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Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...*Bhāgavatam*, you might have found, that when the last time of Ajāmila came, three messengers from the Yāmadūtas of dreadful figure appeared just before him in coma stage. And he was frightened to find them, in the coma stage. They're forcibly trying to take his mental body forcibly towards that mental judge, the Yāmarāja, in the mental world.

Then he found, little before, that his youngest son whose name was Nārāyaṇa, there. For help he wanted to take the name of Nārāyaṇa. Calling, "Nārāyaṇa. Furious persons have come to attack." But when going to take the name of Nārāyaṇa he thought, 'These are strong enough to do away with this little boy Nārāyaṇa. What he will do with them? No comparison.'

Then Nārāyaṇa, this Name, He gave him an idea, a peep into the Lord Nārāyaṇa. His mind from the boy went to the Lord, Nārāyaṇa. And no sooner, four messengers came down from Vaikuṅṭha, like Nārāyaṇa servants. And they faced those Yāmadūta messengers of the Yāmarāja who is the judge of this mundane activity here. There was a fight, and they were defeated and they were forced to retire, and they went away.

And this Ajāmila he saw all these things in coma stage like a dream. Then all his previous mental impulse and tendencies finished. He got up and thought, 'Oh. What is these matters? These Yāmadūtas furious, and these mild and grand appearance, these Vaikuṅṭhadūta, they had fight and they've released me for the time being from their clutches.' And his previous tendencies, his attraction for the family all finished. He woke up and went straight to Haridwar and began 'Nārāyaṇa, Nārāyaṇa.' And after some time when he finished, the four Vaikuṅṭhadūta came and took him towards that direction, Vaikuṅṭha.

This is *sāṅketya*. He began one thing, but something, another came in its turn, retinue, *sāṅketya nāmābhāsa*.

Then there are other kinds also. One is taking the Name of Kṛṣṇa, 'Oh.' In a merry sport one may utter, 'Oh. You are taking Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa. Yes, you may take. See what is the consequence. Kṛṣṇa will take you.' He may cut joke of taking the Name of Kṛṣṇa may be *nāmābhāsa*. When cutting jokes by uttering the word, the Name of Kṛṣṇa, sometimes *nāmābhāsa* may come and he may be liberated from the mundane tie.

Then another, *sāṅketya, parihāsyā, stobha*. Sometimes we use symbolic way. When playing on the *mṛdaṅga* and others we use 'Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa,' as a matter of some symbol. 'Hey Kṛṣṇa.' That symbolic representation we may use. By that also we may get liberation.

Then *helana*, sometimes negligently we may take. We're rising from the bed in the morning taking the Name. 'Hare Hare Kṛṣṇa.' In this way, not very regardfully, or faithfully. But there also I can attain *nāmābhāsa*, that is liberation. But not participation in the direct service of the Lord.

So this *nāmābhāsa* should be avoided, and the *nāmāparādha*, the offences also should be avoided.

Then how to proceed? Always aspire after the service of Kṛṣṇa and His own persons. With this idea go on taking the Name. Then you'll feel the progress in no time, that you're being drawn towards that. Kṛṣṇa consciousness will rise within you. A wholesale transformation will come within your mental system. Kṛṣṇa centred, not body centred, or country centred, or society centred. But Kṛṣṇa centred transformation wholesale will begin and go on, until gradually you'll find that you're in a particular happy position in the transcendental world.

So now you go and bow down to those Vaiṣṇavas you find here. And go to the temple veranda, and there take a few rounds of Name, as I told from the big towards the small. And then finishing four rounds you may take some *anukalpa* on Ekādaśī day...

...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: ...have any clash with ISKCON. As much as possible I want to avoid any clash. But when one finds untenable, their connection untenable, so at the risk that is *caitya-guru*, the Guru within. Guru outside, *mahanta-guru*. And Guru within, *caitya-guru*, Guru who is living within us, giving suggestion in the spiritual matters. So you appeal to Him, appeal to Nityānanda Prabhu, the general Guru, representative of the general Guru tattva. Appeal, pray to Him for proper guidance. That is above all.

The conscience that took me to Swāmī Mahārāja whom I accept to be the absolute spiritual guide, I can rely on that. The conscience that took me to him, I can rely on that conscience sincerely. But avoiding external clash as far as possible.

