



***Sri Krishna Seva Prapti***  
***A practical guide to God-realization***

**A Mahaprabhu Charan Pahari Series**



A

## Mahaprabhu Charan Pahari Series

Krishna Seva Prapti – The Gaudiya Vaishnava Way

यस्य प्रसादाद्भगवत्प्रसादो  
यस्याप्रसादान्न गतिः कुतोऽपि  
ध्यायन्स्तुवंस्तस्य यशस्त्रि-सन्ध्यं  
वन्दे गुरोः श्री-चरणारविन्दम्



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## DEDICATION



This work is dedicated to the Lotus feet of our eternal spiritual master Param Puja Sri Sri 108 Premadasa Babaji Maharaj. An embodiment of transcendental humility, he picked us up from the darkness of “jeeva maya” and in the mood of a loving mother keeps nurturing us to our final destination of Sri Krishna Seva Prapti.



## PREFACE

This work is a collection summary of spiritual realizations and conversations with a God-realized spiritual master. The contents of this work form the basis of spiritual tenets on the path of Bhakti and represent experiential principles of the Gaudiya Vaishnava thought. This work does not boast of positioning itself as an authoritative treatise on Gaudiya Vaishnavism or any other school of spiritual rigor. Any inadvertent representation of any spiritual/religious school should be considered to be purely unintentional. The purpose of this work is to drive home the need for the general populace to immediately take to the process of “Nishkama Bhakti” (Unconditional Devotional Service) considering the fact that this is the need of Kaliyuga as expounded by the Kaliyuga Avatara Sriman Gauranga Mahaprabhu who briefly visited our planet about 530 years ago.



## ECSTATIC MOODS

The mission of Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had already been pre-ordained even before His advent. Yet for the sake of Leela, Sriman Mahaprabhu had sweet transactions with His devotees. In that context even the Leelas in the jungle of Jharkhand had its resolution even before the advent of Sriman Mahaprabhu. The Lord simply fulfilled that ecstatic Leela to set an example of the glories of Hari Nama. Even the meeting between Sriman Mahaprabhu and Sri Ramananda Raya was pre-determined as part of Leela. The Lord wanted to establish through his conversations with Ramananda Raya, the highest sadhana. Ramananda Raya was an established scholar and the world had full faith in his words. Hence the Lord wanted to establish the ultimate truth from the very mouth of His eternal associate Sri Ramananda Raya. The Lord thus established the original form of sadhana through these conversations. The conversation started with Varna Ashram Dharma; gradually the higher moods of the four rasas of dasya, sakhya, vatsalya and madhura bhava were established. Mahaprabhu did never directly accept fully any of the gradient philosophies that Sri Ramananda Raya put forth. The Lord only finally accepted and agreed that the highest was the mood of the Gopis of Vraja that is the “goal” zenith of a jeeva who is bound by Maya.

People who occupy the forest areas of Jharkhand are no less than animals in mood and are cut off from the actuality of human form of life. Sriman Mahaprabhu passed through Jharkhand on his visit to Vrindavana. He realized that it was the people of Jharkhand who deserved utmost mercy and that the jungle of Jharkhand is the place where He was required to shed maximum “kripa” or mercy. This was His mood. He also realized that the people of Jharkhand were so



fallen that they would never know what Dharma is even with maximum effort. Avidya and stupidity in human nature was at its peak in the area called Jharkhand. They would never accept any Shastra because of limited intelligence. They were unable to differentiate between a fool and an intelligent man or even between what is right and what is wrong. However Sriman Mahaprabhu was convinced that if these people witnessed some miracle in connection with Bhakti then it can have some effect on the consciousness of the people in Jharkhand. Generally people who witness miracles consider a “Miracle” Man higher than God even. The goal of Sriman Mahaprabhu was to simply induce faith in Hari Nama in the hearts of the people of Jharkhand through a miracle. The Lord wanted to establish the greatness of the Holy name and also its effects.

Amongst animals the ones which revel only on flesh are the ones who have no connection with “sukriti” or activities in connection with Bhakti even in their previous lifetimes. Even amongst these animals there are various varieties who are degraded with respect to their connection with Bhagavat Dharma. The Lord drew near such deadly animals close to Him during the Leela and simply inspired them to take Hari Nama which was even impossible for human beings of lower categories to take. The Lions and tigers started roaring “Krishna” “Krishna”. The other animals were so much imbued in the nectar of Hari Nama that they became ecstatic in ways even unknown to the perfected devotees. When a trained monkey dances to the tune of the master, it cannot be called a miracle from any angle. The real miracle is when the animal forgets its own animal nature. The way the animals loved each other in the midst of the great tumultuous Sankirtana at the forest of Jharkhand was like the meeting of long-lost friends of eternity having converged. There was no distinction of species amongst the animals and it appeared that it was a congregation of Rasika





devotees who chanted Hari Nama in the highest ecstatic mood embracing each other in divine rapture. This is the special power of the Holy name, that with which Sriman Mahaprabhu made the impossible happen. Sriman Mahaprabhu ordered the wild animals “Kaho Krishna” (Chant Krishna); the one who is the personification of the Holy Name orders to the animals of Jharkhand.

The animal propensity of all the animals in the Leela was destroyed at the moment the animals had the “darshana” (Divine sight) of Sriman Mahaprabhu. The Prarabdhas were destroyed instantly at the sight of Sriman Mahaprabhu. When one utters Krishna Nama once, mountain heaps of sin is destroyed. When the Nama is uttered for the second time one immediately attains Krishna Prema. This happened with the animals instantly. However this usually never happens with humans! The animals thus obtained Prema in a fraction by mere two repetitions of Krishna Nama. Humans rarely experience what the animals of Jharkhand experienced owing to a phenomenon called Aparadha. When one utters Krishna Nama, sin represented by tall mountains of cotton simply reduces to ash with a single spark of Krishna Nama. However Aparadha is represented by Stone Mountains. These cannot be destroyed so easily. When one hurts a Vaishnava it represents a rock of Aparadha which is very difficult to remove. Thus a devotee who commits an aparadha of this nature develops hard-heartedness denser than a rock. The fluidity of Bhakti can never flow in such a heart. When the Hari Nama falls like a hammer on such a heart, the hard-heartedness is such that the hammer bounces back with double force but does not succeed in smashing the rock formation in the heart of such a devotee. Sriman Mahaprabhu is merciful to even such beings and encourages them to take the Holy Name unabated. Just like a person attacked by jaundice finds sugar-cane juice bitter like bitter-gourd, yet the solution for jaundice is the consumption of



