sadhana-siddhi* and there is *kripa-siddhi* and if, somehow or other, you've got *kripa-siddhi*, then there is no problem. Lord Caitanya liberated a dog. He would give coconut to the dog, he would throw it to it and the dog would eat. He would tell it, "Hay, chant 'Krishna! Rama! Hari!'" and the dog would eat and chant, "Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!", it didn't even chant 'Rama and Hari!' It got liberated and then no one saw it and everyone knew that everything is well with the dog. Well, of course, if we're lucky to somehow or other meet Lord Caitanya and receive that *kripa* that's Okay and we can wait until we get lucky, no problem, we can wait, too. But normally there is a way and it's called achieving perfection through *sadhana*, *sadhana-*

siddha, and *sadhana* means overcoming the *anarthas* and we shouldn't confuse these two ways. The normal way is *sadhana*. *Kripa* is an exception.

Srila Prabhupada said that it is possible to receive an honorary degree and become an honorary doctor without doing anything but that's *kripa*. Normally, one must study and pass exams and everything else, then he will get a degree. Otherwise, we can certainly wait until we get an honorary degree; we can even fall asleep and wake up with that thought, "Maybe today I am going to be given an honorary degree or maybe not?" Therefore, normally a person still has to overcome the *anarthas* and the desire for love enters his heart before the *anarthas* go away, I spoke about that. When Sukadeva Goswami concludes the *rasa-lila-panca-dhyaya*, the five chapters describing the *rasa-lila*, he says that if a person reads about it, even if this deadly disease of lust is there in his heart, it will all go away just thanks to reading all this. It's a fact, the desire for love or *bhakti* can enter even that heart, but *prema* will not. First, we must all the same expel that thing and how do we do it? By hearing, by associating, by serving. If I don't do that I can wait until Lord Caitanya bestows His mercy on me, anything can happen. Just do not forget to pass that mercy on to someone before you fly away to the spiritual world. But normally one must go through this process. And he must understand: if I serve the *anarthas* will emerge one after another and I must know what to do with them, I must know what medicine I have against them. In most cases, this medicine is one – it's the medicine of associating with the devotees and serving them. In the case of all these three *anarthas* Raghunatha Das Goswami essentially gives the same advice, slightly varying it. Therefore, we have a society of devotees where we serve and thus get purified. So, I do not see any contradictions. The *anarthas* are there and we can get rid of them either by mercy or in the process of some service. We must simply be aware of them and not imagine that I'm already free of them.

Question: Hare Krishna. Thank you very much for the wonderful lecture. I'll try to formulate my question. I've heard in lectures that Krishna can change one's *karma* only if a person truly repents of his sinful activities, i.e. of his sins. Of course, we constantly make mistakes, we are subject to illusion, we are imperfect, I don't remember the fourth one, ie the four shortcomings of the conditioned soul, but if the conditioned soul sincerely repents, then one's *karma* changes by the will of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna.

Answer: One's *karma* changes immediately, at the very moment I take up the beads and start chanting. What *karma* can remain? And Krishna takes up the case. *Karma* doesn't remain, Krishna personally starts to reform us and what is actually the point? If I perform devotional service this in itself already means certain repentance. It is clear that repentance can accelerate the process of internal transformation and sometimes one must do that, but repentance can also impede one in some situations because he's focused only on his own problems. Krishna changes our *karma* immediately, no *karma* is left. Of course, there is a gradual process of spiritualization, but we should not think that only repentance changes *karma*. Chanting the mantra also changes our *karma*, one is beyond the realms of influence of *karma*. The *acaryas* explain that this is not *karma*, but something that resembles *karma*, in fact it is a kind of shadow of the *karma* and it can look like *karma* but Krishna teaches us, we can see that very deep changes take place. In some situations, if a person repents, the fire of repentance burns down and accelerates these changes, that's good, but in our spiritual tradition this repentance or the fire of repentance is not our main method. We listen to this in order to see, to hear all this, but we don't focus too much on all this because sometimes people repent all the time but as the saying goes, self-humiliation is worse than pride, they become obsessed by their problems and instead of going away those problems just become even stronger. *Karma* can be changed very easily.

Question: Krishna told Arjuna not to speculate, He gave him the instruction, "Fight!" What's the difference between the instruction He gives Arjuna and the instructions we give the others: not to fight, to be humble, to be patient and to speculate, that is to preach? What is the difference between these ... that we are not killing any relatives (laughter) ...

Answer: Well, that varies from person to person. You're lucky you haven't killed anyone. There's no differences because to fight means to fight and to fight means to kill something and when Krishna says, "Fight and kill!" He doesn't mean something external, He means that Arjuna must stand up and declare war on certain problems in his heart, to declare war on his false ego and so on. We must give and we do give the same instructions. When Srila Prabhupada told us – and we follow Srila Prabhupada - "Preach in carrying out my order", that's also fighting because when we start preaching, we start seeing more clearly what is happening in my heart and the process of cleansing is accelerated. Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada very much fought against just going somewhere and performing *bhajan*, because he knew that would just make one's ambition grow and he will constantly think of god knows what. Therefore, he gave this advice, "Preach." Yes, we have problems and when we preach we sometimes pour our problems onto the others, too, and our preaching may not be pure, but it's our chance to get purified. This is our battle. We preach and we tell the other people the right things and eventually we understand that I'm speaking right things but I myself have the same problem in my heart. This is our battle.

Question: Guru Maharaj, when a person joins some religious movement, i.e. in our case our ISKCON, through studying the scriptures, he starts becoming much more aware of his imperfections; he starts following some rules and austerities and at some point he may face the situation that he's simply unable to follow them. But since he has this very deep desire – we each have this very deep desire to be loved, to be respected, this same desire for honor ... That is oftentimes a person starts showing some false humility, hypocrisy due to the fear that if he is sincere, he won't be accepted, he will be rejected and his reputation will be spoiled. Oftentimes people in this state start to think that everyone else also behaves like that, he starts to suspect in his things everyone around. How does it affect the consciousness and how can one get out of this?

Answer: Therefore, there is this institute of guru, although this is a dangerous thing, on the one hand no Vaisnava should consider himself to be a guru, on the other hand we know that some Vaisnavas, however, consider themselves guru. This misunderstanding or something like that is needed so that a person can at least in the relationship with one person be unafraid to reveal everything because he understands that somehow or other I will be accepted in any condition; if I reveal something that I have I will not be rejected. When he does so, he feels relieved. In order to get out of it he shouldn't keep it back at least in front of one person. Of course, in front of the others we are afraid, we have embedded protective mechanisms but far not so immediately can one straighten all his convolutions in his complex mind. But one person he can tell and that will already be a step forward which in turn will help him to see the others in a different way, too. He will see that the others on the one hand are fighting with something and on the other hand they are sincere, because they are truly fighting.

