

Śrī-Upadeśāmṛta

With

Commentaries by

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Verse – 6

**dr̥ṣṭaiḥ svabhāva-janitair vapuṣāś ca doṣair
na prākṛtatvam iha bhakta janasya paśyēt
gaṅgāmbhasām na khalu budbuda-phena-pañkair
brahma-dravatvam apagacchati nīra-dharmaiḥ**

Being situated in his original Kṛṣṇa conscious position, a pure devotee does not identify with the body. Such a devotee should not be seen from a materialistic point of view. Indeed, one should overlook a devotee's having a body born in a low family, a body with a bad complexion, a deformed body, or a diseased or infirm body. According to ordinary vision, such imperfections may seem prominent in the body of a pure devotee, but despite such seeming defects, the body of a pure devotee cannot be polluted. It is exactly like the waters of the Ganges, which sometimes during the rainy season are full of bubbles, foam and mud. The Ganges waters do not become polluted. Those who are advanced in spiritual understanding will bathe in the Ganges without considering the condition of the water.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā

By

Śrīla Rādhā-ramaṇa dāsa
Gosvāmī

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

Due to their residing within the material world, pure devotees seem to have some apparent defects from the mundane perspective.

Nevertheless, we should not consider such devotees to be material or, in other words, to be ordinary conditioned souls.

If one notices imperfections in their natures, such as harshness, anger, greed and so forth, or imperfections in their bodies, such as lack of cleanliness, ugliness, aging and so on, he should never assign mundane attributes to them.

Upadeśa-prakāśikā-ṭikā

It is impossible for these mundane imperfections to exist within devotees' spiritually perfected bodies.

Therefore to perceive these mundane defects in elevated devotees is offensive.

This point has been made clear by the example of Ganges water.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

By

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

The instruction of this sixth verse is that it is improper to perceive mundane defects in pure devotees and to consider them to be mere conditioned souls.

It is impossible for pure devotees to fall into bad association or to commit offences to the holy name.

Perhaps there can be some imperfections in their bodies and in their natures.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vrtti

Lack of cleanliness, deformity, ugliness, old age and so forth are bodily imperfections.

Birth in a low caste, harshness, lethargy and so forth are imperfections in one's character.

The water of the Ganges is considered to be pure despite the natural appearance of bubbles, foam, mud and so on within it, and its nature as liquefied transcendence is not lost.

Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-vṛtti

Similarly, Vaiṣṇavas who have realised their eternal identities are not contaminated by the natural transformations of the physical body such as birth, aging, death and so on.

Therefore even upon observing imperfections in a pure Vaiṣṇava, one intent on performing bhajana should never disrespect him.

By disrespecting such a personality, one becomes an offender (aparādhī).

Anuvrtti

By

**Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī Gosvāmī
Prabhupāda**

Anuvrtti

One should not perceive the apparent defects in the bodies or characters of pure devotees by viewing such devotees with mundane vision.

Just as the water of the Ganges forever remains transcendental though it is mixed with bubbles, foam and mud, similarly, pure devotees are always transcendental.

To view them on the basis of mundane considerations is offensive. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in Bhagavad-gītā(9.30–1), has also warned to beware of this:

॥ 9.30 ॥

**api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ**

Even if (**api cet**) the most sinful person (**su-durācāro**) worships Me (**bhajate mām**) with no other desire than to please Me (**ananya-bhāk**), I consider that person to be My devotee (**sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ**), as he has fixed himself completely in Me (**samyag vyavasito hi saḥ**).

|| 9.31 ||

kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā
śāśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

Very quickly he becomes a righteous person (**kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā**), and becomes completely devoid of contamination (**śāśvat-śāntim nigacchati**). O son of Kuntī (**kaunteya**), you declare (**pratijānīhi**) that My devotee never perishes (**na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati**).

Anuvrtti

Even though a devotee of Kṛṣṇa may not be born in a brāhmaṇa family or a gosvāmī line, to not refer to him as “Gosvāmī” or “Prabhu” is considered viewing him with mundane vision.

