

Śrī Manah-śikṣā

Splendid Instructions to the
Mind

by Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

Verse-6

Commentary

by

Śrīla Jayadvaita Swami

Verse-6

are cetaḥ prodyat-kapaṭa-kuṭi-nāṭi-bhara-khara-
kṣaran-mūtre snātvā dahasi katham ātmānam api mām
sadā tvam gāndharvā-giridhari-pada-prema-vilasat-
sudhāmbhodhau snātvā svam api nitarām mām ca sukhaya

O ruffian mind (**are cetaḥ**)! Why do you burn (**katham dahasi**) yourself and me [the soul] (**ātmānam api mām**) by bathing in the trickling urine (**kṣaran-mūtre snātvā**) of the great donkey (**bhara-khara**) of full-blown hypocrisy and duplicity (**prodyat-kapaṭa-kuṭi-nāṭi**)? Instead, you should always bathe (**sadā tvam nitarām snātvā**) in the nectarean ocean (**sudhā ambhodhau**) of love emanating from the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī (**gāndharvā-giridhari-pada-prema-vilasat**), thereby delighting (**sukhaya**) yourself and me (**tvam api mām ca**).

Excerpt from Jaiva Dharma

Excerpt from Jaiva Dharma

Vijaya: “Gurudeva, I maintain my family by reciting and lecturing on the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, which is actually a treatise on rasa. Is it therefore an aparādha to earn money by reading Śrīmad Bhāgavatam to the ordinary public?”

Gosvāmī: ‘Indeed!’ The Bhāgavatam is an excellent text and the crown jewel of all scriptures being the mature nectarean fruit of the entire Vedic literature. Simply abide by its espousals, especially this particular verse of the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam, 1.1.3:

muhur aho rasikā bhuvi bhāvukāḥ

Excerpt from Jaiva Dharma

“O devotees who are thoughtful experts on the science of rasa, O devotees who are the relishers of rasa, kindly continue even after liberation to savour the sublime and nectarean fruit of the Vedas, known as the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.”

Instruction
“According to this edict, the only eligible candidates for rasa-tattva are the [devotees] who are bhāvuka, thoughtful and expert, and the rasikā, relishers of rasa.”

Excerpt from Jaiva Dharma

No other person is permitted access.

Therefore my son, immediately abandon this method of earning your living.

You are a thirsty searcher for rasa, do not commit further aparādha against rasa-tattva.

Excerpt from Jaiva Dharma

The Vedas, Taittirīya Upaniṣad, 2.7, declare: ...raso vai saḥ... ‘Rasa is personified in Kṛṣṇa.’

The scriptures offer several options for earning one’s living, follow their bona fide advice, but stop lecturing and reading the Bhāgavatam for monetary gain.

If you find a rasikā audience, certainly read the Bhāgavata Purāṇa to them with great jubilation, but without expectation of taking a fee, a donation, etc.”

Excerpt from Jaiva Dharma

Vijaya: “Gurudeva, you have saved me from the clutches of a terrible aparādha—but how shall I counter the aparādha I have already committed?”

Gosvāmī: “That aparādha will not remain. Entreat rasa-tattva guilelessly, and surely you will be exonerated from your aparādha. Do not worry about it any longer.”

Without duplicity

Vijaya: “Gurudeva, I now feel that I should rather maintain this body by some low profession than reveal the intricacies of rasa-tattva to an undeserving person and wrongfully earn my living.”

Kīrtana

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

We are advised not to hear from professional bhajana singers.

They are singing for money, not for the pleasure of the Lord.

It's their profession, their way of earning a livelihood, and they cultivate a beautiful voice for public gratification.

One can say these people are Vaiṣṇavas, but that's not our standard of a Vaiṣṇava—someone who doesn't really follow the principles of devotional service or practice but is a great singer.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

Some of the most popular bhajana singers are based in Bombay, and we know about them quite well.

So we know that in their private life they are drinkers, womanizers, and so on.

They don't follow the four regulative principles an ISKCON devotee is expected to follow.

So we are advised, avaiṣṇava-mukhodgīrṇa-pūta-hari-kathāmṛtam:
(Do not hear from a person who is not a Vaiṣṇava.)

Verse-6 Commentary by Śrīla Jayadvaita Swami

Apart from that, devotees who listen to professional bhajana singers often start to sound like professional bhajana singers themselves.

Instead of immersing themselves in the transcendental sound vibration sung by the pure devotee of the Lord, they immerse themselves in the beautiful music sung by the professional bhajana singers.

But although fancy tricks with tunes and notes may turn the public on, that's not what pleases Kṛṣṇa.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

There's a passage in Jaiva Dharma about a spiritual aspirant who has had training in classical music.



When he has been in the association of devotees for a while, he takes the opportunity to sing kīrtana in beautiful classical style.

All the devotees get turned off right away.

“What is this?” Here is a guy with a professional background and technical training, but he doesn't have bhāva, he doesn't reflect genuine devotion.

Verse-6 Commentary by Śrīla Jayadvaita Swami

His music reflects his cultivation of professional technique.

And we see that a lot, unfortunately: kīrtana lacking devotion but overflowing with technique.

I was in some kīrtana, and the mṛdaṅga player was all beats.

If there was a moment of space, it had to be filled with alaṅkāras (decorative sound vibrations).

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

There wasn't enough space in the kīrtana for all of the beats one can play, so the player had to fill in as many as possible.

And I noted the difference between that kind of mṛdaṅga playing and the expert playing of Śrīla Prabhupāda's godbrother Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja.

