

"Saranagati – surrendering oneself to Krishna," Germany (19.05.2012), Introductory lecture

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I am very happy to see all and every one of you here, in this wonderful hall. I'm glad to see this hall, too. But much more I'm glad to see you all of you here. Today we're going to have a short introduction, a small introductory speech. The subject of this year's retreat here in Germany will be "Saranagati – surrendering oneself to Krishna." Many years ago I started this topic at the first retreat in Magdalinovka and just a few days ago I was giving a talk on this subject in English in London. So, I wanted to again raise this issue so that we could reflect together on what it means to "surrender oneself." We call ourselves devotees because we have surrendered, we have dedicated ourselves to a cause. In other words, surrender means a certain basis or foundation which all our practice rests on. But very often we try to get around this foundation. Very often unwittingly due to certain deviations that are naturally there in our minds we try to approach the practice of *bhakti* with other recipes. *Bhakti* will be successful only if it is based on surrender, that is change of our ego.

However, very often we hear recipes that are actually taken from other traditions. In this regard perhaps it would be curious, as an introduction to this topic, to explain what is meant by surrender in Ramanuja Acharya's *sampradaya* (*Sri-sampradaya*) and what distinguishes it from *bhakti-yoga*.

For us, there is no difference between *surrender*, *saranapatti* (*sharanapatti-prapann*) and *bhakti-yoga* – one is unthinkable without the other. But the spiritual tradition which is very close to ours makes a very clear distinction between the two. It is said that these two methods are two methods by which a person can change his status. Now we all have a material status, we are very firmly attached to material identification, our ego binds us to our material body. So, in Ramanuja Acharya's *sampradaya* it is said that there are two methods that Krishna speaks of at the end of the "Bhagavad Gita." If you remember the very end of the "Bhagavad Gita", Krishna first tells Arjuna, "Arjuna, I told you everything. Think it over and do as you know. Do whatever you want. I've told you everything." Then Krishna looks at Arjuna and compassion fills His heart. He realizes that He can't conclude the "Bhagavad Gita" here. He can't say: "Do as you know" and with tears in His eyes he goes on, "And now I'll tell you the most important thing. Something extremely important. Just listen to Me." Krishna invests so much power in these two verses, that it's impossible not to understand what exactly He wants to tell us by all the "Bhagavad-gita." He speaks two verses. The first is (Bg 18.65):

man-manā bhava mad-bhakto
mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru
mām evaiśyasi satyaṁ te
pratijāne priyo 'si me

He says: "I solemnly promise to you, O Arjuna, that you will come to Me if think of Me (*man-mana*). *Bhava mad-bhakto* – if you become My *bhakta*, that is if you fulfill certain requirements, if you bow down to Me and perform sacrifices for Me (*mam-yaji*) and worship Me (or just bow down to Me), then you will come to Me for sure." And the next well-known verse is (Bg 18.66):

sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ

In this second verse He says, "Just give up everything and surrender unto Me and don't do anything else." So, Ramanujacharya, and the entire *sampradaya* following him (the entire school of *bhakti*) states that Krishna speaks here of two fundamentally different approaches to spiritual life. Both approaches work, but the two of them strongly differ from each other. He says that in the first case Krishna says, and that's a fact; the Sanskrit in itself and Krishna's words imply or at least allow such an interpretation – the first approach is called *bhakti-yoga*. In their understanding *bhakti-yoga* is our attempt to meditate on Krishna, on Krishna's image, on Krishna's form, on

Krishna's name (*man-mana* – think of Me). *Bhava mad bhakto* – become My devotee (when we follow the various rules and injunctions of devotional service, when we perform sacrifices in Krishna's honor, when we bow down, when we lead a strictly regulated life in accordance with the principles of *bhakti-yoga*).

And in a sense, this approach is *yoga*, or it somewhat resembles the meditative *yoga* described in the sixth chapter of the "Bhagavad Gita." For, what is *yoga* in the usual understanding of this word? *Yoga* means we meditate, "Focus, relax, sit in a nice pose, meditate." So, they say, "This is one method" and very often we try to follow this way. Has anyone tried to follow this way? We have to focus on Krishna's name: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. *Man-mana* – think of Me. However, we know that these attempts are quite helpless, oftentimes they are rather futile. So, we think, "Why doesn't it work? They say we have to focus on Hare Krishna Xare Krishna." Right? But before we say Hare our mind has gone elsewhere. We say "Krishna" and bring it back but at the next Hare it's again gone elsewhere.

Once again, this is what Sri-sampradaya calls *bhakti-yoga*. And they say that in order to practice *bhakti-yoga* one must be born in the right family, one must be pure. In fact, one must be able to meditate, one must have a pure mind, which is, basically, quite an impossible task in *Kali-yuga*. Does anyone here have a pure mind, by the way? Because in order to meditate we must have certain abilities. Therefore, they say that there is another method. This second method is described by Krishna in the famous verse (Bg, 18.66): *sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja – saranagati*. "Just surrender to Me and I'll take care of you."

I'm giving this example so that we understand how often But again, that's not our understanding. Our understanding is that we first surrender and then engage in *bhakti-yoga*, then start chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. It's not that first we start chanting Hare Krishna and surrender after that. We first surrender.

In other words, from the very beginning we chant Hare Krishna in a special way. All attempts to somehow or other focus just on Hare Krishna, we know that ourselves, end up in a failure. Sometimes at retreats we say, "We should sit upright in order to chant Hare Krishna." And it is explained that one can practice meditation only if our spine is upright. We understand that whether with upright or curved spines meditation is equally a failure. Our meditation has reached complete independence from the shape of our spine: it doesn't work in either case no matter how hard we try to straighten it. And all sorts of other ways. *Pranayama* is a good method. But if a person has surrendered he doesn't care what shape his spine takes. Why? Because surrendering means investing all our consciousness in these words.

Srila Prabhupada speaks about that. When he explains the way we should *chant* he says that the mantra should be chanted as if a child is crying for his mother. Have you ever heard that? In giving this explanation, Srila Prabhupada is actually saying that *saranagati* should come first because a child is looking for his mother's shelter. He has no other protection than his mother, that is why he's calling her. And in this case, the child needs to be explained the principles of meditation, *pranayama*, so that he calls his mother sincerely. He does not have to do all these things because he will be calling his mother in the right way.

If we understand what this mood of surrender means and if we properly understand – not even understand but feel (because we are not speaking about some cold intellectual understanding; intellectual understanding helps but eventually we are speaking about feeling what surrendering to Krishna means) – then the success of our practice is guaranteed. To give an example of what it means to surrender and why success consists exactly in this (in complete surrender), of course, the most vivid example of surrender (the results of surrender), is the story of Draupadi. You all know and have heard this story. It is said that many years later, one day Krishna was alone with Draupadi. Draupadi then looked at Krishna and said, "Krishna, You saved me at that very moment when I was going to be desecrated." Imagine just for a moment: a chaste woman suffered the attempt of being undressed. And not just undressed – it was all before the eyes of her elders, the eyes of soldiers, kings, a great number of men. What could be more worse?!

So, Draupadi started speaking about that, her eyes brimming with tears. Turning to Krishna she said, "Thank You, Krishna, You saved me. But I want to ask You a question: why didn't You do it straight away, why did You take so much time to save me?" And that's a question we sometimes ask ourselves. We also think, "Krishna seems to be in no hurry to save us." In some situations Krishna doesn't rush to our rescue or sometimes we think, "Is there any Krishna or not? Is He going to rescue me or not?" Krishna replied that question of Draupadi. She says, "Krishna, I was calling You! I was calling you from the very beginning!" Krishna said, "Yes, you were calling Me. Indeed, you were saying, "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna, Govinda!" but you didn't mean Me. At the beginning, when you were calling Me, turning to Me, you were calling Me but your eyes were looking for Arjuna and Bhima. Because they were your husbands and you knew you were under their protection, you knew that they'd always protect you. Your eyes were looking for them and you were saying, "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna", but at the same time you were thinking of what they were going to do. But then you saw that Arjuna and Bhima dropped their heads."

Bhima was looking at Yudhishthira waiting for his sign. But Yudhishthira sat indifferently and pretended that he nothing to do with that. At that point Krishna said, "Then you turned your eyes to Drona. You were calling Me, crying out, "Krishna, Krishna! Help me!" but you were thinking, "Drona can put an end to this disgrace!" Had Drona said a word - Dronacharya commanded such power and respect that a word said by him would have sufficed and all that would have stopped. "You saw that Drona turned his head away, also pretending he did not understand what was going on. Then you turned your eyes to Bhishma and you were calling Me, "Krishna, Krishna, Krishna!" You stood before him and asked, "Bhishma, what's going on? Stop it! Is it according to *dharma* or not?! Am I a slave or not?" And Bhishma said, "I don't know. It's a complicated question, I have to think." Bhishma refused. Then you ran to the blind Dhritarashtra and begged for his help. You were looking at him hoping that he would put an end to all that. When you realized that he's not going to stop it you gripped at your *sari* yourself. Meanwhile Duhshasana was already pulling over the edge of your *sari*. You were calling Me. Then you raised one hand and cried out, "Hey Govinda!" but with the other one you were keeping hold of your *sari*, you clung to it with your teeth and wouldn't let it go. But then you realized that no one and nothing was going to save you. At that point you cried out, "Krishna! Govinda!" and there I was. At that point I turned into your *sari*." Krishna said, "When you called Me I came. Before that you were saying "Krishna" but you were meaning someone else. Before that you somehow or other relied on someone else".

The purport of this story is obvious for us. We're also calling Krishna, right? Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. But sometimes we don't feel anything at all – we don't feel Krishna's presence. We know the theory, that Krishna and His name are non-different from each other. This means that as soon as we utter His name we must feel His presence. But sometimes we don't feel His presence. And sometimes we do feel it, right? Sometimes it happens so that Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. And it all depends only on how much surrender we have at this point in our heart or in our minds, to what extent our consciousness is permeated with this spirit.

Surrender means practice. Of course, it is difficult to expect that we'll surrender overnight at 100% if Draupadi could not do that. Draupadi is not a *sadhaka*, or how shall I put in in the feminine? A *sadhakini*. Draupadi is not a devotee seeking perfection. She is a *siddha* that has reached perfection; but even in her case she relied on someone else and was looking for someone else's protection. Of course, that's a *lila*, a pastime to us. This *lila* is to show us in what way, through what stages our spiritual development is to go through. And *saranagati* or surrendering oneself is a process, it's a *sadhana*, it's a practice. In the stories that will be dedicated to this subject I'll try to touch it, I'll try to tell about it. I'll be telling stories of how different people went through this process, and what it actually implies.

Sadhana is something we do every day. *Sadhana* is not something that we did once and forgot about it. *Sadhana* is a practice and practice means we do it every day. In fact, when we chant the holy name that is our practice of surrendering. If we chant in this mood everything else we do will be done in the right consciousness, in the right state. And our whole life will turn into an amazing adventure when we constantly feel Krishna's presence in our lives and when this presence of the

divine power (which leads us in our life and ultimately should lead us to itself) is not a theory but a practice, a tangible experience in our life.

This is actually the point and I'll be talking about this. This will be the topic of my discussions. We'll be thinking about how to apply this in our life, what we should do and what has been done by others, how we need to respond to everything that happens to us. And the most amazing thing that needs to happen to us at that moment – is Krishna's promise. He says, "When a person does this, when a person surrenders,

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ*

he stops experiencing anxiety, worry, stress and fear. Does anyone experience – sometimes, rarely – anxiety, worry and fear? It's a sign of ... well, let's say of an imperfect surrender. When our surrender becomes perfect, we'll become absolutely fearless, absolutely calm. Such a person can ascend a ship at the age of 70, go to America with forty rupees in his pocket (or with how many rupees?) without knowing what will happen there. And that's all right. What's the problem? Krishna is Krishna even in America, right? Krishna is not just in India, Krishna is Krishna everywhere. Such a person can do anything. He is not worried about anything, he's not worried over trifles, what's the point? He is completely and absolutely unshakable and imperturbable. His life takes place in a different dimension – in constant association with Krishna. Why? Because he's gone beyond the scope of the limited reality we are situated in. We are situated in a limited reality and the symbol of this limitation is death.

The main problem of material existence is death and that is the clearest proof of limitation. Everything inside us rebels against death. We do not want to die, do we? Death is unnatural! Loathsome, disgusting and unnatural. Something absolutely contrary to the living being, something that's beyond our comprehension. A person, a soul naturally feels his infinity. We are looking for infinity – infinite happiness, infinite knowledge and understanding, infinite existence or being and we cannot accept this limitation. When a person surrenders he goes beyond the limited existence, beyond his limited consciousness.

Actually, when we come in touch with the limited we constantly experience stress and anxiety. This is something that Viktor Frankl has noted, a person far from any Vedic culture or understanding (he studied psychology and was a psychologist of the Viennese School of Psychology). So, he states this amazing thing that a person experiences happiness only when he somehow or other comes in touch with something infinite. People are looking for something, they want unlimited expansion, right? Why do people earn money? Because money, especially in large amounts ... It would seem that earn a million and live in peace – that will be enough for you. No! No one has ever stopped at one million, no one has ever stopped even at one billion. People want to expand all these things. Why? Because that's the nature of spirit – constant expansion: *anandambudhi-varadhanam*. This *varadhanam* is the nature of spirit. And we want to obtain something. When a person comes in touch with something that reminds him of that constant expansion he feels good: more, more, more ...

Thus *saranagati*, or surrendering oneself, is the easiest, most natural and most direct way to feel in contact with the infinite God and get rid of our limitations and the inevitable stress associated with it. Everyone wants a life free from stress. Everyone wants something but no one knows how to get it. In other words, we are going to have a seminar on how to get rid of stress (laughter). Because there is only one way to get rid of stress – that is to go beyond our limitations, our material prison, the prison of material consciousness, restricted material consciousness. When a person goes beyond that he comes in touch with the infinite, he becomes absolutely happy. His consciousness acquires an absolutely different nature, it acquires a different quality.

This is what we'll be trying to practice here. Do you agree? (From the audience: Yes) Two *matajis* agree (laughter). Those who don't agree may go (laughter). But actually, it's an amazing thing, it's a secret. And this sacred knowledge is not such a simple knowledge and is not as primitive as we

think. Sometimes when we hear about these things or we see some primitive displays of so-called surrender or *sharanagati*, it doesn't work. We need to understand a very deep point. And doing so doesn't require any preliminary conditions. Anyone can do that: a dog can do it, not just a human. Even creatures of lower forms of life can do that. Therefore, for us it is a most suitable form of spiritual practice, a highly democratic one not requiring compliance with any preconditions or any kind of preliminary qualification.

Unfortunately, Aditi-dukhaha prabhu did not come. I very much hoped that he'll come. Of course this retreat would have been different if he had come, but we must surrender to Krishna. Krishna wanted, Krishna, from the hearts of the Estonian immigration authorities, made them somehow or other put a different date on his visa when our retreat will already be over. So we'll somehow try to submerge ourselves in the right mood without him.

There are a few more important points I'd like to make with regards to all this. A retreat is different from a festival in that a retreat implies a maximum concentration of consciousness. A retreat is a special form of spiritual practice when people retire. Literally retreat means retreat "seclusion" and a retreat implies that the person gives up everything else and tries to focus on the most essential thing. We give up all other thoughts. And all that helps such concentration will generally contribute to the purpose of the retreat which is a "spiritual renewal."

As it happens in the course of our practice, our bustle, a person commits a great amount of offenses, without noticing it, and our practice loses its taste, practice loses its freshness. You all remember your first experience of coming into contact with Krishna consciousness, don't you? When suddenly, everything, the whole world transformed and everything was fresh and everyone thought, "Wow, how cool's all this!" You remember, right? It was like that, wasn't it? For some of you that was long ago, for others more recently, but usually we speak about it in the past tense. Why? Because in our everyday bustle – in our taking care of our daily bread, in our routine – everything tends to blur. Our practice loses its freshness, our enlightenment diminishes. People commit offenses because offenses means inattentiveness. When freshness is lost inattention comes. Being inattentive we stop appreciating. At the beginning we were not offending anyone. We thought, "O my God! It turns out there are such people who live by other principles. This in itself is already a miracle."

Just today I read the letter one lady-devotee wrote me from Tatarstan. She says "I sometimes tell my colleagues about the devotees. They listen open-mouthed and say, 'There are such people? Really?'" In the beginning when we join we have this freshness. We start seeing, appreciating these people who have given up everything, who are focused on God, who want to attain God, who want to serve. We have a fresh approach to the devotees, to the holy name and *prasadam*. We think, "Wow, *prasadam*! Those who try *prasadam* say ... Alexey was telling me, "Wow! *Prasadam*! That's cool!" Another devotee told me that he used to be a bodybuilder and he was in the army. He is a big devotee and he used to eat to mountains of food there. He was probably a hundred and fifty kilos and always used to eat mountains of food. He was invited to come to the devotees and the devotees put before him a small plate with some *sabji* and buckwheat. He looked at it and inside he felt a wave of indignation, "What do they mean? What's this? This wouldn't even ... " There was just a little buckwheat (laughter). He said, "I ate it and I felt so full – I couldn't move. I thought, 'Well, that's cool! That's something!'"

At the beginning we have that. At the beginning we appreciate it but then it all goes away somehow. Devotees? Well, yes, devotees. We now know the faults of all and each of them. We have already discussed those faults over and over again with everyone. Thus our practice loses its freshness. *Prasadam* is now ... if there is no *paneer* that's not *prasadam* anymore (laughter). We now need some pretentious novelties. And because of that we commit offenses and since we commit offenses the taste is lost. And then we perform our practice like some unpleasant obligation. Sixteen rounds is our labor service. But that's all ... That's not spiritual practice.

That is why we need retreats. Bhaktivinoda Thakur speaks about it. Bhaktivinoda Thakur explains in his "Sri-caitanya-siksamrita" that a retreat or a festival is a special day when we can fully concentrate on our spiritual practice in order to retrieve lost freshness, in order to fully submerge into it and feel the taste which only comes with full concentration. For that we have to completely

turn ourselves off from everything else. Actually, the retreat rules are very simple. We should try as much as possible to concentrate on one thing: on the devotees, on service and on all that helps us concentrate.

I recently read a wonderful phrase by Guru Maharaj. He writes, "Purity, like everything natural, helps focus our consciousness." In this phrase there is a most profound wisdom. Purity, like everything natural, helps focus our consciousness. This means that everything artificial helps distraction. We can see that's precisely what all artificial things lead to. They agitate the mind and make our consciousness dissipate. And the fee for this scattered mind is absence of deep happiness and the understanding of who I am and what my purpose is. We scatter our mind in all possible ways. And the best of them, the latest invention for the dissipation of consciousness is Internet. If you want to distract your consciousness go to the Internet and dance there for a while. That is why Internet is to be switched off during retreats. The Wi-fi needs to be switched off, the e-mail and all the rest.

But the point, once again, of what is to be done at retreats is highly natural things. What are those natural things? Let us remember. That's very difficult now. We have to give a seminar on what 'natural' is. Because our lives are so artificial, so unnatural that it is difficult to say what is 'natural.' It's natural to smile. To smile is natural. At retreats we should smile. Every time you see someone smile. It's natural, believe it or not. During retreats you should talk to each other in nice words – that's natural. Talk to each other in unpleasant words is artificial. We should try to inspire each other. During retreats we should serve each other because that's our deepest nature. Unfortunately, we have forgotten this nature, because it's buried under the weight of everything artificial we have learned in this world.

Actually, the desire to serve, the desire to do something for the other, the desire to fulfill the purpose of our existence outside and beyond oneself is something very natural. Everyone wants to do something for someone else. I saw this today when Roman brought me here. I realized that he needed to do all this in order to show it me (laughter). That's a fact! He wouldn't have done that for himself! Actually we can't do anything for our own sake. It's boring to do something for ourselves. Can someone prepare a feast of eighteen dishes for himself? And then sit down and eat it up? (laughter) Maybe that's possible but that's pathology (laughter), that's a way artificial. One who behaves like that is crazy. But to cook that for someone we love, to do something for someone else is natural. That's the most natural thing.

And all natural things, once again, help concentrate our consciousness. All artificial things scatter our consciousness, they defile it, they make it most superficial, most shallow. All natural things make our consciousness pure and profound. Therefore, the success of a retreat is to focus our consciousness as much as possible. For this purpose we need to do the most natural things – we should serve each other, do something for each other, we should smile, we should try to inspire each other, try to adjust to each other. That's also a natural thing. One of our natural desires, a very deep profound desire is to know. Right? *Sat*, *cit* and *ananda*, we want to exist, we want to know and we want to enjoy. To know means to feel the other person (to know what the other person thinks, what he feels). That's a most natural thing. The desire to know, to associate with the other person, to tune in on his wave, to feel him is a most natural desire. And all this helps to ultimately focus our consciousness. And purity, purity also helps to focus our consciousness, purity, simplicity, naturalness.

These are some general words. Each of you can think for himself what this means to him or her: what natural things he or she is naturally going to do here. But one thing is very important – serve, just serve each other. Because once again that's our main nature. I recently met with Bhakti Ananta Krishna Maharaj and he told me an amazing story. He organizes such events, festivals, retreats and the glory of those festivals extends far out – festivals of the holy name. So, one woman came from Volgodonsk especially for that festival. That is, she had to travel one whole day, she comes from somewhere around Rostov, so it takes a day to go to Moscow to take part in that festival and then go back. And at first they explained that the main condition or rule is to serve each other, to do something for each other: to help each other, to support each other. He says, "This woman, when she heard this, she was inspired. She came especially for the festival from Volgodonsk. She rushed to the shoes shelve and the whole day she was washing shoes." There

were about a thousand and a half people (laughter) who arrived. A thousand and a half pairs of shoes! And he said, "She was the happiest person at the entire festival." And she said, "I'm coming next time by all means!" (laughter)

But actually that's a fact. These are most natural things that help a person to properly tune and deepen his consciousness. And of course, we have to wake up early because that's also something natural. Something forgotten but natural. All natural things, as a rule, are well forgotten by us. Get up before sunrise is something most natural. Go to bed early is also something most natural. Coming here to the *mangal-arati* is another most natural thing. Wake up and sing. There's even a play, a spectacle called "Wake up and sing." It's about the Hare Krishnas (laughter). Singing is also very natural, right? Everyone sings in the bathtub or while taking a shower. So, here are some guidelines I wanted to say to tune us to our festival. Let us now sing a *kirtan* to turn us on and that will conclude our introductory program.

Sri Sri Jagannath Baladeva Subhadramayi ki ... Jaya!

Sri Gaura-Nitai ki ... Jaya!

All the rest ki ... Jaya!

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Hare Krishna. Today we are starting with you this topic: contemplations on what surrender means. Virtually, this is what every religion speaks about. If we take religion and peel it down to its essence, its core or meaning, we'll see that that's what religion speaks about. Religion says that there is God who will save us and I should surrender to that God in order to be saved. Unfortunately, since we live in the third millennium A.C. and it is now three thousand years since God last appeared on the Earth (or rather two and a half), people more and more consider independence to be the norm of their existence and behavior. The very notion of independence is a highly valuable for the person of the modern world.

People want to become independent. People deny the very principle of surrender. A democratic society means that everyone is equal, so there is no need to surrender to anyone. Husband and wife are equal and that means no one needs to surrender. The children are equal to their parents. There is now a juvenile jurisprudence which protects the rights of children and parents have no rights to punish their children. We live in a society that is trying to prove an absolutely absurd idea, a totally absurd idea that has no relation to reality – that we are independent. Though actually, in essence, we are dependent on everything.

If we take an objective look at the nature of this reality, we'll see that reality functions in such a way that here everything is dependent on everything else. Ultimately, everything depends on God. And the only one who does not depend on anyone is God. But He does not exist (laughter). Respectively, people are trying to live according to this absurd axiom that they accept without any evidence. This is a certain axiomatic principle that people assume as a basis and try to establish their existence in accordance with it. But since it is absurd and it is refuted at every turn, a person falls into even greater dependence. Those who try to defend their independence paradoxically become more and more dependent.

Previously, people depended on God and to some extent on the weather. Nowadays that people tried to create a reality that is independent of God as a result they depend on computers. Like, you might remember, at the turn of the century there was this panic that the whole world will go to hell because at the end of the year's designation there will appear two zeros and computers will not be able to understand what those two zeros are and will go crazy. As a result the whole world will go crazy. But that's a fact. People depend on electricity, people depend on completely artificial stuff. On oil. People used to live thousands of years without oil and that was Ok. And now they think that if there is no oil that would be the end of the world, it will stop to exist.

That is, paradoxically enough, by trying to assert their independence in a basically interdependent reality, in a reality where each part is dependent on every other part, in a reality which is an integral whole where each tiny particle of the whole is trying to say, "I'm all by myself, I don't need anyone else, people suffer a fiasco in their life. Therefore, an intelligent person understands that I depend in any case. And now I just need to understand, whom I should depend on. I'm still going to depend, in any case, no matter how I try to defend my independence, I will depend. So how am I now to establish this relationship of dependence which ultimately will give me happiness and satisfaction?

This dependence on God, which is *saranagati* (shelter), is the dependence on the complete whole. In this world we accept dependency or we place ourselves under the dependence on parts and particles – and we seek shelter, we seek protection there. But since it is something partial, a part will never be able to give us full protection. Complete, absolute shelter, that is freedom from all fears and all worries can be given to us only by Krishna. Yesterday I said that the name of the seminar is *Saranagati* or how to get rid of stress. Surprisingly enough I found out that Audarya Dhama Prabhu is giving a seminar on the same topic in Radhadesh. I don't know whether he's going to disclose the entire secret of how to truly get rid of stress but actually in the last verse of "Bhagavad Gita" Krishna says: *ma sucah* – here's the way to get rid of stress and grief and it is to place ourselves under the dependence the complete whole, under the dependence on God.

What does that mean? We'll be trying to find that out. But first I'd like to say that, unfortunately, we've been programmed in a different way, a very negative program has already been embedded in us which prevents us from surrendering. We have an inner rejection and fear, a very great fear of surrendering. Actually, in this seminar we'll be learning how to get rid of this irrational fear of surrendering to God which is absolutely baseless. Srila Prabhupada actually defines that again and again in various places as the essence of *bhakti*. This is the foundation of *bhakti*, the basis of *bhakti*, the beginning of *bhakti*, the first step of *bhakti* – but this is also the very essence of *bhakti*. From the very first step, from the *bhakta* who is making his first timid step in surrendering, stepping over the threshold of the temple ... Until now he's been afraid even to step over the threshold of the temple, "They're going to drag me into their sect!" Thus he makes his first step towards God. From the *bhakti* up to the most exalted devotees, the inhabitants of Vrindavan. What unites them all is that they to varying degrees have taken Krishna's shelter, Krishna's protection.

Therefore, *saranagati* is a very, let's say, loose concept. We're going to talk about that, too, about how to gradually learn that. And Srila Prabhupada, I wanted to give you a wonderful quote of his which includes his definition of *saranagati*. This quote or definition was provided by Harivilas Prabhu. He says that one day they were walking with Srila Prabhupada in the Bois de Boulogne – it is very indicative that it happened in France. France is one of the most independent countries in this world where this ideal of independence and non-surrendering to anyone is raised to the rank of public policy. They were the first to proclaim independence. The French Revolution: liberty, equality, fraternity – we are now suffering its consequences. In the Bois de Boulogne Harivilas Prabhu asked Srila Prabhupada, "Srila Prabhupada, what does it mean to be humble?" In essence, these are synonyms: humility, surrender, *saranagati*. Later on we will add to this synonyms series some unexpected words. All these are synonyms – humility, surrender, patience – of different shades of meaning. But we will get several other amazing synonyms to this word which will be unexpected for us. So, he asked what it means to be humble. Srila Prabhupada gave a surprising answer to that simple question. Listen carefully.

Humility is the absolute and unwavering, that is without a shade of doubt, conviction that nothing in this world is going to save you (neither your money, your family, your glory, your arms, your education, the doctors, the state, the government nor anything else, except for Krishna's mercy. If you have that conviction then you have humility." And Harivilas Prabhu explains that essentially humility means dependence on Krishna and simultaneously freedom from all other forms of dependence. Now in this world we depend on so many things. When we find complete protection in the complete whole, in Krishna, we can and should absolutely and easily be able to give up all other forms of dependence, all other things. He says that this definition has saved me in the most difficult moments of my life. Do you sometimes happen to have difficult moments in your life? In these difficult moments when one is looking for protection, when one is looking for shelter – he needs to remember where to find that shelter. This definition is given to us so that we could truly overcome our difficulties – in a dignified manner, without doing any nonsense.

This story will be based on two chapters of the "Bhakti-sandarbha", on the 236th and 237th sections of the "Bhakti-sandarbha" where Srila Jiva Goswami describes *saranagati*. Much is written about that and the scriptures often speak on this concept but Srila Jiva Goswami wonderfully dissects this concept and we'll base our talk on that.

But let us first go back to the main obstacle which prevents us from implementing this ideal, or this value in our life. Because of our incompleteness we constantly want something and fear arises in us. Incompleteness, when the particle of the complete whole turns away from the complete whole, it immediately starts to experience fear. Because it starts feeling its incompleteness. When I constitute a part of the complete whole I have nothing to fear. When I've turned away from the complete whole fear arises in me and along with that fear a variety of needs takes place. So, we start to need lots of things. These needs manifest in the form of an infinite number of desires that the living being tries to satisfy in this material world. In this way we developed a certain nature. Let us once again take a deeper look into our hearts, into our consciousness, our mind and define very precisely this unsubmitive nature. This unsubmitive nature manifests in the fact that I want, I need, I have lots of various needs that I have to meet. Ultimately it all is a manifestation of one

single symptom – the fact that I am not connected with Krishna, I am not connected with the complete whole, I feel my incompleteness. Therefore, I constantly demand. We constantly want something, we demand something, we constantly expect something from the others. Who can confirm this phenomenon?

We constantly expect something from the others, we demand and want to get something from them. In this way we have developed this capricious demanding nature. Like young children, they also constantly expect, constantly want something. And if their desires are not fulfilled, they start doing what? Crying: "A-a-a-a". We remain the same children. Actually we still live in the world of God. And who fulfills all desires here? Do not be afraid to say this word (laughter) – all desires in this world are fulfilled by God. After all, His name is Kamadeva. Kamadeva means who? The God who fulfills all desires, *kama*. He is Kamadeva, the transcendental Kamadeva who fulfills all desires. We come to Him and demand, "I need this, I need that" and He fulfills all our desires. But when our desires are fulfilled we grab our head and say, "I didn't want that! Excuse me please but I don't want that!" And we start complaining, "No! It turns out that I didn't need that, I needed something different!" This is an ongoing story, that's the tragedy of human life. We want something and when our desire is fulfilled we say, "The wish of an idiot has come true!" We've got what we wanted and we start resenting and saying, "No, actually I didn't want that!"

But these complaints in this world ... Because basically everything that happens to us is God's answer to our requests. Have you placed a request? You have. Sign the receipt (laughter). When that parcel arrives to us and we are brought what we've asked for we start saying, "No, no, no. You've brought this to a wrong address." Everything that happens to us is the answer to our question. A person wants to marry. Does he? Yes, he does! He gets married. Then he wants to divorce and he gets divorced (laughter). Then again he wants to get married - and so on and so forth.

And when we complain about what we get it is the same as if we complain about our own reflection, right? God has just answered our desires. We go to the mirror and start complaining, "What's that? It's not me." It's you! It's what you've wanted. Whenever something comes to us we should realize in terror that it turns out that's what I've wanted (laughter). How come that's happened to me?! The devil's work! Actually, it's what I wanted.