Devotees born in gosvāmī lines and those born in any other caste should be treated equally.

Regardless of the caste in which a devotee has taken birth, to assign material attributes to him is offensive.

Anuvrtti

But if any person who has made any degree of progress along the path of bhakti considers himself a devotee and begins engaging in material misconduct, he will certainly fall from the path of bhakti.

By coming into contact with such persons, one's bhakti is destroyed.

Some people, being proud of their birth in a brāhmaṇa family or similarly high lineage, are unable to grasp either the impeccable conduct or the elevated spiritual thought of perfected devotees (siddha-bhaktas).

Anuvṛtti

Due to this, they disrespect Vaiṣṇavas in varieties of ways and become offenders at the feet of Vaiṣṇavas (vaiṣṇava-aparādhīs).

Therefore, in this matter, sādhakas should remain very careful.

Translation and
Purport by Srila
Prabhupada

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Śuddha-bhakti, the activity of the soul proper—in other words, engagement in the transcendental loving service of the Lord—is performed in a liberated condition.

In Bhagavad-gītā (14.26) it is stated:

**mām ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa
bhakti-yogena sevate
sa guṇān samatītyaitān
brahma-bhūyāya kalpate**

"One who engages in full devotional service, who does not fall down in any circumstance, at once transcends the modes of material nature and thus comes to the level of Brahman."

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Avyabhicāriṇī bhakti means unalloyed devotion.

A person engaged in devotional service must be free from material motives. In this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement, one's consciousness must be changed.

If consciousness is aimed toward material enjoyment, it is material consciousness, and if it is aimed toward serving Kṛṣṇa, it is Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

A surrendered soul serves Kṛṣṇa without material considerations (anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam [Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu 1.1.11]).

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Jñāna-karmādy-anāvṛtam: unalloyed devotional service, which is transcendental to the activities of the body and mind, such as jñāna (mental speculation) and karma (fruitive work), is called pure bhakti-yoga.

Bhakti-yoga is the proper activity of the soul, and when one actually engages in unalloyed, uncontaminated devotional service, he is already liberated (sa guṇān samatītyaitān [Bg. 14.26]).

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Kṛṣṇa's devotee is not subjected to material condition, even though his bodily features may appear materially conditioned.

One should therefore not see a pure devotee from a materialistic point of view.

Unless one is actually a devotee, he cannot see another devotee perfectly.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

As explained in the previous verse, there are three types of devotees—kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, madhyama-adhikārī and uttama-adhikārī.

The kaniṣṭha-adhikārī cannot distinguish between a devotee and nondevotee.

He is simply concerned with worshiping the Deity in the temple.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

A madhyama-adhikārī, however, can distinguish between the devotee and nondevotee, as well as between the devotee and the Lord.

Thus he treats the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the devotee and the nondevotee in different ways.

No one should criticize the bodily defects of a pure devotee.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

If there are such defects, they should be overlooked.

What should be taken into account is the spiritual master's main business, which is devotional service, pure service to the Supreme Lord.

As stated in Bhagavad-gītā (9.30):

॥ 9.30 ॥

**api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ**

Even if (**api cet**) the most sinful person (**su-durācāro**) worships Me (**bhajate mām**) with no other desire than to please Me (**ananya-bhāḥ**), I consider that person to be My devotee (**sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ**), as he has fixed himself completely in Me (**samyag vyavasito hi saḥ**).

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Even though a pure devotee may not be born in a brāhmaṇa or gosvāmī family, if he is engaged in the service of the Lord he should not be neglected.

In actuality there cannot be a family of gosvāmīs based on material considerations, caste or heredity.

The gosvāmī title is actually the monopoly of the pure devotees; thus we speak of the Six Gosvāmīs, headed by Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī had practically become Mohammedans and had therefore changed their names to Dabira Khāsa and Sākara Mallika, but Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself made them gosvāmīs.

Therefore the gosvāmī title is not hereditary.

The word gosvāmī refers to one who can control his senses, who is master of the senses.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

A devotee is not controlled by the senses, but is the controller of the senses.