One gentleman came to me, perhaps from Rāmeśvara Mahārāja, Mukundamālā or someone. Then Rāmeśvara Mahārāja he called for explanation from me. "Why have you accepted him? It is beyond Vaiṣṇava courtesy that one should capture another's disciple." He gave a letter.

'You see me and I shall explain.' Then when he came I told plainly that 'he had some complaint against you.' And I examined as much as possible, and I was satisfied that is sufficient to disregard you. And I find in his earnest appeal I approached to help him. That is my explanation to you. I don't think that you are a perfect gentleman. Gradation. You are all so many students. I consider you to be students. I consider myself also a student. And there is gradation. That you have declared yourself, your committee has declared yourself to be an Ācārya and you have become perfect - ha, I don't, I'm not a fool to accept that. I have got some knowledge about the principle of devotion. For long time I'm in cultivation of that, so I feel that I have some knowledge. It is not possible to finish the whole, it is infinite. But some substantial position where from I can judge to certain extent what is what in the spiritual world. And what I've done, I've done with my clear conscience. I don't consider your body is perfect, and you are all perfect Ācāryas. You are *kaniṣṭha adhikārī*, *madhyama adhikārī*, *uttama adhikārī*, so many considerations. We have got some practical experience of theoretical education also in that matter, so we're not guided by any hoax. Some substantial position we must have in our spiritual faith.'

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir, anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālāḥ
[prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus, tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣudapāyo 'nughāsam]*

["As with every mouthful an eater feels the threefold effects of his satisfaction, his stomach being filled, and his hunger being dispelled, in the same way when a surrendered soul serves the Lord he realises devotion of three natures simultaneously: devotion in love, the personal appearance of the Lord who is the abode of love, and detachment from all other things."] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.2.42]

These are the three signs must come within a devotee. *Bhakti*, the tendency towards the service will increase. *Pareśānubhavo*, somewhat conception about Kṛṣṇa, about the spiritual truth, one must possess. And *anyatra viraktir*, and withdrawn from any other ambitious things of the world. *Kanak*, *kāminī*, *pratiṣṭhā*, withdrawal from all these negative sides, and participation in the

positive side. And also with acceleration the tendency to approach towards the truth, that will increase with exploration. All these things are there.

Otherwise it is not anarchy, that by certificate. Why did you come, leaving Christianity, to Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism? What led you to come here? There also so many certificates. The Catholics, their monks they have got their certificate. And why have you crossed that and jumped into a new theological conception? What is the reason? All these things. On the basis of that I'm done.

Devotee: The main thing my wife is fearing that there might be some reaction, for going to Sudhīra...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Don't feel very impatient, and don't hurry. But take time, think soberly, and ask your conscience, her conscience, sincerely. Appeal to Nityānanda Prabhu and Swāmī Mahārāja 'what am I to do?' Only to the form or to the material? The form is one side, and the substance is on the other side, we're to consider over that. The formality, the committee, all these things, but committee for what? Committee to work for particular principles, for particular truth, substance. The valuation of the committee will depend on that. There are no want of any committees in the world. But because there is the committee and so it is the absolute, that cannot be the consideration in the case of the truth. When committee is subservient to the truth then that committee should be allowed, as long as they're connected with the truth. Valuation will be according to that. No want of committees in the world. But committee for what purpose? How much the committee is true to the spiritual fact, that is for consideration. So,

*sarva-dharmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja
[ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo, mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ]*

["Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, so do not despair."] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 18.66]

Before that,

*[śreyān sva-dharmo viguṇaḥ, para-dharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt]
sva-dharme nidhanaṁ śreyaḥ, para-dharmo bhayāvahaḥ*

["It is better to carry out one's own duties a little imperfectly rather than faultlessly perform another's duties. Know that even death is auspicious in the discharge of one's duties appropriate to his natural position in the ordained socio-religious system, because to pursue another's path is perilous."] [*Bhagavad-gītā*, 3.35]

Don't leave your position, remain there firmly, hold your position. That means don't allow you to go down. Then if there is necessity go forward. When that chance will come you must take courage and push towards the front, towards the truth, higher truth. Life is elimination and acceptance, elimination of the bad. Progress means elimination and new acceptance. Otherwise what is progress? Progress means elimination and acceptance, both. But not elimination for the lower order, but for the higher order. We must eliminate and we must go forward. But we must be cautious also that we may not go down. Leaving the present position we should not allow ourselves to go down. But to go forward we must take strong stand there in that position. Just as a

general does, where he puts his army he may consolidate his position so that he may not be pushed back. But whenever he gets the chance - go forward. So *sva-dharme nidhanam śreyah*, don't leave your position, die, do or die. Then when the chance will come go forward, do or die. So life is progress, and progress towards spiritual. From lower to intermediate, from intermediate to higher, in this way. Always we're in a progressive world.