sugarcane juice that will in time remove jaundice and restore sweetness in the tongue of the jaundiced; likewise a person harassed by Aparadha should continuously utter the holy name without break and one day that person will realize the nectar of the holy name, the hardness of his heart having been removed. Sriman Mahaprabhu, through the miracles of the animals of Jharkhand established the greatness of the Holy Name in the hearts of the residents of Jharkhand who were cut off from regulated living. Lord Sriman Mahaprabhu sometimes revealed His divinity at occasions where the obstinacy of human nature did not yield.

Sri Gurudeva has established a temple at that very Leela place Sri Charan Pahari, Kuju village at Ramgharh Jharkhand India. The site of the temple is representative of the Jharikhanda Leela of Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu with the wild animals. The wild animals attained Sri Goloka Dhama after their brief encounter with the Kaliyuga Avatara, Sriman Mahaprabhu. A million salutations to Srila Gurudeva who single handedly discovered this holy place about 20 years ago which was hidden from world view, by the will of Lord Gauranga (Sriman Mahaprabhu). It is Srila Gurudeva's benign wish that one attains the feet of Sri Sri Radha Krishna with the special mercy of Sriman Mahaprabhu through the process of Raganuga Bhajana and Sadhana as introduced by Sriman Mahaprabhu. Srila Gurudeva wishes that the devotees of Sriman Mahaprabhu get introduced to this specific spiritual process whereby one attains personal service of the divine couple Sri Sri Radha Krishna through the Gaudiya Vaishnava way based on the practices as followed by the original followers of Sriman Mahaprabhu represented by the 6 Parivaras or families under the Gaudiya Vaishnava tree. "Babaji" as we fondly call Srila Gurudeva is a representative of the Nityananda



Parivara, a major portion of this parivara is found at Radha Kunda in Braja Bhumi.

To reach Charan Pahari one is supposed to get to Ramgharh district in Jharkhand, take the 4 Lane and arrive at Sri Ram chowk and then one should go to Kuju colliery No 3. That is the foothill of Charan Pahari.



## BASIS FOR SPIRITUALITY

Modern civilization has given us adequate development and the means to enjoy the same. According to the ancient philosopher Charvaka the goal of life is to enjoy the resources of nature and thereby derive complete satisfaction. According to this philosophy there is no need for mankind to worry about anything else other than indulging oneself in deriving the highest pleasure through our bodily senses alone. We toil day in and day out at our workplace and at our homes providing the best education to our children so that one day our children may acquire the means to derive the maximum pleasure or “sukham” through such material occupation. This phenomenon is continuing throughout the world and there is tireless endeavor towards this end. The common man of the world is interested in making himself comfortable and simultaneously is on the lookout for perennial happiness through material engagements. God, for a common man is an esoteric subject and to some extent may be even worthless to worry about because indulging in the subject of God may seem futile for him because he has tasted some sort of happiness or solace in toiling occupations which are devoid of God.

Having said that God maybe a futile subject to contend with, it may also be concluded that on the whole there are only two broad subject areas under consideration. One is the mundane worldly subject, the knowledge of which helps an individual indulge in the mundane which is sensory oriented and then the subject of God which talks of all those things beyond the sensory. Common sense tells us that indulging oneself in sense gratification and enjoying the so-called worldly pleasures tires us and brings in its wake grief and sorrow. This is direct practical experience. As we have been continuing with the worldly sense gratification process we have also been attacked by



dissatisfaction and boredom. It is also an experience that as we try to enjoy material pleasures exasperation results owing to the transient nature of limited happiness that these activities bring along. Thus it is common experience that material pleasures accompany acute dissatisfaction and frustration to complete the package of the totality of worldly experience. A person who goes to the cinema theater to enjoy an action packed movie returns seemingly satisfied from the cinema theater however within few minutes, he misses the “mood” and “drama” of the movie in real life. If he attempts to relive that fascinating experience once again in the same cinema hall, he returns frustrated from the hall. The same cinema that once entertained him now becomes a boring drag denying that transitory experience of elation that it managed to give him the very first time. It is observable that all our engagements with the world of matter gives us pleasures and brings along with it loads of dissatisfaction and boredom. One becomes devoid of heartfelt satisfaction and thus our heart yearns for ever increasing and everlasting satisfaction. As discussed earlier there are only two subjects that encompass our own existence; one that is devoid of the Personality of God and one that focuses on our loving transactions with the Personality of God. It has been fairly concluded that the matters devoid of the subject of God does not hold the key to everlasting satisfaction and bliss and since the only other aspect left is Absolute knowledge of the Supreme; it can be now concluded that everlasting happiness and bliss must be locked in our study and understanding of the Supreme Personality of Godhead.



## WHAT IS BHAKTI

There are various means of realizing one's true purpose of life. They are through Jnana yoga, Karma Yoga, Raja or Kriya Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. Amongst all forms of yoga Bhakti Yoga is simplest in approach. The reason being; the faculty of mind, which is mundane in nature can be easily employed to attain that substance which is supra-mundane, beyond the mind, intellect and the senses; God in form. That God who is all loving, all compassionate and all forgiving becomes easily available to one who is on the path of Bhakti. Bhakti is based on just one simple preliminary condition, a simple faith that there is a controller and that we are the controlled. It is for one who realizes that there is a supreme enjoyer and that we are the enjoyed. Bhakti becomes extremely difficult to one who is judgmental and suspicious by nature. Otherwise the process of Bhakti is a free-way to that "Ideal World" where there is no death, no disease and no old age, that which is perennial. This "Ideal World" is real and not a figment of enriched human imagination.