Basically, beginning with the "Bhagavad Gita", the scriptures teach us a very simple truth that is at the the same time very difficult to grasp. If we ask God for something He will give that to us. He will give us something partial and as a result we won't be happy. Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada says that the contact of the living being with partial things is always a source of endless suffering. Any obsession of ours, any of our desire to get in touch with something partial will ultimately turn into its opposite, into our misery. That's a law. Beginning with the "Bhagavad Gita" and ending with "Srimad-Bhagavatam" and "Caitanya-caritamrita" the *sastras* teach us one simple thing: when we come to God and ask Him for something partial He gives us that partial thing. And when we come to God and do not ask for anything – as an exception (that also sometimes happens) ... If we've come to Him without asking anything, then He's obliged to give us His Own Self. That's the secret, that's the very essence of the "Bhagavad Gita." And when we get Him we don't need anything else because everything is contained in Him. *Saranagati* means to come to God without asking anything. Then He, in accordance with this principle, will give us His Own Self.

Basically, we all know how this happens. Well, actually not all of us know that, those sitting here probably don't know. But I know that very well! We now want to build a temple in Moscow that is why we have to go to the rich and ask them for money. God is the richest person that is why He is called God, He's rich. And when people come to Him ... First of all, when you come to some rich person and ask him for something ... One rich person told me straight away, that, "All those who come to me and ask me something are my enemies" (laughter). And if I come to some influential person and ask him he may give me something just to get rid of me. But if I come to some rich person and surprisingly don't ask him for anything, I don't need anything, that rich person gets so embarrassed and taken by surprise that the next moment he's willing to give all of himself. That's a fact! An undoubted fact. By human psychology we can judge about God's psychology because we are particles created in the image of God. Basically, the same happens with people. God is just the

same. When someone comes to Him and asks Him for something He says, "Here you are, no problem. Take it and come again." But when someone comes and says, "I don't need anything," He is taken by surprise and feeling at a loss He says, "Well, I'll have to give you My Own Self." The point is that actually Krishna is willing to give His Own Self – completely. If someone is willing to give himself completely, that's Krishna. But the only thing He wants is that the person comes to Him without asking for anything. And if he wants something he'll get it.

There is a nice story about Varsana. Those of you who've been in that wonderful place know that there is a Dan-Garh – a mountain where a certain *lila* has taken place. The purport of that *lila* is very profound. In the neighboring village, in Luci-gavana, there lived a *brahmana*. That *brahmana* was very poor and he had a daughter. He had to give his daughter away in marriage. In India to marry a daughter is a big problem, for one has to give a large dowry. So, his wife was constantly nagging him. He had no money and his wife was telling him, "Go and do something! People say there's Krishna nearby. Krishna is *namo brahmanya devaya go-brahmana-hitaya ca-jagad hitaya* ... He is responsible for the *brahmanas'* welfare. He wants to give everything to the *brahmanas*. Krishna lives nearby, go and ask Him for something. Go, find Him and ask Him for something." Finally, the *brahmana* felt embarrassed but we know he didn't go by his will, he was sent by his wife, he went in search of Krishna.

Sometimes a wife also sends one in search of Krishna, but only the smartest of them do so for they know that you can get anything from Krishna. He went in search of Krishna and found Him. Krishna happened to live nearby. He saw Him "Wow! Gopal! That same Gopal." He'd heard about Him, he knew, he had read the "Gopala-Tapani-Upanisad" and he knew who Gopal was. He ran to Gopal, fell at His feet and said, "Gopal ... I need money!" (laughter) Gopal was at a loss. Why was He at a loss? Usually He's not at a loss in such situations, He's used to people asking Him for money. But in Vrindavan He's not used to such treatment. In Vrindavan Krishna is in a different state, He has no money there. He's a *gopal*, a cowherd boy. And in Vrindavan no one asks Him for money. He doesn't need to carry any money with Him (laughter). In all other places God has some change in His pocket just in case so that He can give people what they need. In Vrindavan he has no money. And here in Vrindavan a *brahmana* runs up to Him and asks Him for money! So He's taken by surprise, He shrugs His shoulders and says, "I don't have anything." And here the *brahmana* started crying. He was sincerely crying, he surrendered completely, "How is that?! I can't go back, I was told and I had one hope only – only You. *Namo brahmanya devaya go-brahmana-hitaya ca-jagad hitaya krsnaya govindaya namo namah.*"

And here Krishna banged Himself on the forehead and said, "I have one treasure – Srimati Radharani. I'll give Her to you, the most precious possession I have. I've promised and I'm obliged to look after the welfare of the *brahmanas*. I'll give Her to you." Upon hearing that, the *brahmana* started crying even louder. He said, "What good is She to me? What shall I do with Her? I already have one daughter to marry and I can't marry her, now I'll have to marry two of them!" The *brahmana* cried and so did Radhika. She didn't want to be given to that *brahmana*, either (laughter). Krishna was willing to give anything. Krishna is willing to give anything He has, including the Goddess of love Herself, the Goddess of happiness, the embodiment of spiritual bliss, Srimati Radharani. But seeing that the *brahmana* doesn't want Her, He said, "Well, Okay then." Then he put Radharani on one of the scales. The *gopis* started crying, too. Everyone cried. The *brahmana* cried because he didn't need Radharani. Radharani was crying because She didn't want to go to the *brahmana*. Everyone else also cried because they didn't want Krishna and Radha separated. Then Krishna quickly resolved the issue. He said, "Take off your jewelry and put it on the other scale." They happily took off all their earrings, necklaces, bracelets and piled them on the scales. Everyone was happy. The *brahmana* was happy because he got plenty of gold. Radharani was happy because She remained with Krishna. All Her friends were happy because they preserved Their union.

The meaning of this story or parable is precisely that Krishna is willing to give us everything. He is actually willing to give us everything. Everything depends on what we want. We get from Him only what we want, nothing else. If we don't want anything He has to give us His Own Self. But this very understanding that we should come to God and serve God without asking Him for anything is very scary. Because how's that possible?

Here we come to the most important point I wanted to make at the beginning of my lecture. Because of our incompleteness and in order to protect ourselves from this incompleteness, to protect ourselves from our inferiority and fear, we have put on the rigid armor of the false ego. Surrendering oneself means that we have to take off this ammunition, this armor and it is very scary to do so. We have learned to live in this world, we know that in this world we must have a thick false ego in order to properly survive here; we know that if we don't have that we're going to be exploited. Right? Just try to surrender – immediately a hundred people will rush to exploit you, right? They'll surround you from all sides. For each person who tries to behave like that there will always be those who will be exploiting him. That is why people can't understand, "What does it mean to surrender? How's that?" It's scary!

What happens to us? Imagine a seed. An ordinary seed or a nut. For example, a flaxseed. It is always capsuled in a skin, in a hard shell. And that makes the seed very much protected, right? You can stamp on it, nothing will happen to it. Take a flaxseed, stamp it as much as you wish – it will remain as it was. A seed can survive without water for an indefinite period of time, nothing will happen to it. Now, when the seed germinates, what happens to it? There's a sprout that has broken the shell and immediately the seed becomes most vulnerable, right? Anyone can trample that sprout. If we don't give it water it will wither. Pretty much the same we are to do in religion and especially in *bhakti*. In religion we are told, "Give up that shell of the false ego because you need to grow, you need to sprout." And we say, "No, no, no. I can't. I'd rather remain as I am. Please. I'll be yours, but I'll remain that very flaxseed. I'll live there, in my shell, so that no one touches me. Because how can I possibly do so, if I give all that up I'll become so vulnerable to everything."

In other words, this is what *bhakti* starts with. Exactly as the growth of the seed begins with the need to break this shell and throw it off, in the same way the growth of *bhakti* starts with throwing off our false ego. My false ego has always protected me but now I have to throw it off, trust Krishna and think that from now on Krishna is going to protect me. But how is He going to protect me? Whether He's going to protect me or not is still a question, that's still unclear, that's not a fact. We've seen that, we know ... What if He wants to exploit me? What if He's going to exploit me like anything? (laughter)

This fear to remove our shell is the major obstacle on the path of surrendering – on the path of *saranagati*, on the path of *bhakti*. We must be well aware that this fear – the fear of vulnerability – lives in all of us. Essentially, that's what the requirement is – we come to God and it means we take off our false ego. But that's not all, taking off our false ego is just half of the job – we shouldn't ask anything for ourselves. To just say, "That's it, from now on I'm going to work for You. I'll be doing something for You and You Yourself take care of me" is something most scary. It's actually a leap into the unknown, that's a parachute jump. Moreover, it's a free-fall one. Yesterday I was telling you the story of Draupadi and we saw what a free fall jump that was, what a long time it took for her parachute to open. She was pulling and pulling but the parachute wouldn't open.

Ananda-varadhana has the experience of parachute jumping. He can teach everyone what it means to jump with a parachute. That's why he took to practicing *bhakti* because it's about the same thing. Practicing *bhakti* and skydiving is exactly the same thing: surrender and we'll see (laughter). But first you should jump, because if you don't jump nothing will happen, there will be no result. And this free fall jump with a parachute is what Krishna offers us in the "Bhagavad Gita". That's what He's telling us and here we are going to learn the technique of the jumps we have to make.

So, if we look at the picture described in the Tenth Canto "Srimad-Bhagavatam", the picture of *vraja-bhakti*, complete surrender, we will see that there this ideal is realized with remarkable consistency. Because the ideal of surrender is the *gopis* of Vrindavan. They came running to Krishna at night and they're not even His wives. In Vraja the very notion of *svakiya* or a lawful relationship with Krishna is impossible because there would be no purity then. When we speak about Dvaraka then yes, Krishna is the protector, He's obliged to protect. Krishna has all these obligations towards the others: they surrender – He protects. But in Vraja He says, "No, no, no. You surrender and I'll see." If we look at it it's the ideal of what we are being taught: give up everything (*sarva-dharman parityajya*), run at night God knows where, find a black person in that black night (laughter) in the dense dark forest and, having found Him, rush to Him. And then He will say, "Go back. Why have you come here?! I haven't called you, have I?" When Krishna said that to

the *gopis* they were dumbfounded. A minuted ago Krishna was playing His flute and when He was playing His flute each of the *gopis* was hearing her name absolutely clearly – Krishna is playing her name, Krishna is calling her. They left everything and rushed to that call. "You've called us." Then they came to Him and He says, "No, I haven't. It wasn't Me. You must have imagined that. It was a mistake, anyway."

Ultimately, that's the very ideal of complete surrender. It is clear that now we are not ready for such a complete and unconditional surrender but ultimately this is what we are learning here. That's what any true religion tries to teach us, unconditional surrender to Krishna or God. That's why we call ourselves *das*. What does *das* mean? *Das* doesn't mean a servant. A servant is a concession to modern democratic thinking. Because what does a servant mean? A servant means I serve and I get paid. A servant is to be paid, right? Whereas a *das* is not to be paid because a *das* means a slave. And towards a slave there are no obligations whatsoever (laughter). There is none! When Nrisimhadeva offered Prahlada Maharaja that, "You served Me and I am ready to give you anything you want," Prahlada Maharaja was badly offended by that, he said, "That's not what I served you for. Get away! I don't want to see You any more. I didn't serve You in order to ultimately get offered awards. Because this means that I'd have served in order to get that reward which means that I wouldn't have actually served You." *Das* means that I am a *das*, my nature is a *das* – I don't expect anything. And since I don't expect anything, Krishna is forced, as I already said, to give the whole of Himself, give this complete and absolute refuge.

It is exactly due to this that surrender – if done properly – is the fastest, simplest, easiest, most direct and immediate way to achieve perfection. Because through such surrender a person is again integrated into the complete whole. A person is again takes his natural state of being a constituent part of the complete whole. In this way he gets from that complete whole everything he needs – all protection, all help, everything he needs.

And from this point on I'll start talking about what it means, i.e. what we are to do and in what way so that we can achieve this ideal. On the one hand this is the quickest way to attain completeness or perfection. On the other hand, we have already described this problem, i.e. something that hinders us.

As I said, and actually, Srila Jiva Goswami later on will be speaking about the various degrees of surrendering, this is a process extended in time. It is not a black-and-white one, it's not that at some point I switch over something, although, basically, such a scenario is also possible, at one point I can fully surrender. But as a rule, normally, in our life this process is extended. Therefore the "Sattvata Tantra" analyzes the three stages of surrender: *kanistha*, *madhyama* and *uttama*, or *srestha*. We'll also be talking about these degrees of surrender. But even if we look at the "Bhagavad Gita", interestingly enough, it begins with what? With Arjuna's surrendering to Krishna. He becomes aware of his depression and of the fact that he had accumulated stress and he needs to somehow or other get rid of it. So he goes to Krishna or to Audharya Dhama and says, "Doctor, I want to get rid of stress" - and he surrenders to Krishna (Bg 2.7):

karpanya-dosopahata-svabhavah
prcchami tvam dharma-sammudha-cetah
yac chreyah syan niscitam bruhi tan me
sisyas te 'ham sadhi mam tvam prapannam

"Now I am a soul surrendered unto You. Please, please instruct me how to get rid of it."

That's the beginning of the "Bhagavad Gita." Krishna tells him the entire "Bhagavad Gita", everything that can be said and then at the end He says (Bg, 18.66):

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

Surrender unto Me. But he did already surrender at the very beginning! However, it's absolutely obvious that we are speaking about different things. What I want to say is that the degree of surrendering can be different and that everything starts with surrender but everything will also end with surrender. Everything will end with the highest degree of surrender in Vraja but it should start with at least some kind of surrender – with that same surrender which Arjuna had at the beginning: *karpānya-dosopahata-svabhāvah* - when I've understood.

I.e. we'll now take up this path and we'll understand the governing rules of it all. It's clear that this first surrender is not complete. Arjuna says that very clearly, "I am a soul surrendered unto You. I will do anything You tell me, I am Your disciple. But I will not fight. Tell me anything else but don't tell me that"- that is what our surrender is like at the beginning. This is how at the beginning people surrender gradually, little by little. Basically this is what the description of *prapatti* or *saranagati* begins with, it begins with the fact that a person starts surrendering.

We also know what surrender begins with when we are told (Bhag. 11.3.21):

tasmad gurum prapadyeta
jijñāsuḥ sreyā uttamam
sabde pare ca nisnatam
brahmany upasamasrayam

If you want to get rid of suffering, surrender to *guru*, surrender to a spiritual master. I.e. apparently surrender takes place at the beginning. We'll try to go all this way now trying to understand what surrender means at the beginning and what surrender means at the end. However, in any case from the very beginning we are to somehow or other try to get rid of our ego. From the very beginning and to the very end surrender means a change of the ego, or, as I made this comparison to throwing off our old skin, the hard shell of our ego which is now covering my soul preventing it from revealing. What is actually surrender? Surrender is the process when the heart is completely revealed, when it turns soft, when it comes into full bloom. To do this we have to throw off the shell of our ego. This sincerity, this desire to get rid of the ego is ... Again, the degree of sincerity can be different but at the beginning there must be this desire that "Yes, I'm tired, I don't want this anymore. I do not want to be who I am anymore, I'm tired of my own ego. I'm tired of these senseless attempts to find happiness here in the material world."

There are two fundamentally different ways to surrender. This is how I'll start my description, I'll tell you two stories in this regard illustrating the two forms of surrender. The first is the story of Parashara Bhatta. Parashara Bhatta or Battar, as he is called in the Sri Sampradaya, who was Ramanujacarya's successor. He was a topmost devotee, he was the son of Kulesha, his closest servant. At the death bed of Yamunacarya, when Ramanujacarya saw the dead body of Yamunacarya firmly clenching his three fingers, he asked Yamunacarya's engraved disciples, "Why is he clenching his three fingers? Did he do that when he was alive?" They said, "No, he didn't, he used to bless everyone." Then Ramanujacarya said, "I will free the people of this world. I will give them the understanding of what *bhakti* is" and one finger unclenched. Then he said, "I will write a comment on the greatest work of Srila Vyasadev, the "Vedanta-sutra", which will be called "Sri Bhasya"" and the second finger unclenched. There was one more. There was one more thing that constituted his mission. Then he said, "I will name one of my disciples in honor of the great sage Parasara, Vyasa's father, who wrote the "Vishnu Purana"" and then the third finger unclenched.

So, this Parashara is that same disciple whom Ramanujacarya was speaking about at Yamunacarya's death bed. Here is the story that happened to him, I read it just recently. He was going through a forest and in the forest he saw a hunter. The hunter was very confused. He didn't know what was happening to him, he was completely lost. When he saw the saintly man, the *sannyasi*, the *sadhu*, he fell before him (he was walking with a group of his disciples – he fell on his knees before him) and started telling him:

- Kindly explain to me. Something happened to me today that has never happened to me before. Tell me, please, what has actually happened to me?
- What happened to you?

- I caught a rabbit but then I let it go. I felt sorry for it.
 - Tell me how that happened? Why did you suddenly feel sorry for it?
 - I am a hunter, this is my means of living, I have to feed my family. If I catch someone, I happily take it home. I kill it and everyone is happy. But this rabbit started behaving in a most unusual way. I took it out of the snare and it started poking his head into me. Then I put it down on the ground and he started running around my feet clockwise. Then finally he poked his muzzle into my feet and began trembling. So, I felt sorry for it and I let it go. I said, "Go, my dear, I'll not hurt you."

Upon hearing that Parashara Batta's eyes were filled with tears, he shivered and fainted. Those who stood nearby – his servants and disciples – started bringing him round. When he came round, they asked him:

- What's wrong with you? What happened?
 - When I heard this story, I just ... I realized how lucky we were.
 - Why are we lucky?
 - Well, look what happened. This rabbit has never read the "Bhagavad Gita." It's a mere rabbit. It's never studied the scriptures. And the hunter has never promised to save all souls surrendered to him. Nevertheless, the hunter could not act against his heart. When the small defenseless rabbit surrendered to him, he said, "Go, be free." And the rabbit behaved like that because it's understood what to do.

So Parashara Batta started saying, "How lucky we are, my friends! Can you fully grasp how lucky we are? Krishna Himself says (Bg 18.66):

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

Rama Himself says ("Ramayana", Yuddha Kanda, 18.33):

sakrid eva prapanno yah
 tavasmiti ca yacate
 abhayam sarvada tasmai
 dadamy etad vratam mama

Rama Himself says, "My vow is that I shall protect you from all fear – it's enough that you say once, "I am Yours! I am Yours! I am Yours!" - not even three times, just once. *Sakrid eva prapanno yah tavasmiti ca yacate* – if a person says (*yacate*) with sincerity, if a person says from the heart, "I am Yours!" then Rama says, "I shall protect him." "Ramayana" is called *saranagati-sastra* – a *sastra* which explains this surrender and in the "Ramayana" there are many stories of this.

Once when the monkeys army was already on Lanka Ravana sent out his spies. The spies were called Sharana and Suka. Being demons, or *raksasas*, *werewolves*, Sharana and Shuka took the form of monkeys and began spying there. The monkeys, however, weren't born yesterday, either. They quickly figured out these spies, seized them and started beating them, kicking them, "Spies!" You can imagine what punishment can monkeys inflict. At that point Shuka and Sharana, the two demons, the two *raksasas*, who had come to spy in order to help Ravana, cried out, "Ram!" But more sincerely (laughter). Because they knew that only Rama can save them, that Rama promises that I shall protect everyone. Ram said, "Okay, enough! Let them free. They have called Me. Let them go and don't touch them."

So, Parashara Batta said in this story, "How lucky we are! And to what extent we sometimes do not appreciate the fact that we know this. Krishna promises this and we know it. Nevertheless, we do not do it! Whereas the silly rabbit did it!" The rabbit realized that and the hunter couldn't do anything.

So, this is one way. What I want to say by this story is that there is one way to surrender. A person studies the scriptures and, studying the scriptures, he hears about this. He gets faith. In all the

scriptures of the world, whichever we take, it says that, God promises, "Surrender and I shall protect you." We'll be speaking about what protection means. Srila Jiva Goswami gives an amazing definition of this protection. He explains what protection is in the full sense of this word. This is one way to surrender - when we study the scriptures, learn all this and try to make some steps towards it. We understand that's the way it should be and that it can't be any other way. That there is God and of course He is supposed to protect, of course He should do that. So, we try to do something in this regard. But, let's say, that's a rare case. Or, maybe not that rare but this case may not be so common. Because again, one nevertheless remains mistrustful. That is why Parashara Bhatta exclaimed, "What about us? We do know this! Nevertheless this surrender doesn't take place, we don't desire it."

And there is another way to surrender. The second way ... I'll tell you another story which you've probably heard. It's the story about Sivananda Sena's dog. It's a famous story from the Antya-lila of "Sri Caitanya-caritamrita." When Sivananda Sena set off to Puri together with a group of Bengali Vaisnavas – the way they used to do before the Ratha-yatra. It was around that time that they left Bengal. This year the Ratha Yatra starts on 21st June. They would set off about a month before, in the greatest heat. They would go through those villages, crossing the rivers. And Sivananda Sena took care of all the Vaisnavas. Here a dog stuck to them. That often happens; especially in India that's something common. You go around some holy place and these dogs roam there. They are so humble, so humble. In the west the dogs are much nastier. But in India they are skinny and meek, yellow and beaten up, with a torn ear. You go somewhere and they follow you. A similar dog stuck right behind that Sivananda Sena's group of Vaishnavas. When he stuck to them he thought, "Now, it has surrendered. Since he has surrendered I must take care of him. He's now a member of our group, a member of our *yatra*." He didn't ask him, "Do you have a bracelet? Have you paid or not?" He has surrendered! The person's surrendered and he now must be protected.

So, what he did was when everyone would set up camp for the night, he would take care of that dog. They cooked some vegetarian food in a separate place to feed him. He was well fed. Why? Because he walked on with them. Naturally, when someone surrenders you want to protect him. I remember there was a story. I was once in Vrindavana and that year I walked around Vrindavan every day, I circumambulated Vrindavan. I set off after *mangal-arati* and went around Vrindavan. And at the gates of Krishna-Balaram Mandir there lived a dog that was waiting when someone goes around Vrindavan. It wasn't an ordinary dog. He went around with each and every person. He joined anyone who went on a *parikrama* around Vrindavan. He would just wait for some Vaishnava to come out and go around Vrindavan. I don't know how many times a day he circumambulated it but it was as many times as people did that. That dog would wait and I knew that every time I go after the *mangala-arati*, it would join me. It seemed it was some disciple of Srila Prabhupada or someone like that who has taken birth again and was determined to go to the end in this life. He went around Vrindavan and that was simply his favorite activity. He didn't ask for anything, he just went around Vrindavan. Sometimes he would run ahead but more often he followed.

So, there, walking around Vrindavan, we would pass through an area inhabited by other dogs. Those dogs didn't like that some stranger trespass their domain. Humble as they are, the Indian stray dogs also have a self-esteem as well as *aham-mameti*. Mine! So, when this dog from the other end of Vrindavana would suddenly appear there they would charge towards him and start barking and yelping and he would run off with its tail between his legs. So each time this dog was attacked I took a stick and drove them away. I said, "It's my dog, leave him alone. It's under my protection (laughter). It's not just some no man's dog."

The same thing happened with Sivananda Sena when that dog stuck to him and followed him. There is this story about how one day they were being taken across on a boat and the boatman did not want to take the dog onboard so that he doesn't defile it. Sivananda Sena paid him an additional large sum for the dog that was more than for ten Vaishnavas; he had to pay for the dog. Because the boatman said that, "Phew, I'm not going to let in the dog." So, he paid that amount for the dog. But once the dog didn't get fed. Sivananda Sena was delayed; he was detained at the border. So, they set up camp but didn't feed the dog and the dog ran away because he was hungry. Sivananda Sena came back and the first thing he asked was, "Where's the dog?" He was told, "The dog's disappeared, he ran away." So, he was restless. He looked for him everywhere and sent out some people to find the poor dog. But they saw him only in Puri. They saw how him

sitting in front of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu was eating a coconut. He would pick out the pulp of a green coconut (*malay*), eat a bit and then throw the rest to the dog. So, the dog was eating and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was instructing him, "Chant Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare. Hare! Govinda!" And the dog was eating and saying, "Hare! Wow-wow!" Krishnadas Kaviraj says, "He didn't chant any other names, he just chanted, Krushn! Krushn!" and everyone realized that the dog has received mercy faster than them. And then he was gone and everyone knew that he's gone to the spiritual world. Someone even saw a dog with four hands – instead of four legs – that was going back to the spiritual world.

So, talking about surrender, this is the second way of surrender. The first way is when a person hears the promise of Krishna Himself and tries to trust God. The second way is when a person takes shelter of the Vaishnavas, of the devotees. It is said that this second way is much more efficient. If a person has been able to establish this relationship with a Vaishnava, a true Vaishnava, of course. And here in this story we can clearly see who is a true Vaishnava. If someone has taken shelter in him he never abandons such a soul.

In his book "Taking Care of Krishna Devotees" Srila Niranjana Maharaj tells this story to show the very essence of Vaisnava relationships. The essence of the relationship between Vaishnavas is based on this same principle, on the principle of *saranagati*: If someone has surrendered to me I take him under my full protection. Then Krishna is forced to take him under His full protection. In the First Canto of "Bhagavatam" there is a wonderful verse illustrating this (Bhag. 1.1.15):

yat-pada-samsrayah suta
munayah prasamayanah
sadyah punanty upasprstah
svardhuny-apo 'nusevaya

This is what the sages of the Naimisaranya forest say, addressing Suta Goswami. Listen carefully, it's a very important verse. They say:

yat-pada-samsrayah suta
munayah prasamayanah
sadyah punanty upasprstah
svardhuny-apo 'nusevaya

Svardhuni is a name of the Ganges. *Svardhuni* flows from the heavenly planets, from Svar-loka, from Svarga. She came here and we all know that she purifies anyone who takes shelter in the Ganges, for the Ganges flows from the lotus feet of Krishna Himself. If a person submerges into the Ganges that is equal to taking shelter under Krishna's lotus feet, right? The waters of the Ganges flow from Krishna's lotus feet. But here, in this verse it is said that if a person *anusevaya* – takes bath in the waters of the Ganges over a long period of time then he will be purified. At the same time: *yat-pada-samsrayah suta munayah prasamayanah* – if a person has taken shelter of a devotee ... And the most important word in this verse is *prasamayanah* which is an epithet of the word *munayah*. *Yat-pada-samsrayah suta munayah prasamayanah* – if a person has taken shelter of the lotus feet of a devotee who is *prasamayanah* ... *Sam* comes from the same root as the word *santi*. What is *santi*? Yes, peace, tranquility. If a person has taken shelter at the lotus feet of devotee who has subdued all his passion, who has attained the absolute piece, having taken shelter at the lotus feet of Krishna, who has completely freed himself of anxiety and worries and everything else ... If he has this *prasamayanah*, *pra* means his peace is completely inexhaustible and he is completely undisturbed. If a person is *yat-pada-samsraya*, *samsraya* means "has taken shelter", o Suta, *munayah prasamayanah* – those sages who have found full peace or have attained shelter at the lotus feet of God, then *sadyah punanty upasprstah*. *Punanti* means that his soul and his heart are purified. How? At that same moment! *Sadyah*. *Sadyah punanty upasprstah* – simply by coming into contact with him. Whereas, getting purified in another way, i.e. by taking bath in the waters of the Ganges which flow from Krishna's lotus feet, it would take a long time. He will have to do this over a long period of time in order understand something.

So, there are these two ways of surrendering. One is that we try to find someone who has surrendered to Krishna and the other is we try to surrender to Krishna Himself. One is that we truly try to find someone in whom these passions have been subdued. When near to such a person we immediately start to perceive things in a different way. Have you had that feeling? You meet such a person and your soul is appeased. You start thinking "I was rushing so much but now I'm appeased". Therefore, the sages of that forest address Suta Goswami and say that "We've found you and we immediately feel the effect of purification. We feel the effect of having taken shelter in you" and that's what we are speaking about. This purification takes place when we have placed our trust in such a person. If we have really taken shelter in serving him, if we have dedicated ourselves to serving him, then *sadyah punanty* – at that very moment inner peace takes place or we feel inner purification.

These are the two points I wanted to make at the beginning prior to starting our discussion of how Srila Jiva Goswami describes *saranagati*. Let us take a short break for five minutes and get a little refreshed. I'll now repeat in a few words what we were talking about. I have basically told you three things today. The first thing I said is that we live in an interdependent reality. And that taking refuge, or *saranagati*, i.e. giving up of one's independence – is something natural. We must understand whom to accept dependence from. Otherwise, we'll still be dependent, but we will be dependent on incomplete things. This dependence on incomplete things will never satisfy us.

The second thing I was speaking about is why a person is afraid to surrender or accept dependence. It's because we've grown a shell of a false ego and we've learned to live with that false ego, we've learned to exist here in this protective shell of our false ego. So, we find it difficult to take it off, we are afraid, we see that we immediately become most vulnerable. This tiny sprout growing in our heart becomes vulnerable, it makes us more vulnerable. Many people say, "How am I going to live in this world now?! How am I going to do that? I used to be selfish and I knew how to fend off exploitation. I knew what I need and I knew how to get what I need. And here I have to live in a completely different way – I have to surrender, to get rid of fear, to jump into the unknown." This is the reason why people do not want to surrender.

And I said that in principle there can be two scenarios of surrendering. One scenario is I read and I develop faith. Faith means *saranagati*. Faith and *saranagati* are synonyms. *Sraddha* and *saranagati*. *Saranapatti-laksanam*. Bhaktivinoda Thakur says that *sraddha* is characterized by this feature of our surrendering. This is one method. The other method is that I find a devotee and, again, I develop some confidence in him. However, that's easier because I can directly see the way he communicates and the way he protects, and I take shelter of that devotee. As a result Krishna gives such a person, such a soul, His shelter just like in the case of Shivananda Sena's dog. These are the three things that we've gone through so far. Is that Ok? Let's take a 5 minute break and then we'll go on. Are you still perceptive?

I'll tell you a few more important things that the description of *saranagati* starts with. Starting this topic, Srila Jiva Goswami says that as a rule there are two reasons why a person takes shelter of Krishna. The first reason is the fear of material existence. The first reason why people come to Krishna is certain disillusionment in the material existence. Who can confirm it? This disillusionment in the material way of existence, in the material foundation itself, in the axioms that the material existence is based on, is something most powerful. In particular, Srila Jiva Goswami says that this disillusionment takes place because at some point a person profoundly realizes from his own experience the inevitable problems of material existence associated with lust, anger, illusion, pride and envy (*kama, krodha, lobha, mada, moha, matsarya*) living in his heart. When a person comes into contact with this inexhaustible and insatiable energy and realizes the futility of all his attempts to satisfy this energy of his, he can surrender to Krishna.

Recently I received a letter describing this in a perfectly and an amazing way. A person tells of his life. An ordinary human story, a common human life. A young man, a youth, who, as always, started this life full of bright hopes, thinking that, "Yes, everything will be fine with me, I'm going to be happy." Because of our foolishness and youth we all begin more or less like that. He said that very soon all that turned into ... Apparently, he had a nice and interesting job, he's an investigator of particularly important cases. There is some romance, too. And he says, "Very soon all that freshness, romance and interest turned into an inexpressible, inexhaustible boredom, the feeling of

complete senselessness of it all. And it all was topped by the complete devastation which sex life leads to." This is nowadays the story of life. People are trying to fulfill themselves in some kind of activity, in work, and in sex, in sexual relationships – chaotic, free and non-binding. Both lead to a complete frustration and devastation; to a complete and absolute void in the heart and there can be no other result of that.

So, Srila Jiva Goswami says, "When a person realizes this and fully comprehends that that's it now!" And the young man writes that at some point I was scared by the very thought that that's it, there will be nothing else in my life. That's all, there will be nothing more in my life! There will be this senseless, devastating sex and a stupid meaningless job and that's all. And he writes an interesting thing, he says "I went to Egypt." He says, "I was so struck by that country. The people live in a completely different way. The people are so simple. So, I thought – that's it, that's what I want! Simple living and high thinking." He had the illusion, he thought that "Here I am, living in a world where people are chasing after illusory goals. I'll come here and live a simple life." But that was yet another illusion that deceived him.