Srila Prabhupada once read a letter in which a devotee was describing how he was unable to follow the principles. He returned to his old habits, he began taking drugs and Srila Prabhupada asked that this letter is read aloud. When he heard that letter, he said, "Just see how he's fighting for Krishna!" That is, he felt no condemnation for him. Similarly here, if we see that we have these problems, but we are trying to overcome them sincerely, we can see the same in

others. To do that, we must start with some relationships in which we don't have to conceal anything. Ok, thank you very much. Srila Prabhupada ki! Jaya!

Disk 122, track 6, Lithuania, 31.07.2009, Manah-siksa, verse 7, lecture 4

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For sure I'm not going to finish the "Manah-siksa" this year. I believe all of you were sure about that, but probably I will next year. Let's repeat together the seventh verse:

7.

pratisthasa dhrsta svapaca-ramani me hrdis natet
katham sadhu-prema sprsati sucir etan nanu manah
sada tvam sevasva prabhu-dayita-samantam atulam
yatha tam niskasya tvaritam iha tam vesayati sah

Raghunatha Das Goswami, taking the position of a practicing devotee, tells his mind, actually appealing to our mind, the mind of those who practice *bhakti*, "Oh, mind, judge for yourself: if your heart is desecrated by the whore dancing there, the expectation of honor and glory, who is shameless, who has cast away all shame, *katham sadhu-prema sprsati sucir etan nanu manah* – how will pure *prema* touch it? *Sadhu-prema* means pure *prema* or beautiful *prema*. It will be repelled to have something to do with such a heart. *Sucir etan nanu manah* – judge for yourself: if something is pure how can it remain where there is dirt? And he gives a way out of this: *sada tvam sevasva* – always serve. *Prabhu-dayita-samantam atulam* – serve whom? The generals among the Lord's servants. Which ones? *Atulam* – the matchless, the unparalleled ones. And what will happen then? *Yatha tam niskasya tvaritam iha tam vesayati sah* – this whore will be driven out of your heart, there will be nothing left of her, because you will be seeing how they behave, how every their movement, every glance, every word is permeated with humility. And although they are *atulam*, they are unparalleled, they consider themselves to be lower than a blade of grass lying on the street and they are ready to patiently accept everything that Krishna's sending them. They will drive that whore out of your heart and what will happen then? *Iha tam vesayati sah* – *krisna-prema* will rise in your heart.

It's a very important verse for each of us, especially for those who have been practicing Krishna consciousness for a long time and who have something to be proud of. Actually none of us have anything to be proud of. If we look, there is no merit of ours in anything, but it's the nature of the mind that it expects honor and what's most disgusting is that it expects honor even for his spiritual activity, for his spiritual practice. And, as I already said, this is actually the last obstacle that can remain in a person even at the level of *bhava*. Today I'm going to speak on the consequences that result from carelessness, if a person is not careful and does not drive this out of himself through any available method with the help of association, service and humility; if he fails to show due caution and starts taking service from others for granted, starts accepting respect, fame and honor as something well-deserved, then the consequences can be very sad.

I would like us to go back to the beginning of our discussion, to the definition of the *ragatmikās* that Rupa Goswami gives, that state of attachment or love for Krishna, which initially attracts a person to the path of *bhakti-sadhana*. Srila Rupa Goswami said *iste svarasiki ragah paramavistata bhavet*. The most important words here are *paramavistata bhavet*. *Iste svarasiki ragah* – when attachment to Krishna, to the object of my desire, becomes absolutely natural and *paramavistata*. *Paramavistata* means supreme absorption, the highest degree of absorption, when my mind is completely absorbed in the object of my love or the one I want to attain, such state or such devotees are called *ragatmikās* and basically a person can achieve exactly the same state. But unfortunately, as long as *anarthas* remain in a person, he cannot surrender his

entire mind, we grudge, we want to keep something for ourselves and we have nothing, we have only the mind and the mind is a great sycophant and we don't want to surrender it. Rupa Goswami says: "Here is the ideal, it's when the mind is completely absorbed in Krishna and thinks of nothing else", but we keep some of the mind for ourselves and this means *anarthas*. As long as I have a material body *anarthas* will remain in me, in a certain sense.

Srila Bhaktivinoda very interestingly describes the gradual stages of purification of the mind; he says that I must start my journey by chanting of the holy name, and not simply chanting but chanting with the understanding of who I am. *Sambandha-jnana* – I understand that actually I am connected with Krishna, I am part and parcel of Krishna, I am Krishna's servant, I'm not on my own. This awareness of my subordinate position and eternal connection with Krishna, if my chanting of the holy name is permeated by this understanding, then gradually such a holy name will be purifying. If I chant the holy name and I don't have this understanding, I do it simply as a mechanical ritual or something like that, or because I am supposed to do it or because everyone else does it or because I'll not be fed *prasadam* if I don't do that, or because my husband gets angry and rails at me if I don't do it, the holy name will not be purifying. But if I understand this one thing that, "In any case I'm connected with Krishna, in any case I'm His tiny servant" – and this is very important - "a tiny insignificant servant who is incapable of anything without Krishna," then the holy name will start purifying. Recently Madana Mohan came to me, we were in the *asram*, and I said to Madana Mohan, "Oh, I did not notice you, I didn't see you here", Madan Mohan said, "How could you have seen me? I'm one-ten-thousandth part of the tip of the hair, can you make that out?" If I have this understanding when chanting the holy name the holy name will gradually start to have effect and reveal its cleansing power and drive away the *anarthas* out of my heart.