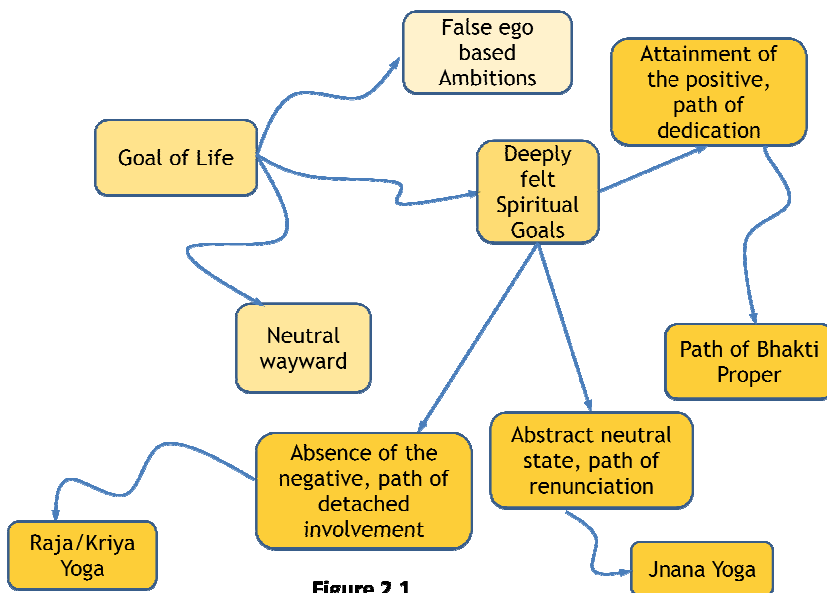
The modern human species is caught up in a matrix of self-created concepts which has complicated life itself. The analogy of the silk-worm trapped in a self-created cocoon is apt in this case. The human mind is the cause for all the complications in one's life and one's perceived world. If one uses this great tool called mind in the path of Bhakti, all the contorted perceptions of life will be effaced thus exposing the pathway beyond the horizon of limited time and space. Compared to the other scriptural based paths Bhakti is that path prescribed for those simple at heart. These simple and intelligent ones will see that this so-called life based on matter and self-created occupations are simply not enough to quench the thirst of the soul.



Such souls will search and find solace in Nishkama or unconditional Bhakti.



## NEED FOR BHAKTI



**Figure 2.1**

A living entity is spawned into this vast existence with literally no clue about the purpose of its existence, completely oblivious of the nature of existence itself. The journey of what one calls life simply picks up as the living entity matures in the cycle of evolution. Maturity of any kind is only seen in the human species. Usually the human being also like other living beings indulges in eating, sleeping, reproducing and defending without prior inquiry of any kind. Here too some system is only seen in enhancing life-style; the way in which one performs the four above mentioned activities. The activities remain the same viz. eating, sleeping, reproducing and defending. There is no scent of a fifth activity. There is life but without a life-manual. However it is seen





that in more evolved humans there is a diversion in terms of a fifth activity. There is a quest for getting certain existential questions answered that opens the possibility of this fifth activity. This fifth activity begins with the advent of questions like Who am I? , Why am I here in the first place? What is life ? What is death and so on? Thus laying the foundation of the fifth activity of life; the search for one's own source, the intelligent one prods on. Especially in the human species it is seen that there are three main types. The ones who are satisfied in keeping themselves busy with activities revolving around basic existence triggered by their false-self or the "false-I". There is yet another kind of human being who goes along life like a ritual with nothing to pursue but to simply exist just because nature has left it that way. The third category of humans are the ones who define something worthwhile which will leave a permanent impression on their life, death and beyond that will solve the riddle of existence once and for all ; at least for those who give it a worthwhile chase.

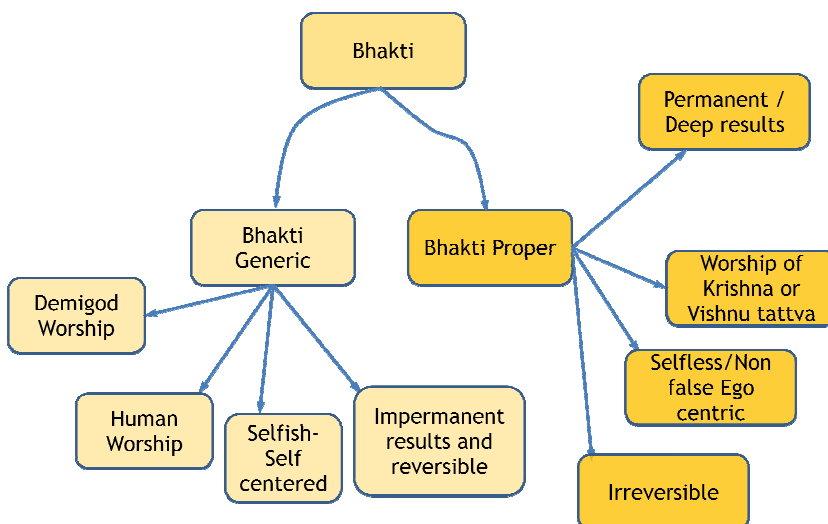
When the human being begins his journey in the quest for his origins, he finds that he has too many suppliers in the market ready to provide him with readymade answers. Three ways primarily exist on the path to ultimate reality which is Jnana Yoga, Raja or Kriya and Bhakti Yoga. Bhakti Yoga can be divided further into Karma Yoga, the path of detached action and Bhakti Yoga proper or the path of surrender which involves dependence on the "subject"( Personality of Godhead) of Bhakti. Raja Yoga or Kriya Yoga is the path of detached involvement, understanding things from the platform of vibrations of holy and unholy. Thus the goal of Kriya Yoga is to experience the vibration of existence beyond the realm of mind and body. Kriya Yoga may not necessarily lead you to a concept of personal God. Through the process of initiation, Kriya Yoga tries to dismantle the secret of creation leading one to the self. Jnana yoga involves using intellect to



distinguish between matter and non-matter by intrinsic study through bonafide guidance. Jnana yoga is the path of worldly abnegation. However in this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, Jnana Yoga is presumably the most arduous path to the Absolute. Karma Yoga is the nascent form of Bhakti where we carry out all worldly activities by surrendering in our mind the results of our action to God (a personal God) and then extending this practice in all spheres of our life to the extent that when we surrender our very selves to the service of the Spiritual master and Lord. Bhakti Yoga culminates with an eternal relationship of the Living entity with God or the highest reality where we submit all action, their results and our entire existence at the feet of God .



