

Śrī Manah-śikṣā

Splendid Instructions to the
Mind

by Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

Verse-7

pratisthāśā dhr̥ṣṭā śvapaca-ramaṇī me hr̥di naṭet
katham sādhu-premā spr̥ṣati śucir etan nanu manaḥ
sadā tvam sevasva prabhu-dayita-sāmantam atulam
yathā tām niṣkāśya tvaritam iha tam veṣayati sah

As long as the unchaste (dhr̥ṣṭā), dog-eating woman (śvapaca-ramaṇī) of desire for prestige (pratisthāśā) dances in my heart (me hr̥di naṭet), how can (katham) the chaste and pure (śucih) lady of love for Kṛṣṇa (sādhu-premā) touch it (spr̥ṣati etad)? Therefore, O mind (nanu manaḥ), you should always serve (sadā) (tvam) (sevasva) the incomparable (atulam), beloved devotee commander of Kṛṣṇa's army (prabhu) (dayita) (sāmantam), who will immediately (yathā sah tvaritam) throw out the unchaste woman (tām niṣkāśya) and establish the pure lady of love (tam veṣayati) in the heart (iha).

Verse-7

Notes on the Commentary

by

Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami

Maharaj

The Unchaste Woman Dancing
in the Heart

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

When we have driven deception out of our hearts, all the while there remains one last thing.

There is no cheating any more, but still I want a little something and that is the chief subject matter of the seventh verse.

Pratisthāśā dhr̥ṣṭā śvapaca-ramaṇī me hr̥di natet—Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says, “In my heart there is a dancer—śvapaca-ramaṇī.”

Ramaṇī means a woman of easy virtue, a harlot; moreover, she has special dietary preferences, śvapaca.

Prostitute

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

Śvapaca means she loves to cook dogs. And dhr̥ṣṭā means she is absolutely shameless.

The name of that dhr̥ṣṭā śvapaca-ramaṇī is pratiṣṭhā-āśā, the desire for respect, honor, and fame.

And then he goes on saying, kathaṁ sādhu-premā spr̥śati śucir etan nanu manaḥ—“Think for yourself, my dear mind, whether prema, which is pure by nature, will touch your heart, if there is this untouchable woman dancing?”

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

Perhaps the most interesting word here is **dhṛṣṭā** meaning that she's shameless.

This actually means that all the anarthas have already gone away by virtue of the holy name, but the **shameless** one (the desire for respect) is staying.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura explains that the very last demon is when we want to be distinguished for our devotional service.

A person may say, “Look how well I know the scriptures! I am a great preacher, so now I’m going to save everyone by my preaching!”

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

In other words, when people start deeming themselves to be spiritual master or guru, this anartha is the root of all the other anarthas, in accordance with the teachings of Sanātana Gosvāmī and the Hari-bhakti-vilāsa.

If we don't drive this away, everything else will come back.

The merry woman that's dancing in the heart will call back all the other anarthas, "Come on, come on!"

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says, "As long as she is there, sādhu-premā, pure prema, will never touch the heart. There will be no love in the heart, because it will remain desecrated."

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

Kṛṣṇa provides all opportunities to fulfill this desire to be great.

This persisting childish desire for recognition, honor, and to be the center of attention is the last to remain in our hearts, and it desecrates everything else that we are doing.

All other problems come as a result of the envy that appears because of pratiṣṭhā-āśā, the desire for pratiṣṭhā, the desire to be distinguished, to show off, the desire to show that I am special, I am exclusive, and the best.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

Therefore, we can see that true spiritual culture always teaches humility.

Humility is the password through which, to some extent, a person can feel
Kṛṣṇa.

If we look at Vedic culture, from the very beginning it explains that God does
everything, not us.

There are many achievements in Vedic history which are anonymous; no one
puts any signatures to them.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

Most of the names we don't know, not even the number of holy persons there were, what to speak of their names.

History has not preserved them, and they did not want to be noted.

For example, we practically know nothing about Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, one of the greatest ācāryas in our sampradāya—essentially the next one after Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Practically speaking, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu made Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī his successor.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

He sent him his āsana, kaupīna, and bahiḥ-vāsa, all of which are still preserved in the temple of Rādhā-Ramaṇa.