That is, a person comes face to face with this absolute hopelessness and meaninglessness of material existence. And this can be the impulse that pushes him to take shelter of Krishna. Srila Prabhupada loved quoting a wonderful verse and the very verse, its very intonation already expresses this mood (Cc, Madhya-lila, 22.16):

kamadinam kati na katidha palita durnidesas
tesam jata mayi na karuna na trapa nopasantih
utsrjaitan atha yadu-pate sampratam labdha-buddhis
tvam ayatah saranam abhayam mam niyunksvatma-dasye

Srila Rupa Goswami quotes this verse in "Padyavali" as well as in "Bhakti-rasamrita-sindhu" where he explains this emotional state in which the devotee comes and surrenders to Krishna: *kamadinam kati na katidha palita durnidesas. Kamadinam. Kama adi. Kama, lust, lobha, greed, krodha, anger – I served them so faithfully. Kati na katidha – in all possible ways have I served them and executed their orders. Their orders were one more disgusting than the other (durnidesah). Nidesah means "an order", durnidesah means durnidesah, there is no need for a translation. I fulfilled everything, I faithfully served them: kamadinam kati na katidha palita durnidesas, I was looking for their protection. People are looking for protection in these things. They think that if I have sex I'll be protected, I'll be happy. They think that's some kind of shelter, protection. If I have lots of things, if I accumulate lots of things, that will give me some protection. That will give me satisfaction, tranquility, peace. Or if I'm proud, if I accomplish something that will give me the opportunity of being protected. No!*

The more I fulfilled their orders: *kamadinam kati na katidha palita durnidesas / tesam jata mayi na karuna na trapa nopasantih*, they had no mercy to me and had no shame. They wouldn't be pacified and wouldn't be satisfied, they made me commit more and more abominable and disgusting things. And *trapa* means "shame", *karuna* means "mercy" – *na karuna na trapa nopasantih*, there was no peace, either. What I was hoping for – the state of sublime inner peace – wouldn't come, either.

Utsrjaitan atha yadu-pate sampratam labdha-buddhis – but today I have finally realized this, he says. Today, finally, it dawned on me, o, Lord of the Yadus. *Labdha-buddhis*, finally reason came back to me, finally my mind brightened a bit. Intelligence came to me. *Tvam ayatah saranam abhayam mam niyunksvatma-dasye* – I have come to you and I am asking you for protection, for shelter (*saranam*), *abhayam* that will make me fearless. What that shelter will consist of? *Mam niyunksvatma-dasye* – let me serve You, let me take shelter in serving You, o Lord of the Yadus.

This is how the first reason of surrender is described by Srila Jiva Goswami in his "Bhakti-sandarbha". He says that there is another reason why a person surrenders. That is a rarer case and a rarer scenario. The second reason this can happen to a person is valid in the case of those who are more pious. He says *bhakti-matra-kama-api*. It sometimes happens that a person understands that I need love. The first case has to do with those who don't understand that. They think I need to satisfy my lust, I need to be selfish, I need to enjoy to the max. In the second case a

person understands: I need love and not simply love but spiritual love. There are people who due to some kind of piety, some accumulated piety from their previous lives, education or whatever have a glimpse of this, that: I need *bhakti*. In one form or another. It can be some more traditional form of *bhakti*, but they understand: I need God, I need a relationship with God.

Nevertheless, what is the problem that even these people face in their attempts to establish a relationship with God, pray to Him, address prayers to Him, do something in this regard? They face the same problem. But in their case this problem takes on a different hue. They realize that in order to do this, I still need to overcome all these problems in my heart: lust, anger, greed, and all the rest. "I know my goal is *bhakti*, my goal is love, my goal is spiritual enlightenment." But the attempts to achieve this goal they face these same things: *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *mada* and *matsarya*. And where do they go in order to overcome them? To the same, to Krishna. They say: "Krishna ... Hare Krishna. I myself can't do anything here. I'm looking for Your protection, for Your shelter."

Often people ask this question. This is an absolutely classical question, "How can we fight lust?" We can fight lust in the same way we need to fight anger, greed, pride, envy and stress. There is only way to do that. And you start explaining to them: you need to take this posture, that posture, you need to stand on your head, maybe that would help, maybe it will flow from top to bottom? That does not work! It's been checked personally (laughter). Ultimately all these methods don't work. They may give some temporary relief or something like that but they don't give ultimate relief. The ultimate solution to all these problems is only one, Krishna's mercy. Surrender to Krishna and say, "Krishna, that's it! I'm Yours. Now You deal with that. It's not my lust anymore, it's Your lust. Because I'm Yours. Since I'm Yours my lust is Yours, too. You have to deal with this problem." That's the solution of the problem. There's no other solution.

That is, the second scenario is the scenario of a person aspiring to spiritual goals and in the attempts to achieve these spiritual goals he faces the same obstacles and problems. And, if he's reasonable, if intelligence comes to him, in that case he also turns to Krishna's protection, that is he puts off his ego, gives up his attempts to solve these problems by himself. Because all attempts to solve these problems by ourselves is *yoga*, *astanga-yoga*: postures, *pranayama*. *Pranayama* never interfered with anyone having a sex life! It's quite possible to combine them (laughter). Ultimately, all these are recipes that do not solve the problem at the bottom level. Because at the bottom level the root of this problem is my independent existence, my independent ego. As long as I don't solve the problem of this independent ego at this level I won't be able to get rid of all its external manifestations once and for all.

So, these are the first two reasons why a person may seek Krishna's shelter or protection. Further on Srila Jiva Goswami gives a definition of *saranagati* or surrender. What definition would you give? It is very important to have clear definitions of all notions we are dealing with so that it's clear what we're talking about. Because we often say, "surrender, surrendered," without understanding what it means. Therefore, this very important definition in Sanskrit is the following: *ananyagati tvam*. *Ananyagati tvam* literally means ... *An-anyā*. *Anya* means "other"; *ananya* means "I have no other." *Gati* means "my purpose, my aspiration." This is the understanding that I have no other purpose in life. Thus, the definition of *saranagati* is when a person has this understanding: *ananyagati tvam*, that all other goals are contained in this goal; that ultimately I have one single goal or a single meaning, something that can make my existence meaningful.

This understanding that there's no other goal, no other meaning to apply our efforts to, it may again come – in accordance with Srila Rupa Goswami – in two ways. He says "The first thing is that I simply realize that no one else is going to save me."

These important things may seem not so interesting at first glance but actually they are of utmost importance because if we properly grasp them we'll eliminate the causes, the illogical and irrational causes, preventing us from surrendering. For the time being I'm not going to talk about the second reason; I'll start with a few words about the first reason. This is actually something very interesting. He quotes a verse that illustrates this verse; it is from the Tenth Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam", chapter three. Who knows what the third chapter of the Tenth Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" is

about? (from the audience: Krishna's appearance) Krishna's appearance? Is that right? No? Basically, it would be nice to sometimes read "Srimad-Bhagavatam", it helps.

Yes, it's Krishna's appearance in Kamsa's prison in Mathura, when Krishna was born to Vasudeva and Devaki in the form of a four-armed Vishnu when all gatekeepers fell asleep. The first chapter describes the preceding events, the prediction to Kamsa, the marriage of Devaki and Vasudeva and the disgrace that Kamsa inflicted. The second chapter describes the prayers of the demigods to the infant in Devaki's womb. The third chapter describes Krishna's appearance, when Krishna appeared at midnight in Kamsa's prison. So, Devaki explains this very reason why a person takes shelter in no one else but Krishna; why this understanding that no one else is going to give me shelter appears in him (Bhag. 10.3.27):

martyo mrtyu-vyala-bhitah palayan
lokan sarvan nirbhayam nadhyagacchat
tvat padabjam prapya yadrcchayadya
susthah sete mrtyur asmad apaiti

Everything's clear, isn't it? *Martyo mrtyu-vyala-bhitah palayan*. What does *bhitah* mean? *Bhitah* means the same as *bhaya*. *Bhaya* means fear. *Mrtyu* means death. *Vyala* means serpent. Fear – *mrtyu-vyala-bhitah* is the fear of the snake of death. Very often the scriptures compare time to a snake. Time is an endless snake biting its own tail. This snake devours everything. Time devours everything. The human being is *martya*. What does *martya* mean? *Mrtyu* is death and *martya* is mortal. The living being is mortal, it is doomed to die. The living being is sentenced to death here in the prison of the material world. So what are the living beings doing? They are trying to *palayan* – to find protection from it. Having felt the fear of death – *martyo mrtyu-vyala-bhitah palayan lokan sarvan nirbhayam nadhyagacchat* – they are rushing everywhere. *Lokan sarvan* means they are trying to find a place where they are not going to die and, driven by that, they travel from planet to planet.

Why do you think people are flying to other planets? For one simple reason – they think that out there they won't have to die. Now they're about to go to Mars. What business do they have on Mars?! But the idea behind it is that all living beings in this world are seized by fear. All the forms of fear, all the forms of rushing around... We are constantly rushing and tossing around because we have this fear of death. All these varieties of forms are the manifestation of one single fear – the fear of death. The fear of losing our position is the fear of death. The fear of losing our apartment is the fear of death. The fear of losing my insurance is the fear of death. Fear of disease is the fear of death. All the fears we have is the fear of death or the fear of changing our existence. One who understands that existence is by definition temporary and that I'll be always haunted by fear, at the beginning rushes trying to find something. He goes to Australia or immigrates somewhere, to Germany, right? A nice place! Unfortunately, here people also die. We thought people are dying like flies only in the Soviet Union. No! That's everywhere.

Therefore Devaki says that driven by this fear of death people are trying to change their place, trying to find their place, trying to find some peace somewhere here in the desire to attain the state of *nirbhayam*, when there is no fear. But they do not find that! And who serves as an example of this in "Srimad-Bhagavatam?" Who was flying to various planets in fear of death? Durvasa Muni. Narada Muni was also flying to various planets but that wasn't due to fear. It was Durvasa Muni who was flying to various planets in fear of death. Durvasa Muni was trying to escape from the *cakra* that was following him. That *cakra* chased him everywhere. He was trying to find refuge from the fear of death – from this fear – because he sensed that. The *cakra* is actually the symbol of time. Vishnu's *cakra* which is turning is nothing but the infinite *cakra* of time. It is flying, it is here among us. We can feel its heat-emanating cells. So, he tried to find refuge here and there. In Brahma. Brahma said, "No, please, do not come to me. I have enough of my own problems." Shiva said, "No, no. I can't protect you from that." Vishnu ... Even Vishnu was unable to do so. That's what Devaki is speaking about.

In the "Ramayana" there is another story about this. It's the story of Kakasura. Have you heard of the *asura* named Kaka? Kakasura. The name is quite fitting. In Sanskrit *kaka* means a crow. Kakasura is actually Jayanta. Jayanta is Indra's son. In one way or another, Indra's son was

imparted with some demoniac inclinations as inheritance from his father's. Bad inheritance. Because Indra is also fearful. If someone in this world fears something, that's Indra – Indra fears everything. When someone starts performing asceticism you don't fear that but Indra does. Indra fears everything. Jayanta was his son and he had very strong demoniac tendencies. One day, when Rama was in the forest ... Actually, Rama tells this story to Hanuman in the "Ramayana". Hanuman asked Ramachandra, "If I find Sita how will She know that I am Your messenger? How am I to prove it?"

So, Ramachandra held out a ring on His palm and said, "Give Her this ring." But Hanuman wasn't satisfied. He said that "You never know, the ring might get lost somewhere. Anything can happen. Sita is in such a state that She might not believe me. All the more so, look at me – such a monkey comes to Her and says, 'I come on behalf of Rama' She'll get scared! How shall I prove to Her that I'm Your messenger?" Then Rama said, "Well, okay, take this ring but also tell Her the story which no one knows except Her and Me."

"This happened when we were alone in the forest. At that moment I decided to have a rest. I lay down and put My head in Her lap. She sat, caressing and protecting Me. At that point a demonic crow came jumping and pecked Sita. In order not to wake Me and not to disturb My rest She restrained Herself. But the crow wouldn't calm down, it came and pecked Her again and again. Finally, the crow flew to Sita's chest and pecked Her in the chest with its sharp and powerful beak until blood gushed out of the wound. It was not just an ordinary crow, it was a demoniac crow. Unable to contain Herself, Sita cried with pain. Rama felt something on His face. He woke up, jumped and saw that there, on His forehead, was a drop of blood from Sita's chest. He was terrified, He had no idea what was happening. Sita wouldn't say anything. She just covered Her chest but He could see the blood pouring from Her chest. Not far away He saw the crow. A big black crow, its beak smeared with blood. He realized that it was the crow who had wounded Sita.

That same moment Rama burst into a fury. You'd better not infuriate Rama. Even though half-awake. Rama was fury embodied. He picked and fired an arrow. In fear of the arrow the crow flew off at a great speed but the arrow was chasing it. The arrow was chasing it and the crow flew farther and farther. It flew out and beyond the earth atmosphere. I do not know how it did that, it was a special crow. That was Jayanta, Indra's son, he could travel to other planets. The arrow was at his heels and he could feel it. He flew extremely fast for he wasn't an ordinary crow. He flew from planet to planet. He was trying to escape but in vain. It took quite some time while this cosmic journey was going on.

Then the crow noted a strange thing. He noted that when he fled away from Rama the the speed of the arrow would increase, but when he suddenly turned towards Rama, the the speed of the arrow would slow down. The crow was clever; his inheritance wasn't that bad after all. He thought, "Maybe I should fly in Rama's direction?" He, too, like Durvasa Muni, was seeking a refuge, was seeking protection from that arrow. The arrow was chasing him. Completely exhausted he finally realized that the only way was to fly back to Rama and he did so. And he flopped, he literally flopped at His feet. And he flopped down most impudently – with his feet pointing at Rama's feet. The crow flopped like this, with his feet towards Rama. Which is not very polite. Sitting in front of someone with legs stretched out is most impolite. But the crow could hardly grasp anything. Having been also pacified, the arrow plopped down next to him.

Sita saw it all. And Sita felt sorry for the crow. She was gesturing something to the crow but he was in an absolute trance, absolute prostration, lying with his feet towards Rama. So, Sita took his head, turned it the other way and placed it at Rama's feet, so that it touched Rama's feet. Then She said, "Look, Rama, he has surrendered to You (laughter). He has taken refuge at Your feet." Rama said, "Well, if so, then of course I'll have to protect him." And Rama breathed strength and life into him. So, Rama told this story to Hanuman and said, "Tell Sita this story, no one else knows it. She will remember how She saved Kakasura by teaching him what to do; that he had to surrender by placing his head at Rama's feet."

So, Devaki – we've stopped here, we've only gone through two lines of this verse, *martyo mrtyu-vyala-bhitah palayan lokan sarvan nirbhayam nadhyagacchat*. They can't find that anywhere, *lokan sarvan* – they're looking for that in all the planets. *Tvat padabjam*. What does *abja* mean? A lotus.

Abja means 'that which grows out of water.' *Tvat padabjam* – Your lotus feet. *Prapya* – having attained. *Yadricchayadya* – o, *adya*, primeval Lord, the source of all. *Yadricchha* – by Your mercy, in some way.

Tvat padabjam prapya yadricchayadya susthah sete mrtyur asmad apaiti. Susthah. Stha means what? Yes, *stha* means "a place", a camp (*stan* in Russian) – Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan. *Stha* means "a place", this is where all *stan*'s are derived from. *Stan* is a Russian word; *stan* is where we've made our camp. *Susthan*. *Su* means beautiful (*sundara*), nice. *Susthan* – when he attains this refuge he realizes that is *susthan*, this is my camp, I've come home. The living being feels that finally all my wanderings through all these planets have brought me to the right place (*sete*). *Susthah*: I've come, I've come back home, I've found shelter at the lotus feet; I've come back home and now I feel absolutely safe. Accordingly, when a person feels ... Imagine you've been wandering through various planets, you've been running, flying. Finally you've found a shelter and you've realized that's my home, you've sheltered there; what would you do then? Sleep. At home we sleep. Especially if you've had enough troubles and are completely worn-out.

Literally *sete* means *susthah sete mrtyur asmad apaiti* – having found refuge from death, they find their place, their home, and start sleeping there. *Sete* literally means "sleep", but in this case it means that they find complete peace here, they become absolutely peaceful just like in sleep. The meaning of this verse is to illustrate in what way a person realizes that there is only one single refuge, that there is no other refuge. I gave a definition of what *saranagati* is, it's the understanding that only Krishna can protect me: *ananyagati tvam* – I have no other goal. Who can protect me from death? Can anyone else protect me from death? Only Krishna! Right?

If a person, having had enough troubles, realizes this he can come to Krishna. Therefore Srila Jiva Goswami quotes exactly this verse. It gives precisely this understanding, that "Here I am. I'm tossing around, I'm running, I'm trying to escape from death. It may seem that I'm trying to escape from something else but actually I'm trying to escape from death. But it's only Krishna Himself or Rama who can protect me from death."

And the second way this understanding comes to us is when in our attempts to find refuge or protection here, in this world, we have tried to find shelter in other things but have finally realized that all these other things can't give us protection, either, because all other things are not the ultimate protection. What is meant here is a very important point. Again, the first way is the most common one. The first way, the understanding that I need to go only to Krishna – comes from this understanding that only God can save me from death. The second way is when a person in his attempts to find such protection takes refuge in what? In what do some people try to find protection from death? Except chemotherapy. (options are offered by the audience) Money? There is a certain pattern or certain regularity in the way Srila Rupa Goswami describes surrendering oneself or finding shelter. At first he describes the common scenario and then he describes the scenario that applies to more pious people.

Where do usually pious people seek protection from the fear of death? In the healthy way of life, in certain religious rites, in following their *dharma*, in the fact that everything's all right with them. They try and they think that if I fast properly I'm never going to die. If I lead an ascetic life I'm never going to die, or if I take bath in the Ganges... In January next year there will be a Kumbha Mela and the Kumbha Mela is the precise time when the nectar of immortality (*amrita*) comes up. The nectar which Garuda had spilt in several places. This *amrita* comes out to the surface of the Ganges. So, people think that "The most important thing is to plunge into the river in the right place at the right time and that's all". That is people seek shelter not in God Himself but in what? In something connected with God but not in God Himself – in rituals, in pious activities and the like. They want to somehow or other prolong their existence and get rid of this fear of death by trying to find this shelter in worshipping other living beings and other demigods.

Thus, explaining this second way of surrender, Srila Jiva Goswami says that when a person realizes that ultimately all this is not going to save him, it's not going to protect him from fear – it may protect him from many other things: from disease and things like that but it's not going to protect it from the ultimate fear – such a person fully surrenders to Krishna, understanding that there is only one refuge from fear – God Himself, the Personality of God, He alone. And Srila Jiva

Goswami quotes two verses from the Eleventh Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" where Krishna Himself says that. Tomorrow we'll probably talk about them in more detail. Now I'll just read them (Bhag. 11.12.14-15)

tasmat tvam uddhavotsrjya
codanam praticodanam
pravrttim ca nivrttim ca
srotavyam srutam eva ca
mam ekam eva saranam
atmanam sarva-dehinam
yahi sarvatma-bhavana
maya sya hy akuto-bhayah

Tasmat tvam uddhavotsrjya. Uddhava - "O Uddhava"; *tasmat* - "therefore"; *tvam* - "you"; *utsrjya* - "give up". *Codanam praticodanam* – all the injunctions of the *sastras*. *Codanam praticodanam* – all possible injunctions of the scriptures which give a person the illusion of protection: "If I strictly follow all this I'm not going to die." *Pravrttim ca nivrttim ca* – all the various injunctions: 'do this and don't do that' are to be *utsrjya*. *Srotavyam srutam eva ca* – all you've heard and all you are still to hear, all these wonderful books that you've read from the esoteric store. About toadstools, right? And you want to take shelter of toadstools, don't you? You take some toadstool and immediately turn cool, traveling somewhere in the astral worlds and fighting. Wouldn't you like to take shelter of that? Well, you may not like to do that, you're lazy. But that's exactly what many people try to take shelter in and that's what Krishna says (Bhag. 11.12.14):

tasmat tvam uddhavotsrjya
codanam praticodanam
pravrttim ca nivrttim ca
srotavyam srutam eva ca

That's not the only thing you're going to hear. There are many other recipes of how to live and be happy in this world and be free from fear. But He says, "No, no. Give all that up. It doesn't work!"

Mam ekam eva saranam – He repeats the same thing. Krishna is not afraid of repeating Himself. In the "Bhagavad Gita" He says, *mam ekam saranam vraja*, and here: *mam ekam eva saranam* – take shelter of Me alone, seek protection from Me alone. *Atmanam sarva-dehinam*. Why? Because I am the soul of *sarva-dehinam*, of all living beings. Because I am situated within, I am the soul of your soul. *Yahi sarvatma-bhavana* – how should you do that? *Sarvatma-bhavana* – with all your *bhava*, with all your consciousness. Not with a part of your consciousness, not with a fragment of your consciousness but completely, with all your *bhava*. *Yahi sarvatma-bhavana / maya sya hy akuto-bhayah*. Why? Because I will make you what? *Akuto-bhayam* – fearless. I will give you full protection, complete freedom from all forms of fear.

In essence, that's the other method, the other scenario. You can see that, right? Once again, this is how Srila Jiva Goswami describes it. First he speaks of the common way for the majority of people. Then he says how a more pious person surrenders who's been trying to find shelter in other things, in other relationships, but who has ultimately realized that "I have no other protection in this world. There is only one protection – only Krishna can give me protection."

I'd like to tell a story, but I'll probably not do so now or probably will tell some story tomorrow, I can tell you many stories, don't worry. You'll have enough of all kinds of stories. What I wanted is that for a couple of minutes you turn to each other, two or three persons – and just discuss what you've heard here in terms of your own life experience. All that we've heard today in our opening lecture or discussion about what *saranagati* is. How a person, in his looking for a refuge is trying to find refuge in something else, in something that actually prevents him from finding refuge. That is, please remember and share some things related to yourself if something within has responded so that all this experience sinks deeper. Please turn to each other and share some thoughts or feelings if our discussion brought some associations to your mind. Has something within you responded? What did you recognize in yourself from this description? Now you can share that with each other. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama,

Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Let us briefly summarize what we said; I'm now going to ask you. I've told you everything about what the two reasons are for a person to surrender to Krishna and try to find refuge and protection in Him? Due to what two reasons, how does that happen? Disappointment, yes. Disappointment is the consequence of what? Suffering. Suffering caused by *kama* and *krodha*, lust and anger. And what's the second reason? Yes, the quest for love or spiritual realization, when again we are faced with hardly being able to overcome all these problems within ourselves. Thank you, you're learning well.

And what is the definition of *saranagati*? How does Srila Jiva Goswami define *saranagati*? Yes, *ananyagati tvam* – the realization that ultimately I have only one goal, one aspiration without a second.

And what are two methods that this understanding can come to us? The understanding that the fear of death is caused by our material attachments. Because as long as I have material attachments I will fear. Fear is nothing but the fear of losing what I'm attached to. What is the fear of death? It is the fear of losing what I consider to be mine, what I've identified with. Fear or not we are going to lose it for sure. There is a nice joke about two friends speaking at the grave of their friend at his funeral. One's asking, "What did he leave behind?" meaning his wife, children, things like that. The other one says, "He left behind everything." He hasn't taken anything with him.

When a person realizes this and he has precisely this understanding that as long as I have material attachments and goals related to something material, I'm going to fear – such a person can now turn to Krishna. And when he turns to Krishna he feels the freedom from fear and peacefulness. It's absolutely amazing! It's an absolutely real thing when someone suddenly simply chants Hare Krishna without even knowing anything.

In my case it was exactly like that. I began chanting Hare Krishna without knowing who Krishna or Rama was. Let alone Hare (laughter). It was something absolutely ... And the first thing I noticed is that fear went away, it diminished. The same fear that I had become used to; the same fear that had taken on a variety of forms, began diminishing and losing its grip. And immediately Krishna tested me, He sent the KGB (laughter) to prove to me; it was like a litmus test: do you fear or not? In those times the KGB was the personification of the fear of death in the Soviet Union. So the mantra did a great job. It did work! That's the first thing Devaki says. That when a person attains You, he *susthan*, he finds his shelter, and *sete*, he remains in this state of peace under the protection of Your lotus feet.

And what is the second way this understanding can come to us? The understanding that we are to seek shelter only in Krishna? In what way can this understanding come to us? Yes, when a person tries other ways and realizes that ultimately they don't work. He has visited all healers, all clairvoyants; he has tried all psychologists and all kinds of *dharma*, he has done dry fasting and everything else; nevertheless he's attained no fearlessness. He hasn't attained this ultimate feeling that that's it, that's what I need, that's what I'm looking for. And in this case – it's something amazing when a person comes to Krishna – then he realizes that, "that's it, I don't need to go anywhere else. I don't need to aspire for anything else. This is where I belong."

At the end I'll tell you a story that illustrates this. I've been telling it several times, about how a hippie girl, who was later called Lilavati, joined. A dandelion, a child of love, a hippie, was in quest of truth and finally she came to Srila Prabhupada. She'd hear that there's a Swami. She came to him and the devotees brought her upstairs into Srila Prabhupada's room. Srila Prabhupada was sitting with Garga Muni. Garga Muni was the first treasurer. Srila Prabhupada was looking at Garga Muni's accounting books and was asking questions. He gestured her to take a seat and wait, we'll talk in a while. She came and listened to their talk, "Here's 5\$, here's 2 \$. Here's 30 cents. What did you spend 30 cents on?" So, a wave of indignation was rising within her as she thought, "Where have I come? Why have I come here?" Finally unable to stand it anymore, she jumped up

and shouted, "I've come here to find love!!" Srila Prabhupada calmly looked at her and said, "Sit down, you've come to the right place! (laughter) Calm down." That was her first acquaintance with the philosophy of *bhakti* (laughter). "You've come to the right place, don't worry." This is the second method.

Okay, we've done a great job, thank you very much (applause). The most interesting will come the day after tomorrow.

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Hare Krishna. We are talking on the subject of *saranagati* or surrendering. The Vaishnava scriptures state that this is the easiest, the most direct and the fastest method of salvation. When we try to rely on our own strength ... Not sometimes but always. But our sad experience of existing in this world proves that, ultimately, everything we are trying to rely on or trying to surrender to, trying to seek protection in, betrays us. Family, kinsmen, protectors, friends – they all betrays us. Our own body betrays us. Our mind which we have trusted so much, continually betrays us and lets us down. Therefore, the *sastras* recommend that one seeks protection, shelter, security and fearlessness in Krishna, in God.

We are trying to understand what this means in practice, what prevents it. Actually, this means harmonizing my will with the will of God. I have my own will and in the material world I either try to somehow or other assert my will or align it temporarily with some other person's will – in order to achieve my goals. In the material world we know what it means to adapt or to subordinate our will to someone else's will. But surrendering to Krishna means complete unconditional surrender. I say once and for all, "That's it, it's not my will, it's Yours. As You want, so be it. And as long as I insist that my will here is above all and that my will shall be fulfilled – this will cause innumerable troubles to me. Because my will will never be fulfilled here, in this world. Rather, sometimes it will be, but that will be by accident, by coincidence. If it has accidentally coincided with Krishna's will, that's Ok. But as a rule when they diverge a person experiences stress, grief and all sorts of trouble. So, a devotee is one who says, "That's enough! I've understood everything. Krishna, I submit to Your will. I surrender to Your will. I want Your will to prevail." And then I start acting in harmony with Krishna's will. And Krishna becomes very pleased with me. So, today we are going to read about this being the only way to bring Him under control, paradoxical as it may seem. When a person voluntarily surrenders then Krishna obeys.

Yesterday we talked about the fact that surrender begins with the understanding that in this world I have to seek Krishna, I should aspire for Him. Sometimes a person realizes this very deeply himself, but more often he finds this out in an empirical way. Yesterday I was telling this story ... By the way, yesterday I made a mistake. When I was telling you the story of Kakasura, the *asura*-crow, the demon, this story was told to Hanuman by Sita. Not to Hanuman by Rama but by Sita. As a letter of credit Hanuman gave Sita Rama's ring. Hanuman asked Her, "But how can I prove to Rama that I've seen You?" Then Sita told this story about Kakasura, the crow. That crow has empirically found out where to move. He realized that the more he flew away from Rama, the closer His deadly arrow would follow him. But as soon as he made a slight turn into Rama's direction the arrow would slow down, thinking that, "Maybe he's going to surrender to Rama? Maybe he's understood something?"

We can observe exactly the same in our own life. When we try to get away from God, to turn away from Him and get saved from death, retribution or whatever in any other way life becomes more and more unbearable. The heat of the persecuting arrow becomes even more tangible. But as soon as we turn – even slightly – into Krishna's direction we are immediately relieved. Have you noticed that? We are immediately relieved – even slightly. But then we think, "Well, everything is Okay, it's not that bad, I can again take the other direction." And again zh-zh-zhyyy – the arrow starts persecuting us. And again we think, "Yes, yes, it's all clear, I have to go that way." (laughter) This is our story, the story of our life, when we are trying to get away, run away from God. But the *sastras* tell us that actually we need to come to Him, that is the only salvation from all our problems.

This is one way – when we've realized that *ananyagati tvam* – that only God is the goal of our efforts, that He alone is worth going to. And we've understood that other – material – means are not going to save us. Prahlada Maharaja says this in his prayers to Nrsimhadeva (Bhag. 7.9.19):

balasya neha saranam pitarau nrsimha
nartasya cagadam udanvati majjato nauh

taptasya tat-pratividhir ya ihañjasestas
tavad vibho tanu-bhrtam tvad-upeksitanam

Srila Prabhupada loved quoting this verse. This is a verse from the prayers of Prahlada Maharaja. He says *balasya neha saranam pitarau nrsimha* – sometimes parents try to save their child who's turned sick. *Balasya neha saranam pitarau* – actually the child though it's most natural for him, is seeking shelter in his parents, *balasya neha saranam pitarau nrsimha* – he can't find this shelter for his parents can't the child.

Nartasya cagadam – a sick person seeks protection where? Yes, in medicines, in doctors. Do medicines save us? Sometimes, if Krishna wants it (laughter). *Nartasya* – a person is suffering and he's trying (*arta*) but he cannot get rid of suffering through medicines. There are people who suffer from migraines and although they take medicines for decades the pain does not go away. *Nartasya cagadam udanvati majjato nauh* – and sometimes a person who's drowning – clutches at a straw or a boat or something else and drowns along with the boat.

Taptasya tat-pratividhir ya ihañjasestas – Prahlada Maharaja says that by no means all these methods always work. As a rule, they do not. And *tavad vibho tanu-bhrtam tvad-upeksitanam* – if God is disregarding the person they all are not going to help. In this mood (of surrendering) Prahlada Maharaja says, "Only You can save me. Only You can save me – no one else can do that."

And there's a curious, nice and interesting example of this. It's the words of Sita Herself when She talked to Hanuman in Ashokavan. Hanuman appeared before Her in his usual form. He jumped down from a tree and said, "I am Rama's messenger." And then, when they were talking, he said, "Do you want me to rescue You? Get on top of me and I will get You out of here." Sita began laughing at him. She said, "What a monkey!" That's the way She said it, "You can hear that from no one but a monkey. Look at yourself! How can I get on top of you?" Hanuman was terribly offended. Sita kind of didn't take him seriously. Hanuman said, "Now, I'll show You" and increased into an enormous size.

- Look at me! You think I can't rescue You?!

- No, no, no.

- Get on, we'll fly away in an instant! I'll fly in such a way that no *raksasa* will catch me. I will get You out of here in a moment!

So, Sita began to speak:

- You know, monkey, thank you very much. But first of all, if I'll be sitting on top of you and you will be flying across the ocean, there's a good chance of Me falling over and getting devoured by a shark. I'm not going to do that!

- No problem, we'll catch You in the air.

- No, no. *Raksasas* will attack you and will knock Me over. And even if you defeat them, still nothing good will come of it for it will glorify you and not Rama.

And She began to find numerous reasons. "Anyway, ultimately I don't touch any other man even if it is a monkey (laughter) I do not want to fly on top of you." But anyway.