Consequently he should be called svāmī or gosvāmī, even though he may not be born in a gosvāmī family.

According to this formula, the gosvāmīs who are descendants of Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Advaita Prabhu are certainly devotees, but devotees coming from other families should not be discriminated against; indeed, whether the devotees come from a family of previous ācāryas or from an ordinary family, they should be treated equally.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

One should not think, "Oh, here is an American gosvāmī," and discriminate against him.

Nor should one think, "Here is a nityānanda-vaṁśa-gosvāmī."

There is an undercurrent of protest against our awarding the title gosvāmī to the American Vaiṣṇavas of the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Sometimes people flatly tell the American devotees that their sannyāsa or title of gosvāmī is not bona fide.

However, according to the statements of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in this verse, an American gosvāmī and a gosvāmī in a family of ācāryas are nondifferent.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

On the other hand, a devotee who has attained the title of gosvāmī but is not born of a brāhmaṇa father or of a gosvāmī in the family of Nityānanda or Advaita Prabhu should not be artificially puffed up by thinking that he has become a gosvāmī.

He should always remember that as soon as he becomes materially puffed up, he immediately falls down.

This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is a transcendental science, and there is no room for jealousy.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

This movement is meant for the paramahamsas who are completely free from all jealousy (paramaṁ nirmatsarāṇām).

One should not be jealous, whether he is born in a family of gosvāmīs or has the title of gosvāmī awarded to him.

As soon as anyone becomes envious, he falls from the platform of paramahamsa.

If we consider the bodily defects of a Vaiṣṇava, we should understand that we are committing an offense at the lotus feet of the Vaisnava.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

An offense at the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava is very serious.

Indeed, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has described this offense as hātī-mātā, the mad elephant offense.

A mad elephant can create a disaster, especially when it enters into a nicely trimmed garden.

One should therefore be very careful not to commit any offense against a Vaiṣṇava.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Every devotee should be ready to take instructions from a superior Vaiṣṇava, and a superior Vaiṣṇava must be ready to help an inferior Vaiṣṇava in all respects.

One is superior or inferior according to his spiritual development in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

One is forbidden to observe the activities of a pure Vaiṣṇava from a material point of view.

For the neophyte especially, considering a pure devotee from a material point of view is very injurious.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

One should therefore avoid observing a pure devotee externally, but should try to see the internal features and understand how he is engaged in the transcendental loving service of the Lord.

In this way one can avoid seeing the pure devotee from a material point of view, and thus one can gradually become a purified devotee himself.

Those who think that Kṛṣṇa consciousness is limited to a certain section of people, a certain section of devotees or a certain tract of land are generally prone to see the external features of the devotee.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

Such neophytes, unable to appreciate the exalted service of the advanced devotee, try to bring the mahā-bhāgavata to their platform.

We experience such difficulty in propagating this Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

Unfortunately we are surrounded by neophyte Godbrothers who do not appreciate the extraordinary activities of spreading Kṛṣṇa consciousness all over the world.

They simply try to bring us to their platform, and they try to criticize us in every respect.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

We very much regret their naive activities and poor fund of knowledge.

An empowered person who is actually engaged in the confidential service of the Lord should not be treated as an ordinary human being, for it is stated that unless one is empowered by Kṛṣṇa, one cannot spread the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world.

When one thus criticizes a pure devotee, he commits an offense (vaiṣṇava-aparādha) that is very obstructive and dangerous for those who desire to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

A person cannot derive any spiritual benefit when he offends the lotus feet of a Vaiṣṇava.

Everyone should therefore be very careful not to be jealous of an empowered Vaiṣṇava, or a śuddha-vaiṣṇava.

It is also an offense to consider an empowered Vaiṣṇava an object of disciplinary action.

It is offensive to try to give him advice or to correct him.

Translation and Purport by Srila Prabhupada

One can distinguish between a neophyte Vaiṣṇava and an advanced Vaiṣṇava by their activities.

The advanced Vaiṣṇava is always situated as the spiritual master, and the neophyte is always considered his disciple.