Even Rādhā-Ramaṇa himself came to him in response to his prayers. But Gopāla Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī asked Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja, “Please don’t say a word about me!”

If someone starts to be aware of himself as a guru, or imagine himself to be a guru, then that’s the end of his spiritual life.

Love is out of the question, the only thing left in the heart is vanity.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

The more Kali-yuga evolves, the more this problem also deepens.

The word guru in Hindi initially meant a master; now in Hindi it is almost a swear word.

Besides everything else, guru also means a trickster.

This spiritual vanity is a very dangerous thing and it can haunt us up to the very end.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

For instance, the famous Kumbha Mela in India is practically the best fair of spiritual vanity.

The gurus gather there, seated on jewel-bedecked silver thrones on top of elephants.

Recently even the elephants went out of fashion—they put the silver throne on top of a jeep.

This behavior is a very sad thing, because actually we must understand that if I'm a true devotee I should not expect honor.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

Moreover, if I am a true devotee, I will expect to be reproached by others.

Mādhavendra Purī wrote a wonderful verse where he says, “Let other people think that I have gone mad; let my friends think I am totally confused; let my relatives say that I am a complete fool; and let those who know the Vedas consider me just some proud fool.”

If we are a true devotee, we can expect people not to like that we live a life of complete and absolute devotion; they will start reproaching us.

This is something important that we must remember.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī gives a solution, he says, ~~pratiṣṭhāśā dhr̥stā~~
śvapaca-ramaṇī me hr̥di natet: that śvapaca-ramaṇī—this shameless
prostitute is dancing, kathaṁ sādhu-premā spr̥śati—so how can pure prema
touch my heart?

Śucir etan nanu manaḥ—think for yourself how the pure can touch the
impure.

My heart becomes untouchable because this woman there has cast off all
restraint.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

So, he gives a solution to how we can protect ourselves from this problem:
sadā tvam̐ sevasva prabhu-dayita-sāmāntam atulam—constantly serve the
servant of the Lord.

Not Kṛṣṇa, but the servant of the Lord: prabhu-dayita-sāmāntam—the best
of the servants of the Lord (sāmānta means a general).

Yathā tām niṣkāśya tvaritam iha taṁ veśayati sah—then very quickly that
woman will be banished from your heart.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

In other words, Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī says that to expel that woman from the heart the cure is association with the devotees, association in the process of service with the understanding of their greatness.

When internally I am with them, I understand what true devotion is, who I am, and what the scale of my so-called devotion is.

The Hitopadeśa starts with a very instructive story about a tiger who represents the bogus sādhu.

Its hidden meaning is to learn how to distinguish a true sādhu from a pretender.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

He's standing on the banks of a lake where there is an innocent traveler passing by.

The tiger says, "Come here, my dear, come, I have a golden bracelet for you. I've repented all my sins; yes, I didn't used to be a vegetarian but now I am!"

The tiger says to the traveler that there are eight kinds of religiosity.

These are performance of sacrifices, study of scriptures, distribution of donations, performance of ascetic feats, truthfulness, patience, forgiveness, and lack of greed.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

So he says, “Look at me—you can imitate the first four: you can perform sacrifices, you can perform penance, you can study the scriptures, you can give a donation—all this you can do with a contaminated heart, but the last four are impossible to imitate. It’s impossible to pretend to be truthful!”

It is a cheater who is saying that and he is exposing himself.

He says that it is impossible to pretend to be patient; it is impossible to pretend to be able to forgive; and it is impossible to pretend to have no greed.

Because the tiger speaks like this, the meaning in this fable is that even these can be imitated.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

Even these qualities do not serve as criteria, actually.

If we want to know the true criterion for understanding who is a sādhu and who is not a sādhu, then it is not enough to just listen to what the person says.

We need to examine him and look at the way he associates.

The criterion that Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī is giving here is very important, which is that a person should not internally deem himself to be a guru, and this means that he must always seek higher association. He must always consider himself to be a disciple.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

There is a story in this regard about Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī.

A young man came to him trying to somehow serve him, but then he became bored and left for Purī.

After some time, he came back, this time in the robes of a sannyāsī. He was accompanied by some mahānta, the Prior of some temple.