As a result of this, the next stage, as explained by Bhaktivinoda Thakur, it's called *nairantarya*, when my mind begins to love the holy name and everything that is connected with Krishna, although in the beginning I resist it. But at the next stage I get to like hearing about Krishna, chanting the holy name constantly, endlessly, *nairantarya* means incessantly. Although this process may still somewhat bear the trace of mechanicalness or unawareness, at least I don't want to interrupt it, I want to hear *kirtan*, I want to hear about Krishna, I want to do something for Krishna constantly, always. If I go further on from this stage ... Further on everything's easy, further on everything happens by itself; it's hard to reach this level because there is a force that constantly throws us back. The next level, he says, is *sveccha-purvika*, *sva iccha purvika*, which means that at my own will I can at any time sit down and remember Krishna and not just remember Krishna, but an amazingly beautiful picture of Vrindavan will appear before my mental eye and I will see how the devotees serve Krishna and how Krishna serves His devotees, how they associate with each other ... That is, as soon as I want it, I can meditate on the Lord's *lilas*. This is the next stage, at the level of *asakti*, attachment, meditation, my mind becomes so clear and so well-trained that as soon as I wish my mind itself starts serving Krishna and I find myself there with Krishna in my meditation.

The next stage is *svarasiki*; *svarasiki* means that never mind whether I want or not, I think of Krishna all the time, even when I don't want to, I think of Him. *Svarasiki* – I like it so much that I do not think anymore that at a certain point I have to start or seize wanting, I think of Him all the time, the *lilas* enter into me by themselves, I'm there all the time, together with Krishna, I swing Radha and Krishna on a swing or something like that. By themselves, on their own, these *lilas* are revealed in my heart. I have already tuned the receiver of my heart to that wave, the wave of the spiritual world thus it always picks up the transmissions from there. There's news from there all the time, "Radha and Krishna have hidden from everyone and only you know where They

hide." This series is ongoing in me, *svarasiki*, they come in by themselves. Eventually, *krishna-prema*. It is at the level of *bhava* that a person reaches this *svarasiki* stage. At the level of *prema* a person enters these pastimes, he is there, he is not here anymore. Sometimes Krishna comes to him and he doesn't know whether he's here or here, where he is. But at the initial stages the *anarthas* interrupt my meditation, it cannot be continuous, they interfere, they constantly focus me back on myself, on my problems, on my stupid desires, on the image of myself that I've invented. This is what ego is. The trick of the false ego is that a person invents an image of himself and then serves it, this is called idolatry, he worships the idol which he himself has created.

Again, Bhaktivinoda Thakur makes a very interesting point in the "Tattva-Sutra": that as long as attachment to Krishna is not developed to the proper degree of intensity and as long as I still have *anarthas*, there are three things that will help me preserve this attachment and that will give me a taste. These three things are actually well-known. The first thing is *kirtan*; I sing *kirtan* and I think, "Wow, what a nice music! A new tune" and I sing unwittingly: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Thus I come in direct contact with Krishna Himself through the sound of His holy name, and the taste, despite the *anarthas*, can be felt. The second source of taste for those who have no taste. Although our tongue is covered and we can't feel the taste, nevertheless, there are three things that help us to maintain this taste. The second source of taste is association with *bhagavatas*, with the devotees who have fully surrendered their hearts to Krishna. We associate with them and we feel easy and free, there is taste and we think, "Wow!" We see everything in a completely different perspective. And the third is discussion of the "Bhagavatam" philosophy; when we read "Srimad-Bhagavatam" or hear *bhagavad-katha*, it also gives us a special taste. If, despite of the lack of taste I come into contact with these three sources of taste, I can survive, I can get through this difficult period. But if I interrupt my association with these carriers of taste, eventually it will all go away.

This is the very last obstacle that I have to overcome; today we'll be saying that it lingers till the end, even at the level of *bhava* the desire for fame may remain in a person. Srila Prabhupada taught exactly this; that we must be humble and not imagine to be anything. There is a wonderful story about Srila Prabhupada that Tamal Krishna Maharaja loved telling. He told that he was a temple commandant in Los Angeles. The first temple in Los Angeles was on "La Sienna Boulevard" and Tamal Krishna Maharaja was a commandant there. Once he brought to Srila Prabhupada's room a large painting depicting the spiritual world. Murlidhar painted the spiritual world as it appears on the cover of the First Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam", there are the Vaikunthas and somewhere in one of the corners is the black material world with Maha-Vishnu lying there. When he brought it in Srila Prabhupada called him and said, "Let me now tell you" and he started telling him, "Here, look: this is the spiritual world and there is an infinite amount of Vaikuntha planets and each Vaikuntha planet is billions of times greater than one material universe. Krishna is there with His devotees, He performs there His *lilas* and that constitutes three-quarters of the creation. Then there is one quarter of the creation which is covered by a cloud, that's the material world and there is Maha Vishnu and when He breathes out billions of universes come out of His pores. Of all the universe there is one small universe and we are in there. In that small universe there is an infinite number of planets, stars and all sorts of other things. There's a small planet called Earth, a tiny one, one of the smallest planets that are there. On it there are seven huge continents and lots of cities. On one of the continents there is a city called Los Angeles. It's a big city and there are many people, too; in Los Angeles there is a street called "La Sienna Boulevard." There is a big house on it, the Hare Krishna temple. It has many rooms with many inhabitants, too, and one of them is Tamal Krishna and he thinks, "I'm very important!" (laughter)

This is for us to understand what our size is. This is how Srila Prabhupada taught us that this idea of self-importance is a complete, absolute illusion. The most disgusting is when we try to strengthen this idea in ourselves through spiritual practice. In essence, what we do is we come to Krishna in the robes of a *sadhu* and we try to enjoy His spiritual energy. When we enjoy the material energy that's half the trouble, but the most terrible offense we can commit is when we try to enjoy by means of our so to say spiritual activity. If you remember, Ravana came to steal Sita and what was the outfit he wore? (answers from the audience: that of a *brahmana*) Not just of a *brahmana*, he was in the robes of a *sannyasi* and not just a *sannyasi* but a *tridandi-sannyasi*, he had a *tridanda* staff and in his hand he had beads and I wouldn't be surprised at all if he was constantly chanting, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. And when she invited him, he said, "No, no, I'm very renounced, I don't come in," he tried to enter, but he couldn't and he said, "No, no, I do not eat inside, you come here." Similarly, we come to Krishna, we change clothes, *tilak* and all that and we think, "We've disguised perfectly; now we're going to steal Krishna's internal energy and enjoy it."