Please feel what is happening between them. You are a captive and you are in captivity. And each day of this captivity is a torture. Each day you are subjected to some kind of torture – if not physical, then moral. You are starving, you are grieving. And here comes a monkey and tells you, "Now we'll take You where You belong, we'll take You to Rama." You say, "No. No one but Rama can save Me. No one, I'll accept no other means of rescue." Why? Because I am chaste. Because if I want to rely on someone ... I want to rely only on the Lord. I do not want to rely on anyone else. And this is a description of the understanding of *ananyagati tvam* – I have only one goal and a single means that can save me from everything else, from all these problems.

And yesterday we ended up by reading two verses from the Eleven Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam." There Krishna repeats practically the same as in the "Bhagavad-gita". He says, "Surrender unto Me, o Uddhava. Therefore, o Uddhava, surrender unto Me, obey Me." The two verses we read (Bhag. 11.12.14-15):

tasmat tvam uddhavotsrjya
codanam praticodanam
pravrttim ca nivrttim ca
srotavyam srutam eva ca

mam ekam eva saranam
atmanam sarva-dehinam
yahi sarvatma-bhavana
maya sya hy akuto-bhayah

He says "Give up everything!" *Codanam praticodanam* – all injunctions of the holy scriptures. *Pravrttim ca nivrttim ca / srotavyam srutam eva ca* – don't try to find refuge in this. This was an example of how a person tries to find protection in religious rites, in righteous deeds, in their own righteousness. And often people do this! The motive behind this is their understanding that I myself know how to be saved. I will find a way, I will find the *vrata*, or *yoga*, or some other method that will save me. This is pride! We do not want to turn to God – we have this irrational reluctance to surrender. Our neck wouldn't bend. In the Bible there's a nice expression. The neck does not bend due to arthritis (laughter) or other reasons.

This method of *saranagati* means: that's it, I accept Krishna – and this is not easy. Krishna knows that it's not easy to realize this. I wanted us today to first once again clearly understand that despite all its outward simplicity this method is not so simple. We have this resistance inside and we try to avoid this. And before Krishna speaks the verses that we read yesterday – give up all this and just surrender to Me, *atmanam sarva-dehinam*, the soul of all souls and I will protect you from all fear – curiously enough, in the Twelfth chapter of the Eleventh Canto of "Srimad Bhagavatam" and in chapter 11 before that, in the last verse Krishna says (Bhag. 11.11.49):

athaitat paramam guhyam
srnvato yadu-nandana
su-gopyam api vaksyami
tvam me bhrtyah suhrt sakha

Athaitat paramam guhyam – I will now tell you something most intimate, *paramam guhyam*. *Srnvato yadu-nandana* – o joy of the Yadu dynasty, listen to Me – *srnvato*. *Su-gopyam api vaksyami* - I'll tell you the greatest secret. I'm telling you – *su-gopyam api vaksyami*). *Tvam me bhrtyah suhrt sakha* – why am I telling you this? Because you are *bhrtya*, My servant, *suhrit*, My well-wisher and *sakha*, My close friend. In other words, when Krishna says such things, we are to listen carefully. He says, "I am going to disclose a secret to you, the greatest secret of all." Everyone's tense now. And what will He say ultimately? It's quite curious. He said this and He said *bhrtyah suhrt sakha* – you are My servant, My well-wisher, you're My *sakha*, you know that the relationship between us is very intimate. Only you can understand this secret.

In essence ... And Uddhava knows. Let's picture it once again. You're talking with a friend and suddenly he says, "So be it, I'll tell you something because you're my friend." Why would he say that? Because he knows that if he doesn't say it you won't believe him anyway. He says this to remind once again that "I am your well-wisher. You're My well-wisher. I am your servant and you are My servant. We are friends. Believe Me." Krishna is practically imploring Uddhava – and not just Uddhava, He's imploring us – to believe Him. Because what He's going to say is a secret. But it's a secret not because it is something secret or intimate but just because even those who read it do not believe it. That is why it remains a secret. The secret that Krishna is speaking about ... He's not going to say anything extraordinary. He's actually going to say, "I'll tell you now to simply associate with the devotees and surrender to Me" but no one is going to believe! That is why He says, "This is a secret that no one understands. I disclose it only to you hoping that you'll understand, that you'll be smart enough."

In other words, Krishna doesn't even hope that we'll follow this and understand this. He knows that we'll be mistrust Him anyway, "Surrender to Him?! Look what He wants! Stop relying on my own strength? That's too much! Who does He think I am?!" This means trust Him absolutely. And after Krishna said that ... Listen because it is an important thing, an important understanding. Krishna knows: that's not easy to do, for none of us that's easy to do. What is this terrible secret? This terrible secret is very simple (Bhag. 11.12.1-2):

sri-bhagavan uvaca
na rodhayati mam yogo
na sankhyam dharma eva ca
na svadhyayas tapas tyago
nesta-purtam na daksina

vratani yajñas chandamsi
tirthani niyama yamah
yathavarundhe sat-sangah
sarva-sangapaho hi mam

Krishna says, "Now I will reveal to you this secret because you're My friend." And He says, "I can't be bought through *yoga* – even if it is Ayengar's *yoga*, with all details of performance." *Na rodhayati mam yogo*. *Na sankhyam*: if a person becomes a learned man and tries to understand how this world works and is well versed in psychology – it won't work. *Dharma eva ca*: if he carries out his duties very nicely – it won't work. *Na svadhyayas* – if he studies the scriptures, trying hard, - it won't work. *Tapas*: if he performs asceticism, fasting every other day and dry-fasts on all *Ekadasis*. *Tyaga* – if he is a *sannyasi*, if he's given up everything, he's left his home and even his wife! – he's not going to buy Him! *Na ista purtam* – if he is engaged in charity, in "Food for Life", feeding everyone and digging wells. *Na daksina* – not even by means of a *daksina* is it possible to buy Krishna. If I drop five rubles in the box or 5 euros – strange enough but Krishna will not surrender to me. *Vratani*: if a person follows various *vratas*, if he has taken some vow and strictly follows it. Krishna says, "No, it doesn't work." *Yajya*: if he performs a *yajna*, *asvamedha* – he sacrifices horses or cows or children – whatever. *Chandamsi* – if a person chants secret *mantras* very accurately and very clearly. *Tirthani* – if a person travels around all possible holy places, starting from the most exotic one, Ramesvaram, Dvaraka, Puri. *Niyama yamah* – if a person follows all the injunctions of the holy scriptures.

It is impossible to bring Me under control by all this! *Yathavarundhe sat-sanga / sarva-sangapaho hi mam* – Krishna says that all this fades away in comparison to one simple thing: if a person associates with *sadhus* (*sadhu-sanga*) and thus gives up all other association. All other unwanted association goes away, attachment to other association goes away by itself. So, what has Krishna actually said, in other words? He's said that there's no other more powerful method of spiritual development, of bringing Him under control, of getting closer to Him, than *sadhu-sanga*. Why? Because in *sadhu-sanga*, in the association with saintly persons, we're going to realize what? That we need to surrender to Krishna.

Because if we associate with devotees we'll realize what it means to surrender to Krishna. And if we do not associate with devotees we will never realize that. If we associate with devotees, listen to devotees and try to serve devotees we'll understand what it means to renounce our own independent ego. If we do not do that we will never understand this. Srila Prabhupada once said that a person who thinks it's possible to spiritually advance in isolation from the devotees' society, such a person is seeing hallucinations, he's delirious. It's all delirium and hallucinations. Sometimes a person thinks, "These devotees have really got me, I'm fed up! I'll sit at home and chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare." Caitanya Mahaprabhu says, "You can chant Hare Krishna for seven thousand lives and achieve nothing." Because this will never happen – a person will never be able to give up his false ego. He will never see any of his problems, any of his shortcomings, he will never understand anything related with that. Therefore Krishna says, "I will now reveal a secret to you; the greatest secret you need to know if you want to understand something in this life, if you want to come closer to Me: simply associate with devotees. And associating with them try to surrender to Me."

And He says that there are many examples of this. He then gives a long list of how this method has worked. Why? Because ultimately *bhakti* is impossible to practice if we preserve our independent ego. The independent ego is the greatest obstacle in *bhakti*. And it is in and only in the society of devotees – in the loving society of devotees, in the association of devotees where we can experience love but also see our shortcomings and feel the pain because of them – where we can ultimately understand what surrender means and not be scared to surrender. So, He gives a long list of the people who have achieved perfection. Rather, not just people but all kinds of living beings: demons, animals, people, monkeys, it's a curious list. He says, "These living beings have attained My abode, they have come back to Me." Krishna says, "They've come back to Me in the spiritual world."

And who were those persons? Vrtrasura. Who did Vrtrasura associate with? In his previous life Vrtrasura associated with Narada Muni and with Parvati Muni. Prahlada Maharaja, Vrisaparva, Bali Maharaja, Banasura, Mayasura, Vibhishana, Sugriva, Hanuman, Jambavan, Gajendra, Jatayu, Tuladhara, Dharmavyada, Kubja and the *gopis* of Vrindavan. All of them attained perfections and returned to Krishna only through association with devotees. There is a purpose to His giving this somewhat funny sequence. First comes Gajendra and Hanuman, Jambavan, and then – the *gopis* of Vrindavan. He says, "It doesn't matter who you are!" They have achieved this not because they have studied the scriptures, not because they were austere or adhered to their *vratas* – it was for one simple reason: they associated with devotees, they heard something from the devotees and fully trusted and surrendered to Krishna.

This is actually why further on, after these verses, He tells about the *gopis*, about how the *gopis* surrendered to Him. He does not tell so much about Gajendra, but does tell about the *gopis*. He tells how they gave up everything. And the commentators who write purports to this Twelfth chapter of the Eleven Canto of "Bhagavatam" say that before His departure Krishna nevertheless revealed this secret to Uddhava. He did reveal it, this secret of complete surrender. And He said that the perfect example of this complete surrender were the *gopis* of Vrindavan. Summing all this up, He says (Bhag. 11.12.14-15):

tasmat tvam uddhavotsrjya
codanam praticodanam
pravrttim ca nivrttim ca
srotavyam srutam eva ca

mam ekam eva saranam
atmanam sarva-dehinam
yahi sarvatma-bhavana
maya sya hy akuto-bhayah

Tasmat tvam uddhavotsrjya - "O Uddhava, give up all you've heard. Don't try to rely on all these forms of *dharma* that you have heard." *Mam ekam eva saranam* – and seek protection only in Me. *Atmanam sarva-dehinam / yahi sarvatma-bhavana / maya sya nya akuto-bhayah*.

Very important words He says here are *sarvatma-bhavana*. He says, "Take shelter in Me but do it *sarva-atma-bhavana* – with all your heart." Do not take shelter just formally, do not just come to Krishna, saying, "I'm Yours, by the way. This is what I am. I'm off now." (laughter) *Yahi sarvatma-bhavana* means I come to Krishna and say *sarvatma-bhavana* – I put all my heart in these words. When we chant the holy name – and this is the art of chanting the holy name – at this moment we should ask for Krishna's protection with all our heart. And we know the way we chant: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare (chants in a faltering way) or Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare (chants quickly, swallowing syllables).

Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Surrender consists first of all in the way we chant the *mantra*. *Sarvatma-*

bhavana – we put in this process all our *atma*, all our heart, all our consciousness. We should, at least. And the example of this, of course, is Draupadi. I was telling at the first lecture that she first called Krishna but meant Arjuna, Bhima, Bhishma, Dhritarastra, Drona and all the rest. But then at one point she put all her heart into this cry; everything she had. And Krishna said, "Well, if so, then of course. (laughter) If so, then of course I'm yours."

This completeness of surrender is a most important part of all this process. This is what *sat-sanga* leads to. *Sat-sanga* or *sadhu-sanga* leads to the realization that I need to completely surrender. As long as I'm all by myself, yes, I am some kind of a devotee. I sit, look into the computer and chant Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare (chants quickly in a mechanical way) and there's lots of everything. Even if I don't look at this computer, all the Internet goes through this other computer. In my inner computer I jump from one site to another. But Krishna says, *yahi sarvatma-bhavana / maya sya nya akuto-bhayah*.

This is why it is said the perfection of life is our ability to utter the holy name at the very last moment of our life. Why? Because before we die we will do it like Draupadi: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. (Chants along with the audience with complete surrender). Not like this (laughter). This last call addressed to Krishna, when it is more than clear that we are not going to find protection anywhere else – this last call, if we are able to utter it, will be most powerful. And Krishna will be obliged to come to this call.

In this regard I wanted to tell a story about a great sinner whose name was Shatra-bandhu. This is a story from the "Vishnu-Darmottara Purana". The sinner has committed all possible sins, *maha-patakas*, *ati-patakas*, *patakas* – what sins only didn't he commit. He fell down to the lowest possible degree. Ultimately – I do not know the details of this story but the point is that he met a *brahmana* and asked him, "How can I get rid of these sins?" And another curious point is that in accordance with other religious concepts a person is punished for his sins, right? In what way, do you think, our concept is different? Yes, sins themselves are the punishment. A person is punished by the sins, not for the sins. At some point these sins became such a burden to him that he began looking for salvation from these sins, for a deliverance from them. So, he found a *brahmana* and began asking him questions. He said to him, "Dear *brahmana*, tell me, please, how to get rid of all this." And the *brahmana* said, "You can do this through meditation. You can also do *pranayama*. You can also perform *vratas*. You can do other things."

This is what the *brahmana* advises him and it's good advice. He looks at that hunter but see no enthusiasm in his eyes. So, he says, "If all this doesn't suit you then I will reveal a method to you that is applicable in all cases." This Shatra-bandhu replied to this that "None of all this suits me because my mind is jumping; that I can't focus on any method of spiritual practice, I won't be able to properly do all this. Due to my sins my mind has become too restless, too anxious and too heavy. Please tell me what should I do in this case." And then the *brahmana* told him of last method, the very last method, the ultimate remedy. He said, "I will now reveal to you the method that is most appropriate for those who are sick, for those who are seized by hunger, for those who are seized by thirst, for those who stumble, for those whose health is completely ruined and for those who are dying; there is one single method. It is to constantly chant: Govinda, Govinda, he Govinda, he Govinda."

In other words, why is the holy name and this understanding of *saranagati* basic concepts in our *sampradaya*? Because this is what a person is taught to do from the beginning. Whatever we do, whatever state we are in, whatever we try to do – we must still call Krishna. Sometimes people say, "I do not chant the holy name, I do not want to chant the holy name on the run." It is good that you don't chant the holy name on the run. But what else is to be done?

There is a famous story about Gopal Guru. He was a little boy. And he saw that Chaitanya Mahaprabhu moved aside to relieve Himself. And while doing He was biting His tongue. Because His tongue was always chanting Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare; Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. But now He was necessarily biting His tongue so that it doesn't chant at that moment in that contaminated state. That little boy, Gopal,

said, "Prabhu, why were you biting your tongue while You were urinating? Why didn't you chant at that moment Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare"? Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Well, that would be improper for I was in a contaminated state. How can I do that in a contaminated state?" the boy replied, "But what if You died in that contaminated state?" That happens, too. You go to pass water and die. And Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "O Gopal, you are My *guru*; you've taught me the right way." In other words, this spirit of unconditional surrender is manifested in one's calling Krishna in all possible states: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

And this second thing – we are still finishing the stuff from our yesterday's lecture. The second thing is that a person tries to find refuge in other things. In other vows, in other practices, in other injunctions. However, ultimately he realizes that first of all I cannot do this properly. This is what I need to understand. If I try to very strictly follow the principles of religion – for example, the principle of *ahimsa*, non-violence, will I be able to do so? Can I apply absolutely no violence whatsoever? Can I follow very strictly the principle of truthfulness? Can I? No, I can't! I will still lie out of habit. Can I very strictly follow other things? I can't. I cannot! Therefore Krishna says, "Well, even if you can't, that's Ok." (Bg 18.66):

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

Come and ask Me for protection. And how can you ask Me for protection? In one way only: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. He Govinda. And fear goes away by itself.

I was recently told an absolutely wonderful story. You know that Ayurvedic doctors can diagnose a disease by feeling the pulse. Not so long ago Srila Radhanatha Maharaja visited an Ayurvedic doctor, a famous Ayurvedic doctor in Puniya, who is perfectly versed in pulse diagnosis and who can determine the subtlest nuances of diseases and inner states by the pulse. Better than any X-ray apparatus. Actually, those who know this art of pulse diagnosis ...

One woman was telling me another thing. She said, "I went to Switzerland, paid 20,000 \$ for the diagnosis and ultimately after two weeks I was told that I had something wrong with the left ventricle of my heart. And then – she said – I went to your doctor who diagnoses by the pulse. He felt my pulse for 30 seconds and said, 'The left ventricle of your heart is not working properly.'" (laughter)

So, the doctor that Radhanatha Maharaja visited is one of the best among the experts in diagnosis. Usually he needs a few seconds to feel the pulse, measure it and see the full picture. He started feeling his pulse. A minute passess, another, a third one. He's sitting and still feeling and feeling the pulse. Maharaja said, "I fell asleep while he was feeling my pulse. He was feeling my pulse for half an hour so I dozed off. He's sitting and feeling my pulse. Then he let go of his arm and stretched out before him in full *dandavat*. He said, "It's just Radha and Krishna there in your pulse. I could not let it go." (laughter and applause).

So, when a person surrenders, truly surrenders, when a person has actually harmoniously aligned himself with this supreme will, that is, he has coordinated his rhythm with the rhythm of the universe – through *mantra*, which is the rhythm of the universe – then Krishna and Radha are established inside. Everything, each cell of the body beats in accordance with this rhythm: Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Therefore, ultimately, it's the best way to surrender and align our will with Krishna's will.

Okay. Let's move on. Are you tired?

Referring to these verses, Srila Jiva Goswami quotes the famous verse that we are already read (Bg 18.66):

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

I'm not going to describe it at length before we move on to our completely new stuff, but he says that Krishna repeats the same thing at the very end of the "Bhagavad Gita." In essence, He says that when a person surrenders his personality changes completely, his mental body changes. This complete surrender means complete renunciation of our ego, when, again, we accept Krishna's will in our life and accept it joyfully. Why is it nevertheless so difficult for people to do so? For a very simple reason – because they understand that if I surrender then I will be who? I will be a nobody. As long as it's my will I am somebody, right? And if it's not my will I am a nobody. And no one wants to be a nobody. It's a very difficult task – to be a nobody. Suddenly, it's not my will anymore and it seems that there's nothing left of my personality. Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar Swami, Srila Prabhupada's spiritual brother speaks very nicely about this. He says that in essence this is a voluntary suicide. Bhakti Tirtha Maharaja said the same thing, he said that we should die before death comes. Renunciation of our own ego essentially means the death of the ego. And this ego must die before my body dies. Spiritual life means death of the ego.

So, Bhakti Rakshak Sridhar has very beautifully defined this. He says, "We have to learn to live with this playful absolute." It is unpredictable and absolutely playful; it does whatever it wants, it does whatever it wants to us. And we must learn to live with it. You see? It's not an easy task. Once again, this *sarva-dharman parityajya* is not such a simple thing. Give up our ego and accept all these whims of the playful absolute in our life is very difficult. Sometimes Krishna – precisely because He wants to benefit us – causes us a seeming evil. Right? Whom was all this caused by? It was all caused by Him. Why? Sometimes people ask, "Why is there so much suffering in this world?" How would you answer this question? People are not satisfied even by the response that it's all *karma* and it's your own fault. Where is God looking? Why so much suffering in this world? The answer is very simple – Krishna wants it. But why does He want it?

Like one devotee told me, "It's beyond my comprehension... How many hells are there? 12 hells. And Krishna is playing His flute. How does it fit together?!" Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur Prabhupada explains this in a wonderful way. He says, "Why? Because in these sufferings, when going through them, a person may develop a slight attraction for the absolute." Krishna is testing us by keeping away from us. And, being far from Him, we feel the sense of shortage.

Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur Prabhupada says that in this sense of shortage there is a slight glimpse of craving for the absolute, craving for the complete. I will read it. This is Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur Prabhupad, his words, "We live in this limited world. Many say, 'Why should Bhagavan bestow upon us, living in this world, so much suffering?' The answer to this question can be found in a *sloka* from "Srimad-Bhagavatam" (Bhag. 10.14.8):

tat te 'nukampam su-samiksamano
bhuñjana evatma-krtam vipakam
hrd-vag-vapurbhir vidadhan namas te
jiveta yo mukti-pade sa daya-bhak

We live in a limited world, in a world of ignorance. Anyone will agree with this, whatever his world views might be. Keeping away from us, Bhagavan tests us from a distance. The sense of shortage often contains a slight sense of God. Once again: the sense of shortage often contains a slight sense of God. When this sense of God suddenly becomes causeless and profound in us then we are seized by the poignant desire to live near Him. The desire to live near something partial inevitably turns into evil. But the aspiration to be near the complete whole is rewarded by supreme good."

In other words, in this sense of shortage there is a certain sense of God. And God wants this sense to grow very strong, spontaneous. This is, actually, what surrender is called, "I want God, I need

God and I need only God. I don't need anyone else. No one else can give me the completeness that I'm looking for in this world."

And now we come to the main *sloka* describing *saranagati*, or surrender. Let's repeat it together ("Hari-bhakti-vilasa," 11.417):

anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam
raksisyatiti visvaso goptritve varanam tatha
atma-nikshepa-karpanye sad-vidha saranagatih

This *sloka* is from *tantra*, from the *agamas*, from *pancaratras* (*vaishnava-pancaratras*) – from the *tantric* scriptures describing the process of worshipping God, and particularly, the process of worshipping a *murti* of the Lord. So, it is explained there what surrender or *saranagati* is. It is said there: *anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam* – three pairs of elements or components, or *angas*, of *saranagati* are described there.

Anukulyasya sankalpah. What does *sankalpah* mean? *Sankalpah* means "a vow", yes. But *sankalpah* means "determination." *Anukulyasya sankalpah* – the first thing *saranagati* begins with is determination. Determination to act for Krishna's benefit, *anukulyasya sankalpah*. Later on I'll explain what this means, for the time being this is just the translation. Determination to act in a way that will please Krishna. *Pratikulyasya varjanam* – and rejection of everything that does not please Krishna. *Anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam / raksisyatiti visvaso*. What does *visvaso* mean? Confidence. Confidence (*raksisyatiti visvaso*) that He will protect me. *Goptritve varanam tatha*. *Varanam* means "acceptance", accepting Him as my protector and as the one who maintains me in this world. *Atma-nikshepa*. What does *atma nikshepa* mean? Yes, complete surrender, submitting oneself to Krishna's will, *atma-nikshepa*. And *karpanya*. What does *karpanya* mean? Humility, yes, *dainya* – feeling oneself low and very fallen. *Sad-vidha saranagatih* – these are the six components of *saranagati*.

I'll try now to explain this process. But before that, the first thing I'd like to say about this is that even this very description implies that the process of surrender is extended in time. The sequence of these elements, or *angas*, of surrender in this verse is very important. Bhaktivinoda Thakur starts it in another way, he starts it from the end. But we'll take exactly this verse:

anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam
raksisyatiti visvaso goptritve varanam tatha
atma-nikshepa-karpanye sad-vidha saranagatih

This extension of the process of surrender in time is best observed in the life of Vibhishana. Who was Vibhishana? Vibhishana was a demon, a *raksasa*, Ravana's brother. All these stages of surrender can be seen in his life, by the example of his life. In his youth he, Ravana and Kumbhakarna went to perform austerities. They performed severe austerities on the Gandamadana Mount in the Himalayas. Eventually, Brahma appeared before each of them. When it was Ravana's turn, he asked him, "What do you want?" Ravana said, "Oh, I want power, strength and immortality so that no one can kill me." Brahma said, "*Tathastu*. No one will kill you except Rama." He didn't say it like that but ... In his pride Ravana did not mention the humans in the long list of those who won't be able to kill him. That is why he was killed by a human.

When Brahma appeared before Kumbhakarna the demigods trembled with fear and terror because if that terrible and absolutely hideous demon was to become even mightier that would be the end of them. That is why when he wanted to utter the word *nitya-tvam*, which means "eternity", Goddess Sarasvati appeared on his tongue, twisted it and instead he uttered *nidra-tvam* which means "sleep". Brahma quickly said, "So be it. Sleep quietly, my dear son." Kumbhakarna was bestowed with sleep.

And when, in turn, Brahma appeared before Vibhishana and asked him, "Vibhishana, what do you want?" Vibhishana began thinking. He was a demon, a *raksasa*, and he began thinking, "What do I need? What shall I ask for?" Having thought for a while, he said, "Ah. I want love. I don't want

anything else. Give me the benediction of developing love for God. I don't want anything else." When Ravana heard that he was terrified, "Have you gone crazy or what?"

This is the first step. What does it mean that he asked for love? *Anukulyasya sankalpah*. The first thing he did was "I want to love God." Many-many years passed after that before he did *pratikulyasya varjanam*. Can one who loves God associate with Ravana? No. And Vibhishana lived with Ravana in the same house, in one house, in one palace, on one island, and obeyed him. He was his minister, he was his brother. It was extremely difficult for him to give up these attachments. So, many years passed before he gave him up. Often the same happens with us. We accept something favorable but it's hard to give up the unfavorable. Does it remind you of your own life? You've accepted something, you've accepted God. But there is no way to give up the bad things. But Vibhishana was able to give up the bad things, the association with Ravana - only after he associated with Hanuman. Why couldn't he do it earlier? Because he had had no *sadhu-sanga* save and except Ravana-sanga. No other *sanga*.

Hanuman flew to Lanka and saw Vibhishana. He saw him because he was going around and watching who is doing what. The majority of demons were watching TV. (laughter) He went up to a window, peeped in and saw, "Some strange demon. Pointed ears, sharp protruding fangs and slanting eyes. Standing in front of the altar and singing: *raghupati raghava raja ram / patita pavana sita ram*." So, Hanuman spoke with him. Vibhishana told him how he felt. He said, "I love only Rama, I don't love anyone else." That is why when he was jumping and setting fire to the entire Lanka, Hanuman was carefully avoiding Vibhishana's palace so that it didn't catch fire. After Vibhishana talked with Hanuman this determination to give up Ravana appeared in him. He came to Ravana and said, "Ravana, look, give Sita back before it's too late. Give Sita back to Rama." Ravana wouldn't listen to him. He argued with everyone and told off all of them.

And here, if we read this episode of the "Ramayana" we will see that generally to break off our ties – even the unfavorable ones – is quite difficult. This episode, when Vibhishana rejects everything unfavorable, that is his association with Ravana and his dependence on Ravana – demanded a great courage from him. He began arguing with Prahasta. Prahasta is Ravana's Prime Minister. And Prahasta started, "No! We will defeat them." Indrajit was saying, "We'll be victorious! We're heroes!" So, he started saying, "You fools! Fools! You're also a fool! So you are! You are like a child! You're just a sycophant!" "And you – you're a fool!" He said to Ravana. "Can't you see that since you've brought Sita here ... It's as if you've brought here a poisonous cobra! There's nothing but evil omens all around! Give Her back! Give Her back!" Actually a person needs to break off all of these relationships and that's very difficult, break off the ties binding him to the bad.

And when Ravana refused to do so, Vibhishana returned to his palace and said to his wife and children, "I'm leaving. You stay here. I'm going to surrender to Rama." And when he flew off he had this confidence. Listen how in what stages all this takes place. When he flew off he had full confidence that Rama will protect him. Together with his four friends he flew to where Rama had set up His camp. They reached Rama's camp. There were monkeys who saw the *raksasas* descending with the intention to land. But Vibhishana stopped and hovered at a safe distance. As soon as the monkeys saw all that, greatly alarmed they started picking rocks and throwing them at him. He slightly flew up just beyond reach. Seeing Sugriva, he shouted, "Hey, Sugriva, tell Rama that Ravana's younger brother has come and that he's Rama's friend" Still hovering at a safe distance.

Sugriva rushed to Rama reporting that, "Ravana's younger brother has come. He must get killed. The sooner the better." Rama started asking the rest of them, "What do you think?" – He was a democrat in his heart. He summoned a council, "Ravana's younger brother is here. What shall we do with him?" The monkeys started saying he must be ... Some were saying, "Kill him right away!" Others were saying, "Let's pull him down, make him a captive and attach a spy to him." Still others were saying, "We must test him." Various proposals were made. Finally it struck Hanuman. He said, "Look how composed he is. Look, with in what composed manner he came here. I know physiognomy. If a person is lying he'd never talk in such a confident way. It's clear, he's taken shelter in Rama and we must accept him, he's all right, he's a good man, accept him." Sugriva shouted, "Never! No chance! He betrayed his brother. If he betrayed his brother he will betray Rama, too. We must kill him, just in case."

All the while Vibhishana is hovering above and hearing everything. He's hanging there, his propeller turned on, without coming down. That is, he's trusting Rama but not absolutely yet. *Raksisyatiti visvaso* – when he set off he had this confidence, "Rama will protect me." He's waiting for Rama's words. And Rama says, "Sure. He must be accepted. Even if he's come with not very pure intentions we must accept him. If he has surrendered I must protect him." Then He speaks this verse ("Ramayana", Yuddha-kanda, 18.33):

sakrid eva prapanno yah
tavasmiti cha yachate
abhayam Sarvada tasmai
dadamy etad gates mom

He spoke this verse and He told a story. He said that once in the woods a hunter caught a bird in his snare, a male one, and killed it. Then, when it grew dark, he went and lay under a tree. On that tree was the nest of that bird. So, his wife thought, "A guest has come." She knew that this guest had killed her husband. But since he was a guest, since he has taken refuge under the shadow of the tree they lived in, she said, "Well, since he's my guest I have to feed him." And she fed herself to him. Rama said, "If birds can do this why can't we? Anyone who doesn't do this doesn't do it only out of fear. But I have no fear. If someone comes and submits himself, comes and surrenders I must give him full protection. This is My obligation and this is My vow."

When Sugriva heard this, tears filled his eyes. Sugriva was the one who was shouting, "Kill him, kill him!" But his eyes were filled with tears now and he said, "Rama, Hare Krishna. You're right!" Sugriva took it to his heart. At that moment Vibhishana fell to the ground. *Raksisyatiti visvaso goptritve varanam tatha* – he completely accepted Rama as his protector. And when he accepted Rama as his protector, then *atma-niksepa-karpanye* – he stretched before Him and said, "I'm Yours" and obeyed Him with all his humility.

This is the entire process extended in time; all six stages that a person goes through in his surrender. I'll tell you one more thing and then we'll all do a small exercise, we'll discuss what we've heard. Let's have a look at these three pairs of *angas* or components of surrender:

anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam
raksisyatiti visvaso goptritve varanam tatha
atma-nikshepa-karpanye sad-vidha saranagatih

The first pair, accept and reject. What is it related to? To the mind. The mind has this function of accepting and rejecting. The mind does this all the time. I like this and I don't like that. The first pair of these functions of *saranagati*, the first pair of *saranagati* means that I ... I have this severe criterion: I like this and don't like that; this is written, this is programmed in my mind: *saranagati* begins with me doing what with my mind? I say: "From now on I'm going to like everything that pleases whom? Krishna. And I'm not going to like everything that displeases whom? Krishna. I give up judging by myself, I renounce the idea of my mind being the last resort of judging: this is good and this is bad." This is surrender at the level of the mind or the *manas*.

The third pair, *atma-niksepa-karpanye*, is related to what? *Atma-niksepa* – complete surrender of one's *atma*, of one's ego. And *karpanye*, humility. What is it related to? To the ego, right? When I surrendered I changed my mind. I changed my mind from one saying "I like this and don't like that" in accordance with the programme already installed – to what Krishna likes and dislikes. In the third pair I change my ego, "From now on I'm not by myself, I'm not independent – I surrender to Krishna, I am part of Krishna." *Atma-niksepa-karpanye* – I remain humble.