But *śaraṅgati* is the basis, *śraddhā*, faith. Association with the impurity, what we consider to be impure, of lower level, my association with that will hamper my cause. *Sat saṅga*, good association is indispensable for our progress in our life, *sādhu saṅga*. Association can change us. We're already vulnerable, so bad association will take us down with greater speed. Good association will help us to go up. So association, *sādhu saṅga* association, Vaiṣṇava. And that is very hard to find a good association in the Vaiṣṇava world. Everywhere good association is very rarely found. It is not in the market that we can purchase this. Ha, ha. It's very, very rare.

Devotee: Is that based on *sukṛti* Mahārāja that one gets good association?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes. Good association. The first is *sukṛti*, then *sukṛti* developed comes to *śraddhā*, then *śraddhā* takes us to proper association. And with continual association we select our Guru. Then we accept our Gurudeva we go on according to that.

But in very rare case if we're very unfortunate sometimes we have to leave Guru. But that sort of curse should not come in anyone's fate when one is bound to leave Guru. But still it may come to any person, such misfortune may come. But that is very bad luck and we should not look at that such unfortunate thing, but still it is there. So before we accept anyone as Guru we should be very strong in our judgement before acceptance. Our decision may not be faulty, treacherous. So when we come to Guru, before that we must be very, very firm in our understanding. Because after we surrender, to come back it is very unhappy and detrimental to the cause. But if such case occurs we must have to do.

guror apy avaliptasya, kāryākāryam ajānataḥ / utpatha-prathipannasya, parityāgo vidhīyate

["A guru who is addicted to sensual pleasure and polluted by vice, who is ignorant and who has no power to discriminate between right and wrong, or who is not on the path of *śuddha-bhakti* must be abandoned."] [*Mahābhārata, Udyoga-parva, 179.25*]

If such unhappy incident also is there then in that case we're to come back. That such disaster may not come in anyone's fate, we shall pray to the Lord. But before we accept any Guru we must be quite confident.

Devotee: _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?]

Devotees: _____ [?]

Devotee: When you come to Navadvīpa - when someone like myself comes to Navadvīpa, I like doing *kīrtana* and *bhajan*, but when I come to Navadvīpa I hear so many *kīrtanas* and *bhajans*

where they're playing so many instruments, harmonium. Making, chanting the Holy Name very long, like that, and it seems very attractive.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: We do not do that. Our Guru Mahārāja did not introduce this. Swāmī Mahārāja might have accepted there, because he had to modify according to the stages where he had to preach. *Loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā*. According to the conditions _____
[?] But in our position our Guru Mahārāja did not allow any other instrument. Because what is not in the cause is not in the effect.

Mahāprabhu came from the ideal of that world here, and what He introduced that is eternal partnership that had. And what is not found in His *kīrtana* we generally do not accept that. This *khola*, *karatāla*, all these things He used. 'And the civilisation was in want, no harmonium was created at that time, so He ignored.' We don't take it in that way. Everything in perfect form in Goloka, His paraphernalia, instruments, everything is there in full. And He came down with His own paraphernalia. And we adore that. And what is not found there, such things we don't like. But sometimes,

*loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā, nityā hi jantor na hi tatra codanā
[vyavasthitis teṣu vivāha-yajña,-surā-grahair āsu nivṛttir iṣṭā]*

["Everyone is naturally inclined to have sex, eat meat, and drink wine. There is no need for the scripture to encourage these things. The scriptures do, however, give concessions to people who are determined to do these things. The scriptures therefore grant a license to enjoy sex by allowing sexual intercourse with one's lawfully wedded wife at the proper time of the month. They grant a license to eat meat to those who perform a certain kind of sacrifice, and a license to drink wine to those who perform the Sautramani sacrifice. The purpose of granting these licenses for sense gratification is only to restrict these activities and encourage people to give them up altogether. The real intention of the Vedic injunctions regarding sex, meat eating, and wine drinking is to make one abstain from these activities."] [*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 11.5.11]

To take up it is necessary to make progress by instalment. So some experts may allow something wrong to continue for some time. And then afterwards he'll say, "Leave this and take pure things." In that case according to *deṣa-kāla-pātra*, the time, and person, and local necessity, some provision may be given by some experts for some time. And then he will, after some time he'll say, "It's better to give up these things." It may be in some places.