This is what is called weakness of the heart. I will quickly tell of a few more very important things. Bhaktivinoda Thakur says in the "Bhajana-rahasya" that there are four weaknesses of the heart or four manifestations of the weak heart, the heart which is imprisoned here by the material energy. This is *krishna tara visaya sakti*, attachment to things that are not related to Krishna, to some ordinary trivial things, *kutinati* or diplomacy, hypocrisy, *paradroha*, slander, when we talk bad of others, humiliate them, offend them, and our favorite *pratisthasa*, the desire for fame, the hope to gain fame. Listen carefully to what he says, these four things are manifestations of the *hridaya daurbalyam*, of weakness of the heart and all *sastras* say the same thing, that these four things give rise to the six enemies and the six waves that carry us throughout the material world. We know the six enemies, *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya* – lust, anger, greed, envy, illusion, pride. All other bad qualities arise from there. Further on he says, the six waves, *sadurmi*, means things that drive us crazy, that agitate our mind. As long as a person has these, as long as inside he retains attachment to material things, as long as he retains *pratistha*, the desire for fame, he will never find peace. The six waves are hunger, thirst, old age, death, grief and illusion, the delusion that we are in. These are the six states that one's mind is in.

If we look, our mind is constantly bothered or concerned about something: we want to eat or drink; if we do not want anything, neither to eat nor to drink, we lament; if we don't lament, we are in complete delusion, if we are not in delusion we have already grown old, we are incapable of anything and we think, "Ahhh." Eventually, we die. The prospect of death is constantly agitating us, constantly depriving us of peace. These six waves are the fee that we have to pay; it's what we pay for some stupid pleasures; this is what we pay for some paltry crumbs of pleasures.

Sanatana Goswami goes even further, he says that of all roots, of everything else, this *pratistha* is the root of all other *anarthas*; all other *anarthas* start growing out of it. Listen carefully to what he's saying at the very end, in one of the last verses of the "Hari-bhaktivilasa": *sarva-tyagepy aheyayah* – even if a person has given up everything else, *sarva-tyagi*, even if he has rejected everything else, has renounced everything else, *sarvanartha-bhavas ca te* – all *anarthas* can return to him, everything unnecessary and stupid can return to him. *Kuryuh pratistha-visthayah* – why? Because inside, in his mind, he comes in contact with *pratistha* which is like *vistha*, excrements. *Yatnam asparsane varam* – if a person comes in contact with that then everything else returns to him.

This is the very end of the book, wherein Sanatana Goswami describes *sadacar*. He says, "To keep clean, you are supposed to do this and this, you should do this" and he says, "You're not going to keep clean even if you do all that" if you catch yourself at this desire for fame and don't drive it away because it is like excrements. If we do everything else – we purify ourselves, we do *acamana*, all the *mudras*, *pudras*, *sudras* – anything, everything! But if inside there are excrements, will we be clean? Never. And, as Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur Prabhupada kindly calls this *pratistha*, he says, "This is not just excrements, it's pig's excrements." A pig eats other excrements because they are tasty but their own excrements even pigs don't eat. This is what *pratistha* is, it is *sukarera-vistha*, pig's excrements.

Another curious point is that there is a very interesting principle in *nyaya*. *Nyaya* says that if we one thing is left from some category of things ... There is a group of some things and we are left with one such thing, everything else is gone, then everything else will come back. It is a very important principle. All other *anarthas* are gone, there's only one left and it seems a harmless one, because this *anartha*, the desire for fame, makes me study the scriptures, become very ascetic, preach, perform extraordinary feats in our devotional service. Kavi Karnapur cites this in the "Caitanya candrodaya" where he says, "If one thing has remained all the rest will come back." If someone loves Sanskrit, I can quote it, *eka yoga nibhirsanam sahava pravrittih sahava nivrittih* – if one thing out of a group of things remains it will attract all the rest. One *anartha* and everything else will come back.

Today I would like to explain how this happens, because actually we should clearly understand how this one thing ... I kind of already given up everything else, I don't eat meat, neither do I eat onions, garlic or fish, neither do I drink vodka or take drugs, but I still want glory; and how everything else gradually comes back, how it invites there everything else. The principle is actually simple. A couple of days ago in Minsk I was asked, "For what reasons ghosts enter into a human being and obsess him?" Sometimes we can see this happen even to the devotees, suddenly there are some ghosts, it's called schizophrenia, a person goes crazy. The reason is one: we normally have a protective aura that protects us on a subtle level from all evil, but how can they enter there? If a hole appears in the aura. Why can a hole appear in the aura? Due to dirt, contamination. Srila Prabhupada said, "If a person is not physically clean, ghosts can enter." Or another example, a physical example of how it happens – if a person's body is somehow or other contaminated, if *ama*, toxins have accumulated in the body, he can get infected by any small infection because his immunodefence has weakened.

That is, in other words, if something contaminates us, our consciousness, our aura, then a channel appears through which all the other contamination can enter there. The initial contamination has to stay there in order to invite to itself all the other contamination. If a person is immaculately pure then naturally no contamination will stick to him, no ghosts will scare him and nothing will bother him. Therefore, once again, people do not attach importance to this desire for fame, but Srila Prabhupada explains in the *gundica-marjana-lila* that if a person does this, the desire for fame remains in him, he secludes himself, he starts chanting *harinam* and not just *harinam* but 128 rounds, or 164, or 192 rounds or I don't know how much, or five *lakhs*, ten *lakhs*, then sooner or later that person will decide that he is an *avatar* and will start pestering the others. He says that the heart of such a person becomes harder and harder because *pratistha* gives rise to *jiva-himsa*. We'll analyze this sad mechanism.

At first I wanted to tell a story that I'm sure many of you have heard of, it's about Rupa Kaviraja. He was a contemporary of Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur and a very famous devotee, a very exalted devotee. He was initiated by Krishna Caran Cakravarti and he studied "Srimad-