The second pair, *raksisyatiti visvaso goptritve varanam tatha*, is related to what? There is the mind, the *manas*, there is the *buddhi*, the intellect or intelligence, and there is the false ego or ego. These three pairs are related to the three functions of our consciousness. The mind which accepts and rejects – and we change our mind. The intellect which is constantly looking for the source of protection. What's the target of intelligence or *buddhi* in this world? It's looking for the place where I will feel better. So, I tell my intelligence, "I will be better if I'm close to God." This is my intelligence.

By means of intelligence I surrender, or I change my intelligence so that I think, "God is my protector. Protection comes from Him." And I change my ego, I don't want be independent any more. In other words, these three things are related to our consciousness, to the way our consciousness works at the level of the mind, intelligence and the false ego. When I change all these three components it means I have surrendered.

Sometimes people think that surrender means to give up our intelligence. Actually, this is not giving up, rather, it's replacement of material intelligence by spiritual intelligence. There is a wonderful story. I'll tell you this little story about Srila Prabhupada and then we'll move on ... Intelligence is the tool by means of which I surrender. *Goptritve varanam* – this is the most complete element of *saranagati*. *Goptritve varanam* means that I accept Krishna as my protector. Sometimes people think that if I think this means I haven't surrendered to Krishna. I was told the following story.

In 1970 in Los Angeles there was a group of devotees, at the Los Angeles Temple, who thought that if we plan something, reflect, use our intelligence, it means that we prevent the Supersoul from guiding us, we interfere with this process. That is, we rely too much on ourselves. And the philosophy was something like this: if we go on a *harinama* but have forgotten to take the *mridanga* it means that Krishna wants us to just sit in the car and read books. If we go on book distribution but have forgotten to take the books it means that Krishna want us to chant *mantra* all day. If we go somewhere but have forgotten to fill petrol in the tank this means that Krishna wants us to stay where the car has stopped. Surrender, right? It looks like that, right? In our understanding. Such philosophy made their leader uncomfortable; however, he could not say anything because people would say that, "That's the Supersoul! He's guiding us! If He didn't allow us to fill in the tank it means that it was not necessary." He didn't know how to put it and wrote a letter to Srila Prabhupada asking him somewhat timidly, "When we are planning to go on *sankirtana* what does it mean "to surrender to God'?" Srila Prabhupada immediately understood everything and replied that, "To surrender means to use your intelligence."

Once again, among these six things the two key ones are that Krishna protects me and I accept Krishna as the one whom protection comes from. This can be achieved by means of intelligence.

We don't have much time. Are you tired? Let's discuss now. Turn again to each other in a circle of two or three persons and I will give you a task. Let's recall what we were talking about. First we talked about what actually hinders us. A person is trying to find protection and shelter in someone else other than Krishna. And in these attempts to seek protection or shelter in something else he resorts to other methods, he relies on other methods of spiritual self-realization. We were also talking that surrendering means giving up our own independence, that it's the death of our ego, the death of our independent nature. Surrendering means acceptance, absolute acceptance of Krishna's will with regards to us. And then we said that there are six constituents or six elements of surrender:

anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam
raksisyatiti visvaso goptritve varanam tatha
atma-nikshepa-karpanye sad-vidha saranagatih

Six constituents. And we saw in what gradual way sometimes surrender takes place. How we first accept some favorable things and then reject the unfavourable and then start accepting more and more things from Krishna, realizing that He is the one who protects me. We start feeling this.

And the task for this short discussion is the following: please tell some stories from your life when you accepted Krishna in your life, trying to surrender to Him and what response from Him you felt. In what way, gradually, making your first steps, you felt Krishna's response, in what way Krishna came to your rescue or protected you from something. This is something gradual when our independence is gradually dying out, when we surrender and feel that Krishna responds to this. What exactly were you feeling? Krishna may respond in the form of a miracle, but not necessarily; Krishna may respond just in the form of an inner feeling of being protected, feeling a greater courage. That is, let's see how this process of surrendering has worked specifically in your lives. Tell each other, share and think how it all happened. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

I'd like to ask you: did you manage to surrender a bit? (laughter) It is very important to actually feel how this process works, how Krishna responds as we gradually surrender to Him. Tomorrow we'll be talking about there being three stages of surrendering to Krishna; three large spheres let's say, when a person surrenders. Or probably I can tell this today. Tomorrow I'll say more.

The first step that a person makes is precisely that he starts doing what he feels is pleasing Krishna. That is, he starts going on pilgrimage, going out on *harinamas*, doing what he's heard is pleasing Krishna. He adopts some rules in his life. But at the beginning he acts formally; profound inner deep surrender hasn't taken place yet; it's all happening at a superficial level, "Well, yes, I've adopted this in my life." And he's become a devotee, he's wearing different clothes and insignia, he's changed his way of life. This is the first level of surrender.

The second level of surrender is much deeper. The second level of surrender or the level of working with one's ego is when a person suddenly starts realizing that nothing belongs to me. Everything I used to think of as mine – my reputation, my accomplishments, my husband or wife, my property, my children – all this belongs to Krishna, to God. Everything is His! And I need to take care of this as being His property. That is, at the beginning a person adopts something in his life. At the second stage, when he becomes a *madhyama-saranagata* or a person who has surrendered to a medium degree, he gives up the concept of "mine". Everything belongs to Krishna, I have nothing here. Then he starts to follow the same principles he's been following but much more deeply and without the sense of "mine". He starts doing the same things but in an entirely different way. He goes on a pilgrimage in a different way, he chants the holy name in a different way.

Finally, at the third stage, he gives up this independent "I". He says, "I am Yours, I completely belong to You, I'm fully Yours; not just what's mine but I myself." And here he allows Krishna to do everything with him. And Krishna makes use of that. Krishna gets extatic, He says, "Okay!" Tomorrow we'll be telling these various stories. But it is not by chance that surrender takes place exactly in this sequence. At first I just accept something.

But here it's also very important to understand what "to adopt" means. *Anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam*. Srila Jiva Goswami very nicely explains this, you can even put down the definition. "The determination to adopt everything favourable means to do what pleases the Lord and His devotees and adopt in my life what awakens in me the spirit of devotion." In other words, *anukulyasya sankalpah* consists of two aspects just like *pratikulyasya varjanam*. First, we try to do only what is pleasing the Lord, His devotees and everything related to Krishna. We try to do only what they accept and what they are pleased with. Not what is pleasing me, not what is good for me, not what I like – but what pleases them. Before I do something I ask myself this question, "Would they be pleased with this or not?"

We are used to applying this same criterion but in relation to ourselves. Before we do something we know whether we'll like it or not. If I like it I do it. If I don't like it – *pratikulyasya varjanam*. Everything that is *pratikul*, that I don't like, I reject. Everything that I like, I accept, *sankalpah*. I'm determined to do so.

Surrender means that I think whether this will please or not someone else. It's not simple. It's not simple because we are not used to it. When a person thinks in this way he practically develops an almost mystic sense – the sense of knowing for sure whether that person's going to like it or not.

One devotee wrote me a letter. He was telling of his love experience. He says, "I went to the market to buy flowers for my beloved. I thought what flowers she might like. I saw some flowers and I was absolutely sure in mysterious way that it was precisely these flowers that she'd like. When I gave her those flowers I saw that that was perfectly so." When we think of this from the perspective of another person it becomes very clear. Actually all of us have this sensitivity or the ability to see and feel whether this is going to please or not the other person.

At this level a person changes radically. Imagine that we've truly and consistently perfected this one principle – do only what pleases Krishna. Will we be a different person? Speak only what pleases Krishna, think only what pleases Krishna and do only what pleases Krishna. We'll be ... Everyone will love us! We will be the most wonderful persons. Because it won't be this nasty, shallow and weak "Self" of ours that will be saying and shouting, "I want! I like this! I will do my way" but we act on higher principles. Or at least what my spiritual master likes. This is what surrender means. Surrender starts with the fact that I think whether he'll like or not what I'm doing now.

You can always feel that. There are people who are trying to serve. But in trying to serve they don't bother to think whether the one they're serving is going to like it or not. Hridayananda Maharaj said that there are four, not three, kinds of suffering: 1) suffering caused by other living beings, 2) suffering caused by the mind, 3) suffering caused by natural disasters, and 4) suffering caused by servants, *adhidasika-klesa* (laughter). Because when a person does what he likes and what he believes the person he's serving is going to like, that's one thing. But if a person actually asks himself the question, "Will this really please whom I'm serving or not?" – that's quite another thing. He will get an answer from within, Krishna will give him the answer from within if he thinks about it.

And when a person attains perfection in this service ... Like Lord Ramachandra, He praised Hanuman. Hanuman did everything perfectly – more than Rama had told him to do. Rama sent him to Lanka and he burnt it without killing the *raksasas*, although he was quite able to do so. He did everything in a perfect way as befits a servant. This is the first thing: *anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam* – without regretting I reject all that is not going to please the Lord or the one I'm serving. I reject this completely, unconditionally, without any regret. If some kind of mood pleases my beloved I adopt this mood.

Like "Caitanya-caritamrita" describes the last years of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He would experience some emotion and Ramananda Raya or Swarup Damodara Goswami who were near Him, would sense that emotion and would start singing a song that would start nourishing that emotion, that wave of emotions.

At the same time we know of another example of disciple-master relationships. It's the example of Ramachandra Puri and Madhavendra Puri. When Madhavendra Puri was dying he was experiencing the painful sense of separation from Krishna. He was constantly crying, "I haven't heard, I haven't understood, I haven't met the lord of my life", all the time repeating this one verse (Cc, Madhya 4.197):

ayi dina-dayardra natha he
mathura-natha kadavalokyase
hrdayam tvad-aloka-kataram
dayita bhramyati kim karomy aham

What should I do? I am *dina-dayardra natha he*. You are the lord of all fallen souls; You are *mathura-natha*, You are in Mathura. What shall I do? – My heart is sinking from separation from You. Here Ramachandra Puri came and said, "Why are you crying? Self-realized souls do not cry. You're a *guru*! You should be happy at the time of death." Madhavendra Puri said, "Not only haven't I seen Krishna. At the time of death I see this rascal. Take him out of here! I don't want to see him. For what sins has Krishna sent him to me at this time." This is *pratikul*, when a person doesn't understand what the other person's feeling whom he's supposedly serving, what is there in his heart. *Anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam* means that in my mind I completely surrender to the other person and accept only what he likes and reject everything he doesn't like.

And perhaps the most amazing example of this in our scriptures is the story of Srivas Thakur. Srivas Thakur is an example of complete surrender. One night, when Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was leading a *kirtan* Srivas Thakur suddenly heard the lamentations in the women's part of his house. He rushed there and saw that his little son had died from the disease. The women were crying and wailing without being able to stop. Srivas Thakur scolded them, "Why are you crying?! The soul does not die. He died at a time when Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself is in our house. What could be better?! If you want to cry at least do not cry now. Because my lord is dancing. Please

don't let your cries and lamentations spoil His mood. He's experiencing the ecstasy of love for Krishna. Please do not disturb it by your cries."

Now, is this feasible for us? He understands, "If my grief doesn't please Krishna I will not grieve. If my grief pleases Him I will grieve." At one point Chaitanya Mahaprabhu stopped and said, "What's the matter with you today? I'm not experiencing the usual ecstasy, the usual *bhava*." And Srivas Thakur immediately replied, "Ecstasy is where You are. Wherever You are everything's fine." Chaitanya Mahaprabhu said, "Has something bad happen to you?" Srivas Thakur said, "How can anything bad happen where You are?! Wherever You are everything's fine." But the others said, "He's son has died." And Caitanya Mahaprabhu said, "How could you?! Why didn't you stop it all?" He said, "How could I stop You?! What matters is what happens to You, not what happens to me."

In other words, this stage of surrender or perfection, *anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam*, is not such a simple thing – when we fully accept what pleases someone else; and if it pleases him it becomes my law; if it doesn't please him I reject it. These are the first steps in devotion. Jiva Goswami also explains another thing. He says that *anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam* also means: I accept everything that is favorable for my developing this spirit of surrender. *Anukulyasya sankalpah* means that I accept everything that contributes to this *bhava*. I accept everything that helps me develop this desire to surrender to Krishna as something favourable and I reject everything that prevents it.

Well, this is probably all I wanted to say today. We'll stop here. And tomorrow we'll try to understand all remaining points. And then the day after we'll conclude our description. Today we were reflecting on how a person gradually surrenders and what prevents him from doing so. And we looked a bit closer at what it means to accept what's favorable and reject what's unfavorable in our lives. Are there any questions?

QUESTION: I have a question. In the story you told about Sita and Hanuman. Prior to that you mentioned that in order to attain Krishna we can also take refuge in a devotee. But how to understand the example of Hanuman's helping Sita was ... As I understand, Hanuman is a devotee and so is Sita. Why didn't She accept Hanuman's proposal? As an illustration of attaining Krishna's shelter through taking shelter of a devotee?

ANSWER: I think that Sita could easily take shelter of Hanuman and perhaps it would not be a violation of the principle of *saranagati*. But in this case, maybe it did not work or was not supposed to work, because, so to say, She had the direct shelter of Lord Ramachandra Himself. We can take shelter of a devotee when we don't have the Lord's shelter yet. But when we've already attained the Lord's shelter and we realize that we need the shelter of the Lord Himself then we wait only for the Lord to save us. Well, in any case, Her reasoning was such that if you rescue Me now everyone will glorify you. A I want that everyone glorifies Rama. And when Hanuman heard that, he said, "Yes, I've got it. That's right."

QUESTION: In order to engage in pure service, we need, as you said, to find out what is pleasing Krishna and then do it. In order to find that out we need to reflect and think. However, we can't always get to think properly. What would you recommend in this case?

ANSWER: Can't always get to think properly. What would I recommend in this case? (laughter) Ok, fine. Actually, it's a good question. How do we know what pleases Krishna and what displeases Him? There's a good chance of misusing that. For example, I was told of a perfect family life where the wife knows exactly what pleases Krishna and what doesn't. And the husband fully accepts her authority in these matters. She tells her husband that, "Today Krishna wants oranges." So, overfilled with enthusiasm, the husband goes and buys the oranges that Krishna wants. That is, everything is perfect. The wife knows what Krishna wants and the husband knows what his wife wants (laughter) – it all works without a glitch.

But we can truly find out what Krishna wants from *sastra*. The proper answer to this question would be that in order to know what exactly Krishna wants, what is favorable, what pleases Krishna and

what pleases His devotees, we need to know what is written in the *sastras*, we need to know what our spiritual master likes and in what way the other *acarya*-Vaishnavas also say on this matter.

For example, Srila Jiva Goswami describes this in his "Bhakti-sandarbha". It's an interesting point he's talking about in his "Bhakti-sandarbha". He explains some things that a devotee must do. In particular, he says that a devotee must by all means chant the *Gayatri-mantra*; of course, those who have received a second initiation. And at first glance, the *Gayatri-mantra* – is an element of, say, lower order because the *Gayatri-mantra* invokes that somehow or other Krishna gives us some direction in life. That is, there is no description of the pure love of Radha and Krishna or something like that. But Srila Jiva Goswami says that since the *sastra*, the scriptures, emphasize this, it means it's Krishna's will. And if a person does not that he violates Krishna's will. And the person who intentionally doesn't do this, violating Krishna's will, thus deviates from this principle of *saranagati*.

In other words, the correct answer to this question is very simple. If I want to find out what Krishna wants I must, under the guidance of my spiritual master, study *sastra*, which will tell me what in these *sastras*, - what instructions in these *sastras* – apply directly to me. Then, following these instructions of the *sastra* I'll be directly fulfilling Krishna's will. And for this I need a spiritual master, an *acarya*. The *acarya* says, "This is an important instruction and this one is not. This can be ignored and this musn't be ingored". This needs to be there in our lives. If a person does this he meets the principle *anukulyasya sankalpa* and *pratikulyasya varjanam*.

Therefore, when it comes to *saranagati*, it is very important to understand that it's not just some intuitive or mystical process. This is a process the *sastras* play a very important role in explaining a person what he must do.

Question: Some freedom remains for the devotee, even if there's *sastras*. Krishna leaves some freedom. For example, a devotee was standing before the Deities thinking in what way he can please Them. So, he remembered a *sastra* which says that Krishna likes the dust from a devotee's feet. He went up and started shaking off the dust from his feet onto the Deity. Ecstasy for Krishna ...

Answer: This story has actually taken place once. The person turned to the Deity and started shaking off the dust from his feet onto Him because Krishna says *anuvrajamy aham nityam puyeyety anghri-renubhih* (Bhag, 11.14.16) - "I always follow the footsteps of My pure devotees." This story is describing a certain level of devotion. If we now turn to the Deities and start shaking the dust off our feet onto Them Krishna will hardly like it. Let's say, on a certain very high level a devotee can afford doing such things but on other levels *sastras* regulate that. We should clearly understand what I can do and what I can't do.

Elaboration of the question: The question was precisely in that if the mind is switched off you won't be able to properly understand even *sastras*.

Answer: Yes, of course. This is why when we speak about *sastra* we always speak about intelligence. *Sastra* means intelligence.

Elaboration of the question: What to do when intelligence is switched off? You say, "Read the *sastras*" and he'll read in the *sastras* that "We have to shake off dust onto Krishna."

Answer: When intelligence is switched off nothing's going to help us. Except neuroleptics (laughter). There is no way out. If the mind is switched off then what can you do?! If the mind is switched off we have to call the ambulance. That's why I said that when Srila Prabhupada was asked what it means to surrender, he said, "Surrender means using our intelligence that has been given us by God." This means studying the *sastras*, this means association with *guru*. As a rule, when a person does this his intelligence returns to him. That is, if we are speaking of intelligence and of bringing it back, the *sastras* do bring a person around. *Sastra* is required so that a person actually realizes what he has to do.

Question: Yesterday you said that *saranagati* means to come to God without asking anything from Him. Do we need to practice this right now? Or is it a different level? And prior to that we have some desires, are they just to be satisfied?

Answer: "Srimad-Bhagavatam" says (2.3.10):

akamah sarva-kamo va
moksa-kama udara-dhih
tivrena bhakti-yogena
yajeta purusam param

Even if you are full of all desires, still come to Krishna and ask Krishna to fulfill those desires, but simply do not consider yourself to be a *saranagata*. *Saranagata* means: what do I ask Krishna? I ask Krishna for protection. I have this understanding that only Krishna will protect me and He knows what I need. If I have my own desires and I come to Krishna to fulfill my desires, this really means that this is not *bhakti*. This is *bhakti* in the modes of material nature. If my desire is in the mode of passion then this is a so-called "service in the mode of passion." If my desire is in the mode of ignorance then the "service is in the mode of ignorance" too, so to speak. But actually that's not service! Service starts with the understanding that I don't need anything; that I need Krishna Himself. And *saranagati* starts with this understanding that I don't need anything other than Krishna Himself.

In other words, there are two large spheres. One is up to the point when I think that I need something else. And I can use Krishna as a tool. Come to Him, ask Him something. The other sphere begins with my understanding that I need Krishna Himself. I come to Him and say, "Krishna, I don't need anything" meaning that "I need You." There's nothing else to say. I can come to Krishna, but I should understand that this is my level.

Elaboration of the question: Tell us, please, what if this is related to our service. Guru Maharaja has given such an order and this is with regards to it, so I'm asking.

Answer: If I need this to serve *guru* then I can come to Krishna and say, "Who do You think You are? Come on, *guru* told me what I have to do." No, it's a fact. If one's only desire is to somehow or other serve his spiritual master he can come to Krishna and say, "Krishna, do whatever you want, I'm a soul surrendered to You. My *guru* demands this." This is allowed, this is not violating the principle.

Question: There are stages of increasing spiritual faith, of spiritual practice. *Sraddha*, then *sadhu-sanga*, *bhajana-kriya*. So, *saranagati* is supposed to change at each stage, right?

Answer: Of course, yes. Naturally. *Saranagati*, or the degree of my surrender, the degree of my giving up of my independence, will be different at each of these stages. At the level of *sraddha* it is a tiny sprout. Then it becomes bigger and deeper. First *sraddha*, then *sadhu-sanga*, when I hear from *sadhus* and in the process of hearing my desire to fully surrender, to obey, to submit my will, becomes deeper. Then *bhajana-kriya*. *Bhajana-kriya* means that I actually start doing not what I want and that is service. And when I start serving, that is doing not what I want, I'm suddenly faced with all the problems I have inside. With my own faults, *anarthas* – they emerge. When a person serves, especially when a person serves his spiritual master, he will inevitably see all the problems he has. And when he starts seeing these problems, emerging in the process of service, which he had not previously suspected he gradually starts getting rid of them. Always remaining at this level of understanding that I'm doing what Krishna wants and I want to do only this. And when he comes to the level of *nistha*, accordingly his surrender becomes more or less complete. That is, he reaches the level of *madhyama*, at the level of *nistha* he understands that nothing belongs to me. And then various situations happen to him that we're going to discuss tomorrow. At each level they are different.

Okay, well, that's all, thank you very much.

"Saranagati – surrendering oneself to Krishna," Germany (23.05.2012), lecture 4

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Hare Krishna. Today I will try to finish this topic. At least in outline. As I said at the very beginning, this is a highly practical, though not a very simple art – the art of surrender. There are many pitfalls and ways of self-deception by explaining to oneself that I've surrendered – to actually not be a devotee. But if a person learns this art, as I said, one of the results of this is relief from stress, complete relief. We're learning very practical things. We've been learning to get rid of stress, to skydive. Today I will teach you the most important thing – how to fully relax.

You all know that the pinnacle of yoga is *savasana*. After every possible effort (mimes exertion and relaxation) a person relaxes, this is the favourite posture. Actually, *saranagati* is the art of acting in a state of complete relaxation. The art of not simply acting but achieving amazing results and at the same time remain completely relaxed. These are not my own words – these are words that I will be quoting today. That's exactly what's said there – relax. *Saranagati* means relax. Rely on God and at the same time act.

But once again, for this to take place a person must completely give up his property rights. This is the main problem – we want to appropriate everything. The problem is that no matter what we do we want the fruits to come to whom? – To us! But that's not *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is when I do something and I want the fruits to go to whom? – To Krishna. Why? - Because the fruits belong to Him. Why so? Because who do I belong to? – To Him. Everything's simple. If I belong to myself, the fruits belong to me. If I belong to Him, the fruits belong to Him.

And although we've heard of, we know and we practice lots of ways of devotional service, starting with hearing ... When we hear about Krishna, when we speak about Krishna, when we sing about Krishna, when we chant His holy name, when we think of Krishna, all the time this desire remains in us, that let the fruits come to whom? To me. But *bhakti* begins when I chant, when I sing a *kirtan*, hear about Krishna and at the same time I think, "All this is for Him, not for me. All this is for His sake, not for mine." When this *bhava*, this mood, this state is established in the heart, then all these amazing fruits of *bhakti* will come to us. The most amazing thing is that they" surely come to us – all those exalted sentiments that the great Vaishnavas write about, the sentiments they have experienced. They will come to us but for this we must give up this ownership rights. They'll come to us because we belong to Krishna; respectively, the fruits belong to Krishna. But since we belong to Krishna, the fruits belong to us, too (laughter).

Srila Prabhupada would oftentimes say a very funny thing. He'd say that there are lots of rich people who have lots of palaces. I know such people: one palace in London, another in Moscow, a third one somewhere in Singapore, a fourth one somewhere else. Who lives there? – Their servants (laughter). And they live in the airplane (laughter). It's their servants who enjoy all those things – the devotees who live there. But for this we must become servants. And this is an art, the art of *bhakti*, the highest art.

And before we move on to our conclusive topic... And today I will be speaking about how to transform our ego form the ego of the independent doer who acts independently to the ego of one who acts in total dependence on Krishna – but before that we'll go back and summarize some key points of what was said before. The day before yesterday I said that first is *anukulyasya sankalpah*, let's repeat this *sloka*. This *sloka* is given in the "Sattvata-tantra" and also in the "Vayu-purana":

anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam
raksisyatiti visvaso gopritve varanam tatha
atma-nikshepa-karpanye sad-vidha saranagatih

We spoke that surrender begins with my giving up the right – voluntarily giving up the right – of being the criterion of what is good and what is bad. From now on, it's not what I want and what I don't want, it's not my likes and dislikes that serve as the ultimate criterion of truth or the basis on which I judge whether I need to do something or not but it's Krishna's "I want or I don't want", Krishna's likes and dislikes, or that of the Vaishnavas. Does it please the Vaisnavas or not, does it

please my spiritual master or not? And that's what I do. In this way a person changes or transforms his mind – he radically changes the programme installed in his mind. And it is precisely here that this element of risk lies. Why? Because the programme that is already there in my mind is based on my experience. And that experience tells me: do this, this is right, this is good. This same program, "I want this and don't want that", "I love this and don't love that", "I like this and don't like that", "this is good and that's bad", - "*raga – dvesa*", this programme of duality is based on my practical experience: this makes me feel good and this makes me feel bad. But then here comes Krishna and it turns out that what was good is not good at all and what was bad is not bad at all. And a person, trusting Krishna, makes this step and changes his program. And of course, Krishna's programme turns out to be better, much more sensible, reasonable, appropriate and a good way to live, to exist in this world.

Yesterday we talked about what it means to give our intelligence to Krishna. Give our intelligence does not mean to suppress it. Give our intelligence does not mean to give up our own intelligence. Giving our intelligence to Krishna means to sharpen it, making it subtler and turning it into the appropriate tool through which we can feel Krishna's will. And, having felt Krishna's will, surrender to this will. Actually, intelligence is the conductor of Krishna's will. When the *buddhi*, the intelligence we have, is sharpened by means of *sastra*, it becomes our guide that brings us to Krishna. That's 100%! *Dadami buddhi yogam tam / yena mam upayanti te* – in this way you will come to Me – by means of the *buddhi* that I'll give you. Surrender to Me, submit to Me, obey to Me and I'll give you intelligence" (Bg 10.10).

And where do we get this intelligence from? From the scriptures, from the *sastras*. Yesterday we said that there are four ways of how *sastra* protects us. I surrender to Krishna means that I also surrender to the *sastras* and ask Krishna for protection. And Krishna protects me by His own words in the *sastras*. We talked about the four things that protect us. What are these four things? *Dharma*. First is *dharma* – *dharma raksati raksitah* – a person builds his life in accordance with the principles of *dharma*, understanding that this is the *dharma* given by Krishna.

Second: *parihara*. Krishna also provides various ways of protection: various *upayas*, various methods and *mantras* – He provides and quotes Them. In some cases, when we need to do something, we resort to all these things – and that is also surrender. We run to the doctors, if necessary. Better if that is Ayurvedic doctors. This is surrender.

The third method. (audience: *aparihara*) *Aparihara* – not exactly, but yes, changing our attitude, changing our perception. This is actually, once again, turning our suffering into lessons – that is what *sastra* teaches (Bhag. 10.14.8):

tat te 'nukampam su-samiksamano
bhuñjana evatma-krtam vipakam
hrd-vag-vapurahir vidadhan namas te
jiveta yo mukti-pade sa daya-bhak

We transform any life experience – especially the inevitable experience of our life, the inevitable suffering when we have no choice, we are talking specifically about dead-end situations ... When we can alleviate our suffering we should do so by means of the various methods that Krishna gives us. If we can't get rid of that situation in one way or another we transform this situation into a lesson, into Krishna's own words who tells us, "Look and think what you need to learn from this." In this way miseries turn into happiness because we feel that I have been enriched in this way.

Finally, the fourth way of Krishna's protecting our intelligence through the *sastras*. *Divya-jnana hrīde prokasito* – *divya-jnana*, the spiritual knowledge that Krishna gives. And this is very interesting because in this *sloka*: *gopritve varana tatha* – yesterday I explained this principle. *Gopritve varanam tatha* – we accept Krishna as a *goptara*. *Goptar* means "a cowherd boy." The "Gita-mahatmya", which Srila Prabhupada quotes in his introduction to the "Bhagavad-gita", contains the same analogy. It says that Krishna is a cowherd boy; all the Upanishads are cows; and Arjuna is a calf. And what does He nourish the calf with? With the milk of the "Bhagavad-gita." That is, the *atma-jnana*, the spiritual knowledge contained in these scriptures is the milk that

nourishes us. It is highly important to understand this. We say, "Yes, Krishna is a cowherd boy, He must nourish me, He must give me something but He doesn't! He doesn't give me my daily bread" – as if we were starving. He gives! But besides our daily bread He also gives us milk, the milk of spiritual knowledge. This protection of His is His greatest protection. The trouble is that we don't drink this milk. Does anyone regularly drink Krishna's milk? This is how Krishna nourishes us and how He sharpens our intelligence, making it subtler.

Interestingly enough – today, while preparing for this lecture I was browsing through some of my notes and came across a curious thing from another tradition, from the Christian tradition, that says the same thing: that this intelligence or judiciousness which comes as a result of our spiritual practice is the most important virtue. And it's very interesting how it comes. This is a certain John Cassian the Roman. Quoting a religious dialogue on what should be considered the main virtue, he gives priority to judiciousness. He writes, "Judiciousness is the source and root of all virtues. True judiciousness is acquired only through humility." Can you feel? The intelligence that comes as a result of humility, as a result of surrender, as a result of *saranagati* – is the source of everything else we have. The source of all the other spiritual riches that are to come to us. That is, surrender means attaining a spiritual intelligence. This is another synonym. Remember, we were providing various synonyms to make this concept of *saranagati* more volumetric, more multifaceted. *Saranagati* means "attaining a spiritual intelligence." This is another important thing.

One more very interesting thing before I start our today's topic. I'd like to quote another verse as the subject for our meditation on what *saranagati* means. This verse is spoken by Akrura. Akrura, we know, took Krishna away from Vrindavan. Why? Because cruel Kamsa ordered him to bring Krishna to Mathura. And the very name of Akrura means "non-cruel." But the *gopis*, when they became aware of Akrura's taking Krishna away, mocked on his name at their heart's content. They said all they thought about the "non-cruel" Akrura, "Good Akrura took our Krishna away from here." But Akrura was a devotee, so Krishna agreed that Akrura takes Him away. Of course, Akrura's fate is unenviable because incurring the curse of all the devotees of Vrindavan ... I would not like to be in his shoes. However, he did that as a service to Krishna.

So, when he arrived in Mathura, there were two feelings fighting in him. One feeling was, "He's God. I've brought Him here and this means that the sooner he kills Kamsa, the better. He's God and I've brought Him to the right place. Let him cut off Kamsa's head – everyone will be happy." And the other feeling was, "He's my nephew, a little boy. He is only eleven years old." Well, Krishna looked older than an eleven year old boy. And when they came to Mathura, Akrura said, "Look, let me hide You at my place. No one will find you! I brought you here, but let me hide You at my place. I'll be taking care of You, I'll be feeding You, You'll live there. There's no need to go to that Kamsa. Never mind!" Krishna said, "No, no. I have a small business here. I need to quickly finish some business of Mine, there is a man who's longing for My hot embrace. Then I'll come to you."

And a lot of time passed by. Krishna killed Kamsa, Krishna killed the elephant Kuvalayapida, Krishna killed the mahouts, Krishna dealt with everyone, Krishna was going around accepting everyone's love, Krishna met Kubja – all sorts of things happened in the meantime. Then Vasudeva and Devaki performed the *upanayana* ceremony, for Krishna was an illiterate village youth and no rituals were performed for Him. That is why, as it befits a prince, He was given the sacred thread. Then He was sent to study and receive a proper education – to London or wherever. No, not to London. But like the rich, they sent Him to study miles away, in Ujjayan to Sandipani Muni. Krishna studied there, Krishna learned all 64 arts and then He returned. All sorts of things happened. All sorts of things took place but Krishna remembered His promise, He remembered what He told Akrura at Mathura's gates, "I'll come to you by all means. I will come to you." Many many months passed by and every day during that time Akrura would expect that, "Krishna will come today! Krishna will come today! I must prepare *prasadam*, I must receive Him." He renovated his palace, like you did here: he washed and cleaned it, he tidied up and decorated it with flowers. Krishna wouldn't come. Another day would pass but still Akrura would think, "Krishna will come today!"