## MODES IN BHAKTI



**Figure 3.1**

There are a few modes in Bhakti that need to be recognized as we embark on the journey to eternal redemption. Bhakti essentially means to surrender to a higher entity. Bhakti done with regards to serving demi-gods and other human elements cannot be termed Bhakti proper. Submitting to the Vishnu-tattva (aspects of Lord Vishnu), source of all that can be, based on the “Satvikka Shastras” (Vedic Injunctions in the mode of pure goodness where indolence, inertia and motivated action is totally absent) or those based on the transcendental scriptures like Srimad Bhagavatham, Srimad Bhagavat Gita and the Chaitanya Charitamrita can only be classically termed as Bhakti proper. These explanations are based on the “Parampara” (disciplic framework) of Gaudiya Vaishnava thought. Submitting to any of the incarnations of the Vishnu tattva like Lord Narasingha or Lord



Ramachandra or submitting earnestly to the source of Maha Vishnu; Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu can only be termed as Bhakti proper. All other aspects of surrendering to other agents of the Divine can only be semblance of Bhakti or generic Bhakti based on some specific selfish want or material desire of the one who is performing such Bhakti. One of the aspects of Generic Bhakti is that the results are most often impermanent and such a manifestation of Bhakti is transient. One who practices Bhakti proper transcends material nature and since this is unmotivated in connection with expectation of material benefits; such Bhakti is permanent and irreversible. Such Bhakti matures over a period of time and irrevocably carries on through few life-times till the object of Bhakti; personal service to Sri Vishnu or Sri Krishna is finally attained in the transcendental domain persisting far above the influence of material nature.



## UNMOTIVATED BHAKTI

Pure Bhakti is synonymous with “Unmotivated” Bhakti. This is the most important facet in Bhakti. If there is any motive for sense-gratification as we take up Bhakti, it becomes a self defeating activity. Prayers are usually performed with some motive towards some end. A heart filled with desire for worldly people and/or worldly objectives; does not qualify as Bhakti proper. The prayers from such a heart, even if heard by that Almighty God will not help achieve the ultimate goal of life. The basis of unmotivated Bhakti is freedom from the clutches of the material world and the energies that bind us to this realm. Unless one is motivated by “transcendental” life, it is obvious that whatever practice we may follow, it will simply boomerang our existence back into this mortal world. Unmotivated Bhakti typically stands for selfless service to the divine with absolutely no hidden agenda. Our current material body is contaminated with the elements of this world namely the five elements of earth, water, fire, air and ether. Unmotivated bhakti warrants doing all our activities both mandatory and optional activities of this world for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord Krishna. When any other motive mixes along with this motive it will defile the nature of Bhakti and will fall under the category of “Motivated” Bhakti. Each and every result of action dedicated at the feet of Lord Krishna, as discussed in earlier section will qualify as unmotivated Bhakti and will represent Karma Yoga. This feeling of serving Lord Krishna 24 hours a day, 365 days a year without any ulterior motive of gain in this mortal world forms the basis of pure Bhakti. However this will only represent the initial stage of the pure Bhakti process. One’s mind needs to be alert all the time and should be under the scanner of continued introspection while rendering such service. When one practices such Bhakti Yoga with diligence, this will



qualify as Karma Yoga proper. When one employs one's heart in understanding one's own worldly transactions and becomes vigilant in surrendering those activities at the feet of Lord Krishna and keeps praying to Him for His propitiation and pleasure , the Lord starts immediately communicating through one's heart and gives one the knowledge of appropriate and inappropriate action through inspiration. When one continually engages one's action and its results to the Lord in such a way, one starts maturing in the "Art of Karma Yoga". The goal of such Karma Yoga is to get finally relieved from all motivated action so that in due course one will slowly ascend the stairways of pure Bhakti. Such an approach will finally culminate in Bhakti proper.



## TASTE OF BHAKTI

The Gaudiya Vaishnavic thought fundamentally revolves around the constant chanting of the Mahamantra "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare" loudly as well as in a low audible voice on the beads. This is the easiest process of emancipation and was popularized by the Kaliyuga Avatara Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu.

We normally talk of the science of Self-Realization. But this field of experience is more like art. An art that can be learned and applied, that which manifests as a full blown science once realized. In most of the sciences "The What" of things is most important. How to get the rest is based on attention, practice, application and finally consummating in realization. This is evident in the life of great scientists like Albert Einstein, Thomas Alva Edison and the like. These people invented and discovered many things but they could never clearly articulate how they went about doing what they did. After they arrived at the truth, it was easy for them to reverse engineer and then present a mathematical or logical paradigm to support their inventions or discovery. Isaac Newton was a classic example.

However compared to all this , it may not be far-fetched to say that "Krishna", the Supreme Lord is more easier to experience , in becoming a reality in this very life. Krishna is not a commodity or an invention. He is the highest truth and with a "little" but sustained effort and conviction; He can become part of our reality!!

Unfortunately the Krishna Consciousness of today has become a set of dogmatic "aphorisms" encased in scriptures which themselves have become an object ( an obstacle really) of human speculation .The



spirit of Krishna Consciousness has been reduced to “Krishnaism” like Buddhism and Hinduism whereby today the religion exists but the objective is missing altogether!!

Fundamentally to experience God there are 2 fundamental steps

1. To get liberated from all our misgiving and misconceptions while still in the body
2. To realize and experience the "person" Krishna.