The spiritual master must not be subjected to the advice of a disciple, nor should a spiritual master be obliged to take instructions from those who are not his disciples.

This is the sum and substance of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's advice in the sixth verse.

**Commentary by
Srila Bhakti
Rakshak Sridhara
Maharaj**

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Rupa Gosvami says that we should not be very eager to find any defect in a pure devotee.

The water of the Ganges can purify even if there are bubbles or mud found in the water.

The bubbles and the mud do not stand in the way of purification.

The devotee is only meant for the good of the universe.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

The devotee himself, the pure soul or atma, is the purifying agent – the purest and most normal factor in the world.

But we may find in him some ‘mud’ or ‘bubbles’ – a Vaiṣṇava may sometimes be seen to be a little greedy, a little angry; or physically he may be blind or deaf or lame – but the saintly character of the Vaiṣṇava is independent of his mental or physical characteristics.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Such qualities do not affect his status in the Vaiṣṇava world.

If we attribute those faults to his inner self then we are the losers – we commit offense.

In Kurma-ksetra in South India, there was one brahmaṇa, named Vasudeva.

He was a devotee who had leprosy of an extreme type.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

So many worms were falling to the ground from his wounds, but he would pick them up and put them back in the wounds so they would not die.

He understood in his internal mind that, “The Lord is coming here and I shall have a chance to have His darśana.”

He was very eager to have darśana of Mahaprabhu, but Mahaprabhu went away and that man fell senseless to the ground.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

“What is this? I could not have a glimpse of the Lord.

He came and went away, and I did not have the capacity to have His connection, His darśana.”

Mahaprabhu was almost a mile away, and then suddenly He felt some attraction to go back.

He ran back and found that man on the way and embraced him.

His leprous body vanished and his whole body was turned into a beautiful figure.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Whatever may be externally seen in the character of a Vaiṣṇava is like the mud, bubbles and foam found in Ganges water.

The purifying capacity of Ganges water is separate and cannot be disturbed by any foam or dirt mixed with it.

The spiritual capacity does not depend in any way on the apparent material capacity.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Once Sanatana Gosvami contracted sores all over his body due to drinking bad water in the jungle, when he was returning from Vrndavana to Puri.

Mahaprabhu used to welcome him by embracing him, but Sanatana would try to withdraw. Sanatana objected, “Don’t touch me! This is the body of a sinful man.”

The sores were oozing and emitting a bad odor, but Mahaprabhu embraced him forcibly.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Sanatana had decided, “I shall either leave this place or I shall invite death by falling under the wheel of the cart of Lord Jagannatha.”

But as the Lord in the heart of all, Mahaprabhu knew Sanatana’s mind.

He chastised him and embraced him forcibly.

All the sores disappeared, and Sanatana’s body immediately became like gold.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Mahaprabhu said, “Sanatana Gosvami is a devotee of a pure type.

I see that there are some sores on his body oozing pus. I see that with My eyes.

But due to My scriptural knowledge I will show no disgust. The body of a devotee is sac-cid-ananda.

If I think it is mundane, then this shall be offensive to Krsna.”

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara
Maharaj

ghṛṇā kari' āliṅgana nā karitāma yabe
kṛṣṇa-ṭhāñi aparādha-daṇḍa pāitāma tabe

If I had been repulsed and refused to embrace Sanatana,
then I would have been punished for offending Cri
Kṛṣṇa. (Cc. Antya. 4.196)

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

The body of a devotee is sac-cid-ananda; there are no mundane things there, yet my material eyes deceive me.

But my scriptural knowledge tells me that no mundane thing can be present there.

If I say, “No, there is pus and sores and that is mundane,” then I will commit an offense against sastra and against Kṛṣṇa.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

The Vaiṣṇava conception is atma-dharma, the souls function.

Any bodily contamination is absent there.