Ultimately, Krishna came together with Balarama. He came to Akrura' place and Akrura seated Them and while washing Their feet as honoured guests ... Now, imagine what he felt – Krishna Himself has come! – Akrura began offering prayers to Him. It is said in our scriptures that Akrura attained perfection through his prayers; that in his prayers, *akrura-vandanam*, - which is the very method of devotional service that Akrura reached perfection in, among other verses he speaks a very interesting and a very important verse for us regarding surrender (Bhag. 10.48.26):

kah panditas tvad aparam saranam samiyad
bhakta-priyad rta-girah suhrdah krta-jñat
sarvan dadati suhrdo bhajato 'bhikaman
atmanam apy upacayapacayau na yasya

Kah panditas tvad aparam saranam samiyad. He says, "What intelligent person – *kah panditah* – what *pandit*, what person who knows *sastra* ... " Once again, this is same point, in order to truly surrender to Krishna I must know *sastra*, because if I don't properly know *sastra* I will never have the courage required to surrender. Akrura says here, *kah panditah tvad aparam saranam samiyad* – what intelligent person will go to seeking refuge to anyone else? (*aparam saranam samiyad*). If he's intelligent, if he knows *sastra*, why should he go for protection, for refuge, for surrender to anyone else (*kah panditas tvad aparam saranam samiyad*)?!

And then he describes why, *bhakta-priyad rta-girah suhrdah krta-jñat* – because You are a *bhakta-priya*. *Bhakta-priya* means "You love Your devotees." *Bhakta-priya* means that You love Your devotees, You are not being simply indifferent – You love them! *Rita-girah*. What does *girah* mean? *Karmana manasa gira* (B-r-s., 1.2.187) Speech. *Rita-girah* means that whatever You say becomes truth. You never lie. You promised me that You will come and You did come. All Your promises come true. *Bhakta-priyad rita-girah suhrdah*. And *suhrdah* means "well-wisher" – You always wish well. You are very kind, You constantly wish well. And *krta-jñat*. *Krta-jñat* - "grateful." *Krta-jñat* is Krishna's quality.

He says, "What intelligent person who knows these qualities of Yours, o Krishna: that You are *bhakta-priya*, Your devotees are very dear to You, that You always keep Your word, that Your attitude is ever beneficial, that You always wish well, You are our eternal well-wisher, and that You are very grateful, Krishna remembers whatever little thing a devotee does for Him – what intelligent person will go for protection to anyone else?!

Sarvan dadati suhrdo bhajato 'bhikaman – he says, "You fulfil all the desires of Your *suhridas*." He amazingly calls Krishna *suhridah* – a well-wisher, and he also calls the devotees *suhridah*. Krishna is a well-wisher for whom? – For His devotees. And His devotees are well-wishers for whom? – For Krishna. They always say, "May all be well with You, Krishna. Don't get sick, please. May all be fine with You." *Sarvan dadati suhrdo bhajato 'bhikaman* – You fulfil all desires, *abhikaman*, of Your devotees. *Atmanah api* – even to the point that You give them Your Own Self. *Atmanam api*. *Abhikaman* – all desires. You give even Your Own Self.

We know lots of such cases when Krishna has surrendered to His devotees and has started serving them. And the most famous case is Arjuna. Arjuna said, "Krishna, I want You to drive my chariot." So, Krishna said, "Of course, I'll be Your driver." Now, if you go to any big man and tell him, "Can you please become my driver? I don't have a driver. Would you drive?" And Krishna says here *atmanam*. Akrura says, "You can give the whole of Yourself." Let alone a driver – what only hasn't Krishna become during His career as Krishna?! In His God's career He had to master many disciplines. There is a story of how Krishna turned into a barber, into a carpenter, into a cook. Time and time again, go to any temple and you'll be told a story of how Krishna, in order to help His devotees, took some form and either cooked or cleaned, or helped. Yesterday the devotees were telling, that, by the way, Krishna was participating here, too. In this building too – somehow or other He took the form of various devotees and repaired the building, took out the garbage. Krishna can become anyone! Krishna can become even a computer engineer to help His devotee. Anyone, no matter what!

That is why he says here that He fulfills any desire. To the extent that He gives His Own Self – to come and help. *Atmanam apy upacayapacayau na yasya* – and although You give the whole of Yourself, You are *upacayapacyau* – You never become less. You can give the whole of Yourself to some devotee and then go and give the whole of Yourself to another. The fact that Krishna has given the whole of Himself to someone doesn't mean that He won't give the whole of Himself to you. He can give the whole of Himself and still be His complete Self. He has this quality – to each of you! This is the special quality of Krishna. Why can't you be jealous in devotion? Because Krishna can give Himself to each and any of us.

When Krishna was dancing the rasa-dance each *gopi* thought, "Wow! How lucky I am! Krishna is only with me – with no one else. Only with me!" And Krishna thought, "Yes, yes, I'm only with you. And with all the rest, as well." That is why Akrura is saying about this. He says, "When a person knows *sastra* he understands: this is what Krishna can do. He develops confidence." Krishna may not give me what I need – I need some nonsense. Usually people ... Yesterday Roman told me that he went to some protestant church and there he was told, "Write down your desire, we'll pray for you." They keep a special wish-book there. They told him, "Everyone who comes here writes down their wishes." He says, "I started reading what people wish for. What only don't they wish for! My dear Lord, help our football team win the match!" (laughter) No problems at all! The problem is that the fans of the other football team are asking for the same thing (laughter). That's the only problem, there's no other problem.

But the point is that when a person comes to know Krishna's nature ... Where can he know Krishna's nature from? Only from the *sastras*, only from the scriptures. Why is it so important to again and again read "Srimad-Bhagavatam" or "Caitanya-caritamrita"? Because in this way we understand who Krishna is, how He acts, how He'd been acting all that time. Therefore Akrura exclaims, "What intelligent person will go and seek refuge with anyone else".

Okay, this is regarding the importance of *sastra*. Because surrender means faith in *sastra*, *sastriya-sraddha*. This is another synonym. Not just *sraddha* but specifically *sastriya-sraddha*. *Saranagati* means "faith in *sastra*", *sastriya-sraddha*, *faith* with regards to the scriptures.

And we are now starting our last conclusive topic – the last, the third pair of qualities that reads *atma-niksepa-karpanye*. And it's a very interesting thing. I am sure it will intrigue you as we analyze all this.

So, first of all, Srila Jiva Goswami, as is the way with our *acariyas* who wrote purports, gives a definition of *atma-niksepa* (from the "Gautamiya-tatra"):

kenapi devena hridi sthitena
yatha niyukto 'smi tatha karomi

it's a very curious definition of *atma-niksepa*. *Kenapi devena hridi sthitena* – that's clear, isn't it? Deva, *devena*... *Deva* means God, right? *Kenapi* - "some"; some God. *Hridi* - "in the heart." *Sthitena* - "is situated." Only *devena* is in the instrumental case. This God is situated there as God; as the God situated in my heart. *Kenapi devena hridi sthitena*. *Yatha niyukto 'smi tatha karomi*. Some God is situated in my heart. *Yatha niyukto 'smi tatha karomi*. It's all clear, isn't it? This God turns me around and I do whatever He wants.

This is the definition of *atma-niksepa*. And listen carefully because this is not such a simple thing. This is a very interesting definition of what *atma-niksepa* means. *Atma-niksepa* means the understanding that ultimately everything is done by Krishna. The deep understanding that there is some God who is situated in my heart and He gives me everything I have: my thoughts; actually, I act the way He wants me to act, He induces me to act. At the level of *atma-niksepa* a person realizes this fact. A person realizes that he is not acting of his own. *Atma-niksepa* means: I don't act on my own any more. *Atma-niksepa* – the fifth element of surrender – is the realization of the fact that Krishna can fully act through me, that I totally depend on Him.

This understanding in itself ... Sometimes people say, "Well, I do what Krishna wants me to do", devotees often say that. All the nonsense we do is usually done by Krishna. Have you noticed? "This is Krishna!" But *atma-niksepa* means true understanding of the fact that everything is done by Krishna. And this real understanding that Krishna does everything brings a person to such a state in which he absolutely imperturbably accepts anything that happens to him. We remember that Krishna does everything only when we need to justify ourselves. When we need to justify some stupidity, then we become *atma-niksepa*, "That's it! I am a surrendered soul, act through me." But actually this means that the devotee accepts everything that happens to him and says that ultimately it's Krishna who sends me all this.

The best example of this ... I have already said that "Ramayana" is a *saranagati-sastra*, a *sastra* that describes various forms of *saranagati*, full surrender to the Lord's will. Krishna actually explains this attitude. He says, "My *bhakta* equally accepts everything: both honour and dishonour, both victory and defeat, both success and failure – it's all the same to him. He accepts both with equal happiness." Now can I ask you an indiscreet question: "Do you equally accept victory and defeat? Do you equally accept success and failure? Do you equally accept shame and praise?" If I've understood ... And that's a sign! The sign of *atma-niksepa* is that it's Krishna who leads me, it's Krishna who does everything. And the sign of *atma-niksepa* – a very simple one – is that I equally regard everything that happens to me.

In "Ramayana", once again, this episode is very important, it's one of the key episodes of the "Ramayana". Maharaja Dasaratha decided to consult his astrologers as to when to crown Rama. And the astrologers said, "Actually there's no suitable time in the coming one hundred years. But basically, He's God, it doesn't matter for Him. Therefore, let's crown Him tomorrow. (laughter) The Rohini star is in the sky and it's a nice *naksatra*."

So, he called Rama and said, "Rama, tomorrow You'll become the king. Tomorrow You'll become the ruler of the prosperous Kingdom of Ayodhya." Rama said, "*Dasosmi*, I am a servant. I'll become the king." And not a single muscle of His face moved, nothing, He took it in stride. He returned to His own chamber and said, "Sita, be ready, tomorrow you'll become the queen of Ayodhya." And then there was a stormy night. In that stormy night Manthara succeeded in completely brainwashing Kaikeyi. Kaikeyi went to Dasaratha and staged a row with him. Kaikeyi said, "You must exile Rama to the forest for 14 years so that He doesn't set His foot here – and crown his son Bharata."

The next morning Rama was again called to Dasaratha's palace. Dasaratha's sitting, beside himself, it's not him, he'd rather crawl under the throne. He's all shrunk, he's weeping, he's crying, he doesn't know what to do. He doesn't look – he can't look – at Rama. And behind his throne stands a woman with a squared chest. Rama comes and asks, "Did you want anything from Me? I am your servant, I have come to accept." Kaikeyi says, "Your father is a little unhealthy. He's slightly beside himself. But I'll communicate what he wants from You. Go to the forest in exile for 14 years." With exactly the same expression on His face Rama said, "Yes, *dasosmi*. The word of My father is law." Not a second of hesitation was there. None whatsoever! He went to Sita and said, "Sita, I'm going to the forest for 14 years. Our plans have changed (laughter). Yesterday I told you you would become the queen – today I tell You that You're going to become a widow for 14 years. I'm going to the forest and You remain here."

When He told Lakshmana about that Lakshmana was outraged. He said, "Father has grown out of his mind, Father is too old. He's now 60 thousand years old. Don't listen to the old man. He just doesn't realize what he's saying." Then he began interrogating Him and it turned out that it wasn't even His father who said that but Kaikeyi. He said, "That's not a problem at all. We'll sort it out with Kaikeyi! Don't listen, just give me a sign!" He began persuading Rama. He began, "Rama, don't even tell me anything. Just give me a wink. Just give me a wink and I'll do everything. You will be the king!" Rama said, "No, why? I'm going to the forest. I will live in the forest. God wants Me to be in the forest. "

Then Bharata came to Him and began dissuading Him. Bharata began, "What nonsense! I'm not going to be the king. Come back. Father is dead now. You must be the king!" He says, "All the

more. Father's dead – so I must fulfil the word I gave him. I'll remain in the forest!" Vasishtha began dissuading Him. Vasishtha began, "From the point of view of the law, of *dharma*, and the holy scriptures, You should be the king." He says, "No. God wants Me to go to the forest." Bharata began telling Him, "It is written in the *sastras*. Well, Okay, if You must stay in the forest, let it be so, I can stay in the forest for You." Because all *sastras* say that any act can be performed for someone else's sake." If for example, you can't fast you can hire a *brahmana* to fast for you. There's no problem: that's said in the *sastras*. And it will be counted as if you've fasted. You hire a suitable *brahmana* and he fasts for you. Any vow, anything can be done in this way! Bharata says, "I'll go to the forest for 14 years, there's no problem." Rama said, "No, these rules are valid only in the case where a person cannot do it himself. And I can! I'm not going to hire anyone to live in the forest for 14 years. I accept this."

And this means "there is some God in my heart and He does with me whatever He wants." This *atma-niksepa* means exactly this, "It's absolutely the same to me what happens to me. I accept what God sends me, because it is good, because ultimately He leads me. I belong not to myself, but to Him." This is the definition of *atma-niksepa*. Actually, we can find out how devoted we are by our reaction. When we succeed in something, you've done something: you've sung beautifully, you've said something clever or joked, do you want to get praised for that? Well, as long as you do there is no *atma-niksepa*. As long as this desire remains it means that this stage is not passed yet. When we've done something we should immediately give the fruits of Krishna, "It's not me who did that, Krishna did that. Krishna did that through me. And I don't need anything for that: whether people appreciate it or not, whether they do it or not, whether they understand it or not."

Ultimately, this is amazing. Everything most amazing that there's in the world was done by Krishna. If you think that Mozart's symphonies were composed by Mozart that's not true. Mozart's symphonies and concerts were written by Krishna; Mozart himself says that, "I hear this music from somewhere and I just write it down." Anyone who has done something great knows: it comes from some unknown place. Any great poet knows: poems come god knows from where, they come by themselves. And this is a certain type of *saranagati* – the problem is that then the Nobel Prizes don't go to Krishna (laughter). The Nobel Prize goes to them – people ascribe this to themselves. And *atma-niksepa* means: there is some God in my heart and He does everything. This is something that "Bhagavad-gita" also explains – that there is this fact of the *diva* or God that guides me and everything is done through Him.

I wanted us to do a little exercise now. This exercise is to tell each other how we expect to be praised for what we do and what our attitude towards our success and our defeat is, how we suffer if something goes wrong and how we rejoice when luck comes. Tell each other about this to more clearly understand to what extent this ego, "I am the doer", here in this world is firmly rooted in us. Please turn around and confess to each other. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Did you tell?

It is actually a very natural thing. Our ego constantly wants to ascribe merit to himself for everything we do and even not only for what we do but for what others do as well. We always want to undersign it – to leave our signature at the bottom of something (laughter).

I remember many years ago I was staying with some devotees in Moscow. Half of the family were devotees and there was a little boy. He was about 12. And he once came and solemnly handed all of us – his older devotee-brother, me and his mom – a verse he had written. Completely thrilled we were going around him and looking at him in disbelief. We thought, "Wow!" It was a good poem. Three days later it turned out that it was plagiarism (laughter) – he had copied it from some book (laughter). It was worth it, because he got what he needed (laughter). People admired him and enjoyed that. And this is our own situation. So, *atma-niksepa* means, "I understand that there is a God in my heart. He acts through me. I do all He tells me. And ultimately it's His merit."

After that Srila Jiva Goswami quotes three verses from the "Padma-purana" that explain what *namah* means. *Namah* means "paying obeisances" (*namaskar*, *namaste*). And that is something traditional; actually it is there in all religions. Of course, nowadays paying obeisances seems something strange and mostly a Muslim custom. It is still preserved with the Muslims. Yesterday one man told me, "When I saw them simply bowing down I thought they must be Muslims." But this

namah is a natural expression (devotion, humility, obeisances). And though it is important to physically bow down – and that is already a certain feat – nowadays for someone to bow down is a serious act. Because it is very much at odds with our notions of "liberty, equality and fraternity" and other values of modern civilization. But it is also important to maintain a proper mood. The bow will be a bow only if I do it in the right *bhava*, in the right mood. And these three verses explain what it means to bow down: why we bow down and what it means. And that's exactly what a bow means:

ahankritir ma-karah syan
na-karas tan nisedhakah
tasmāt tu namasa ksetri-
svatantryam pratisidhyate

Ahankritir ma-karah syan. *Ma-kar*, or this second syllable *na-ma*, the second syllable *ma* what does it mean? *Ahankritir* – *ahankara*, the false ego. The syllable *ma* means the false ego. *Ahankritir ma-karah syan* – that is the idea that I am acting here, everything depends on me. *Na-karas tan nisedhakah* – and the syllable *na-ma* ... What does *na* mean? "No", negation. That is, *na-mah* means ... What does *na-ma* mean? "Not me." This is the explanation of the mantra: *krsnaya namah*, *keshavaya namah*, *govindaya namah* – I bow down to Govinda, I bow down to Kesava, I bow down to Krishna. This means not me but He.

And *tasmāt tu namasa ksetri*. *Namasa ksetri*. *Ksetri* means a "living being", the owner of the *ksetra*, or this body, the *ksetra-gya*. Therefore, if in the mind of a living being – *svatantryam pratisidhyate* – that is why the word *namah* means that the living being gives up the false sense of independence. *Namah* means that I give up, *namah* – I'm not independent, I'm not on my own: I give up this independence, I reject this independence. This is the first verse. And the other two verses are very interesting, very important.

bhagavat-paratantra 'sau
tadayatatma-jivanah
tasmāt sva-samarthyā-vidhim
tyajet sarvam asesatah

What does *svatantra* means? *Svatantra* means "independent." *Svatantra* means "nezalezhny" in Ukrainian. *Svatantra* - "I am on my own." *Paratantra* means "dependent", "dependent on others". This verse says that the very essence of the living being is its dependence on Bhagavan: *bhagavat-paratantra 'sau / tadayatatma-jivanah* – the very essence, the very principle of our existence consists in our being dependent living beings. Those who agree with this, raise both hands and loudly shout Haribol. (audience: Haribol!) Thank you (laughter). Who doesn't agree? (audience: silence, laughter).

The living being is by nature and in essence *bhagavat-paratantra* – it is dependent on God. *Tadayatatma-jivana* – the *jiva*, the living being, is dependent on the Lord, it's not independent. Therefore, *tasmāt* – therefore: *sva-samarthyā-vidhim / tyajet sarvam asesatah*. Therefore, the living being should discard *sva-samarthyā-vidhi*. You understand what *samartha* is, right? *Samartha* means "I can." *Samarthyā-vidhi* means the feeling that I can. *Tasmāt sva-samarthyā-vidhim / tyajet sarvam asesatah*. *Asesatah* means "without regret, completely, once and for all." *Tasmāt sva-samarthyā-vidhim / tyajet sarvam asesatah* – therefore, the living being, aware of its dependence, its constitutional dependence on the Lord, its invariable dependence on the Lord must renounce this feeling of *sva-samarthyā-vidhi* (*tyajet sarvam asesatah*). And what's next? Well, what happens next is the most interesting. The third verse of this series of verses reads:

isvarasya tu samarthyat
nalabhyam tasya vidyate
tasmin nyasta-bharah sete
tat-karmaiva samacaret

But the Lord can. When we say "I can", *sva-samarthyā* – I can myself, it is a relative statement. Who can? – God can! *Isvarasya tu samarthyat / nalabhyam tasya vidyate* – there's nothing the Lord cannot achieve *nalabhyam tasya vidyate*. *Tasmin nyasta-bharah sete* – and, keeping this in

mind, the living entity *nyasta bharah* – relaxes, *sete*; *sete* means "relaxes", it transfers this burden to Him – since You can everything and I can't anything – go ahead and do it. And what does he do? *Tat-karmaiva samacaret* – he goes ahead and does it.

Here is given the very formula that one must realize when he understands what *saranagati* is. He understands that, "I can't anything but God can everything. Therefore, I will act. And who will act through me? God. Therefore I will do anything. I can't anything but He can everything, therefore nothing is impossible for me." Therefore "impossible" is a word from the dictionary of fools. Srila Prabhupada said that. Why is "impossible" a word from the dictionary of fools? There are impossible things for us, aren't there? There are. There are things we can't do, right? There are. And we'll remain in this state for as long as we don't realize that God can everything, therefore I also can everything. Because He can do anything through me. It is this feeling or this *bhava* that *atma-niksepa* means. I can't anything, God can everything. I serve Him, respectively, God can do anything through me.

If Srila Prabhupada didn't have this feeling, we wouldn't be sitting here. God can everything! God can do the impossible. God can take a 70-year-old man – He has purposefully chosen a 70-year-old man who has completely surrendered to Him. There were no 35-year-old people who have surrendered, there was only one and he was 70 years old. And this 70-year-old man sailed across the ocean and did the impossible. The impossible, the absolutely impossible. At the same time Srila Prabhupada was completely confident from the very beginning. We read his letter when he returned from Moscow: "Many young people want to join our Movement" – that is 1971, yes, of course. (laughter). Of course! Crowds of young people wanted to join our Movement. They were just unaware of that (laughter). But God can everything. He can. Nothing is impossible. There is absolutely nothing impossible for a living being, provided we have given up our ego, "I am the doer" as well as the desire to somehow or other ascribe the merits to oneself for all this. This is the meaning of these verses.

And in this regard I'll tell a couple of stories, most important and instructive – about how a devotee thinks. Unfortunately, just hearing these stories does not mean attaining the same way of thinking. A little later we'll talk about this too: in what way we can truly attain this. One of the stories is from the life of Francis of Assisi. Yesterday I spoke with Sacinandana Maharaja and he told me that he is now reading a book about Francis of Assisi at bedtime, "Two minutes before going to sleep I read a book because I get tired." He told me a nice story. I'm going to tell it to you, there's no hurry.

One is not directly related to our topic, nevertheless, it's a nice story. It is related in a certain way. Then I'll tell a story illustrating this point. He said that at one time Francis of Assisi lived in a cave as a hermit. He realized what his vocation was: to devote his entire life to God. It was somewhere in the Italian mountains and it was wintertime. And at some point a most insistent thought emerged from somewhere deep in his consciousness, from the depths of his heart, "What am I doing here?! Maybe I can go down, start a family and everything will be fine with me? I will have a wife and children." And that thought was very persistent to him. He did not know what to do with it. Then a brilliant idea struck him. He says, "In this case I must fulfil this." Although he was determined not to marry but entirely dedicate his life to God, he thought he had to be a balanced devotee.

So, he came out of his cave and began making snowmen. Rather, he made a snow-woman and a snowman. He made eight figures of snow. He went up to one of the figures and said, "This one will be me and this one will be my wife. These two smaller ones will be two our sons. And two even smaller will be our two daughters." He also made a servant and a maid so that the family was complete. And what did he do? He collected some rags and began dressing them up. And he dressed them up: he dressed his wife in rags as well as himself. He was going around them feeling very happy. And he would say, "Here's my wife and here's me and our two sons. We have a happy family. Two daughters, servants." All of them were such beauties. And with a sense of accomplishment he fell asleep, it was late in the afternoon. The next morning the sun rose and what did it do with those figures? They began melting before his eyes. He stood there. The sun was melting them and they were dwindling away. He stood there, wept a bit and said, "Well, very well then! That's it." (laughter) That was how he put an end to that *samskara* of his; his happy family life didn't last long.

But that's by this way. There was another nice story from his life, which specifically – most specifically – illustrates the point that we just read. One of his brothers – one of the people who joined him, who took the vow of poverty, was called Brother Masseo. This brother Masseo came from a rich family but gave up his opulence and left his wealthy parents. He was pursuing good studies but gave up his education. He had a very beautiful appearance. He was highly educated and could nicely speak. And yet ... And he tried, he observe this vow of poverty that the Franciscans take. He didn't have anything but still inside he had this "!! !! I'm handsome, I'm smart, I'm young, I'm healthy, I'm strong. I, I, I can." And what happened? They would go from town to town and would be mocked when people saw them dressed in rags.

But then Francis would start speaking and everyone would freeze. A crowd would gather. His words penetrated the heart. Terrible things happened to people. They would start crying, they would start giving them everything, leaving, surrendering... His word was so powerful that you couldn't resist it. And Masseo would observe all that. So, one day after one such scene, when they left the town and there was this usual scene when people crowded around Francis and listened open-mouthed, Masseo suddenly exclaimed, "Why you all the time? Why you? Why only to you and only for you?" At first, Francis was surprised, he asked, "What do you mean?" And Masseo went on to explain, "Why people run to you? Why do they listen to you? Why do they heed you? You're not so good-looking I am far better. You're not very learned and your origin is not that good. Right? Nevertheless, people are attracted to you – not to me." Francis smiled and made a very nice point, "Because God who sees and knows everything was unable to find a greater and a worse sinner than me among all the sinners. That is why He's chosen me in order to show on my example that by ourselves we can't do anything but God can do everything."

In other words, he answered that very question or has perfectly illustrated this point described in the "Padma-Purana." And the "Padma-Purana" says what it means to bow down to the Lord. It means: not me. It's God who does everything through me. I have no *samarthya-vidhi* – I don't have this idea of *samarthya-vidhi*, that I can. But at the same time I know that God can everything. That is why I have completely relaxed and allow God to act through me. The specific word used in the verse is *sete*. *Sete* means one has "completely relaxed" and has no worries. This particular word *nyasta-bharah*. What does *bharah* mean, who knows? Burden, load. *Nyasta-bharah* means a person has "got rid of the burden." When a person has surrendered ... Does anyone feel burdened? Loaded? When we suddenly realize that everything's done by Krishna we start feeling light and easy.

There are many funny stories regarding that. One story is that one day a man was riding a horse carrying a very heavy load – a big big bale on the horse. And the horse could hardly walk under this load. People passed by and reproached the man, "Shame on you! Not only you yourself have mounted the horse but have loaded it like anything! Look, it can hardly move." He thought, "True, that's wrong! What a rascal I am exploiting the horse, loading it so much! Let me carry the load!" So, sitting as he was upon the horse he shifted the load onto his head (laughter) and I thought, "Well, I've relieved the horse a bit." No, the horse is carrying the load just like before! God ... There is no need to burden ourselves. All our worries, all our troubles as to how it's going to be, what's going to be, is somehow or other a manifestation of our ego. And if I realize that God can do everything and become an instrument in His hands, by being proactive but for Him rather than for my own sake, it will make me feel easy. I do much more than I would normally do but I do not get tired because everything's done by God.

The story in this regard is one of my favourite. This is another story from the "Ramayana." It's a story about Hanuman when the monkeys huddled on the beach of the ocean on the Vindhya Mountain, on the shore of the ocean before Lanka, and began to think how they could jump to that island. And Angada ... No, Jambavan or whoever? He started asking each of them. Sampati had said that Sita was on that island. Sampati is a kite and he has a very keen eye. He narrowed his eyes a little and by his sharp vision he saw Sita sitting under *asoka* tree in Asoka-van, in the Asoka-vatika in Lanka. And Sampati said, "Well, all you have to do now is just somehow get there, convey the message to Sita and return, thus fulfilling Rama's will."

And the monkeys were asked, "How much can you jump?" One monkey came and said, "I can jump ten *yojanas*." Another one said, "I can jump twenty *yojanas*." A *yojana* is eight miles or about

10 kilometers. A third one said, "I can jump thirty *yojanas*." The distance is one hundred *yojanas* – you have to first jump there and then jump back. Ultimately none of them could do that – each one would risk falling down. They all have their limits. It came to Jambavan. Jambavan said, "I can jump even farther. In my youth I used to do even better. But I'm now old and my joints are not the same. They hurt. Back in my youth I could quickly fly around the universe. Now I won't be able to do that." Then Angada was asked. Angada is the son of Sugriva, one of the generals. He was terribly embarrassed. He said, "I can jump one hundred *yojanas* but I won't be able to jump back. With all my strength I will jump there but then I'll have to stay there. I'll have no choice but stay in Lanka. "

And all eyes turned to Hanuman. Everyone thought, "Hanuman can." And someone asked him, "Can you do that, Hanuman?" At that point Hanuman closed his eyes and didn't answer. Suddenly everyone saw two large tears rolling down his cheeks. In his meditation Hanuman approached Rama. He saw Rama and he saw himself standing on his knees before Rama. He began, "Oh my Lord, I was told that I must fly to Lanka. But who can fly across the ocean, across one hundred *yojanas*? Who can enter the fortress that is impossible to enter? The fortress that is vigilantly guarded day and night. Who can possibly find Sita in that city? And who could possibly convince Sita of his being Your messenger? Who can communicate to Her all that You want Her to know? Who can escape from all the chasing *raksasas*? No one can! And then jump back, too?" Is it a possible task? Jump there, enter the fortress, find in that huge golden city a woman whom he had never seen, convince that woman – any woman is hard convince about anything, a woman in such a state. You never know what she'll think, how she'll perceive ... Inspire Her, breathe strength into Her, to get away from all the *raksasas* who will chase Her and then jump back. And in that state, in his meditation, Hanuman said, "My Lord, I can't do that. But if You want me to do it, I'll do it." And in his meditation Lord Ramachandra smiled at him and said, "You know what I want. Do it. You'll be successful!" In this way Hanuman got those powers from Lord Ramachandra. If You want I'll do it. If You want me to do it, I'll do it for You.

That's the essence of *atma-niksepa* and, generally speaking, the essence of devotional service and the essence of what Srila Prabhupada teaches us. I often hear this word ... Niranjana Maharaja says that the first word he learned in Russian was "it didn't work." He says, "The first two words I learned in Russian were it didn't work and we failed. Because everyone came to me and said, "Maharaja, it didn't work, it failed." And this is the precise reflection of our material consciousness. All the time and everywhere people are saying that, I'm constantly hearing that: impossible, impossible, very difficult, absolutely impossible. Of course it's impossible! We can't do anything but Krishna can do everything! If I have this understanding nothing is impossible for me.

If I understand ... I have to constantly deal with this. This is an absolutely depressing situation: impossible, impossible. Who says that? People who are young, strong, healthy. Impossible! Whereas Srila Prabhupada went and did something impossible. Syamasundara said, "When we were with Srila Prabhupada there was nothing impossible for us." He says, "Once I had the idea: why not meet George Harrison?" Now, imagine. At that time the Beatles were at the height of their fame, they were celebrities. And some unknown hippie arrives from somewhere in America saying, "I'm going to meet George Harrison." Possible? Impossible. Did he meet him? He did!

He tells another story of Srila Prabhupada. They were on their way to visit Lalita Prasad, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's own brother. On their way, it was the rainy season and there was a bridge over a river that was washed away. The bridge was half-destroyed and it was impossible to drive across it. So, they stopped not knowing what to do. The car they had was some sort of a jeep that could not pass through. They couldn't cross the river for the bridge was half destroyed. Srila Prabhupada said, "Come on, gather speed and we'll ..." He says, "I didn't think twice. I gathered speed and flew over the bridge. No one would ever do that now. But then ..." Is it possible? Everything's possible! If a person has this understanding within that, *isvarasya tu samarthyat* – God can do anything, He's almighty and can do anything through me – if I've given up my ego of acting on my own and He somehow uses me as an instrument.

Have you ever happened to do more than you actually can in miraculous way? Srila Prabhupada did that when in 13 months' time or about that he made a marathon to publish all "Sri Caitanya-caritamrita." Impossible! Paint a number of pictures, release them all there. Impossible! Srila

Prabhupada says, "No problem, we'll do it. Krishna will do it." Guru Maharaja likes re-stating this. He says that at some point when you surrender, a power immeasurably superior to your own abilities starts to act through you. And he says that this is the most wonderful feeling that a person can experience. You are aware that you can't do this by yourself but nevertheless something works out. And this is the secret of spiritual success.

