

Six Guidelines for Developing the Vṛndāvana Mindset

Excerpts from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura's *Sva-nyāma-dvādaśakam*

1. THE OBJECTS OF DEVOTION BIRTH AFTER BIRTH

No matter whenever and wherever I happen to take birth, let my loving affection and attachment remain unshaken throughout each and every lifetime for the following things:

- * For my divine spiritual master,
- * For Śrī Gaurāṅga,
- * For the detailed topics of pure devotional service (and the methods of its execution) as personally instructed by Him,
- * For the holy places of pilgrimage such as Śrī Navadvīpa, Śrī Kṣetra, Śrī Vṛndāvana, etc. which are all blooming with divine sanctity due to His performance of wonderful pastimes therein,
- * For the *dīkṣā-mantra* bestowed upon me by the divine grace of my spiritual master,
- * For the Holy Name,
- * For the most beloved eternal associates of the Lord,
- * For the sacred days of celebration throughout the year such as Śrī Ekādaśī, Śrī Janmāṣṭamī, Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī, and the appearance/disappearance days of the great Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, etc.,
- * For the Lord's dearest devotees who strictly follow in the sacred footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī,
- * and for the holy scriptures such as *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, narrated by Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī.



2. THE INTERNAL IDENTITY OF LORD CAITANYA, THE ETERNAL GUIDE

The Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the personified abode of all divinely ecstatic mellow tastes. And Śrī Rādhikā is the topmost abode of all His divinely potent energies. Indeed, She is the personified form of the highest mellow of love in separation. Within the forest of Vṛndā, which is gloriously rich in the all-pervading treasure of the sweetest *madhura-rasa*, this Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa is continuously enjoying as He makes Śrī Rādhikā happy by His loving service rendered to Her 24 hours a day. This very same Lord Kṛṣṇa is exactly identical to the Son of Mother Śacī who eternally lives simultaneously yet separately in Gauḍa-deśa as the instructor of the process for rendering His own devotional service. May this Śacī-nandana become my Supreme Master and Guide, and may He always appear to me just to lead me on the pure devotional path birth after birth.



3. REJECTION OF THINGS UNFAVORABLE FOR ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ-KṚṢṆA'S ETERNAL SERVICE

Let no form of so-called renunciation or asceticism become fit for my acceptance if it does not give rise to the continual expansion of my eternal serving mood of loving devotion. And let no form of so-called knowledge or intellectual cultivation appeal to me at all if it does not admit the reality of eternal individuality shared by the Lord and His devotees during their everlasting daily pastimes. I have no desire at all for practicing any branch of the eight-fold yoga process, for none of them contain any scope for relishing the daily pleasure of serving Lord Hari such as His confidential worship does. Rather, may I render profuse, uninterrupted confidential service 24 hours a day to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for all of time to come (such service being the means as well as the end).



4. REPULSION FROM THOSE THINGS WHICH ARE DISCONNECTED FROM ŚRĪ RĀDHĪKĀ

I have no attraction for living in Vaikuṅṭha, that part of the spiritual sky presided over by Śrī Śrī Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa; nor do I desire the useless activities of gross sense-gratification in this material world. I will never cherish the desire for attaining the divine bliss of impersonalistic liberation, even for a second. Furthermore, there are many transcendental pastimes of Śrī Hari that may be very purifying for all conditioned souls – yet such pastimes will never give me any real happiness at all. This is because such pastimes are quite different from the blissful ecstasies of Vraja-consciousness, because they are completely devoid of any relationship with Śrī Rādhikā, who is the one and only fountainhead of pure joy.



5. AVOIDANCE OF SO-CALLED 'DEVOTEES' WHO PROUDLY NEGLECT ŚRĪ RĀDHĪKĀ

There are certain persons who appear to be very advanced in devotion. Indeed, to increase their service to the Lord, they have long since rejected the evil company of:

- * Those who are completely blinded by faulty arguments arising from so-called intellectual logic,
- * Those who are madly addicted to the fleeting pleasures of the dull material body,
- * Those who are averse to and envious of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa,
- * And those who are very fond of the inferior, distasteful concept of liberation as it is cherished by the impersonalists.

They have thus favorably avoided all kinds of bad association; yet is seen that such persons worship Lord Govinda without Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī being present. This just shows that they are actually puffed-up with excessive pride and a conceited arrogance directed against Śrī Rādhikā, who is Herself the best worshiper of Govinda. Therefore

I will never ever go anywhere near such so-called devotees – even for a second. This is my strict vow.



6. HOW TO WORSHIP THE LOTUS FEET OF ŚRĪ RĀDHIKĀ'S PURE DEVOTEE

There is a class of pure devotee who is completely expert and experienced in following all the instructions of Śrī Śacī-nandana. Such a devotee incessantly worships Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī exclusively, who is indeed the most worshipable personality, and who is deeply absorbed every day in relishing the divine mellows of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's association. The pure devotee of this caliber definitely performs his confidential worship wholeheartedly and with exclusive surrender unto Śrī Rādhīkā. Thus he always lives in Śrī Vraja *maṇḍala*. I shall take the nectarean water that has washed the lotus feet of such a devotee and carry it on my head. Drinking it with great joy, and with a devout heart, I will then happily offer my full prostrations upon the ground in the nicest, most perfect way that I possibly can. This will indeed be my routine each and every day.