But we say in Mahāprabhu's time that is the ideal. And what was not used at that time, we do not like to use those things. That is our contention. Our Guru Mahārāja did so and we accept that in toto. Harmonium was invented during his time but he did not allow it. And we also could understand in that way. Mahāprabhu He's perfect, His paraphernalia, His environment is perfect. So what is most suiting to the purpose, that *was* with Him, everything. And that was not in want in anything, which is found today in so-called civilised world. So we do not allow all these things. To introduce something more, to add something more to the perfect ideal, that is not our liking. That is perfect we shall try to understand how that is the most perfect stage in *saṅkīrtana*.

Why flute was selected by Kṛṣṇa to be a playing instrument in the first order, not other things? What is the speciality of the flute of Kṛṣṇa, and not other things? And why shingha [?] for Baladeva, not the flute?

These things to be considered, with the stage and the suiting paraphernalia, that is to be understood particularly. This suits the best there, that suits that stage best. In this way we're to understand the gradation everywhere.

Devotee: If someone wants to learn the *mṛdaṅga*, we know some teachers they teach many, many, many mantras. But how much is actually required for one who's trying to become pure devotee, *śuddha bhakta*...

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: We're not expert in that department, so with a general idea we move on. In *mṛdaṅga*, or _____ [?] we do not know much. That may come automatically when our *svarūpa siddhi* - when we shall reach that position.

During the time of the war, in Calcutta in a public place, the British constructed one military dress, and told, underlying there was, this was written, "Accept this dress, and the dress will teach you what you'll have to do. The dress will say that what you'll have to do. You please put on this military dress, and the dress will say what you're required to do."

So when we shall reach the particular paraphernalia and our *svarūpa siddhi*, that will automatically supply everything in me. The circumstance will make me fit. My duty is to go up. And the soil will be my teacher, the paraphernalia, environment will be my teacher, through gradual process. And that will be the best to nurture this, the ornaments, and everything, the dress, and the soil. Otherwise will be misfit.

Rāma, Rāma.

Devotee: When one is doing *bhajan* and *kīrtana*, what should be his attitude, his meditation?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Ha. Meditation not much effective. Only we shall try - *śaraṇāgati* we shall, almost the whole attention should be concentrated to *śaraṇāgati*, surrender.

Once, one gentleman, a *zamīndār*, took Hari *Nāma* from our Guru Mahārāja and asked, "While I shall take to count the beads, what should I think in the mind? Any portrait of Kṛṣṇa? Or any Śrī Mūrti anywhere? What should I - how I can engage, utilise my mind at that time while counting the beads?"

Guru Mahārāja answered. I was present there. "Mind has nothing to do in the supra-mental region. Mind he use this like a vulture, mind is like a vulture. Always vulture goes to the cremation ground. So mind and other senses they will try to fall on that thing and make it mundane, a cremation ground, that is all mortal. They have got all mortal experience, the mind, the eye, etc, the ear, everything has mortal experience. So whenever you will take the Name, other senses including mind, they will try to make it a mortal field. With their prejudice and experience of the mortal world they will fall on it, and will make it a cremation ground. Don't allow that. Only consider that I've got some spiritual things, or sound, which is completely otherwise from this mortal world. And that sound will gradually evolve, spiritual figure, or colour, *rūpa*.

namnastam sravanam anta karana suddatvam apeksam [?]
sude chantak ranye rupasya sphuranam bhavati [?]

Jīva Goswāmī says. "When by taking the Name, concentrating over the Name, I have got it, spiritual sound from my Gurudeva, this is transcendental. And waiting how the effect may come

down in me. With such expectant attitude we shall go on counting. And never pining ourselves down in this mundane. But rather expecting something new, transcendental experience."

