

The Role of Mercy in Attaining *Kṛṣṇa Prema*

How Pure love for Kṛṣṇa develops

The prime cause of pure love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Kṛṣṇa's full mercy, which in someone may arise spontaneously and in someone else by gradual practice of devotional service.

Just as from a generous donor one might receive food already cooked or the means and ingredients for cooking food oneself, so according to the opinions of scripture one receives Kṛṣṇa's mercy through a method of devotional practice (either regulative or spontaneous).

PURPORT

Though all perfection in bhakti comes only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy, there is still a need for different methods of sādhana. To illustrate the point, we may consider the hungry people who should receive charity. Some should be given food already cooked and offered to the Supreme Lord. Others, like strict brāhmaṇas who eat only what they have cooked themselves and offered to their own Deities, should be given rice, other ingredients, and pots and fuel for cooking. Similarly, most aspiring Vaiṣṇavas need to be purified from material contamination by regulative devotional practice; only a few souls, already pure, can enter directly into spontaneous loving service.

Once one has overcome the obstacles on the path that arise from frailties like fear, one can then achieve pure love in which one thinks of the Lord like a close friend in the ordinary world. For this one must have a strong desire to serve the Lord in the manner of His *gopas* and *gopīs*.

One develops that love by practicing the devotional service whose main ways are meditation on and singing about the many Vraja pastimes of the Lord. That service becomes brilliant by *saṅkīrtana* of the Lord's most beloved holy names.

PURPORT

Vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti, which consists of nine basic devotional practices, beginning with hearing, chanting, and remembering, prepares a devotee's heart for the awakening of prema, love of God. Dhyāna and gāna—the general methods of remembering and chanting about the Supreme Lord and His pastimes—transform, in the advanced stages of sādhana, into preṣṭhā-nāma-saṅkīrtana, ecstatic absorption in the nectarean names of one's worshipable Lord. This saṅkīrtana is the most essential means for achieving prema. By nāma-saṅkīrtana one easily realizes the full glories of Kṛṣṇa and His pleasure potency.

In the company of people whose only taste is for devotional service in pure love, that love appears of its own accord. Yet one must try hard to keep it concealed.

When one resides always in seclusion in the land of the Lord's favorite pastime forests, surely such love will soon develop and mature.

PURPORT

Sādhana-bhakti performed in Kṛṣṇa's holy dhāma is especially conducive to the awakening of prema.

— Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Śrī Bṛhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Vol 3. Ch 5 Verses 215, 216+p, 217, 218+p, 219

The Role of Humility in Attaining *Kṛṣṇa Prema*

Loving devotional service is far different from disciplines such as *karma*, *jñāna*, and *yoga*. At every stage it is decorated by indifference to them, and its root is *dainya*, utter humility. When one allows secondary means and goals to become prominent, one deviates from *bhakti*. The most essential support—and a candidate for pure *bhakti* must always take help from it—is utter humility.

An intelligent person should carefully cultivate speech, behavior, and thinking that fix him in utter humility, and anything that stands in the way of it he should avoid.

Dainya at its most exalted comes forth when *prema*, pure love of God, reaches full maturity, as it did in the women of Gokula when they were separated from Kṛṣṇa.

When *dainya* fully matures, *prema* unfolds without limit. And so we see *dainya* and *prema* acting in a relationship in which each is both cause and effect. Yes, *prema* is the final goal, but *dainya* is not altogether different from *prema*. *Dainya* is an integral component of *prema*, and both foster one another.

Without utter humility, the pure love that leads to entrance into Goloka will never arise. And until you attain that world, you will never be at peace.

Dainya, transcendental unconditional humility, is the most important prerequisite for gaining eternal residence in Goloka.

— Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Śrī Brhad-bhāgavatāmṛta*, Vol 3. Ch 5 Verses 221, 223, 224, 225, 240, Ch 6 Verse 29