The Bhagavatam has condemned this bodily conception in the strongest terms:

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara
Maharaj

yasyātma-buddhiḥ kuṇape tri-dhātuke
sva-dhīḥ kalatrādiṣu bhauma ijya-dhīḥ
yat-tīrtha-buddhiḥ salile na karhicij
janeṣv abhijñeṣu sa eva go-kharaḥ

He who considers the true self to be this corpse-like body that is full of mucus, bile and air, who believes that his family belongs to him, who thinks his country of birth is worthy of worship, who thinks that a holy place is merely an ordinary body of water and who never seeks the association of the wise, is no different from an ass. (Bhag.10.84.13)

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

One who thinks this body is the self is a gokhara – not an ordinary ass but a worthless ass that can only be used to carry animal fodder and not to serve any real purpose for human society.

One who thinks that his material connection is all in all is a fool. We are to remove ourselves from the platform of identifying the spiritual with the material.

The spiritual is necessary, not the material, and it is imperative that we understand the real position.

**A Doll Playing in the
Hands of the
Infinite**

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Fault finding is not a very good quality.

We are out to find good qualities, what is good in the universe and we have to preach that the highest good is in Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

A positive thing must attract us wholesale – our position is not to blame but to bring down the positive.

That should be our main object in life.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

If you try to find fault with anyone, if you criticize for your personal interest, that fault will come to you – especially when that is in the devotee section.

By connecting with poison in someone else's body, that poison will enter into you.

Through that connection the contamination will come to you.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

But if you seek help from the higher for purification and not out of envy, then you will be purified.

Otherwise, you may find yourself in the same position at the next moment.

What I am criticizing to be so bad, in the next moment I may find myself in the same deplorable position.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

I do not know the ways of the Infinite environment.

I am vulnerable. I am a doll playing in the hands of the Infinite.

At the next moment, from my human birth, I may have to go to a dog's birth, a cat's birth or an insect's birth.

We must avoid that.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Try to find only good things in others. That will help you.

In the time of our Guru Maharaja there was a system in our maṭha.

Guru Maharaja ordered one Vaiṣṇava to please another Vaiṣṇava, especially one that he does not like.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

That means he was forced to find the goodness in that devotee whom he didn't like.

He should try to find good things in him.

Eliminating the bad things in his conception of that devotee, he will search for anything that is good there and thereby he will be benefited.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

No culture of any bad thing anywhere – especially with the devotees because Kṛṣṇa has taken charge of those surrendered souls.

What is good and bad is His responsibility.

Those evil things in the devotee may disappear at any time, or Kṛṣṇa will allow that to continue in order to serve some purpose.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Such devotees are under Kṛṣṇa's direct charge. They are ananya-bhak (fixed in devotion).

Once, Bhaktivinoda Thakura had a dream in which he was wandering in the sky chanting the Holy Name.

He came upon the court of Yamaraja, where Yamaraja himself was sitting with Brahma, Narada, and others discussing a point from a verse in Bhagavad-gita:

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara
Maharaj

api cet suduracaro
bhajate mam ananya-bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavya
samyag vyavasito hi sa

Even if the most sinful person worships Me with one-pointed devotion, such a person should be considered to be saintly because his determination is perfect. (Gita 9.30)

Commentary by Sriia Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

The generally accepted meaning of this verse is: “Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is an ananyabhak devotee who worships Me alone in devotional service which is free from karma and jnana, he is to be considered saintly because his endeavors are completely on My behalf and his determination is fixed.”

Here, Kṛṣṇa says, “Whatever he has done, if he is exclusively given to Myself, he should be considered as My devotee – samyag vyavasito hi sa’. And whatever he is doing is cent percent right.”

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

But then the next passage says, ksipram bha-vati dharmatma – “Very soon he will be a man of righteousness; he will become dharmatma – dutiful.”

As Yamaraja, Brahma and Narada discussed this point, a question came up.

Kṛṣṇa says, bhajate mam ananya-bhak – “One who is My exclusive devotee.”

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

The question arises, what is exclusive devotion or ananya-bhajana?

Kṛṣṇa says, “Give up all other religious conceptions and surrender to Me alone” – sarvadharmā parityajya, mam ekam caraṇam vraja. That is exclusive devotion.