It should be understood clearly that one can never realize Krishna without first realizing one's true identity not scripturally or dogmatically but on the platform of deep experience. Many Self-realized masters stop at step one because step one also is the realization of the formless aspect of Krishna which is “their” final destination. However in the Gaudiya Vaishnavic school this state of existence is avoided altogether. The first stage of realization is experienced in an alternate way in case of a Gaudiya Vaishnava. A person under the Gaudiya Vaishnavic culture establishes the mood of being the servant of the servant of Krishna. Such a person performs sadhana or spiritual practice till this mood becomes firmly established in his/her heart. Acceptance of this mood comes from Krishna as a deep dream experience or in the state of Samadhi or transcendental equilibrium during the chanting process. Once this mood of servitude is established one continues one's spiritual practices that will propel one to the state of developing spiritual emotions or rasas which is essentially an aspect of "Bhavamayi Krishna" or bonding with Krishna and transacting with Krishna as a servant, friend, parent or a lover. Such sadhana and spiritual practices should be done under the guidance of a Spiritual master who comes in the “parampara” (traditional disciplic) system discussed in the next chapter. When the





spiritual states within our material body reaches a peak with the mercy of Sadhana Bhakti and Guru Kripa, our spiritual body is formed which has an identity of its own in the spiritual kingdom. The spiritual body is the vehicle that gets developed as one takes shelter of Sri Guru and performs sadhana or by undertaking spiritual practice. This spiritual body is the medium through which one attains communion with the Supreme Lord Sri Krishna and attains the highest spiritual realm of Goloka Vrindavana. As one matures in Bhakti beyond the liberated state, the spiritual body becomes a vehicle that connects us to the "Personal form" of Sri Sri Radha and Krishna. The divine couple then appears in deep meditative states when our life energies are the peak of bhava or spiritual mellow. This is when direct communication and audience of the Lord becomes possible to the fullest. Unlike traditional material sciences, in spiritual sciences basically the "How to" is more important. These processes are already established by the 6 Goswamis of Vrindavana (6 spiritual teachers of the Gaudiya Vaishnavic school of thought) under the directions of Sriman Mahaprabhu. One simply has to surrender to these authentic processes. The basic framework includes the following items

1. Chanting of the Hare Krishna Mahamantra without fail in a sustained manner with high quality .Surrendering one's (all) thoughts to Krishna is essential as they infest our mind and attention. This process is compulsory prior to even before attaining shelter of Sri Gurudeva in the parampara system.
2. One needs to ensure that one interacts with Uttama devotees (Devotees who only serve Sri Radha Krishna with no ulterior motive. Devotees, who are on the highest platform of devotional service, usually those whose life is spent in Bhajana in Vrindavana Dhama). If one is sincere in one's endeavor of carrying out one's spiritual



practices for the pleasure of Sri Sri Radha Krishna one will be automatically directed to the right places by the "Chaitya guru" (indwelling aspect of the Supreme Lord) in the heart.

3. With Such Vaishnava kripa (blessings from elevated devotees of Sri Sri Radha Krishna) one attains a spiritual master who will first give Harinama (present the Mahamantra to the student after acceptance of the student) and initiating one with Krishna and Radha mantra which is termed as Deeksha.

4. By sustained practice and mercy of Sri Guru one becomes liberated from the misconceptions and misgivings of the material world.

5. One further develops greed to meet and serve Krishna personally. As one chants and commits further this becomes easily possible

### **Symptoms of Liberation while in the body:**

One starts feeling that one is the source of all suffering around oneself. One starts seeing faults in oneself and in nobody else (This cannot be artificially imposed as some propound, only committed chanting under the supervision of the Sadhguru this becomes easily possible). One starts understanding one's own self like never before. As one's misconceptions about one's own self are shattered there are deeper realizations on the subject of one's relationship with one's kith and kin and the world around. There is a copious appearance of blocked emotions in the form of tears from eyes. One starts developing "humility" in the true sense. It is observable that humility is not an external feature but a deep realization of one's own miniscule nature in the scheme of the universe. One's hard mental concoctions dissolve and one will slowly lose one's artificial sense of self that has



been built over a period of many life times. A deep sense of freedom arises in the heart. One can for the first time be able to breathe freely as if one is out of jail after millions of years of imprisonment. One will start respecting even an ant. One can bow down even to a prostitute in real humility as one approaches material liberation. The aspect of considering oneself lower than a blade of grass and at the same time building of high tolerance levels develops in one's personality though a fixed persona will be conspicuously absent. All the likes and dislikes in the heart will evaporate like they never existed. Things like stress, anger, pressure and unrest due to differences of opinion will be consummately erased from consciousness. These are just the initial symptoms of appearance of Bhakti. Having said all this, such liberation will still mean nothing to the practitioner as all this is not even the beginning of the flowering of Krishna Consciousness.



## GAUDIYA VAISHNAVISM

The principle of pure bhakti has been expounded since time immemorial; the Vedas and the Shastras are adequate evidence to this effect. The Garga Samhita mentions about the acceptance of the 4 sampradayas or 4 disciplic systems through which the ultimate goal of life can be achieved. These systems have existed ever since the time of cosmic creation. The 4 schools are namely the Rudra Sampradaya headed by Visnuswami, the Sri Sampradaya headed by Sri Ramanujacarya, the Kumara Sampradaya headed by Sri Nimbarkacarya, The Brahma Sampradaya headed by Sri Madhwacharya. Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is directly Lord Krishna who visited planet earth in the year A.D 1486 at Mayapur, West Bengal. He took Vaishnava Deeksha from Sri Sri Ishwara Puri who appeared in the Sri Brahma Madhwa Sampradaya. Lord Mahaprabhu established the facet of Acintya-Bhed-Abheda that is simultaneous oneness and difference with regards to the aspect of the Absolute. The Brahma Madhwa Sampradaya exists in Gauda Desha; the patch between Bengal and Punjab in India, in its current form of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. The principle of Acintya-Bhed-Abheda can be expressed as follows. Though the soul is one in quality with the Supreme Absolute; it varies in quantity as compared to the Absolute. The soul is “anu” or infinitesimal whereas the Absolute is “vibhu” or infinite. Since the time of Sriman Mahaprabhu that “pure current” of Bhakti continues to exist even today. Lord Sriman Mahaprabhu's close associates Lord Nityananda (Lord Balarama Himself) and Lord Adwaitacarya (combined incarnation of Lord MahaVishnu and Lord Sadashiva) were ordered by Sriman Mahaprabhu to continue the Gaudiya Parampara through their family line by means of providing



Deeksha (initiation) to devotees and thus maintain the sanctity of the authentic spiritual system. In addition to the family of Sri Adwaita and Sri Nityananda; authentic “Parivaras” or family lines were established through the Gaudiya descendents of Sri Narottama Thakhura Mahasaya, Sri Gadadhara Pandita, Sri Shyamananda Pandita and Sri Srinivasa Acarya. Thus there are 6 major authentic Parivaras or family lines under whose tutelage one can attain Spiritual initiation even today. There are other authentic lines like those of the family line of Sri Vakreshwara Pandita. The exact authentic Parampara lines yet cannot be easily enunciated.