Okay. We can add one more concept to the synonymic series that we're writing to make the concept of *saranagati* mani-facetted. It is called *bhara-nyasta* or *bhara-samarpanam*, when I get rid of burden. And this word *sete* – as I've already said – means "peace." A person is greatly relaxed, he has a very deep sense of peace. Despite the fact that he's faced by something impossible. And he does it very calmly. In the Gospel of Matthew there's a nice verse illustrating this very nicely: "And your souls will find peace for my yoke is beneficial and My burden is light." The same idea was expressed by Jesus Christ in his "Sermon on the Mount" where he says, "In your humility you will find peace. The soul attains this extraordinary state of peace and joy. He realizes that this yoke that he has taken upon himself, the yoke of his service, is beneficial. And this burden is light." That is, such an unexpected confirmation describing it in detail. And the Sri-Vaishnavas say that at some point when a person surrenders, he can feel this *bhara-samarpanam* or *bhara-nyasta*, when he gets rid of this burden. He starts feeling easy and free. He starts feeling that someone else is acting through him.

However, we usually act just in the opposite way. We burden ourselves with this yoke. And I'd like us to very clearly understand this difference. This is an important point. We do act, right? We serve Krishna. And do we sometimes feel that it's getting too much? That the yoke, the burden is too heavy? Too many concerns, too much anxiety, too much stress, everything's too much! Here's a very clear criterion and a very clear principle: when we feel stress, fatigue, emotional depletion and when we feel that I can't bear it any more – what does that mean? That means that who acts? Our ego. That means that I haven't surrendered. All these situations are a sign of just one thing: the ego. I serve! But how do I serve, what do I serve for? I want to get praised for it, to get recognized, so that all the devotees say, "What a devotee! Oh, how he toils! How amazing." And people burn out in this devotional service.

I want to tell you one thing: in devotional service you can't burn out. Impossible! This principle: that the person has burned out at his job, that he's got exploited there and things like that – all these feelings result from the fact that my ego is being preserved, that I'm holding onto my ego. It's for my ego's sake that I've undertaken something, started doing something, I've taken upon myself this great burden. Then I realize that this burden has become impossible to bear and I give it up. I need to go somewhere to relax. I need to take a vacation from my devotional service. There are no holidays in devotional service! At the very beginning of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" (Bhag. 1.2.6) it is said: *ahaituky apratihata*. *Apratihata* means "no vacations, no holidays." And that's not so complicated! Because in this state you feel that it's not you who acts – it's Krishna who acts. It's not the ego that acts, therefore there is no fatigue.

Srila Prabhupada loved telling a story. He says that there was an old woman who would go to the wood to collect firewood; then she would put the bundle of firewood on her shoulders. So, one day she was walking bending under the weight of the firewood bundle. And being too heavy, the firewood bundle slipped down. She fell down too and realized that she won't be able to put it back on her shoulders and drag it home. So, she began praying to God, "My Lord, My Lord, please come and help!" God appeared before her and asked, "What do you want?" In embarrassment she said, "Help me get this bundle of firewood back on my shoulders." (laughter) This is our story. We either do nothing or, riven by our ego, start doing too much, then we start groaning about it all. And the only thing we understand in our relation with God is how to go on carrying some firewood bundle of our own.

Now I'd like, since we have some more time, to do some inner work at this point. Turn to each other once again and tell of situations when I have been under this type of stress or burden that I have myself put on my shoulders, kind of voluntarily, and how this burden weighed on me, completely destroying me emotionally. And most importantly, we must find the root, the poisonous root of this state of our ego: what did I want get? What reward was I after? And if you've had situations in which, on the contrary, you felt easy and did something incredibly fast and easily when

it was just working out itself – tell about that state as well. Always, when the ego goes away everything starts to happen miraculously: a person performs miracles, cooks, does it in a surge without expecting anything. Then with great satisfaction he rests from the work itself. He doesn't even rest he just rejoices. Surely you've also been in that state when you did much more than normally without getting tired. And you've been in a state where incredible fatigue pressed you down and stress crushed you. And at the heart of this always lies one thing only made of three letters. What? – the ego, the *ahankara*. Please tell each other. Think of something, share experiences with each other. Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare.

Okay. I wanted us to better understand this point. We often take offense at others. The feeling of being a victim and the feeling that others are forcing us to do something arises in us. We need to understand that we are free. Our freedom lies in the fact that it's us who chooses what we do. We always remain free. And the highest expression of this freedom is our submission – voluntary submission – to God's will. When this happens miracles begin to take place through us. And although we realize that it's all done by God we still want to do something special for Him. Thus, responding to this desire of ours, He acts through us.

It is a misunderstanding that *saranagati* means a certain passive state – a python-yoga, which is also described in "Srimad-Bhagavatam." *Saranagati* is a very active and awaken inner state of understanding how God participates in my life and how He can act through me if I'm doing something for Him.

I'd like us to study another very important verse that Srila Jiva Goswami doesn't quote in this section but nonetheless is a very important and a very interesting verse, so that this point sinks. Which verse concludes the "Bhagavad-gita"? *Sarva-dharman parityajya*. What does *parityajya* mean? Not just *tyaktva* but *parityajya*. What does *parityajya* mean? Completely! Having completely given up (Bg, 18.66):

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

This is the end, the conclusion of the "Bhagavad-gita". The "Uddhava-gita", the other "Gita" in the Eleventh Canto of "Srimad Bhagavatam", ends in exactly the same way. This is a certain last word of Krishna's instructions emphasizing the importance of this principle of surrender. But there is one very interesting point. I'm now going to read you the final verse of the "Uddhava-gita" (Bhag. 11.29.34):

martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma
niveditatma vicikirsito me
tadamrtatvam pratipadyamano
mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai

It's all very simple. What does *martya* means? A mortal person. *Yada? Yada yada hi dharmasya / glanir bhavati bhārata* (Bg, 4.7). *Yada?* When. *Martya yada tyakta-samasta-karma* – when the (mortal) living being does what? Yes, *tyakta-samasta-karma* – gives up all other activities that are supposed to save him; the righteous deeds and the like. *Martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma* – when the living being has given that up. *Niveditatma vicikirsito me* – and these two words here are the most important here. *Niveditatma*. *Atma nivedita*. *Niveditatma* means a "surrendered soul", a soul that has surrendered to Me. He becomes a surrendered soul that has attained My protection. And *vicikirsita*. *Vicikirsita* means "and at the same time he wants to do something special." Not just *cikirsita*; *cikirsita* means "to do something." *Vicikirsita!* If the living entity gives up everything and completely surrenders to Me but wants to do something special for Me, *vicikirsita me, tadamrtatvam pratipadyamano*. At this point, *tada, amrtatvam* – I bestow immortality upon him. I reward such a living being with immortality. I give him a method to attain that immortality, *pratipadyamana*, I open the path to immortality before him.

Tadamritatvam pratipadyamano / mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai. And *atma-bhuyaya ca* – I make him equal to My Own Self, *atma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai.* Krishna says that when this happens, when a person develops such a sincere feeling, then I don't just make him immortal, I promote him to the same level of existence as Mine, I start dealing with him as an equal. In other words, the living entity changes his status, he becomes very different by status. This can be called liberation but it is a different type of liberation, because this liberation contains this element: the living being wants, "I want to do something special for Krishna." At the same time I have completely surrendered to Him. I understand that but I want to do something especially for Him.

These two words express the essence of surrender and the essence of what we're talking about: *niveditatma* and *vicikirsita*. *Niveditatma* – I've completely submitted to Your will but still I want to do something special for You. This is what devotional service is about and this is what Srila Prabhupada taught. He would tell his disciples: "What's the point of your being Americans if you can't do anything special for Krishna?! What's the point of being an American?! What's the point of being a German or a Russian German? What's the point if you can't do anything in this mood of surrendering to Krishna, if you don't want to do something special?"

This is the last verse of the "Uddhava-gita" where Krishna promises amazing things: immortality and a status equal to His Own as the award for the right surrender. Not for a passive surrender but for the right surrender - "I want to do something special." We're building this temple in Moscow. Of course it's a crazy thing from the point of view ... And people from all sides write to me: it's complete madness! My response to them is, "I know." (laughter) If you think that I'm not aware of this you are mistaken. If anyone is aware how crazy this business is it's me (laughter). Because you know just a little bit and I know everything, how crazy that is. By whatever measures ... I don't know but Krishna has somehow or other inspired this madness in us (laughter). This is *saranagati*. That is why this year I'm giving this seminar on *saranagati*. We're starting to build a temple (laughter) and I'm giving you the right tune (laughter). If suddenly someone surrenders then a miracle may happen (laughter).

Okay. Several other points in conclusion. We're already nearing the end of this 236th *anuccheda* from the "Bhakti-sandarbha" where Srila Jiva Goswami describes *saranapatti* or *saranagati* and the process of surrender and at the end he says several other important things. He quotes a verse from the "Brahma-vaivarta-purana":

ahankara-nivrittanam
kesavo nahi duragah
ahankara-yutanam hi
madhye parvata-rasayah

Ahankara-nivrittanam / kesavo nahi duragah. I kepp trying to make you start understanding Sanskrit (laughter), it's so simple and easy! *Ahankara-nivrittanam / kesavo nahi duragah* – if a person has given up his *ahankara* then Kesava becomes *nahi duragah*, not far away. Kesava becomes very close. When a person renounces his *ahankara kesavo nahi duragah*, God becomes very close, He approaches very near. *Ahankara-yutanam hi* – but a person who has this *ahankara*, *madhye parvata-rasayah* – an entire mountain grows between such a person and God.

When a person has an *ahankara* or this feeling of "I act here, everything is done by me, everything depends on me, I am the doer" then between such a person and the Lord a barrier, a mountain appears. What is this barrier called? Yes, ego. It is also called *ahankara*. He doesn't feel the Lord. Actually, it's not a mountain, it's such a trifle but this trifle blocks out the Lord from us because it is very close to us. We've established this trifle and that's it, we can't see the Lord any more. This trifle is right before our eyes.

So, Srila Jiva Goswami says here that this *ahankara*, this feeling of our own independence, "I am independent from the Lord", "I can act on my own", "I can do without Him", "I don't need Him" or "I will act and in this way I will obtain glory, honour, awards" – all this is *parvata*, a mountain. An enormous mountain, *parvata-rasayah*, a huge mountain range, actually. If a person is proud then

this mountain appears there and this mountain is *hridaya-granthi*, the knot in our heart. And one's task is to somehow or other undo this knot.

But we can't even undo it on our own. This is the greatest secret that I want to reveal to you now. The greatest and ultimate secret: that on our own we can't even give up our own pride. Even in this we need Krishna's help. We can fight this for ages trying to become humble, but it will truly happen if we understand that even here Krishna must intervene. Has anyone tried to get rid of his pride? Successfully? (laughter) All the same this ego emerges. The ego is an amazing thing. There are organs that grow out again; even if they've been amputated with a small piece left they'll grow again. The ego belongs to this category: you cut it on all sides but if you leave a bit then it remains in full. And only Krishna can remove this barrier when a person asks Him to help him get rid of it.

The same story, a continuation of the story about Maseo, the friend or mate of Saint Francis. He went through a long long inner struggle but nothing worked out. Ultimately, one day he went out and happened to be all alone. It was as beautiful spring day as this one. The wind was blowing, the sun was shining. And he suddenly had the strong feeling that this is God Himself: that God has come to him in this form. He was breathing in the fresh alpine air. Exactly as we are at the foothills of the Alps he was also somewhere there in the Alps. He fell to the ground and was filled by a strange warm feeling. He thought, "How is it that I don't feel the Lord. A mountain is standing between me and Him. And He's so close, He's so near. He's here, here He is! He's come to me, He's knocking at me all the time. He's here, He wants me to be near Him." And he recalled the prayers they have that the wind is our brother and the earth is our mother and the Lord is our father. He fell to the ground and wept. He earnestly prayed to the Lord, "Please, save me from pride, save me from pride, take away my pride, take it away!"

And then he heard a distinct and clear voice from within that asked him, "What price are you willing to pay for it? What are you willing to give up for My taking away your pride?" And in that burst of complete surrender he said, "I'm willing to give my vision to You." Because our vision is what we're proud of, right? All these senses are the tools of our *ahankara*, our false ego: "I can do this, I'm this, I'm that." And he's always valued vision most. So, at that point he said, "I'm willing to give it up." He heard a voice, "Your vision will remain with you but I'll take away your ego." And at that moment he felt that singular easiness and happiness that remained with him till the end of his days; the feeling of having completely given up the burden of the ego and that now the last barrier that separated him from the Lord has disappeared.

This is one of those stories illustrating that ultimately it's God who must take it away. There is another story from Vrindavan. The story of Lalu Babu. When he chose a *siddha*, a holy, an absolutely holy man from Govardhana as his spiritual master, he told him, "I can't give you *diksa* for *diksa* is the very moment of our life when we give up our ego – and you still have an ego." However, he couldn't see his ego. So, for many many years he performed his *bhajan*. Then God appeared in his heart and told him, "Build a temple." He built a big temple. Then God appeared and told him, "I want another temple." He said, "I have no more money." God said, "That's not the type of temple I want – I want you to build a temple in your heart. I want you to finally build a temple in your heart." He couldn't understand anything. Finally, he approached the Deities that he himself installed in the temple of Krishna-Chandra; it is still there in Vrindavan and is one of the most beautiful temples of Vrindavan. He began crying and saying, "Please reveal to me this ego of mine, where is it? Take it away! I can't bare it any more. Take away these remnants of my false ego away." He fell asleep and Krishna showed him everything.

He woke up in a happy state and realized that – I've told this story many times – he used to compete with Lakshminivas Seth who built a South Indian temple, the Ranganatha Temple. He went to him and stood in line for charity – to his rival. They were rivals in everything: one built a temple and the other built a temple, one gave away donations and the other gave away donations; they both were rich. He stood last in the line.

When Lakshminivas Seth learned that, he came out with a tray of gold coins. Lalu Babu said,
- This is not charity! What have you brought me? I've come for charity!
- You're right, this is not charity. This is my tribute. You've defeated me.

Once again, it's all about the same point. This *ahankara*, this "I" - "I act", "I'll do something for Krishna" – is the mountain that separates me from Krishna, or *hridaya-granthi*. And when a person gets rid of his ego, when he gets rid of this last obstacle, he gets rid of the knot in his heart that had tied him to this body. Because the body is an instrument of pride. And as long as we have pride we'll be tied to our body as to the instrument of pride. We won't be able to change our status, we won't be able to feel as a soul, we won't be able to see God. But when a person gets rid of his ego he becomes free. Liberation comes naturally by itself in this process of surrender. Srila Prabhupada loved quoting a verse from "Krisna-karnamrita" (107):

bhaktis tvayi sthiratara bhagava yadi syad
daivena nah phalati divya-kishora-murtih
muktih svayam mukulitanjali sevate 'sman
dharmartha-kama-gatayah samaya-pratikshah

He says that when a person *bhaktis tvayi sthiratara bhagava yadi syad* – when he has *bhakti* towards You. *Yadi* – if or when. *Bhaktis tvayi sthiratara* – becomes *sthiratara* which means "unshakeable". *Bhaktis tvayi sthiratara bhagava yadi syad* – when this *bhakti* becomes unshakable, that is, when I surrender to You, then: *daivena nah phalati divya-kishora-murtih*, I immediately, at that very moment, I see the image of *divya-kishora-murtih*. I see the image of the Lord standing in front of my eyes. I see this Kishora, *kishora-murtih*, this youth, *divya-kishora*, the divine cowherd boy. *Daivena nah phalati* – the fruit of all this, by Your Own will, by God's will, *divya-kishora-murtih* – becomes the fact that I see the Lord before my eyes when I completely surrender to You. And as a by-effect of this: *muktih svayam mukulitanjali sevate 'sman* – *mukti* comes to me, folds its palms and says, "Can I help you? How can I serve you?" And *dharmartha-kama-gatayah samaya-pratikshah* – not to mention *dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and everything else. *Dharma*, *artha* and *kama* become the errand boys for such a person.

In other words, all other goals are achieved. Even the goal of liberation! Oftentimes people ... Among the devotees there are many people who actually want liberation. Actually it's all the same to them whether there's God or not. If He gives me liberation I will chant Hare Krishna. So, liberation comes by itself and starts asking for service. Liberation is a by-product of *bhakti*. That is why Srila Prabhupada would quote this verse again and again:

bhaktis tvayi sthiratara bhagava yadi syad
daivena nah phalati divya-kishora-murtih
muktih svayam mukulitanjali sevate 'sman
dharmartha-kama-gatayah samaya-pratikshah

If the main thing that I should attain is unwavering *bhakti* I can attain it only by Krishna's mercy or by a devotee's mercy. If a devotee bestows his mercy on us then our *bhakti* will also acquire this quality. And this is the last verse that we'll study. As long as this doesn't happen we'll remain in the world of illusions. As long as Krishna doesn't take away our false ego, as long as we don't sincerely want Him to take away our false ego, we'll be ... Well, maybe ... Well, almost the last one!

I'd like to give an example of all this. As long as we retain this false ego ... And false ego means love for one's body. The ego turns the energy of love that is there in the spiritual world into love for one's own body, right? We love our body, right? There's nothing to love, but still we do. And when there is this union between the false ego and the body, tightly intertwining into each other, then, like any union, it begets children, right? This union begets two wonderful children: a boy and a girl. The girl is called *raga*, which means "attachment", and the boy is called *dvesa*, which means "hatred". These *raga* and *dvesa* enter into an incestuous union for they are a brother and a sister but they unite with each other. The *raga* and *dvesa* beget a wonderful child that is called *moha*, illusion. This *raga* and *dvesa* ... Listen, this is very serious ... As long as the false ego loves our body and is focused on our body this *raga* and *dvesa* will be there: I like – I don't like; I love – I don't love; I love these and hate those, friends and enemies. As a result, one is overcome by *moha*, illusion. That's what Prahlada Maharaj speaks about. A person starts looking at the world and dividing it: this is good, this is bad.

The world is one! The world is a manifestation of the Lord. Everything's fine! God speaks to us, there is no good and bad, there are no friends and enemies – that is an illusion. But the union of *raga* and *dvesa*, when *raga* and *dvesa* unite, they beget *moha*, complete lack of understanding of what I need. One thinks, "I need this *raga*, something I derive pleasure from. I have to somehow or other avoid *dvesa*, what I don't like." And one runs from *dvesa* to *raga* – this is called *moha*. And *ahankara*, the false ego, that everything started from, nourishes with milk. His grandfather, the grandfather of the boy that was named *moha*, - what a nice name! The grandfather is called *ahankara*, his two children are *raga* and *dvesa*; they beget *moha* – and *moha* is fed by his grandfather with the milk of hope, "Oh, you're going to be happy in this world! You are! All the rest are not but you are! You'll succeed in having everything and everything bad will fall away by itself. And that's all there's to it, you'll make it, you're going to be happy!" This is *ahankara*. *Ahankara* says, "Come on, drink this milk of hope."

And what happens then, besides this? This *moha*, the illusion that people live in, hoping that somehow or other I'm going to be happy here in this world deprives a person of spiritual strength. And when it grows it starts to ... Let's remember our life, wasn't it precisely like that – this illusion has grown nourished by all these hopes "I want to be happy here." And when it's grown due to this *moha* we lose heart: the soul becomes weak, unable to do anything. But, like all bad children, when this *moha* grows up ... What do bad children start doing when they grow up? They turn into drunkards, right? So, this *moha* turns into an inveterate drunkard: it starts drinking the wine of resentment and dissatisfaction. It all starts with *ahankara*. *Ahankara* is the progenitor of all this. It gives rise to illusion, illusion gives rise to resentment and dissatisfaction. And that's like a drug, actually. We drink and drink this taking offence at everyone and we need that to say, "I am good, all could've been fine with me, but all the rest are to blame." Right? My illusions were not fulfilled in this world. Why? Because I was prevented. They are to blame! Just in front of me, they've crowded on me, surrounding me on all sides. That is the wine that this *moha* drinks. And in this *moha*, in this illusion, a person starts trying to enjoy, spreading out the thorns of strange ideas and notions that obstruct the path of *bhakti*. In this way the living being enters the jungle of material existence.

This *ahankara* is a problem. And *saranagati* is the cure for this problem. If we bring the treatment to the end we'll get rid of all this. If not then the path of *bhakti* will be covered by lots of thorns. All these problems will persist with us and will be constantly standing in the way. We'll be constantly pricking ourselves thinking that, "Why have I taken this path of *bhakti*? Why?" That is the problem. Because we're trying to retain our ego or our *ahankara*.

And not the last verse that Jiva Goswami quotes but the last verse that we'll probably study ... I'll later say just a few words and that will be all and we'll finish. Today dinner will be later, so don't worry, everything is going according to the plan. This is an important verse that illustrates these things, the very allegory or metaphor I gave. This is a verse from the Third Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam", chapter nine. Addressing us or the creative energy, Brahma says ... This is also very important! In order to create this world, Brahma ... These prayers are precisely for getting rid of the false ego. The ninth chapter of the Third Canto tells of Brahma, who, before starting to create, that is, before doing something, before acting, is asking, "Please ensure that I act as Your servant, not on my own. But as a servant in service to You, so that my ego wouldn't interfere, poisoning everything I do with its poison." And he makes this diagnosis. There are many other prayers related to surrender but I'm not going to speak about them. There, in one of his prayers in particular, he says (Bhag. 3.9.6): *Arti-mulam* – this ego is the root of *arti*, the root of all suffering, *arti-mulam*. But let's focus on this verse that Jiva Goswami quotes in his 236th *anuccheda* (Bhag. 3.9.9):

yavat prthaktvam idam atmana indriyartha-
maya-balam bhagavato jana isa pasyet
tavan na samsrtir asau pratisankrameta
vyarthapi duhkha-nivaham vahati kriyartham

What a nice verse! You've already understood everything, right? *Yavat prthaktvam idam atmana indriyartha-/maya-balam bhagavato jana isa pasyet*. *Yavat* means "as long as." And *yavat* always goes with *tavat*, "as long as something happens". *Yavat prthaktvam idam atmana indriyartha-/maya-balam bhagavato jana isa pasyet* – as long as the living being feels separate, *prthaktvam*.

This *prthaktvam*, if you carefully read "Srimad-Bhagavatam" is repeated over and over again, the same idea: *prithag-drsi*, *prthag-dhiyah*, regarding oneself separate or independent.

Yavat prthaktvam idam atmana – as long as this *atma*, the soul, regards himself separate or independent. *Indriyārtha-maya-balam* – he will be acting for the sake of what? *Indriyārtha* – yes, for the sake of sense gratification. *Indriyārtha* – for the sake of the senses. *Maya-balam* – driven by the power of *maya*, *maya-balam*. Why? *Bhagavato jana isa pasyet* – because he will be under the influence of Your illusory energy. This is Your energy, *bhagavato jana isa pasyet*, o my Lord. He will be after sense gratification.

Tavan na samsrtir asau pratisankrameta vyarthapi duhkha-nivaham vahati kriyārtha – and until that time he will never be delivered from material existence. *Tavan na samsrtir! Samsriti – samsara*. He won't be freed from *samsara*. *Na samsrtir asau pratisankrameta* – he won't be able to get out of it. *Vyarthapi* – he will be dragging material existence, even though aware of it's being what? What is our material existence? Meaningless! Material existence is absolutely meaningless. But he will be holding on to his material existence, *vyarthapi*. And *duhkha-nivaham* – he will be constantly suffering miseries associated with this and various things devoid of reality associated with this material existence.

That is, despite the meaninglessness and the illusory nature of this material existence the living being will be in all this and he won't get rid of the illusion of material existence as long as he retains this feeling that, "I am on my own, I am independent, I can be independent from God, I am by myself." Therefore, Srila Prabhupada would say, "Act with enthusiasm – he writes that in a letter – act with enthusiasm, always being aware that ..." I'm afraid to say it. Shall I? Only with your permission. (audience: Haribol!) Louder. (audience: Haribol!!!) In this regard Srila Prabhupada writes in a letter that, "You should never decrease your efforts or enthusiasm. Do not postpone your enthusiasm. Act! You should always consider that you've been sold in slavery to Krishna. And that is the only way to get rid of the slavery to *maya*." Be always aware that we don't belong to ourselves – we are His, we belong to Krishna. In this way you'll be able to rid of the slavery to *maya*. And then Srila Prabhupada writes, "I hope you understand me correctly and will do what is required. May Lord Krishna always help you." This is the formula of surrender. Srila Prabhupada understands, "The only way to be free is to realize that I'm not on my own, I'm not independent." Then only we'll be free from the slavery to *maya*.

I'll say just a few more words. For dessert I've stored one more ... I understand that everything else was bitter. So, to sweeten a little the bitter things I was speaking about, I'll end up with one point. Srila Jiva Goswami says that this is a gradual process and that if a person completely surrenders he immediately gets all results. And all results means that he gets Krishna. If he surrenders partially, then the results, Srila Jiva Goswami says, will be "corresponding" (laughter). Precisely as much as a person's been able to submit his will to Krishna's will, he gets these results. And he gives a definition of *karpanya*, the last thing. We've gone through *anukulyasya sankalpah pratikulyasya varjanam / raksisyatiti visvaso gopritve varanam tatha / atma-niksepa*. *Karpanya*. And he says *karpanya*. He quotes a verse by Rupa Goswami. He says that *karpanya* is a simple thing. *Karpanya* is (Narasimha-purana):

parama-karuniko na bhavet
paa parama-socyatamo
na ca mat pair

He says that there is no one more merciful than You and that there is no one more worthy of Your mercy than me. This is *karpanya*. *Karpanya* means, "You are *parama-karunika* and I am *parama-socyatamo* – I am a deplorable living being that's deserves pity." And this is *karpanya* – the last component of *saranagati*, the last component of surrender.

And here, as I said yesterday, instead of *karpanya* some versions of this *sloka* from the "Vayu-purana" sound in a different way: *niksepana-akarpanye*. And this is an important addition. Actually this version of the verse is quoted by Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura. *Niksepana* means the same: the understanding that Krishna acts through us, we do not act on our own. And *akarpanya*

means: not to show others our humility. In other words, innerly we should be humble, we should feel that, "Who am I?! I don't deserve anything. Only Krishna's mercy can save me." However, we don't show that, we don't particularly demonstrate these things.

And we can see that Srila Prabhupada was humble though you wouldn't tell that on the look. He would go with his head held high, there is this photo. There's a story of how that photograph was made. Srila Prabhupada was walking and some devotee was taking photos of him, running and jumping after him, trying to take the perfect picture. Srila Prabhupada said, "Wait, let me pose for you." And he flung his *cadar* around his shoulder, stood straight, proudly raised his head and said, "Now you can take a photo." Have you seen that photo? It is on the cover of the "The Science of Self-Realization" in English. And Srila Prabhupada said, "I am like Napoleon" (laughter). But that is on the outside. A devotee does not show his humility, he oftentimes behaves like ... Sometimes people don't understand this, the devotees don't understand this, thinking, "What a ..." No! A devotee is willing to do anything for Krishna, anything! But inside he always has this feeling, *karpanya*, I'm Yours, I entirely consist of Your mercy; Your mercy is my only hope.

Well, here's the last promised verse for dessert. Are you tired yet? Are you still perceptive? Our seminar turned out a bit strange. Ah, yes, before I say that sweet thing, I'll say one more thing. Srila Jiva Goswami quotes another very interesting verse (Brahma-purana):

karmana manasa vaca
ye 'cyutam saranam gatah
na samartho yamas tesam

How should a person surrender? *Karmana* – in his acts, *manasa* – in his mind, *vaca* – in his words. *Karmana manasa vaca / ye 'cyutam saranam gatah gatah* – he must come to Acyuta, to the infallible Supreme Lord – and by his body, mind and speech say, "I will serve You." *Na samartho yamas tesam* – such a person says that ... Wait, I seem to have got it wrong ... No, that's the right thing but not exactly ... ("Hari-bhakti-vilasa", 11.418):

tavasmiti vadan vacah
tathaiva manasa vidan
tat sthanam asritas tanva
modate sharanagataha

That same point – a person must ... What does it mean? The "Hari-bhakti-vilasa" explains what this means. *Tavasmiti* – I am Yours; *vadan vacah* – it's the person says that; we kind of summarize what surrender means. Srila Jiva Goswami quotes this verse from the "Hari-bhakti-vilasa" or this other verse from the "Sattvata-tantra", what surrender or *saranagati* means. The words he says are *tavasmiti vadan vacah* – I am Yours. *Tathaiva manasa vidan* – he thinks the same in his mind. *Tat sthanam asritas tanva / modate sharanagataha* – he says I'm Yours, he thinks the same in his mind, understanding that I'm dependent on God. *Tat sthanam asritas* – he takes refuge in some holy place associated with Krishna – that can be the temple – he comes to the temple and takes refuge there. Or he takes refuge by going to Vrindavan, to a holy place. Or he takes refuge in a place where devotees sing *kirtan*. Because the place where devotees sing *kirtan* becomes *tat sthanam* – Krishna's, where Krishna is Personally present.

And the most important I wanted to say, he says *tanva modate sharanagataha*. This *sharanagataha* does all this but does it in a particular way. In what way? *Modate!* Who knows what *modate* means? Joyfully! He doesn't just approach Him and say, "Krishna, I'm Yours! That's it! They've got me! I can't stand it anymore!" He comes to Krishna and says, "I've understood everything, Krishna. This is what happiness is! I'm Yours! I'm Yours! Finally I have someone to belong to and for whose sake I can do everything I do!" A person thinks in this way and lives and does it joyfully. This is actually a very important point. Surrender is not a painful process, like some people: "Ah-ah-aaa! I'm Yours! (forcing himself to say that; laughter) Take me as I am, lock, stock and barrel." No. Surrender is a joyful process. When a person has realized what that means he comes and says, "Krishna, I'm Yours. I am willing to do anything for You. I don't want to live for my own sake. I will live for the sake of making You happy. And everything that belongs to me belongs to You." This is

the last verse that Jiva Goswami quotes explaining *saranagati: modate saranagataha. Saranagataha*, a true *saranagataha* does this joyfully.

And the promised sweet verse. This is a verse from Prabodhananda Saraswati's "Radha-rasa-sudha-nidhi." This is one of his most exalted writings. I don't recommend it to beginner *saranagatas*. At some point, when you mature, Krishna will give you access to that piece of writing. There Prabodhananda Saraswati explains his relationship with Krishna and with Srimati Radharani. And there he explains the innermost essence of our philosophy – that actually it's not even Krishna we surrender to. Whom do we surrender to? To Radha, yes. Because there's no hope in surrendering to Krishna. It's easier to deal with women, they have a compassionate and soft heart. They can somehow or other accept us. And one of the initial verses of the "Radha-rasa-sudha-nidhi" is very beautiful (9):

vrindani sarva-mahatam apahaya durad
vrindatavim anusara pranayena cetah
sat-tarani-krita-su-bhava-sudha-rasaugham
radhabhidhanam iha divya-nidhanam asti

Oh! If you act in accordance with this advice of Prabhodananda Saraswati you'll become the happiest person in the world. What is his advice? He advises us, *vrindani sarva-mahatam apahaya durad* – that in this world there are many great things that attract us - great accomplishments; the abilities we have; the pleasures we have; wonderful exotic countries. *Vrindani sarva-mahatam*. *Vrindani* means "a group of such great things that attract our consciousness – beautiful women, models, happy family life, the Nobel Prize, honour, happiness. What not – great things, *mahatam*. And he says, *vrindani sarva-mahatam* – put all this in a pile, *vrindani* means "stack it in a pile" and *apahaya durad* – throw it far away. Throw all the great stuff of this world away, dump it away. *Vrindani sarva-mahatam apahaya durad*.

Vrindatavim anusara pranayena cetah – and with a heart full of love go to Vrindavan. *Vrindatavim anusara pranayena cetah*. *Anusara* means "take the road that leads to Vrindavan." And he explained why we need to go there. *Vrindatavim anusara pranayena cetah* – with a heart, *cetah*, overflowing with love, *pranaya*, feel this happiness of love and go there, leaving all the great things behind you – all the great accomplishments, hope and opportunities that you have.