But if one is practicing exclusive devotion then he is already dharmatma, he is already righteous.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

How is it then that in the very next verse, Kṛṣṇa says, “Soon he becomes dharmatma?” How are we to adjust this? Kṛṣṇa says:

**ksipram bhavati dharmatma
sasvac-chantim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijanihi
na me bhakta' praṇasyati**

He quickly becomes virtuous again and attains everlasting peace. O Kaunteya, go and declare that My devotee never perishes. (Gita 9.31)

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

This is the general meaning of this verse.

Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “He soon becomes dharmatma. My devotee is never ruined. Go and declare this to the public.”

Kṛṣṇa says that after the devo-tee became ananya-bhak - that is, he gave up all sorts of duties and surrendered to Kṛṣṇa - then again he will be a dutiful man.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

As Brahma, Narada, and Yamaraja discussed this point, they saw Bhaktivinoda Thakura walking in the sky and taking the Holy Name.

Then one of them suggested, “There is a pure devotee. He should be able to give the real meaning.”

Then Bhaktivinoda Thakura was invited in their midst and was asked, “How shall we adjust these points? Kṛṣṇa has said that this person is an exclusive devotee, that he has renounced all sorts of duties and surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. And yet, in no time it will be seen that he is very dutiful. How can we understand this?”

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Bhaktivinoda Thakura explained that, “He quickly becomes righteous” refers not to the exclusive devotee, but to one who considers the exclusive devotee pure in all circumstances.

“Even if he performs some abominable act, he is really a sadhu, a saint” – one who can think of an exclusive devotee in this way will soon become dharmatma.

This was Bhaktivinoda Thakura’s explanation.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

However, merely professing that, “I am ananya-bhak!” won’t do. A real ananya-bhak devotee won’t say, “I am ananya-bhak.”

His innate feeling will be, “I can’t be ananya-bhak. That is not a small thing. I have not attained that stage. It is very difficult. Rather I am going away from it.”

That will be his feeling.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

This opposite tendency will come.

In this verse from Gita, Kṛṣṇa is saying that, “The fact is that one who has accepted Me exclusively has no taste in other things, so really he is not duracara (sinful).

Internally he is always connected with Me and he is indifferent to external life.

Whoever has surrendered to Me I have accepted as My own.”

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

This means that those that are accepted by Him will gradually be purified.

But we are very eager to point out their faults.

We are quick to judge the case of others, “Why should he receive causeless mercy? He has got so many defects.”

This is a very poor attitude, a disqualification. “Why should he be accepted or given any chance?”

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

But for ourselves we want mercy, “Don’t come to judge, if so then I have no hope, my Lord. Please grant your grace then I have some hope. Please be lenient and do not find fault with me.”

But in the same breath we will say, “Why this man? He is disqualified! Why should he get any grace? Why should he get some mercy or affection?”

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

That is hypocritical and causes a great deal of difficulty within us. It is suicidal.

It is most dangerous for our progress.

In my own case, I want something higher, but in the case of others I can't tolerate the same behavior from the Lord.

Generally this is the basis of vaiṣṇava-aparadha.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

He has been accepted by the Lord and gradually Kṛṣṇa will purify him, but we continue to give much attention to whatever difficulties are still left in him.

The result is that those difficulties will be transferred to us.

These are the realities of the experience in this line.

If we especially mark the faults of another devotee, they will be transferred to us.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

It happens. From our own experience and also from the castra we have seen this.

The greatest enemy to our progress is vaiṣṇava-aparadha, especially for a beginner on the journey in this domain.

Apaaradhana – aradhana means to worship, to revere, to serve, and apa means that which is not up to standard.

vaiṣṇava-aparadha has been said to be most dangerous.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

If a Vaiṣṇava is serving Kṛṣṇa and we find fault with him, our level of purity will go down.

Generally a Vaiṣṇava will always think, “I can’t serve perfectly. There are so many defects in my service.”

Even Radharāṇī says, “I can’t serve Kṛṣṇa properly,” but She is serving to the highest degree.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

In the lower position if there is some clash, that is vaiṣṇava-aparadha.