Bhagavatam" under Mukuna Dasa's direction at Radha-kunda. When he read "Srimad-Bhagavatam" both he cried and his audience cried. People would come and cry when he was speaking of Krishna, people would stand still in delight. And he himself would display ecstatic symptoms while all this was going on, but *pratistha* was alive and he would think, "How great I am! Oh, how great I am!" Once Krishnapriya Thakurani came; she is a great Vaisnavi. Of course, she was a Vaisnavi, a woman, what would you expect of her, she might be a great Vaisnavi, but she's a woman. She sat among his audience and started listening; however, her tongue kept chanting, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. He did not like that and he said, "I'm giving a lecture! What right do you have to chant the holy name?" She said, "Forgive me, please, my tongue wouldn't stop, it's chanting on its own, I can't do anything." He went into a rage, he began stamping his feet and screaming. This person was situated at a very high level but what did it all lead to? As a result of that Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakur took care that he is banished from Vrindavan. At that time he was banned because he invented a theory of his own. His books are still there, he tried to pass off one of those books as a book of Rupa Goswami, where he describes *raganuga-sadhana*. At first glance you would say it was a harmless thing, that person perfectly knew Sanskrit, he knew the scriptures, those books were very scholarly, he quotes everything that is needed. However, the essence of his theory is that at a certain point in his practice, at a very high level, he made the reservation that I can *vraja-loca-anu-karanam* – imitate the devotees of Vrindavan, i.e. they had no guru. Did the *gopis* have a guru? No. Do we know the name of their guru? No. At a certain level I don't need a guru. Did they observe *ekadasi*? They didn't. At a certain level I don't need to observe *ekadasi*. They worshiped the Sun god and at a certain level I must start worshipping the Sun god. This is what happens to one's consciousness which gets contaminated by *pratistha* and it begins by rejection of guru. It's exactly what Raghunatha Das Goswami is warning us against in this verse. He says, if you want to get rid of it, you must never consider yourself to be guru; you must consider yourself to be a disciple, you must learn from others and that will keep you on the safe side. Therefore, Visvanatha Chakravarti Thakur says something very interesting, listen carefully: *anarthas* go away basically completely at the level of *anartha-nivritti* and at the level of *nistha* there remains almost none; after that *ruci*, *asakti*, there is even fewer and fewer. Do you know what remains at the level of *bhava*? There remains the possibility of committing an offense. This possibility is negligibly small because the person is practically connected with Krishna, he sees Krishna. However, that possibility remains and its cause, its root is that pride and the desire for fame remains in one; the fact that he uses his spiritual practice to gain something for himself.

In other words, *pratisthasa* or the desire for fame and honor invites into our heart *matsarya* – rivalry, envy. That's the first one she invites because she's bored, she's dancing her cancan in our heart, *svapaca-ramani*, she's dancing and dancing, but she needs a husband, right? Every woman needs a husband, especially a woman of a cheerful disposition. She says, "Come here, come here" and she invites *matsarya*. *Matsarya* means envy, rivalry or joy when I see that something's gone wrong with another person. Srila Jiva Goswami in his "Bhagavad-sandharba" defines *matsarya* as the inability to stand someone's superiority over oneself. I want fame, fame for myself and if I see someone who is superior to me, I naturally start feeling how? Good, right? (laughter) I want fame for myself, he is my rival, he surpasses me and therefore what should we do with him? It is clear what. I see someone and ... A true Vaisnava sees another person, he sees someone who has all the wonderful qualities and he is glad for him, it's a festival for him because he sees that someone surpasses me! This means that there is still hope for the world; if no one exceeded me, things would really be bad for all of us. There's someone above me, what could be more wonderful? There's someone better than me! But I feel *matsarya*, "I will fall short of honor! He will take away my honor, if he appears, how will I ... " When *pratisthasa* and *matsarya* join in an alliance they beget two children, they have two very sweet and cute

children, they gradually begin to proliferate there. At first she danced alone there, gradually she called *matsarya* and she begets two children – *jiva-himsa* or cruelty in the heart and *asuya*, the desire to offend. In "Sri Caitanya-caritamrita", in the story about Amogha, Caitanya Mahaprabhu Himself also says that *matsarya* is from the same caste as *pratistha*. *Pratistha* comes from the caste of dog-eaters, the untouchable, and Caitanya Mahaprabhu confirms this, He says that if you have invited her, *matsarya-candala*, *matsarya* is of the same nature, she's untouchable, something extremely desecrating. If we come just into slight contact with her it means that we are desecrated as a whole.

These two things that she generates naturally lead to what? *Asuya* means the ability to see faults even where there are none. *Asuya* is the envy that has entered my eyes and I see someone who is endowed with all the virtues and what do I see? Faults. Like Sisupala, he looked at Krishna, Krishna was sitting before him and Krishna was the most beautiful and everyone around was glorifying Him, saying, "He's to be worshipped first!" and Sisupala was saying, "You are crazy!" Bhishma stood up and began to speak, "Krishna is to be worshiped first, we'll perform *agra-puja* for Him!" Sisupala said, "He's gone senile, He's lived too long in the world, He's in His dotage. Not only is He insane, all of you are insane! Because Bhishma says – well, he's an old man, he's babbling something, he's gone out of his mind – but all of you confirm it!" And he started committing an offense after offense. Krishna is sitting, He's calm, He's got beads and He's counting. He said, "One hundred times" and He warns, "Ninety nine, can you do that one more time?" And Sisupala does it, one after another, one after another! This is *asuya*. *Asuya* makes me start offending, start talking bad about them. Inside I have this *pratishtasha*, the desire for honor, it brings back the spirit of rivalry or envy which is manifested in words, I start speaking ill of others, I start offending the devotees. Ultimately, this is *jiva-himsa*; in the end I just start insulting others, I start hurting them, I start doing terrible things; insults pass on into another phase.

In the "Caitanya-caritamrita" there is a story about Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya's son-in-law. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya pleaded with Caitanya Mahaprabhu to come to his home, but he knew that he had a son-in-law and God forbid his son-in-law appears there. He offered Caitanya Mahaprabhu a seat in the temple room, offered Him magnificent *prasadam*, together with his wife they had prepared splendid offerings; he then stood, stick in hand, at the doorway to keep away his son-in-law. At some point, he got somewhat distracted and at that moment his son-in-law ran in, he looked into the room and said, "A-ha-ha-haaa! Glutton! This *prasadam* is enough to feed twelve people, and here is one *sannyasi* sitting here and eating!" Upon hearing that, Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya grabbed his head and said, "Let my daughter becomes a widow!" Caitanya Mahaprabhu just laughed, He was simply amused. Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya said, "Well, how is that?! We invited You and we wanted to feed You, but instead this rascal came and insulted You!" Later, when that Amogha was seized by cholera – and that happened the same evening – Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya was the happiest man in the world. He said, "*Karma* rapidly comes to the offenders! Jay!" When Caitanya Mahaprabhu heard that, He rushed to Amogha who was lying in bed dying from cholera, sat down and said, "How's that? How could you allow that? The heart of a *brahmana* is pure! How could you allow your heart to be desecrated by all that? How could you? The heart of a *brahmana* is a heart, in which Krishna lives, and you have allowed all this dirt, this vile desecrate your heart?"