And why should we go there? He explains, *sat-tarani-krita-su-bhava-sudha-rasaugham / radhabhidhanam iha divya-nidhanam asti* – there is, *asti*, *divya-nidhanam* – a divine treasure. There, in Vrindavan, there is one divine treasure. What is it called? Radha. All the riches that you've given up are nothing compared to the treasure you'll be able to find there. *Divya-nidhanam asti* named Radha. *Radhabhidhanam iha divya-nidhanam asti*. And what does She do? This divine treasure is the amazing accomplishment that you can attain there.

Sat-tarani-krita-su-bhava-sudha-rasaugham – She protects, *sat-tarani*, those who has surrendered to Her. If a person goes there and approaches Her, that is he wants to attain love, She *sat-tarani* – She protects all honest people. How does She protect? By bestowing on them *su-bhava* – an amazing pure feeling in the heart. *Sat-tarani-krita-su-bhava* – inside She creates a feeling, *su-bhava*, a pure feeling of love. Why? Because She is *sudha-rasauham* – She is a cloud of nectar. Out of that cloud – *augham* means a cloud – She can shower the *rasa* or nectar into our heart and thus protect us.

Once again, the purpose or the meaning of this seminar is where to find protection. What protects us in this world? Protection from our passion, from our stupidity, from our desires and the like? He says, "If anything or anyone in this world can protect you it's this divine treasure, Radharani. Because if you approach Her She will shower this rain of nectar on you. And you feel so good at heart that you will need nothing else." You'll need nothing more. You will be the happiest creature on earth. That is the way She protects.

Krishna also protects in various ways. Yesterday we were explaining the way He protects. He protects by *sastra*. "Do this and don't do that and everything will be fine. Go ahead." Just like a

father. And we know the way a mother protects. Mother says, "Oh, well, it's all clear, come to me, I'll give you something. If you get it you won't need anything else. You'll feel absolutely protected." Actually, this is how mother protects us. Father protects us by rules and reason. How does mother protect us? By love – by an unconditional love that isn't based on anything. She just gives us something. And if we've felt this love we'll be the most protected creatures in this world. This protection will always be with us. Therefore, Prabhodananda Saraswati says here, *sat-tarani-krita-su-bhava-sudha-rasaugham* – there is this treasure that can give us this *su-bhava*, this amazing feeling. And when you have this feeling you will be saved – you'll get everything and even more. QED (which had to be proven).

Therefore, he gives us advice. I'm just afraid to say these things. Now everyone will run from here, off to Vrindavan (laughter) or, at worst, to the Himalayas to dwell in a cave. But that's not the point. The point is that Vrindavan is in our heart. And we must set off to the Vrindavan in our heart. Vrindavan is a place where everyone serves Krishna. And the meaning of this instruction is to give up all other hopes and achievements. There's no point in that! Set off, taking the road leading to Vrindavan, armed with the small faith you have. And there you'll find full protection, having felt the love and the reliable shelter that reigns there. And the only one who can give you this is the embodiment of love for Krishna or the serving spirit – Mahabhava-svarupini, Srimati Radharani.

But here I've obviously got beyond the usual standard ISKCON lecture that must end with the statement: "You're not this body" (laughter) - but I've spoken about that, too. We are not this body and we shouldn't get attached to the body. But that's where true protection lies. And we must be very clear about this goal. *Saranagati*, as I've already explained, is a long journey. A journey beginning with some simple things – with my trying to please my spiritual master by my service. But ultimately this journey must bring us to Vrindavan. Thank you very much.

I'm sorry for talking so much on various subjects. But I hope that I said something useful, too, some useful and practical tips. I just wanted this notion of surrender to become more prominent and alive in our heart. It's not just some kind of caricature, it's something very profound. We surrender trying to fulfil the will of our spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, his desire. That's the beginning. Srila Prabhupada's given us a great cause. He said, "You must help people so that they can feel the taste of love of God, the meaning of life." He gave us a preaching mission that is very difficult and ungrateful. Preaching to people is not always a grateful affair. Because you'll get blamed for that, too. But this is our – as Srila Prabhupada would say – burden of love; the burden of love that we've voluntarily shouldered on ourselves. And it's not an easy burden. "My yoke is beneficial and my burden is light" – if a person serves Srila Prabhupada's mission, the preaching mission, then it will be easy for him.

The wonderful Vaisnavas who've made this project – it's their burden of love, too. They told me how they were surrendering in order to get it into shape so that you feel comfortable. I had my hairs stand on end. I thought, "People are surrendering!" And I joked: they used to live a quiet life and everything was fine. For some reason they started ... the social fund paid everything that was due (laughter) so that they didn't have to particularly worry (laughter). But that's the burden of love. And I jokingly said, "the old lady had no worries until she bought a pigsty" (laughter). It's all because we have to do something: not for oneself but for someone else, to please someone else. And this is love. This is how love works. Love is reckless. Love has urged them to undertake these strange reckless things. And everyone can somehow or other participate in this reckless adventure: our temple, everything else that ISKCON is trying to do, *bhakti-vriksha* ... Aleksey is now going to tell us a few more words. This is also our service, our opportunity or chance to express the love in our heart and our gratitude to Srila Prabhupada. He's given us a spiritual world. An entire spiritual world! And we can somehow help him a bit help in his mission in order to please him. Thank you very much once again.

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sa eva bhakti-yogakhya
atyantika udahrtah
yenativrajya tri-gunam
mad-bhavayopapadyate

Translation:

By attaining the highest platform of devotional service, as I have explained, one can overcome the influence of the three modes of material nature and be situated in the transcendental stage, as is the Lord.

Purport:

Sripada Sankaracarya, who is supposed to be the leader of the impersonalist school of philosophers, has admitted in the beginning of his comments on Bhagavad-gita that Narayana, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, is beyond the material creation; except for Him, everything is within the material creation. It is also confirmed in the Vedic literature that before the creation there was only Narayana; neither Lord Brahma nor Lord Siva existed. Only Narayana, or the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Visnu, or Krishna, is always in the transcendental position, beyond the influence of material creation.

The material qualities of goodness, passion and ignorance cannot affect the position of the Supreme Personality of Godhead; therefore He is called *nirguna* (free from all tinges of material qualities). Here the same fact is confirmed by Lord Kapila: one who is situated in pure devotional service is transcendently situated, as is the Lord. Just as the Lord is unaffected by the influence of the material modes, so too are His pure devotees. One who is not affected by the three modes of material nature is called a liberated soul, or *brahma-bhuta* soul. *Brahma-bhuta prasannatma* is the stage of liberation. *Aham brahmasmi*: "I am not this body." This is applicable only to the person who constantly engages in the devotional service of Krishna and is thus in the transcendental stage; he is above the influence of the three modes of material nature.

It is the misconception of the impersonalists that one can worship any imaginary form of the Lord, or Brahman, and at the end merge in the Brahman effulgence. Of course, to merge into the bodily effulgence (Brahman) of the Supreme Lord is also liberation, as explained in the previous verse. *Ekatva* is also liberation, but that sort of liberation is never accepted by any devotee, for qualitative oneness is immediately attained as soon as one is situated in devotional service. For a devotee, that qualitative equality, which is the result of impersonal liberation, is already attained; he does not have to try for it separately. It is clearly stated here that simply by pure devotional service one becomes qualitatively as good as the Lord Himself.

LECTURE: Hare Krishna. Today is our farewell meeting, and this verse from "Srimad-Bhagavatam" reminds us once again of what we need to do. The ideal of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" is very high. At the same time, however, this high and uncompromising ideal is the only one that's right. We all want to get rid of suffering. Does anyone want to suffer? We all want to be happy. And not just happy but eternally happy. We all want to reach the state which is intuitively recognized within: the state of eternity, knowledge and bliss. When Lena's young son was reaching out to the recording device I thought that this person also has the desire for knowledge.

Ultimately, these three goals only are there before us. People want eternity, they want to exist forever – they can't reconcile themselves to the very fact of death. There is no death, we can't see it within, we can't feel it, we can't grasp it. People want knowledge: they want to know, to feel, to be aware, to understand. And people want happiness, simple human happiness. The only thing people don't understand and don't know is where and how to find all these three things. Lord Kapila explains that, in principle, everyone can and everyone has the right to find all these three things. Access to them is not denied to anyone, no one is beyond these opportunities. Everyone can reach this state. How? In a very simple way: 24 hours a day, all the time, always, non-stop, one should serve Krishna.

And the first thing that comes to our mind is, "Impossible!" Well, if it's impossible then you'll remain here. Impossible is a word from the dictionary of fools. And this is a world of fools. A special place reserved for such people: people who set themselves limits. For a living being nothing is impossible, especially if Krishna helps him.

This is possible because devotional service is not confined to a certain form of activity. We can't hear about Krishna 24 hours a day, we can't chant the holy name 24 hours a day. Probably, we won't be able to even think about Krishna 24 hours a day, think specifically about Krishna, about His particular image. Nevertheless, we can serve Krishna 24 hours a day. Because, as explained in these verses – very clearly – serving Krishna is an inner state of consciousness. It's not an external activity and not even an activity of the mind. Serving Krishna is not an activity of the mind. The mind, just like the body, is an instrument. Serving Krishna is the state of the soul that wants to serve. And when within us – within our real selves – appears this motive, "I want to serve Krishna, I do not want anything else, because that's the nature of my soul, because that's what I am and I'm nothing else" – then everything a person does will be service. He'll be serving when eating; he'll be serving when looking around; he'll be serving when speaking; he'll be serving when listening.

These verses from the Third Canto of the "Bhagavatam" that describe the distorted devotional service, explain this simple point: depending on the mode of nature you are in, that mode will impose your motive on you. If you are in the mode of ignorance, this mode will impose ignorant motives on you: to cause pain, to get revenged, to envy. If you are in the mode of passion, then the mode of passion will impose passionate motives: to get famous, to enjoy here in this world, to get honoured, to gain power in this world. If you are in the mode of goodness, the mode of goodness will impose on you motives that pertain to the mode of goodness: to get liberated, to get purified, to get rid of suffering. But all this is not *bhakti* yet. Although this is called *bhakti* by form, it is not *bhakti*. Because *bhakti* begins the moment I have no other motive but to serve. As long as the modes of material nature cover my consciousness, my consciousness will be in this lethargic sleep where, like worms, all these motives are swarming. Imagine such a consciousness swarming with all those various motives. The consciousness is asleep and there is this: I want, I want, I want, I want, I want (pronounced in a squelching voice). And because of this a person either acts over-passionately in order to achieve certain goals of his, or gets into depression. When the sun is shining he acts, when the clouds block it out – a-ah-ah.

The soul is active by nature: the soul wants to act, the soul wants to love, the soul wants to give, the soul wants to live. And to live means to give. To live means to serve. There is no other definition of the word "life." To live means to serve. To live means to give, to live means to love. There is only one form of existence. Everything else is just stagnation in the material world in an attempt to find happiness where there's none; in the attempt to find eternity, knowledge and bliss where there are none. There is no eternity, knowledge and bliss here, no matter how hard you try to find them. Therefore, Lord Kapila very clearly says here *sa eva bhakti-yogakhya* – one who has attained the *bhakti-yoga* described in the previous verses, *atyantika udahrtah*, which is the highest accomplishment of a person, then *yenativrajya tri-gunam* – such a person immediately transcends the modes of material nature. As long as I am under the modes of material nature they affect me, I want to sleep, especially during the "Bhagavatam" class. But when the modes of material nature do not affect me I want to love, I want to give, I want to serve, I want to do something.

And Krishna says, "Then a person attains the same level as Me; that is, he becomes absolutely spiritual." And all this is possible only when it is the service motive that prevails in our consciousness, when the soul has completely turned to Krishna and, having completely turned to Krishna, understands that, "Here, this is the meaning of my existence. Krishna exists, the One who attracts me and Who is the embodiment of everything: all beauty, all love, all knowledge, all renunciation, all glory, all power." (Vishnu-Purana, 5.6.74):

aisvaryasya samagrasya
virasya yasadah sriyah
jnana-vairagyayos caiva
sannam bhaga itingana

When the soul has completely turned to Krishna and understands: "Here, this is my life" - then the soul immediately attains the same level as Krishna. And the *sadhana*, the amazing and mysterious *bhakti-sadhana* which should ultimately take us beyond the material world and to the attainment of causeless things, this *sadhana* consists exactly in developing this motive within us. When chanting the holy name, we are told, "Try to chant purely, i.e. with no other purpose but for Krishna alone." When reading "Srimad-Bhagavatam," when doing something, when performing some service, we are told, "Most importantly, try to develop this motive, try to understand, to feel the taste of this motive, when we do something simply for its own sake, unselfishly." Because all that leads to it is the highest *dharma* of the soul, i.e. the nature of the soul. The soul re-establishes its nature.

At the first lecture the first evening we met I started my presentation with there being natural things. Natural things are those that are in line with the nature of the living being. And the nature of the living being is precisely this: unconditional love and selfless service. *Sadhana* – is [oh-o-o-o-!] the painful attempt to turn our rusted consciousness in the other direction. Our consciousness's been eaten by rust. And we are trying to turn it towards Krishna. It is accustomed to deal with this material world and each attempt to slightly turn it back takes so much effort. "How is that?! To be deprived of my independence? Never ever! How's that?! – Not to enjoy on own? Not for the world! How's that?" This is *sadhana*. "How is that – serve someone else? How's that?" *Sadhana* is the fight with the propensities that are very deeply rooted in our consciousness.

And to help us in this fight, Krishna's created an amazing system. This system is called *guru-parampara*. He's given us the *sastras* and the *sastras* explain it all. He's also stated that if you want to attain the state of perfection described in this verse, you need to practice here so that you attain this state with regards to at least one person. You should try to develop unselfishness. Service will remain a mere beautiful theory as long as we don't have before our eyes a person whose satisfaction becomes the purpose of our existence. Serving God will remain an abstraction, we'll never understand what *krisnanu-silanam* means (B.-r.-s., 1.1.11):

anyabhilasita-sunyam
jnana-karmady-anavrtam
anukulyena krsnanu-
silanam bhaktir uttama

We will never understand this. Never! As long as we do not have this goal and do not understand that I am always a disciple, respectively, a servant. A disciple means a "servant." A disciple is one who learns. A disciple is one who says, "I don't know what I am to do in this world." A disciple is one who says "I'm not going to insist on my being right. It's clear that I am right, but at least with regards to one person I am not going to insist on my being right – let him find out that later (laughter)." A disciple is one who puts aside his pride and tries to understand what service means, what learning means, what being wrong all the time means. Without this system it is impossible to realize the ideal of uninterrupted service, and therefore, it is impossible to get beyond the bounds of the modes of the material nature. This means that the only alternative remaining is to stay here, in this world, and try to find happiness here, which is not a very inspiring prospect.

Therefore, Krishna emphasizes these things over and over again, there's a huge number of verses. And Srila Jiva Goswami, after describing *saranapatti* or surrender in the 236th *annuccheda* of his "Bhakti-sandarbha", the six elements of surrender, gives a definition and explains the meaning, he further on says, the next *anuccheda* is dedicated to the way we should surrender to the spiritual master. He explains what it means and he says that this is the easiest ways of attaining perfection. Because when I start serving someone else I immediately start to see my own shortcomings. As long as I am on my own, as long as I try to imagine that I'm serving Krishna, I will easily imagine myself to be perfect. But as soon as I start performing some specific service I'll be constantly facing the fact that my motives are impure, that I want something for myself. I will think all the time, "Why him all the time and not me?! Why all the time Prabhupada, Prabhupada, Prabhupada. Why someone else all the time?" All these things will be going around in my mind.

And when I finally realize this ideal of *guru-bhakti*, devotion to the spiritual master... And it is not a simple matter, it's not the least simpler than the ideal of devotional service, because Krishna uses

one and the other as synonyms, then I will attain perfection. But in our relationship with *guru sadhana* is possible! *Sadhana* means I do something and think, "Oh, I've done something wrong. Ah, it's clear, *kama*, Hare Krishna." But in our relationship with Krishna *sadhana* is impossible. Relationships with Krishna can take place only at the level of *siddhi*, at the level of perfection. I can rehearse my relationship with Krishna here. And if I do not rehearse them here I'll never find myself in this pastime – out from the pigsty into Krishna's pastime?! (laughter) No way! We'll spoil it all there! Krishna's pastimes are an exchange of love – pure and unalloyed. To get into those pastimes of Krishna we need to achieve the same state of perfection. Hridayananda Maharaja gives the following example: if we want to get to the sun, there's no problem whatsoever, you can quite do so. There's a small issue: our body must consist of what? Yes, of fire. Can we get to the Sun in our bodies and function there? We'll be a bit hot. It will be a bit difficult to stay there.

The spiritual world is made of love. And in order to get to the spiritual world whose nature is knowledge, eternity and bliss, we must also be made of love, so that there's nothing about me but love. There shouldn't be: *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya*. And that is why *sadhana* is there. The first element of *sadhana* that enables surrender is *guru-padasraya tasmāt*. If you want to get rid of problems, the first thing you need to do is *guru-pada-asraya* – take shelter at the feet of a spiritual master, that is, consider yourself a disciple.

The spiritual master never considers himself a master. The teacher does not consider himself a teacher. He plays the role of a master. He is a disciple. If we want to find a spiritual master, one of the definitions of a spiritual master is one who can teach us how to learn, i.e. teach us how to be a disciple. But it is very important to understand what "to serve the spiritual master" means or what setting the goal of his satisfaction means.

Krishna states, over and over again, that if a person pleases his *guru*, I'll be happy ("Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa", 4.344):

prathamam tu gurum puṅyam
tatas caiva mamarcanam
kurvan siddhim avapnoti
hy anyatha nisphalam bhavet

Before worshipping Me – Krishna says – one must worship *guru*. *Prathamam* means "first", *tu gurum puṅyam* – one must perform *puja* for *guru*, one must pay honour to *guru*. *Tatas caiva mamarcanam* – and then only worship Me, *mama-arcanam*. *Kurvan siddhim avapnoti* – if one acts in this way he achieves *siddhi*, perfection. *Hy anyatha nisphalam bhavet* – if he acts in a different way all his efforts will be in vain, *nisphalam* – they will yield no fruit.

Why does Krishna emphasize this point? For this very reason: in the relationship with a real person I can realize how impure my motives are. I'll be able to see what actually my consciousness is focused on: is it focused on the desire to please him or is it focused on deriving pleasure through him – getting praised by him, getting awarded by him, feeling one's greatness, and so on. The ungrateful task of the spiritual master is to show, like a mirror, his disciple's shortcomings. And this is dangerous because the mirror that shows shortcomings – stones are constantly flying at it. People don't like such a mirror. "Look, look, look at yourself" - "Uh, that's not me!" Therefore, Krishna emphasizes these points. This is actually the most complex and inconceivable point of our philosophy: accepting someone as God although he's obviously not God. It's clear, isn't it – you can pinch him and see for yourself.

We should regard him as God, we should serve him as God and we should give up everything. This is not easy. Our philosophy is not that simple, it's a complex philosophy. Just to lure people, it is said, "Chant the *mantra*, be happy, Hare Krishna. There is no easier way" (laughter) These are advertising, marketing tricks (laughter). To attain something serious a person must pay the price. This price should not be low because you can't buy something worthy for a low price, right? If we want something worthy we need to be willing to pay the price. Therefore, our philosophy says, everything starts from the point when we at least slightly put aside our ego and try to serve, try to think whether the other person is going to like it or not. That's not an easy task: thinking of another person and pleasing him rather than myself. And the trouble is that actually we've never really

practiced that. At least consistently. Nevertheless, there's nothing else more interesting in this world than trying to do this.

There is a nice story, I've heard it recently, about a *guru* who was very strict. It was a very strict *guru*. And Srila Prabhupada, too, quotes Chanakya Pandit, who says in his "Chanakya-niti-darpana", 2.12):

lalane bahavo dosas
tadane bahavo gunah
tasmāt putram ca sisyaṃ ca
tadayen na tu lalayet

That if disciples are indulged, if they are praised, then *bahavo dosas* – there will be many shortcomings. But if they are punished there will be many *gunas*, many good qualities. Therefore, one should treat disciples and sons strictly. Srila Prabhupada quotes this thing.

Likewise, this *guru* was very strict. He demanded complete surrender. Everyone knew that and for that reason he didn't have many disciples. When someone would come to him, he would say, "Give up everything!"

So, one day a husband and wife came and said, "We'd like to take initiation." He replied, "No problem." They were from a rich family, well-off people. He said, "That's not a problem at all. Just give me everything and that's all. Surrender." And the husband, he was very sincere, and he said, "Yes, everything. I give you everything." But the wife she had plenty of jewelry. She immediately started thinking, "Why would *guru* need my jewelry? What is he going to do with it?" And she grudged it! She looked at her husband as her last resort and began asking him, to give or not to give? The husband said, "Either give or don't give, the choice is yours. I've given everything but you decide for yourself whether you should give or not." She said, "Well, okay, I'll give everything but here, this ring, my favorite ring... May I keep it?" The husband said, "If you give, give everything, 100%." And she o-o-oh ... She took off the ring, took off everything else and gave him everything."

However, the next day the *guru* called them and said, "Take everything back. I didn't need anything. I just wanted to test you." So, they happily went away. But not because of that. They were happy because it was a proper, true and complete surrender. And they told their friends, another rich couple, about all that. They said, "Yes *guru* asked us to give him everything but then he gave everything back." So, the other couple was very happy, they said, "Ah! It's clear what we need to do." So, they also came and said, "We want to take initiation, give us your mercy." The *guru* said, "No problem. Give me everything." They replied, "Well, no problem at all." They gave him all fingerings, all earrings – everything. The trouble was that the *guru* did not call them the next day (laughter). They kept on waiting, saying "Dear *guru*, we are here" (laughter).

But the point is that a person must be clearly aware of what he wants. This is a relationship in which a person can ultimately learn something, can learn to love. And of course, love is not the result of *sadhana*, love should descend on us. But when, in the process of *sadhana*, a person practices he prepares himself for the descent of love. Krishna will not bestow love on someone who doesn't want it. *Sadhana* is just a way to strengthen our desire, "I want this." *Sadhana* is when we hear about Krishna, about the way Krishna associates with His devotees; this is required to awaken our desire. The trouble, the problem of our heart is that we do not even have the desire for love. The desire for liberation is there, the desire for enjoyment is there but the desire for love is not.

Most people join Krishna consciousness because of their desire for liberation. They think that this is *bhakti*; this is a mistake that many make, confusing the desire for liberation with *bhakti*. It's an unforgivable mistake. Srila Rupa Goswami says that the desire for liberation is a witch who sucks on our strength; he says that as long as these two witches, two *pisacas*, are there, the desire for liberation and the desire for ... *Bhukti-mukti-spriha yavat pisaca hridi vartate* – in my heart there live these two *pisacas*, *bhukti* and *mukti spriha*, the desire for liberation and the desire for enjoyment; as long as they are there, how can pure *prema* appear in such a heart? It is by the means of

sadhana that I expel these two desires. *Sadhana* is required so that I drive these two desires away. Therefore, *sadhana* – the basic *sadhana* – is to hear. I hear and this hearing shows me what I need to ask for. Hearing is the way to attain the desire that I don't have yet.

Just like those who are trying to sell their product that no one happened to need: in one's heart they generate desires through sound, through hearing, through names. Also through images, through advertising, but at the bottom of it all is sound. And just like now – this desire is not there in my heart. And since it's not there Krishna won't give anything and I won't budge from where I am. To move forward I need to attain the desire. To attain the desire I must hear and I must hear in a particular way. And then gradually these two desires for liberation and for enjoyment will leave my heart and the desire for love will appear there.

To do this, we must continuously hear about the way Krishna associates with His devotees. In the Third Canto of "Srimad-Bhagavatam" that we're now reading, there is a remarkable story about the Kumaras who became devotees. And we know, the legend that usually runs is that the Kumaras became devotees because they smelled the scent of the *tulasi* leaves at the Lord's feet. It is actually a secret – it's not because of their nose that they became devotees. What did they see? What are the *tulasi* leaves at the Lord's feet. It's the Lord's servants, those who are always at the Lord's feet, serving Him. Why do they smell so good? Precisely because they have this purity of service. Actually, if we carefully read this story in "Srimad-Bhagavatam" we will see why they became devotees. They became devotees when they saw and felt Krishna's attitude to His servants, Jaya and Vijaya; the way Krishna protects His servants; the way He gives them shelter. And it was when they smelled this scent, the scent of love, that they became devotees. They realized that we're wasting our time up there, in the Himalayas, meditating in a cave. What we want is this: we want to feel the taste of this relationship, this love. And the scent of the *tulasi* leaf is kind of a symbol of what happened to them. Yes, they did feel that ecstasy; everything turned inside them. But everything turned when they saw what true love means.

We ultimately need to get rid of the desire for liberation and the desire for enjoyment that's why we need *sadhana*. *Sadhana* begins with our surrender: we accept a *guru* and try to be as pure as possible in our relationship with him, try to make our relationship selfless. That is why Krishna speaks about this all the time. He says that if a person has satisfied *guru*, he's satisfied Me. If a person has a *guru*, then he already has Me.

And it is in this relationship that a person can gradually purify all the other elements of his *sadhana*. If he sincerely serves his *guru* he'll gradually realize what serving Krishna means, what performing *bhajan* means and what service in the spiritual world means. If he does not do this he'll never realize this, this will be just a theory, a strange theory, a cartoon of the spiritual world, a picture devoid of real life.

I was recently told a wonderful story about Srila Prabhupada who insisted on this point: that a person must serve and serve in a proper, tangible manner. We know that we should serve with our mind, with our speech and with our body, the three components of our being. So, one day, the devotees started complaining to Srila Prabhupada about some temple president. They came and started complaining about him. And they said, "He's this, he's that, he himself is constantly serving and is constantly making us serve. The person's totally in *rajas*." However, Srila Prabhupada wasn't very impressed by these arguments. Then they said something else about him. Finally they put forward the main argument against him. They thought Srila Prabhupada won't be able to say anything against that argument, "Srila Prabhupada, he doesn't even chant the *mantra*!" Prabhupada heard this and said, "Why should he chant? He's already serving all the time" (laughter). Srila Prabhupada said: *vaysuddhi*.

Srila Prabhupada would explained this point, that a person must learn to serve, that a person must become a servant. And this is the meaning of *sadhana*. In that case, when hearing about Krishna, he must feel this taste of service relationship, the taste of selfless relationship when I do something not for myself but for someone else, feel the taste of pure relationship. Then the perfection of chanting of the holy name will easily come, *nama-???* (inaudible Sanskrit 52:15), all other perfections will come by themselves. Therefore, in the Seventh Canto of "Bhagavatam" it is said

that if a person wants to get rid of his problems he should try to become established in *guru-bhakti*, in serving his spiritual teachers master.

This is our philosophy. And it looks like there are no by-passes, there are no alternative ways. We may try to achieve perfection in chanting of the holy name, Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare / Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare. Chant: Krishna, Krishna, Krishna but all the while think about the real Krishna, about the small but real one – about oneself. You can try to do many other things but you are not going to achieve perfection in them because there'll always be a flaw.

And Kapiladev explains this point, He says, "When a person becomes pure, when his motive is pure, then as soon as he hears about Krishna his mind rushes there like the Ganges. It is impossible to stop such a mind. Nothing can prevent it from thinking of Krishna." Whereas our thinking of Krishna can be disturbed by anything. Someone nearby is loudly chanting the holy name and that is disturbing me. Have you noticed? I was asked by one person, "What should be my attitude towards someone who is nearby loudly chanting the holy name? It disturbs me." But that's your problem (laughter) if the holy name is disturbing your focusing on Krishna. This is our condition: anything distracts us from focusing on Krishna.

This is why a person needs to accept a *guru*. It is said that a person will learn to purely chant the holy name if he accepts a spiritual master. Because if he does not accept a spiritual master he is committing the third offense of the holy name: *guror-avagya*. *Guror-avagya* means "to perceive *guru* as an ordinary person and not to take his words seriously, ignore them." I.e. my consciousness is material – I regard *guru* as an ordinary person and I can't surrender. There is a wonderful verse from the "Padma-purana" that I'll quote now and that will conclude our reflections. But it's a very important verse:

*arcye visnau sila-dhir gurusu nara-matir vaisnave jati-buddhir
visnor va vaisnsnavanam kali-mala-mathane pada-tirthe 'mbu-buddhih
sri-visnor namni mantre sakala-kalusa-he sabda-samanya-buddhir
visnau sarvesvarese tad-itara-sama-dhir yasya va naraki sah*

This is a verse that Srila Prabhupada would often quote. He would explain that a person lives in hell if he does not understand how the spiritual nature and God manifest through the Deity, *arcye sila-dhir*, if he considers the Deity to be made of stone and doesn't understand that God associates with him through that stone; *sila-dhir gurusu nara-matir* – if he considers *guru* to be an ordinary person; *vaisnave jati-buddhir* – if he judges a Vaishnava by his origin, his education, his material characteristics, his appearance; if this person considers the water that bathed the feet of Vishnu or of a Vaishnava, i.e. the *caranamrita*, to be ordinary water, although this water can destroy all contamination of the age of Kali – *vaisnsnavanam kali-mala-mathane pada-tirthe*; if a person considers the name of the Lord – *sri-visnor namni mantre*, or the *mantra* containing the name of Vishnu *sabda-samanya-buddhir*, to be an ordinary sound; or considers Vishnu, Who is *sarvesvara*, the Lord of everyone, *sarva-ivara* – the Lord of everything, to be equal to the other demigods such as Siva or Brahma.

Tad-itara-sama-dhir yasya va naraki sah. *Naraki sah* means - "he is an inhabitant of the hell", "he lives in hell." Does anyone of you live in hell? Do we need to look far for an example? Hell is not far away. You don't have to go to another planet. Come on, those who live in hell, raise your hands and shout Haribol. (audience: Haribol) Jai! (laughter) Hell is a state of mind; hell is the state in which our mind is. Therefore the "Padma-purana" says that if a person does not understand in what way God acts through the Deity, through the spiritual master, through the Vaishnava; in what way God saves us through *caranamrita*, through the sound of the holy name or the scriptures which explain the supremacy and the glories of Lord Vishnu over everyone else, such a person lives in hell. *Yasya va naraki sah* – he is an inhabitant of the hell and he is sure to act in a wrong way. Because of his wrong actions he'll incur suffering on himself, he will treat other living beings in a wrong way, he will not understand in what way the spiritual nature manifests here. This means that he will regard the other living beings as material objects for his exploitation, he will hurt them and as a result of that pain will come back to him and he will live in hell.

In order to learn to see the spirit we should learn to see how this spirit, or God, manifests here. He manifests here including in the person of the spiritual master. There is no other way I can learn to see the spirit. Krishna makes the same point in the "Bhagavad-gita" when He says, *tad viddhi pranipatena / pariprasnena sevaya* – surrender to a spiritual master (Bg, 4.34). What does He say in the next verse? – Then you'll see all the living beings, you'll see how they are connected with Me. You'll see everything! You'll see the spiritual nature of this world, you'll see a particle of Krishna in every living being. Until then you won't be able to see. Until you are able to see in one person at least, in your relationship with him, until you establish this relationship in the right way, you won't be able to see spirit anywhere. With your material eyes you will be seeing just matter and you will be treating everything as matter. And you will be trying to assert here your supremacy. As a result, however, you will be living in hell – you are already living in hell.

To learn to see how God acts, how spirit manifest, to understand oneself – one's own spirit, one's own nature – a person must accept a spiritual master. At that very moment he immediately transcends the modes of the material nature. If he accepts the spiritual master in the right way he is no longer under the influence of the modes of the material nature. And if he is under the influence of the modes of the material nature he has not accepted a spiritual master. He still doesn't have this relationship, he is still at the level of *sadhana*, at the level of practice.

This is the meaning of this verse. A person can transcend the modes of the material nature if he develops the right motive, the right desire in his heart, "I want. What do I want? I want to serve, I want to please someone, I want to do something. I want to surrender in this service."

This is not an easy thing. So, don't believe when you are told that *bhakti* is a simple path. We thus conclude our retreat, at this optimistic note (laughter). Actually, there is no other way, no other way, no other way – there is nothing that imparts a meaning to our life except this.