

May I Always Remain Śrīla Prabhupāda's Dog

Girirāja Svāmī: Every morning when Śrīla Prabhupāda was in Bombay he used to walk on Juhu Beach. One morning I had been feeling especially wretched and miserable. Although so many other devotees were present, Śrīla Prabhupāda began to speak as if addressing me personally.

He quoted a Sanskrit verse and spoke about two words *anātha* and *sanātha*. *Nātha* means “master,” so *a-nātha* means “without a master” and *sa-nātha* means “with a master.” The whole goal of life is to become *sanātha*, “with a master.”

In the morning on Juhu Beach many gentlemen used to walk their dogs. Śrīla Prabhupāda pointed to a fat and fit gentleman walking with an equally fat and fit dog. The man was walking briskly and confidently with his dog on a leash, and the dog was walking equally briskly and confidently with his master by his side. Śrīla Prabhupāda commented that every dog wants a good master. If the dog has a good master, the dog is happy. He holds his head high; he wags his tail. He knows that his master will maintain and protect him, so he has no anxiety.

Śrīla Prabhupāda then pointed to some stray dogs. “They have no master. They do not know where they will sleep, how they will get food. Other dogs bark at them; children throw stones at them. They are always in anxiety.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda stopped walking. He planted his cane firmly in the sand of Juhu Beach. Although I stood behind many of the devotees, who moved close around him, with his eyes laden with love and compassion he looked into my eyes. “So we should be *sanātha*, protected, not *anātha*, orphan. We should have our master and be exclusively devoted to him. Then we will feel confident in his protection and always be happy.”

Although I had caught some of the words from the verse and Śrīla Prabhupāda's explanation, I very much wanted to find the verse but could not. Then several years later I came across the same verse quoted in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (M 1.206):

***bhavantam evānucaran nirantarahaḥ
praśānta-niḥśeṣa-mano-rathāntarahaḥ
kadāham aikāntika-nitya-kiṅkaraḥ
praharṣayiṣyāmi sanātha-jīvitam***

“By serving You constantly one is freed from all material desires and is completely pacified. When shall I engage as Your permanent eternal servant and always feel joyful to have such a fitting master?”

Reading the purport, I found the same instructions Śrīla Prabhupāda had given on Juhu Beach: “Just as a dog or servant is very satisfied to get a competent, perfect master, or as a child is completely satisfied to possess a competent father, so the living entity is satisfied by completely engaging in the service of the Supreme Lord. He thereby knows that he has a competent master to save him from all kinds of danger.”

Now whenever I walk on Juhu Beach and see the different types of dogs those with masters and those without, I remember Śrīla Prabhupāda's instructions and pray that I will always remain Śrīla Prabhupāda's dog.