<b>Parivara or family line</b>	<b>Devotees found in</b>
Sri Nityananda	Nabadweep/ Sri RadhaKunda
Sri Adwaita	Nabadweep/ Sri RadhaKunda
Sri Narottama Thakhura	Nabadweep/ Sri RadhaKunda
Sri Gadadhara Pandita	Nabadweep/Sri RadhaKunda/ Orrisa
Sri Shyamananda Pandita	Nabadweep/Sri RadhaKunda/ Orrisa
Srinivasa Acarya	Nabadweep/ Sri RadhaKunda



## HARI NAAMA AND DEEKSHA

In this section an explanation on how an individual can avail shelter into the authentic “parampara” system as established by Sriman Chaitanyadeva is discussed. Once an individual seeks refuge under a spiritual master from one of the 6 Parivaras or family lines (discussed in the earlier section) , one can then immerse oneself in sadhana (attainment of goal) and bhajana (the spiritual process by which such a goal is easily attainable).

Let us begin by briefly touching upon the terminologies of “sadhana” and “bhajana”. Sadhana means to set our focus on our eternal goal and perform spiritual practices. Sriman Mahaprabhu descended on this planet to freely distribute “Prema” or Love of Godhead. However one needs to go a little deeper on this aspect of “Love of Godhead”. Love can be expressed in a tangible way by offering selfless service to our object of devotion. When we offer our untainted emotions in the form of transcendental service, it takes the form of pure love. However in our current condition, our thoughts and emotions are not in the purest state. Our endeavor in Bhakti will be to purify this tainted emotion and offer it as service at the feet of our worshipful deity. Our spirit in its purest form is infinitesimally small. We wish to purify all the layers of our consciousness and then offer it through the vehicle of our “eternal spiritual body” on the transcendental plane where Sri Sri Radha Krishna sport their most intimate, infallible and eternal pastimes. This thus becomes our objective and our “sadhana”. Sadhana thus represents the goal or in terms of Gaudiya Vaishnava parlance the “Prayojana”; the ultimate objective.

“Bhajana” represents spiritual practice or “Abhideya” or the means by virtue of which the “Prayojana” or goal becomes achievable. The main



facets of bhajana is the chanting of Deeksha mantras and Harinama which have been imbibed after taking shelter of the spiritual master who appears in the traditional Gaudiya Vaishnava family line. Bhajana is anything and everything that is performed under the specific instructions of such a spiritual master. The “Prayojana” becomes achievable when one humbly accepts the instructions of the spiritual master and surrenders to his holy wish and thus serves him without duplicity. The activities thus performed constitute the primary limbs of bhajana. Any other activities which support such bhajana constitute the secondary limbs.

### **Harinama Samskaar**

Now we shall discuss Harinama Samskaar: During this process Srila Gurudeva hands over the Hari Nama or the Mahamantra by means of "Shabda Brahma"(The sound form of the Personality of Godhead Sri Krishna) to the disciple. The “sadhaka” or aspirant receives the mahamantra from the spiritual master through aural reception. The spiritual master instructs the aspirant to perform oral repetition of the Mahamantra for a fixed number of rounds each day for the rest of the aspirant's life span.

### **Deeksha**

The Deeksha mantras are the deciding factor in one's attainment of a favorable mood for the eternal service of Sri Sri Radha Krishna in the spiritual world. The Deeksha Mantras in the Parivaras are transferred to the heart of the Sadhaka through the ears or even through blowing of air on the eyes of the Sadhaka by Sri Gurudeva. There is usually no fire-sacrifice or other paraphernalia to support this ritual. This ritual clears the vision of the sadhaka or aspirant. The Deeksha Mantras are the codified aspects of the divine couple (Sri Sri



Radha Krishna). The mental repetition of the mantras by the sadhaka under the guidance of Srila Gurudeva; the qualities, the form and the abode of the Lord is revealed through sustained practice. The Hari Nama is to be chanted in conjunction with the Deeksha Mantras based on the instructions given to the sadhaka by Sri Gurudeva. Sri Gurudeva hands over 2 sets of Mantras to the sadhaka. The 1st set is a set of 12 mantras where 6 mantras represent the seed or Bija Mantras and 6 mantras are Gayatri. The moods of Nabadwipa Leela are invoked by constant repetition of these mantras. Nabadwipa Leelas are the eternal pastimes of Sriman Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the eternal realm of Nabadwipa which is an integral part of the spiritual world of Goloka Vrindavana. The 2nd Set is a set of 12 mantras where 6 mantras represent the seed or Bija Mantras and 6 mantras are Gayatri which represent Vrindavana leela. The moods of Goloka are invoked by constant repetition of these mantras. The Seva Prapti or realization of one's eternal nature happens by the mercy of these mantras. Srila Gurudeva single-handedly holds the key to the fruition of these mantras. It is only by the ultimate mercy of Sri Gurudeva that one gets complete access to Goloka. Harinama is capable of granting some rasa or spiritual mellow all by itself but the ultimate manifestation of Goloka rasa can be achieved only under the tutelage of a Krishna-realized guru appearing in the parampara or original spiritual tradition of the Gaudiya Vaishnavas.

### **Siddha Pranali and Guru Pranali**

Both mean the same thing. This is an additional process injected into the heart of the surrendered disciple by Sri Gurudeva. The conceptualized siddha-deha or the eternal form of the sadhaka in the form of a manjari (hand-maid of Srimati Radharani in the spiritual realm) is given by Sri Gurudeva. The ekadasha Bhavas are given or





the 11 attributes of that spiritual form is given to the sadhaka by Gurudeva. Initially Gurudeva may grant 3-4 attributes ; the other 7-8 attributes of the spiritual form will be revealed in the heart of the aspirant by the mercy of Gurudeva and the bhajana process. The Siddha Pranali is at best understood at the time of the Deeksha.