The mahānta introduced himself, saying, “Bābājī, this disciple of yours has now become an elevated devotee. Please accept him. In Purī he served Haridāsa Ṭhākura and chanted three lakhs of the holy names.”

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

Gaurakiśora Dāsa Bābājī looked at him closely and said, “I do not recall having such a disciple.”

Then he looked again and said, “Actually, I don’t consider anyone to be my disciple in this world, because I myself have failed to become a disciple. So, since I have failed to become a disciple myself, how can I teach someone else?”

Because the only thing we can teach someone is how to become a disciple, how can I consider myself to be another’s teacher or a preacher or a lecturer, or anything like that unless I have learned to be a humble disciple?

He finally said, “Go away! I do not want to see you!”

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

This humility is actually the essential criterion. In his songbook Kalyāṇa-
kalpataru, Bhaktivinoda Thākura explains that if I think, “I am a Vaiṣṇava,”
then I shall look forward to receiving respect from others.

And if the desire for fame and reputation pollute my heart, then certainly I
shall descend towards life in hell.

He says that if a person considers himself a Vaiṣṇava, that person will never
become humble.

Sometimes we also have this pride inside—we are proud that we don’t eat
meat or take intoxications, nor even do we eat garlic.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

There are many other reasons to be proud.

Therefore, Bhaktivinoda Thākura instructs us to have the mood of always remaining a śiṣya (a disciple). Let us never want any pūjā, respect or honor.

Śrīla Prabhupāda is a very good example for all of us.

Śrīla Prabhupāda, although he was a spiritual master and the founder-ācārya of ISKCON, he constantly taught by his example that we should not strive for position; we should strive to be a disciple.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

He taught us to think that we are always, by nature, a follower and a servant, never a master.

There is an amazing letter Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote that touched me very deeply.

It is a letter he wrote to his spiritual brother Bhagavat Mahārāja in August 1969, when he already had a couple of dozen temples around the world, from America to Japan.

There were not many of them, but they were around the globe.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

This letter was written after he read the statutes of the organization of this Bhagavat Mahārāja.

He writes, “I have also read specifically your articles on the matter of ācāryas, wherein on the 14th paragraph I see the ācārya shall be entitled to nominate in writing his successive ācārya.”

He writes as if casually, but he says, “But we do not find any record where our Śrīla Prabhupāda nominated any ācāryas after him.”

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Different persons have interpreted on this point, and every one of our godbrothers are acting as ācārya, so this is a controversial point which I do not wish to enter into while we are proposing for cooperation.”

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijana Goswami Maharaja

Further on Śrīla Prabhupāda writes that Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda wanted his disciples to cooperate with each other.

②

Therefore, at the very end of that letter Śrīla Prabhupāda essentially says that he wants to work together: I have temples. Send your preachers.

You will be preaching in my temples, that doesn't matter.

We'll send you visas, whatever.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

That's what Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Thākura Prabhupāda wanted.

He did not want us to become ācāryas; he wanted us to remain servants and serve the mission.

Finally, he writes, "Also please let me know if personally I can become a member of your society under Clause 3 on page 19 of the Memorandum."

An ordinary member of your society is what Śrīla Prabhupāda writes.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

Once again, he has temples all over the world, he is an ācārya, with many disciples from the West, which is a great triumph, but he asks if he can become a member of his godbrother's society.

Although pride is the last thing, we can see how it works even on some earlier stages of our service, preventing us from appreciating other people and cooperating.

This idea that I am a preacher, that I can do something, and that I can teach someone, actually destroys our society.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

We'll never be able to achieve anything in devotional service as long as we do not banish this from our hearts through devotional service to the other devotees, as long as we don't take this service to other devotees and turn it into our daily nourishment on which we subsist.

This is the last and most important obstacle on our spiritual path that we must constantly be aware of.

Progress to Purity

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī appeals to the minds of those who practice bhakti, “Oh, mind, judge for yourself. If your heart is desecrated by the shameless whore dancing there, this expectation of honor and glory, who has cast away all shame, how will pure prema touch it?”

Sādhu-premā means pure love or beautiful love.