Then the colour will come, figure, the *rūpa* will come. Then after that from *rūpa* will come *guṇa*, quality, relativity. From that relativity it will come down from above, from over the soul. The ordinary plane of experience, the mental plane, the plane of the reason, the plane of soul, plane of Supersoul - in this way the subtle planes are there. So it will have to come down with my expectant attention. Just as a particular bird always expects rain. The *cātaka*, they do not take any water on the floor, neither river, nor lake, nothing of the kind. But only rain water, they always try to have rain water. So our attitude should be...

Devotee: _____ [?]

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: _____ [?] So expectant for some transcendental experience we shall go on. And from the first, from the sound the *rūpa* will come, from *rūpa* _____ [?] the quality will come from that relativity. Then paraphernalia will come, then the pastimes will come. And we shall find that my self as a unit is there, not this self mundane, but my soul has got a serving position there in that plane. In this way we're to be reinstated in our home.

So mind may not be allowed to indulge in its own speculative line.

Devotee: So whatever service we're doing we should have the anticipation of some higher realisation to come down.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: So the stress is always given in this that do under a bona fide Vaiṣṇava, whatever you do. The direction, if you get from the higher, you'll be benefited. You see there are raw materials. Raw materials if it's in the hands of expert it can produce miracle. Otherwise raw materials are raw materials. So we have got raw things, and higher utilisation or proper utilisation of them is necessary. And that can come from higher transcendental region. As much as higher direction will come and we shall live, surrender to its disposal, we'll be more and more benefited. This is the scientific life.

Hare Kṛṣṇa. Nitāi Gaura Hari bol. Nitāi. _____ [?]

Devotee: _____ [?]

...

Devotee: ...chanting the Holy Name, or can it come when one is rendering some other type of service?

Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja: Yes, some other also, when Vaiṣṇava *sevā*, Guru *sevā*. What is done under the direction of the Vaiṣṇava that has got another, transcendental value. I'm reading myself, and I'm reading by the order of a Vaiṣṇava. Anyhow recentralisation is necessary. We're wrongly centralised. Recentralising is necessary. And in other words real spiritual centralising is necessary. We must be Kṛṣṇa centralised. We're already we're different, partial centralised. But all must be For Itself. One ended, Kṛṣṇa ended, Kṛṣṇa ending towards Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction. So this ego must be demolished, for separate interest, local interest. The enquiry for local interest, that ego must be

dissolved. And we shall try to find that within the Kṛṣṇa centre ego is there. That is the positive side we're to develop or find out within us.

So, to take the Name, to hear *Bhāgavatam*, that can be, that may be *dharma, artha, kāma, mokṣa*, any, according to its end purpose. But when it's done only for the interest of Kṛṣṇa then it's devotion. I'm reading this book, not to get any fame by delivering lectures to the public, then it will not be devotion reading the book. I'm reading the book because my higher Master he wants me to do this. This line should be found and should be followed. That whatever I'm doing, not for my interest, but for the interest of my Master, whatever I do. That will have spiritual character. That is progress towards Kṛṣṇa, towards centre. Centre interested we shall try to do anything and everything.

Otherwise taking the Name, or scripture, all may be false if it's not for the central interest. For selfish interest also we may use all those apparently devotional forms. Some may be *sahajiyā*, some will be trader and they will have to go to hell, a reaction. Anyhow, for the interest of Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa conception. So it is very imperative necessity, exclusive necessity, that we should come in contact with a real Vaiṣṇava who has got Kṛṣṇa interest in his heart. Wholesale converted into Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Kṛṣṇa consciousness means Kṛṣṇa centred, for the satisfaction of Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa consciousness, Kṛṣṇa centred means for *His* satisfaction.

We have got, every one of us, our separate satisfaction. We're running after that, in different shades of life. We're to eliminate them, and to convert, to find out, in other words, find out our innermost tendency, home tendency that is moving towards Kṛṣṇa's satisfaction. That is to be found out in our innermost part of our heart. That is there, home. Home consciousness is within us, it is the innermost. And Kṛṣṇa's home, that is, He's our Master. We're in one family with Kṛṣṇa. Everyone is busy to satisfy Him.

Yaśodā whipping Kṛṣṇa, but her heart is wholesale converted to Kṛṣṇa's interest. But formally what she's doing apparently it may seem she's against the interest of Kṛṣṇa, but it's not so.

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