### **Technical standpoint of Siddha Pranali**

The mind becomes truly spiritual after Srila Gurudeva transfers Deeksha. When one recites the Deeksha mantras by mind in a humble mood, divinity permeates all aspects that touch the mind. The subtlest aspect of the mind is called chitta; this chitta is the gateway to the spiritual world. The Deeksha Mantras are the key through which this limitless passage unravels. Thus Gurudeva empowers one through Deeksha. The Siddha Pranali is a possibility. Just as we have a material body which is a vehicle in the material world. When Siddha Pranali is given (reference Prem Bhakti Candrika by Narottama Thakhura Mahasaya) by Sri Gurudeva; an unmanifest spiritual vehicle called siddha-deha makes its appearance which is eternal in nature. Gurudeva identifies this specific body for that sadhaka. When the sadhaka by the mercy of bhajana/sadhana invokes that eternal spiritual body and in course of time realizes the same before so-called material death approaches. There are two bodies that evolve (One spiritual and one transcendental). One should not doubt this process as this is what Sriman Mahaprabhu revealed as the ultimate internal esoteric process of Gaudiya Vaishnavism. The first body is this material body which gets spiritualized by Sadhana. It is practical experience that when Sadhana is done under the guidance of Sri Gurudeva many symptoms (after Deeksha) arise which will exhort the spiritualization of this material body itself. In fact Sri Gurudeva says that immediately after Deeksha; one must not consider this body itself



to be material. These are the precepts of Sriman Mahaprabhu. This very body will be given to us time to time for Samsara Leela (earthly pastimes) every time when we come back to the material for some higher seva; after having attained the state of Nitya Mukta or the status of “parikara” through the process of Sadhana Siddhi( Seva Prapti through Bhajana). The second body will be a transcendental body exclusively for the direct service of Sri Sri Radha Krishna once Seva-Prapti is attained by Sri Gurudeva’s mercy. The attributes of this siddha-deha is revealed by Sri Gurudeva at the time of Siddha Pranali.



## SHAPING OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The acts of Shravanam (Hearing about Lord Krishna), Kirtanam (speaking or singing His glories) and Smaranam (remembering the Lord's various transcendental aspects) form the back-bone of a full-blown Krishna Conscious life. When we do Shravanam we apply the principle of vibration which attracts our senses and mind in particular to the higher principle of shaping our consciousness in resonance with the Absolute. Kirtanam involves more of the senses; it uses the tongue, the ears and the mind to get attracted to the holy sound vibration that de-conditions the compulsive course of material consciousness. However at an advanced stage when a practitioner has trained his consciousness in such a way that his mind is saturated with the vision of Krishna, thought of Krishna and pastimes of Krishna or the Holy name , he enters the mode of Nitya Smaranam (constant remembrance) which when practiced over a prolonged period results in "Seva Prapti" (attainment of eternal service) or acceptance of the living entity as a "sevak" ( servant) in the spiritual realm which becomes accessible through the mind ; that faculty of mind spiritualized by constant exposure to mercy and grace through constant holy remembrance.

Let us study the process of Smaranam in detail. Smaranam in the beginning is intermittent; probably a few times a day when we remember Krishna; His qualities or pastimes. With constant practice when these thoughts become frequent; the duration of a particular thought of Krishna will subsist for a longer duration during the day maybe for a few minutes. Through sustained practice when the duration of remembrance becomes long enough; the quality or depth of remembrance will become more vivid and vibrant thereby having a direct bearing on decline of material habits and material bondage.



The three components of Smaranam thus are 1. Frequency of Smaranam 2. Duration of Smaranam 3. Depth of Smaranam.

Since the Gaudiya Vaishnavas are in the mode of Radha Dasyam (mode of eternal servitude to Srimati Radharani in the spiritual realm), Smaranam has to be practiced in the mood of kinkori (a personal hand-maid) to Srimati Radha Rani. This meditation during times of Chanting Mahamantra or Deeksha mantras is found very useful which can form the basis of Leela Smaranam (remembering the eight fold pastimes of the Lord as expounded in the literature Sri Govinda Lilamrita). This principle in itself is capable of getting us direct entry into Leela Smaranam provided one has undergone mantric Deeksha initiation from a qualified Sadhguru (God-realized spiritual master) in the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition. This type of Smaranam is also useful if one is aspiring to take Deeksha and will indicate spiritual greed to attain Deeksha. Srimati Radharani of Vrindavana is most benevolent even a million times more than Sri Thakurji (Sri Krishna). A typical method to perform Smaranam is delineated below.

*"I remember several times a day that I am a kinkori with the characteristics given to me by my Sadhguru sitting at the Lotus Feet of Srimati Radharani and Her eternal associates like Rupa and Ananga Manjari begging them to grant me my "nitya seva"*

*Whatever the time of the day or night, I constantly try to set the eye of my mind at the Lotus feet of Srimati Kisoriji (Radharani) begging at her feet to grant me the position of her most intimate kinkori.*

*When I deliberately practice this simple meditative technique with either eyes open or eyes closed or even during regular light conversations, I see that my closeness to Srimati Radha increases manifold. Radharani starts communicating mysteriously with me. I only*



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*crave for Her constant attention and resolve in my heart that I will go to any extent to attain the eternal service of Her Lotus Feet!!"]*



## ESSENCE OF CHANTING

The only goal of Chanting (both Deeksha and Mahamantra chanting) is "Krishna Seva Prapti", this is evident in the previous sections.