It will be repelled from having something to do with such a heart.

But Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī gives a way out of this: sadā tvaṁ sevasva—always serve.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

Prabhu-dayita-sāmāntam atulam—serve whom? The generals among the Lord's servants.

Which ones? Atulam—the matchless, unparalleled ones.

What will happen then? Yathā tāṁ niṣkāśya tvaritam iha taṁ veśayati saḥ—this prostitute will be driven out of your heart.

There will be nothing left of her, because you will be seeing how the Lord's servants behave, how their every movement, every glance, every word is permeated with humility.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

And although they are atulam, unparalleled, they consider themselves to be lower than a blade of grass lying on the street, ready to patiently accept everything that Kṛṣṇa sends to them.

They will drive that prostitute out of our hearts.

Then iha taṁ veśayati saḥ—kṛṣṇa-prema will rise in our hearts, taking her place.

It is a very important verse for each of us, especially for those who have been practicing Kṛṣṇa consciousness for a long time and who feel we have something to be proud of.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

In reality, none of us have anything to be proud of.

If we look, there is no merit of ours in anything, but it is the nature of the mind that it expects honor.

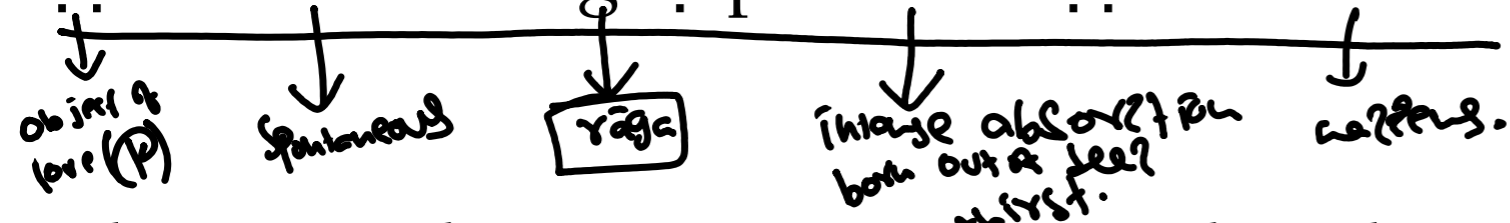
What is most disgusting is that it expects honor even for our spiritual activity and practice.

As I have previously mentioned, this is the last obstacle that can remain in a person even at the level of bhava.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

As a result of carelessness, if we do not drive this out through any available method with the help of association, service, and humility, if we are taking service from others for granted and expecting respect, fame, and honor as something well-deserved, then the consequences can be very unfortunate.

Rāgātmikā, the state of attachment or love for Kṛṣṇa that initially attracts a person to the path of bhakti-sādhana, is defined by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as iṣṭe svārasikī rāgaḥ paramāviṣṭatā bhavet.



When attachment to Kṛṣṇa, to the object of my desire, becomes absolutely natural and there is the highest degree of absorption in the object of my love or the one I want to attain, such a state or such devotees are called rāgātmikā.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

This state is achievable, but as long as anarthas remain, we cannot surrender our entire mind.

Rūpa Gosvāmī tells us that the ideal is when the mind is completely absorbed in Kṛṣṇa and thinks of nothing else.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda very interestingly describes the gradual stages of purification of the mind.

① Chanting with sambandha jñāna

He says that we must start our journey by chanting the holy name, and not simply chanting, but chanting with the understanding of who we are.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

Sambandha-jñāna—I understand that I am part and parcel of Kṛṣṇa, his servant.

If our chanting of the holy name is permeated by this understanding and awareness of my subordinate position and eternal connection with Kṛṣṇa, then gradually the holy name will be purifying.

If I chant the holy name and I do not have this understanding, if I chant simply as a mechanical ritual, or because I am supposed to, or because everyone else does it, or because I'll not be fed prasādam if I don't, or because my husband gets angry and rails at me if I don't, then the holy name's purifying effect will take a long time.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

If we have this understanding that we are 1/10,000 part of the tip of a hair when chanting the holy name, the holy name will gradually start to have an effect, reveal its cleansing power, and drive anarthas out of our heart.