This is how *pratistha* or the desire for fame ultimately gradually desecrates the heart. We can always see *pratistha*, invariably, there is one cast iron symptom that works out in 100% of the cases: If a person has *pratistha*, he will be offending others, he will be offending the Vaisnavas, He will in one way or another be finding all possible faults and rejoicing at that. There is a remarkable magazine called "Back to Prabhupada," issued by the ritviks. It's simply a collection

of Vaisnava-*aparadhas*, they relish all possible *vaisnava-aparadhas*! When we had a kind of dispute with them, I said, "Look, my dear, everything's okay, of course, you are nice devotees, but why, where has Srila Prabhupada said that we should collect *aparadhas*?" The answer was, "We are speaking the truth!" This is how people justify themselves, this is how people ultimately, being in a fallen state, justify themselves. Whereas it is said that if a person has this *pratistha* and *matsarya* inside there can be no love. "Srimad-Bhagavatam" begins with that, *paramo nirmatsaranam satam*. Who can understand "Srimad-Bhagavatam"? Only those who are free from envy, free from the spirit of jealousy, rivalry, and *paramo nirmatsaranam satam*. I've seen how it all happens in reality; unfortunately, this is not some fairy tale, this is not a myth, we see how it all turns into reality.

One person is standing before my eyes, also a great guru – thank God not in ISKCON – he's running down everyone. Whoever comes to hand! Srila Prabhupada, when his disciples got reinitiated by one of his god-brothers, he felt very offended, insulted, because it is an offence. This person is also reinitiating one, second, third ... I asked him, 'Why are you doing it? Why?' He said, "I will! I will!" Because *pratistha* lives in the heart, because there is this feeling or awareness that I am great and I must prove to everyone my greatness. Accordingly it inevitably leads to offense, inevitably! And offenses bog us down deeper and deeper here, in the material world.

In the "Ramayana" there is a story and all these stories are meant to teach us a lesson. In the "Ramayana" Rama comes into the forest and finds a small *asram*, a hut, where Atri Muni lives. Atri Muni has a wife whose name is *Anasuya*. *Anasuya* means 'she who never runs down anyone'. Rama brings Sita before *Anasuya* and says, "Teach Her to serve Me." She serves and finally she gives Her some make-up that is so popular; I think that many will be interested, especially those sitting in this part. *Anasuya* says, "Sita, if You use this make-up You will never grow old." Does someone want such a make-up? "Old age is not going to touch You, You will always look eternally young." What is that make-up called? *Trinad api sunicena taror eva sahisnuna*, because this is what cools down the soul, cools down the consciousness; it's the sandalwood paste that, when applied to one's face, a person can be in a normal state. This is what *Anasuya* teaches us ultimately, humility and that's the make-up that can help us to stay forever young.

Therefore, the basic principle of the Vaisnavas, the essence of the Vaisnava ethics, the very essence of what we should be learning is one single thing: humility, and by no means should we let that *pratistha*, the desire for fame, which is somewhere there in each of us, be manifested. It will remain until the very end, Sanatana Goswami says, "Just don't touch it, it will go away, go on serving humbly." If this humility is there then the mercy of Krishna will come to you and the mercy of the devotees will come to you. When there is humility, mercy comes in a natural way. When there is no humility, there will be no mercy. This is a natural thing and this is the most important lesson. The only thing we should learn and understand is this simple thing; then we will be safe and then the holy name will be with us all the time, the Vaisnavas will be with us, everyone will be with us, nothing will go away and our spiritual experience, the experience of love, will be growing deeper and deeper. One simple thing.

There is a wonderful story from the life of one *sadhu* of Vrindavan, his name was Radha Raman Ghosh. He was very smart, very brave, very determined, very strong-willed and he was the secretary of one *maharaj*. That *maharaja* was a humble Vaisnava. So, naturally he would regularly meet Vaisnavas and he would constantly ridicule the Vaisnavas, "These Vaisnavas are worthless people." He couldn't understand this one thing which we oftentimes also can't understand – the beauty, the importance of humility, that it is impossible to live without humility,

it is impossible to practice anything. Although this Radha Raman Ghosh had a good master, *maharaja*, he himself was too learned, too proud of himself, he thought, "How's that? What a nonsense! Why should I be humble? What for?!"

Once there was an occurrence. They arrived in Vrindavan, that *maharaja* came with his retinue, they were accommodated at the house which he had there. He gathered the *sadhus* around himself, they were discussing something when suddenly they heard some noise on the street, as you would sometimes hear in Vrindavan. He looked out and saw that his servants had hung out his clothes along with a precious shawl which cost a whole fortune, made of the finest cashmere wool. Immediately a monkey came running, grabbed the shawl and sat on a branch. Those who have been in Vrindavan know that monkeys earn their living in this way. Especially in some places monkeys know exactly what to steal, when to steal and they are unequalled, they can steal anything, they can pick your glasses before you even notice. The servants rushed to that tree and began offering it fruits, bananas, they brought all possible things just to make it give back the shawl. The monkey was sitting in the tree, quietly looking at all the fruits and tearing the shawl into strips with great pleasure. They were telling it, "Here, take the fruits!" Usually the monkeys are honest businessman, if you give them fruits, they would take the fruits and give your thing back. However, this one showed no interest whatsoever in all the offered fruits and was just tearing that shawl apart. The *maharaja* was staring at the scene and suddenly everyone saw tears roll down from his eyes. Radha Raman, his secretary, also saw those tears and thought, "Is he lamenting over that shawl, I wonder?" He was embarrassed to ask him then but later he snatched a moment and asked him, "*Maharaj*, what happened? Why were you crying when you saw that?" He said that the monkey wasn't a monkey but a great saint and sage who lives here in Vrindavan and that he came to teach me that one should not enter Vrindavan with one's entourage on horseback. One should enter Vrindavan barefoot. He came especially to teach me that lesson. When the monkey was tearing that shawl into pieces, I saw myself sitting high in a mountain, that was the mountain of my *pratistha*, my ambition. I saw myself sitting there, looking around, and I realized that I won't be able to get mercy, because mercy flows downwards, mercy doesn't go upwards; whereas I have climbed up that mountain and have thus deprived myself of the opportunity to receive mercy and am sitting there." And again he began to cry. Then he looked at him sorrowfully and said, "Do you think I have any chance or not?"

This Radha Raman Ghosh, who later also became a great saint, when he saw that, he realized what humility means. He realized the value of this quality when he saw those tears appearing in the eyes of a person who seemed to have everything to be proud of and who was cursing this quality in himself.