That is greater than any aparadha directly made to Kṛṣṇa, because the Vaiṣṇava is serving Him properly with earnest-ness and I am abusing him.

Thereby I am committing suicide. To stand against the Vaiṣṇava is to stand against one's own vital interests.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Visvanatha Cakravarti Thakura says that the maha-bhagavatas do not care for any offenses made against them, but the foot-dust of those maha-bhagavatas cannot tolerate the dishonor of their master.

Physician Cure
Thyself!

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Generally, one must be very careful not to make any remarks about the practices and activities of another Vaiṣṇava.

It is only acceptable when one is empowered by the Supreme, as in the case of disciples.

To correct his disciples, the sympathetic guardian can mark their defects and help them to remove them.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Don't criticize. Don't be hungry to find the faults in others.

But if someone finds fault in you, then you may consult a higher authority – a more senior Vaiṣṇava, “There have been some complaints against me. Whether or not they are valid, I don't know. Please, can you help me to understand my defects?”

Such an enquiry has no envy, no spirit of competition that I am good and he is bad; it is devoid of mischievous motives underground.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Only it must be endowed with pariprasnena – honest enquiry. Otherwise, I shall have to suffer.

‘Physician, cure thyself,’ before you attempt to cure others.

This is your primary duty; then you will really be able to offer others a cure-all.

In conclusion, my advice is that you should try to be submissive to the Vaiṣṇava devotees.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

Submissiveness to them will promote your spiritual merit.

We shall also pray to the Supreme Lord for such an attitude, “Oh Lord, my bad temperament stands in the way of my association with the devotees – please remove it.”

Association with the devotees of the Lord is a primary necessity.

It vastly improves our position with the Supreme if we always remain in prayer.

Commentary by Srila Bhakti Rakshak Sridhara Maharaj

“Oh my Lord, this bad temperament in me, this inconsiderate thinking and feeling – sentiments concerning the outer world – this is disturbing my association with the higher Vaiṣṇava devotees.”

We have to try to find the good in others. That will help us.

Otherwise we will be in great difficulty.

This is not theoretical – these are all practical things.

Commentary by
Srila Bhakti
Siddhanta Saraswati
Thakura
(Upadesamrta
Bhasa)

Upadesamṛta Bhasa

Verse – 1

śuddha-kṛṣṇa-bhakta tāhāra svabhāvika doṣa
āra tāhāra deha-doṣe na kariha roṣa

Although natural faults may be found in a pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, one must never becomes disturbed at the bodily defects found within him.

Upadesamṛta Bhasa

Verse – 2

prākṛta darśane doṣa yadi dr̥ṣṭa haya
darśanete aparādha jānibe niścaya

If one sees such faults with material vision, know that such a vision is certainly offensive.

Upadesamṛta Bhasa

Verse – 3

**hīna-adhikārī haye, mahatera doṣa
siddha-bhakte hīna-jñāne nā pare santoṣa**

If one, having insufficient qualifications and knowledge, sees the ‘faults’ of a great devotee who has attained perfection, then one can never become happy and peaceful.

Upadesamrta Bhasa

Verse – 4

**brahma-drava gaṅgodaka pravāhe jakhana
budbuda-phena-pañka jalera milana**

The waters of the sacred Gaṅgṛ are always considered to be divine although bubbles, foam and mud may be found within it.

Upadesamṛta Bhaṣa

Verse – 5

anya-jala gaṅgā-lābhe heya kabhu naya
tadrūpa bhaktera mala kabhu nāhi raya

When any other water is mixed with the Ganga, it is still never considered to be impure. Similarly, the so-called faults found in a pure devotee will not remain in him.

Upadesamṛta Bhasa

Verse – 6

sādhu-doṣa-dṛṣṭā yei kṛṣṇa ājñā tyaji
garve bhakta-bhrṣṭa haiyā mare adho maji

Those that see faults in a sṛdhu reject the instructions of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Due to pride, their devotion becomes incinerated and at the time of death they fall down.