

I Am Such an Ass!

1. With great enthusiasm I spent my time in the pleasures of mundane learning, and never worshiped Your lotus feet, O Lord. Now You are my only shelter.
2. Reading on and on, my hopes grew and grew, for I considered the acquisition of material knowledge to be life's true goal. How fruitless those hopes turned out to be, for all my knowledge proved feeble. Now I know that all such erudition is actually pure ignorance.
3. All the so-called knowledge of this world is born of the flickering potency of Your illusory energy (*māyā*). It is an impediment to the execution of devotional service to You. Indulgence in mundane knowledge verily makes an ass of the eternal soul by encouraging his infatuation with this temporary world.
4. Here is one person who has been turned into such an ass, who for so long has carried on his back the useless burden of material existence. Now in my old age, for want of the power to enjoy, I find that nothing at all pleases me.
5. Life has now become agony, for my so-called erudite knowledge has proven itself to be worthless ignorance. Material knowledge has now become a pointed shaft and has pierced my heart with the intolerable, burning pain of ignorance.
6. Lord, there is no treasure worth seeking in this world other than Your lotus feet. Bhaktivinoda abandons all his mundane knowledge and makes Your lotus feet the sum and substance of his life.

– Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Śaraṇāgati*, “Dainya” (2)