This is a very important lesson for all of us. If we read the "Caitanya Bhagavata" Vrindavan Das Thakur says again and again that "if you see a Vaisnava bow down to him! If you can't bow down then at least bow down to him in your mind. If you see a Vaisnava be glad to see him." He says, "If a person has one quality: he doesn't distinguish between Vaisnavas and doesn't judge them and doesn't say, 'This Vaisnava is here, that one is there, and I'm here' or, 'some are above me, others are below me' – if a person sees a Vaisnava and considers them all to be above himself, such a person will go to Vaikuntha, will go directly to Krishna."

Further on he says, "If a person doesn't bow his head before the Vaisnavas, he sees a Vaisnav and doesn't bow his head before him, then that head will bring him to hell." Hare Krishna! If he doesn't address him with some humble words but says, "Iyaiyaiyaiya" what does it all mean? One thing only. Behind all the possible offenses there is one single thing that eventually desecrates all our consciousness and prevents one from chanting the holy

name. Therefore, at parting I wanted to give you three advices that are very important in our dealings with the Vaisnavas: first is to consider each Vaisnava above myself, "He is my guru; Krishna has sent him to teach me something. If I consider him my guru, my teacher, I can learn from him something very important, he's above me." If someone comes up to you and starts criticizing another Vaisnava – also a very important advice, remember it – tell him, "You know, I have to do something very urgent. I've just remembered, I have to run" and run away! Run far away! How many spiritual lives ... Because when we hear offenses against others, our respect for the Vaisnavas diminishes whether we want or not, even if we don't believe, even if we screen it off, still the respect we feel inside the Vaisnavas diminishes, even if it is not true a hundred times, a thousand times not true, a million times not true, we know that it is not true – we still won't be able to respect that person as a before. Therefore, we must not commit offenses ourselves but we also must not hear offenses against a Vaisnava. That is why we must say, "I have urgent things to do, I must chant Hare Krishna, I've just remembered." If we see a fault in a person – and there are faults, naturally, sometimes it's hard to not see them – what should I think? I should think, "Why do I see this fault? Because I also have it. This is my fault, it's not his fault." In this way, instead of rejoicing, I must reproach myself, "Here it is, yes, I saw the fault that is there." Then *pratishta* will go away. These are three simple but very practical advices which can make our life in Krishna consciousness very happy. This is probably all I wanted to say. Thank you very much. Is there any questions?

Question: Thank you. Could you explain the difference between what we call in Russian language wretchedness or impairment and humility and immediately the second subpoint is whether humility that arises from despair is of any value?

Answer: In the "Brihad-Bhagavatamrita" Sanatana Goswami says that humility is not when a person has nothing and he decides to become humble in this way. Humility is just the opposite when a person has everything, all the merits, but nevertheless he's not proud of that. Each of us has something, but we must understand that it's not mine and we must not try to be proud of it, to show it off, to demonstrate it; on the contrary, try to keep back all this. Like Madhavendra Puri, when he heard from the *pujari* that Ksiracor Gopinath has stolen milk for him, he got scared, he thought, "Now there will be a crowd here that will be glorifying me" and he ran away. But Krishnadas Kaviraj says that "the glory of a Vaisnava is so great that wherever he runs it follows him, you can't escape it."

Wretchedness means I have nothing, but no one has nothing, this is a person with an inferiority complex. We are not talking about the inferiority complex that we have to develop; we should use all the talents we have in Krishna consciousness, but not be proud of that, that's the difference. The difference is not that I'm sitting unable to do anything and I just keep saying, "I'm so fallen, I'm so fallen, look how fallen I am, look, I'm the most fallen servant." Who needs a most fallen servant? Does anyone need a most fallen servant? Someone comes and says, "I'm the most fallen servant, engage me in your service. I can't do anything, I'm incapable of anything, I'm completely worthless." Hare Krishna! No, a servant means that I can do something and I do it properly, without any particular complexes, without anything, I just do it because this is my service, this is my way, my chance to do something for Krishna. This is the difference between humility and wretchedness.

As for the humility that ensues from despair, that's not bad; when Krishna has cornered us and we have understood everything and say, "Krishna, I've understood everything, Hare Krishna, that's it, I'm incapable of anything but I'll still serve You, You do everything." That's what humility is, it's just the understanding of who I really am. Humility is not an artificial thing, I understand, "This is what I am, this is what I can do, I do whatever I can, I don't do what I can't." Simple,

without any particularities. Despair sometimes means I've immersed myself in my own pridefulness and ultimately it has all collapsed, all that artificial that I've built around myself, it all crushed down and for me there is no way out except to be humble. It has a value of its own, if I understand that actually it's a very secure position. This is what I am, I'll still be doing something for Krishna, no matter what happens.

Question: Tell us, please, which type of *anarthas* does the loser complex fall in?

Answer: The loser complex usually takes the place of the hero complex (laughter). First a person begins with the hero complex, then that is replaced by the loser complex. These are two sides of the same coin, this is pride. First a person likes to consider himself a hero, a winner, then nothing works out for him, he needs something to be proud of and he starts being proud of this, he starts doing this in different ways. All complexes are of the same nature, the nature of pridefulness, I want to show off through all this. A person pretends to be a victim, "Oh, yes, everything is bad, yes, yes." Usually the loser complex consists in blaming the others for our own failures, this is what the complex is. We explain to everyone that, "I would have actually been a hero, but I was prevented by the enemies and the envious."

Question: Sometimes it's extremely difficult to discern our pride and *pratistha*; as you say we must trace it and somehow reject it; the presence of these qualities prevents us from practicing our spiritual life, prevents us from chanting the holy name, which purifies our hearts and gives us the opportunity to trace our *pratistha*, our pride. So, the question is: it turns out to be a double-edged weapon and what should we pay more attention to – to tracing the qualities or ...

Answer: Neither the one nor the other, we must pay attention to serving a devotee who is a *priori* above me; to constantly referring to him in our consciousness and considering ourselves his servant. This is the advice Raghunatha Das Goswami gives in this verse. I serve him; everything I do, I do on his behalf, not because I am like that; he has told me and I do it. If I just trace it ... We should keep an eye on it, too, we should understand where it works and in what way; and we'll see it, if we hear of it, we'll see how it manifests, but it will be like a peekaboo, *pratistha* will always be coming in new forms, in new images, we'll be recognizing it and then it will again be taking various forms... That's not where the secret is; the key to breaking this circle is that we must serve, inside we must constantly come in contact with that and regard ourselves to be a disciple, that's the point. And even if I play the role of a teacher – and sometimes we have to play the role of a teacher in relation to someone – I must understand: this is a role I play. Inside, my inner self is "I am a disciple." Then who am I? I'm just a transmitter, I connect that person with the great devotees and somehow or other, since I'm sincerely trying to connect him, some energy does run through me. I must never ascribe that to myself, "I'm saving him, I'm his savior, I'm this, I'm that." Inside I always consider myself to be a disciple no matter who I am.