① Chanting with proper sambandha jñāna

② ~~nairantarya~~ anartha nivṛtti

As a result of this purification, the next stage, as explained by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, is called nairantarya—when our mind begins to love the holy name and everything that is connected with Kṛṣṇa.

③ nairantarya → mind beginning to love the HN & everything connected to it.
 ↓ hrista
 eventually little mechanical → there is no desire to stop.

At this stage, we like hearing about Kṛṣṇa and chanting the holy name incessantly.

Although at this point, the chanting process may still somewhat bear traces of being mechanical or unaware, at least we do not want to interrupt it.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

We want to hear kīrtana and hear about Kṛṣṇa.

④ Svecchā-pūrvika →

Naturally things start happening
↓ I can sit @ anytime & remember (P)
↓ āśakti → itī śmalaya.

We always want to do something for Kṛṣṇa.

If we go further into devotion, everything happens by itself.

But it is very hard to reach this level because there is a force that constantly throws us back.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says about this level—svecchā-pūrvikā—which means that at my own will, I can at any time sit down and remember Kṛṣṇa.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

I will remember not just Kṛṣṇa, but an amazingly beautiful picture of Vṛndāvana will appear before my mind's eye, and I will see how the devotees serve Kṛṣṇa, and how Kṛṣṇa serves his devotees.

Whenever I want to, I can meditate on the Lord's līlās.

This stage is āsakti, or attachment.

The mind becomes so clear and so well-trained that as soon as we wish, our mind itself starts serving Kṛṣṇa, and I find myself there with Kṛṣṇa in my meditation.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

The next stage is svārasikī which means that never mind whether I plan to or not, I think of Kṛṣṇa all the same, even when I don't try.

⑤ Svārasikī
↳ bhāva

We will think of him all the time, because the līlās enter into us by themselves.

We are there all the time, together with Kṛṣṇa.

On their own volition these līlās are revealed in our heart.

At this stage, we have already tuned the receiver of our heart to the wave of the spiritual world.

Thus it always picks up the transmissions from there.

It is at the level of bhāva that a person reaches this svārasikī stage.

⑥ Prema → gain entrance into the pastimes.

At the level of prema, a person enters these pastimes.

Sometimes Kṛṣṇa comes to such a person and they don't know whether they are here or there.

However, at the initial stages the anarthas interrupt our meditation, constantly focusing us back on ourselves, our problems, and on our useless desires, and on the image of ourselves that we have invented.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

This is what ego is.

The trick of the false ego is that a person invents an image of how they are and then serves it.

This called idolatry, and we worship the idol that we ourselves have created.

Bhaktivinoda Thākura makes a very interesting point in his book Śrī Tattva-sūtra.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja

He says that as long as attachment to Kṛṣṇa is not developed to the proper degree of intensity, and as long as we still have anarthas, there are three things that will help us preserve spiritual attachment and that will give us a taste for it.

↓ When attachment to P is not developed fully & as long as anarthas are there. → 3 things can help preserve our SP. attachment → & increase our taste.

These are kīrtana, association with bhāgavatas, and discussion of bhagavad-kathā, or philosophy of the Bhāgavatam.

- a) kīrtan b) association with bhāgavatas c) discussion of SB

We sing kīrtana and we think, "What nice music! A new tune..." and we sing unwittingly: Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare/ Hare Rāma, Hare Rāma, Rāma Rāma, Hare Hare.

Verse-7 Commentary by Srīla Bhaktivijñana Goswami Maharaja

Thus I come in direct contact with Kṛṣṇa himself through the sound of his holy name, and the taste, (despite the anarthas), can be felt.

Secondly, although our tongue is covered and we can't feel the taste, nevertheless, if we associate with bhāgavatas, those devotees who have fully surrendered their hearts to Kṛṣṇa, we feel easy and free, and we see everything in a completely different perspective.

And the third is discussion of the Bhāgavatam philosophy.

When we read Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam or hear bhagavad-kathā, it also gives us a special taste.

Verse-7 Commentary by Śrīla Bhaktivijñāna Goswami Maharaja



If, despite of the lack of taste we come into contact with these three sources of taste, we can survive this difficult period.

But if I interrupt my association with these carriers of taste, eventually my interest will all go away.