→ AKIṅGua

When Bābājī Mahārāja wanted to do something extra, he could do it. But for most of the kīrtana it would be boom, boom-boom, simple, simple, simple, because the thing he wanted to hear was the holy name.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

The mṛdaṅga was only to give a little shape or support to the holy name, not for a mṛdaṅga-playing exhibition.

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, at the time of leaving this world, wanted to hear śrī rūpa manjarī pāda sung by someone other than a big kīrtanīya who was present.

“Śrīdhara Mahārāja is there. Let him sing.”

Śrīdhara Mahārāja was not known as a silver-voiced kīrtanīya, but the technique wasn't what was wanted—it was the feeling.)

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

Once in Māyāpura, the devotees and the managers in 1976 or '77,
arranged a kīrtana melā (a kīrtana competition).

The idea was to attract more people to Māyāpura from surrounding
areas.

There are kīrtana groups that roam around and do kīrtanas at
weddings, birthdays, and festivals and then get paid something.

So at this melā, various kīrtana groups were invited to come.

Verse-6 Commentary by Śrīla Jayadvaita Swami

They would perform and be judged by the panel of judges on their mṛdaṅga playing, their dancing, and their dress.

These guys could play kartālas with their hands behind their backs.

They could play mṛdaṅga with their elbows. They were fantastic.

Prabhupāda was in the Lotus Building in his quarters. At that time he was feeling indisposed; his health was deteriorating.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

So he sent word down from the Lotus Building, “Turn off the amplifiers.”

Prabhupāda wasn't interested in hearing them at all.

He said, “They are simply singing for money.”

Our kīrtana is different. What Kṛṣṇa wants is your feeling.
Bhāvagrāhi janārdana: What the Lord accepts is the feeling of the devotee.

Verse-6 Commentary by Śrīla Jayadvaita Swami

After Hiraṇyakaśipu was killed, the demigods offered prayers to pacify the Lord, but still the Lord was roaring in fury.

Then Brahmā pushed Prahlāda Mahārāja forward, saying, “You speak something.”

Prahlāda Mahārāja thought, “All the demigods have offered their prayers in beautiful Sanskrit”—again so many alaṅkāras—“and they are all big demigods.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

What will I say?

When all these demigods have failed to satisfy the Lord, what can I do?"

Then Prahlāda thought.

"But I can offer my feelings."

That's the thing, not how great a singer you are.

Expertise as Part of Devotion

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

Now, it's not that we have to be a culture of incompetence.

When Acyutānanda Prabhu compiled ISKCON's first song book, Śrīla Prabhupāda appreciatively wrote in a foreword, "He has learned how to sing in Bengali and play mṛdaṅga like an expert professional."

But, on the other hand, if externally someone is a great singer or a great speaker or a great pūjārī or a great yajna performer or whatever but internally the heart is all trash, then we have a problem, the one Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is speaking about in this verse. It's a deceit problem.

Verse-6 Commentary by Śrīla Jayadvaita Swami

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī balances his verse by saying on the one side to give up all this affectation, this urinary interest you have, and on the other side develop your love for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

That's the real business of life.

In the early days of Jadurāṇī's painting, at one point she was applying techniques from the great masters and trying to become really professional.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

She wasn't trying to become as good as Rembrandt, but because all the great masters studied anatomy carefully, she painted a very muscular Nārada Muni.

And Prabhupāda said, "If you want to go down this path, I will pray to Kṛṣṇa to save you."

Save her from what?

From becoming like a professional artist.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

Śrīla Prabhupāda sometimes detected a problem with devotees who had learned some Sanskrit.

A devotee may have wanted to serve by editing Sanskrit, so he decides to go university and take an introductory Sanskrit course.

Now he knows a little Sanskrit.

But Prabhupāda said, “As soon as he knows a little Sanskrit, he think he is better than Guru Mahārāja.”

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

You absorb the mundane mentality that these people have.

You start to become a rationalist, and you start to think you're hot stuff because you know the rules of sandhi and all these incompetent ISKCON brahmacārīs are chanting without the correct pronunciation.

And then you think you can correct your guru.

You become puffed-up and then you are finished.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

In any category, whether it is academics, art, music, business, or anything, when people start to think they are God's gift to the Vaiṣṇava community, deceit will arise.

So professional training can be a pitfall.

There are valuable things we can learn.

On the other hand, when you pick up the head, you get the tail also.
So one has to be very careful.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

Academically, if a product is up to a certain standard it's good, no matter what rubbish the actual content is.

But if something is not up to that standard, then it is rubbish, no matter how exalted it is.

Academics with this point of view are fools because their emphasis is on what doesn't matter and they are missing the point.

Someone is crying out that there's a fire, and you are analyzing the grammar of their sentence.

Verse-6 Commentary by Srīla Jayadvaita Swami

Prabhupāda wrote in regard to his translations and commentary on Śrīmad Bhāgavatam that somehow he had to get his message across in a foreign language although there would be so many discrepancies.

He said that if there's a fire in the house, then the residents will somehow or other make it known to the neighbors, even if they don't speak the same language.

Of course, you have to know your level of capability and also be humble.

Verse-6 Commentary by Śrīla Jayadvaita Swami

If you approach a big Sanskrit professor, it doesn't really pay to come off like you're the world's greatest Sanskritist.

Therefore it is advised that one be humble but at the same time clear about one's principles.

Academics who are honest will appreciate that you've got something.