Like, Bhakti Pramod Puri Maharaja told that Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati has written an entire "Vaisnava ke?" on this, on *pratistha*, on how a person engages in devotional service for that purpose. At some point he began crying, "I'm sitting on a higher seat than you, excuse me, please, I do that not because I think I'm above you and not because I want to somehow exploit you". I simply play this role, it's a thankless role, it's not a good role. I know that it's a dangerous role, that it does not pass harmlessly, but that's exactly the secret – inside I must always feel that I am a disciple, I am a servant, I serve, then everything will be okay.

Question: Hare Krishna. Maybe Maharaj can tell us about the Moscow project?

Answer: The Moscow project was invented by Krishna to teach us humility and patience (laughs), that's an undoubted fact. The more I do this the more amazing is the feeling that I have inside: that actually I don't do anything, everything is done by Krishna because no one would have overcome these difficulties. When you do this, you understand: Krishna does everything, He brings this person, that person, someone else appears, another one helps here and you see that and amazing things happen, it becomes amazing. This is the very feeling when there's some energy flowing so that everything is going on, thanks to your blessings, your help; this helps a lot, especially the devotees from Riga help a lot. Thank you very much, I hope that everything will be all right, because it's Krishna's project and generally, it will be the way He decides. Thank you.

Question: We are imperfect by nature and the times now are not easy, very often it happens that we commit offenses, *aparadhas*, just by the fact of our existence (laughter), we don't have to do anything for that, here I am what I am and it's already an offense and not simply against one person, but against many (laughter). How should be deal with such offenses?

Answer: We should ask for forgiveness, "Forgive me that I am." Actually, any offense, if one repents humbly and sincerely and asks for forgiveness ... We can hurt someone, that's a fact, we can offend someone unknowingly. Moreover, that's just the way we commit most of the offenses, without meaning it, we just don't notice a person, thinking about something, we pass by without greeting him, and the person feels offended and that's it, that's already an offense. Therefore, we should ask for forgiveness, we should ask for forgiveness everyone, just in case. A Vaisnava is a humble person. Raghunatha Das Goswami has taken a vow to bow down to the Vaisnavas 2000 times per day and he was looking for them because you can't even meet 2000 Vaisnavas, so he had to bow down several times to one Vaisnava. Humility is the topmost virtue and if there is humility then we'll be able to cope even with this serious problem. Yes, it's a fact, we have certain qualities, sharp angles or something like that but we should ask and say, "Please, forgive me, but that's the way mother has borne me, with angles. I'm trying."

Question: The majour part of us is parents, the female half, and very often we face the following situation: from very childhood children get the understanding that Radha and Krishna give protection, but very often due to their playfulness we have to reproach or punish them. But then they run to the altar, "O Radha, O Krishna, save us!" (laughter) The mother says, "When you deserve to be punished no Radha and no Krishna are going to save you." In what way do we help developing the children's' faith by such words? The children actually seeing that no Krishna or Radha are going to save them? (laughter)

Answer: Children should understand that Krishna also punishes and you should not say that "No Krishna and Radha are going to save you." We should say, "It's Krishna and Radha who are punishing you, and I'm just a tool in Their hands, I'm not punishing you on my behalf, I'm punishing you on behalf of Radha and Krishna." In fact, these two things should come from the parents, strictness and love and these two same things come from Krishna too: He sometimes is strict, because He understands that He must restrict you. That's also His mercy and children should understand this one thing: that mercy is not only when they are given an ice-cream or they're petted. Mercy or good is also when they are punished or restricted. They must understand this: yes, Krishna and Radha give protection, but sometimes they can reproach and that is also protection, that's how They protect us.

Question: Please tell us whether pride and the desire for fame is one and the same thing?

Answer: Not quite the same because pride is something that follows. The desire for fame is a bit subtler thing. Pride means that I have something and I'm proud of it, I'm telling everyone, I'm bragging, I'm explaining. The desire for fame – I may not be bragging about anything, I may not be explaining but just hinting. The desire for fame is something subtler, that is why it stands apart, it's the last thing. Sometimes in order to get famous I become humble. Pride is the antonym of humility, right? In order to gain fame sometimes becomes so to speak "humble." So, it's a bit subtler.

Question: Is there exploitation of humility?

Answer: Exploitation of humility can take place. If someone is humble he might get exploited by others and he must not allow to be exploited. Humility does not mean stupidity. Humility does not mean allowing others to exploit you. Narada Muni told the serpent, "sometimes hiss but don't bite; you can hiss". We should not allow other people to exploit us. Humility means that I do not pose as anyone, I do all I can, I try to serve, but if someone exploits me or makes improper use of my so to speak humility, that's also wrong, it means that I want to get some fame in return for that or something like that. Gaura Kishora Das Babaji would rail at everyone. People would come to him and he would tell them, "Go away!" When he saw that someone has come to exploit me, who has come to be near me in order to bask in the rays of all this, he would drive them away. Humility can be manifested in different ways. Humility is not some cliché, humility does not mean that I have to put on some mask. Humility means that inside I always consider myself a disciple, I am learning.

Question: [unclear]

Answer: We should be careful with Vaisnavas, very careful; however, sometimes we can also tell them some things. Once again, humility is not external behavior, it's my consciousness, who I consider myself. If I consider myself a very small and humble servant and nevertheless I scold someone, that's Ok.

Question: What about non-Vaisnavas?

Answer: It doesn't matter whether I scold a Vaisnava or a non-Vaisnava. What's important is whom I consider myself inside at that moment. If my self-esteem is hurt, "I'm so great and I was not respected, I was not honored" – that is one thing; but if inside I simply know that I'm a servant and I'll always be a servant and I'll always be serving, and I need to do something, I'll do it. Arjuna killed people.

Continuation of the question: If there is a situation with the relatives where only a harsh word can explain something and people get actually offended because ... [unclear] Shall we not pay attention to their offense?

Answer: If inside I all the same consider myself a servant of that person, I can say a harsh word, but then I should come and apologize to him and he will understand that I was actually driven by the desire to help him. It's just like with a small child. He may take offense if we punish him but after that we should always make him understand that "you are mine all the same, I love you and I do that out of love."

Thank you very much.