However this goal is not at once achieved as we embark on the spiritual journey. There are many intermediate milestones that we encounter before we are assured by our inner spiritual self that "Seva prapti" is round the corner. There is a domain in human experience beyond thoughts and emotions. As we chant ardently with full commitment, the holy name, we come to a sphere of existence where thoughts will become refined beyond its assumed original nature (ie to think beyond family, problems, work and other so called ephemeral things of the visible world!!). It is only then that thought becomes subtler touching domains of existence that is beyond common sense and logic. We may suddenly realize that we are becoming child like without any effort. Such thoughts cannot be super-imposed but can be felt. This also introduces one to newer emotions which are of "superior nature". One needs to pay immense attention while chanting, which in return evaporates the dross collected in our consciousness for lifetimes. Our original spiritual nature or spiritual form is beyond thoughts and emotions which emerge out of the contaminated mind purview. As one feels connected to Krishna one sees oneself going far away from mundane logic and looking at things from a different dimension. This is an internal process but does not have a bearing with the external material world.

When we move further away from material based thought and emotions, one will access what we called "spiritual mind". That mind is secret. It will reveal to us the sphere of Krishna because it comes in contact with Him or rather by His mercy one comes in touch with the



"chitta", that aspect of mind which works beyond the mundane. The communication with Him when becomes deeper, one will have deeper visions of one's spiritual future. The aspect of "chitta" manifests changes in the material world around us which becomes exceedingly supportive to our "intense spiritual journey". One has to strive hard enough to get connected so! We may experience all this because we have been all the while feeding ourselves with mundane nonsense. The easy way to get "full access" is to ensure that we consciously chant the mahamantra while we eat, walk, converse, rest or anything else either audibly or in the mind. In addition to this we must resolve to chant a minimum number of rounds (a mantra per bead on a bead mala of 108, a full circle represents 1 round). Those who work or conduct business for a living should not worry of how one should maintain focus on other activities. Mind has immense capabilities, only thing is that we have never cared to explore!! As we chant and become one pointed in Bhakti aiming solely at Krishna seva Prapti like "Arjuna's eye of the parrot", chanting reveals many subtle dimensions of our inner persona. The way we look at the world is from the inside. In fact there is nothing outside. When you are looking at someone who is 1 feet away from you, it means that he is placed at a "conceived notional distance" from the surface of your body. In reality the entire experience of "viewing" is all happening inside you. One cannot really say whether someone or some place is on the outside. In fact everything is experienced totally at the mind and intellect level whose exact position or place of existence cannot be pin pointed. If someone tells you that the soul is seated inside the heart or in the middle of the eyebrow or so on ...this is only something which we have heard or read (based on someone else's experience) not that which is directly experienced by us. The entire world projected from within our consciousness is our "notion" nothing else. The reality is far



beyond this notion. One of the preliminary effects of the chanting of the holy name is the breaking of this "vast notional expanse" which we term as mundane experience. When one adopts a humble and tolerant mood and in such a mood perform chanting our notional experience that has been built over millions of life times starts melting. These notions are the ones which keeps us away from the Lord and His eternal abode. Each individual has his own notion of the universe hence every individual in this world moves in existence with his conception of his own universe. The number of universes simultaneously present is thus equal to the entire living population of the world. At the same time, the way one perceives the universe is also changing from time to time. It is necessary for all such perceived notions to melt down so that the Absolute reality manifests in front of us one day. Otherwise these "notional clouts" cloud our vision.

This is the great web of Maya (mundane illusion). In such a vast notional expanse how can one know that "One Reality". simply not possible. This formidable Maya can only be dissolved by surrendering at the feet of a spiritual master who is established in that reality ,Krishna. As one surrenders thus and chants qualitatively and quantitatively the world around us that "we have unfortunately built in such a bad way" starts dissolving. As the walls of this world breaks ...the reality of Krishna sinks into our consciousness inch by inch. All that we hold as "My reality"..Likes..Dislikes..Possibilities..So-called doctrines and philosophies begin to fade away. We start living for the moment without any plan, living on the edge as we say!!! , ready to live in the vastness of insecurity, vibrating and riding on a wave that will propel us into "Krishna's Divine presence" one day. Yet in the end, unless one takes sadhana and bhajana seriously one cannot escape the scary matrix that one has woven around oneself.





## TRANSCENDENTAL CHANTING

Chanting the Holy Name is the ultimate transcendental process. The Holy Name (names of Krishna) is the pure substance which when mixed with mind through Sankirtana (congregational chanting) produces everlasting "scientific results". Our mind stuff is made up of thoughts and emotions, a conglomeration infused by insurmountable material consciousness which gives us the experience of this material world, based on the sum total of all our previous intentions and actions in all previous and current lifetimes.

Chanting is that transcendental tool which can give us the "highest" experience of "Gopi Bhava" (the highest mood of the Gopis of Vrindavana) if performed under expert guidance of Rasika (servants of Krishna serving Sri Radha and Krishna in the spiritual realm) devotees. Chanting produces subtle ripples of transcendental nature which impinges the surface of the mind stuff and finds its way right through our subconscious and unconscious realms of consciousness. Consistent and steady increase in the chanting method produces a high spinning vortex of transcendence which first separates the dross of our "assumed misgivings" of the material world. These are then ejected out of our consciousness. These sometimes appear in the form of consistent terrifying dreams at night which may appear so real that sleep may get consistently broken during nights. During day time there may be bouts of feeling terrible attachment towards family members or the feeling of the world moving away. When chanting is intensified it can result in strong hunches of the future. Chanting boils out our misconceptions of life and presents "Life as it is" and not what we suppose it to be. When consciousness is purified further, it can lead to strong inspirations and decisions which "transcend" material conceptions, solely directed towards attainment of Krishna. It is at



such an advanced state that the true mercy of Krishna becomes tangibly visible. One pointed chanting churns out Maya (perverted view of the world) completely from one's life and awards the highest glory "Krishna Prema".

The Mahamantra is mind-blowingly potent. This is an experiential truth. If it is not in one's experience, it means that one has not invested sufficient attention into chanting. Sri Gurudeva says often that the Mahamantra even if chanted once with sufficient intensity should be enough to get one unconscious. When one wakes up after that, he/she will never be the same again.

Even as one chants the Mahamantra one is getting transformed for sure only that one has not become sufficiently sensitive to experiencing it in a telling way. It is only the intent and desire for "serving Krishna" through a "personal meeting with Him" that will invoke the necessary intensity while chanting. When one gets into such a one pointed mold and chants, one's own "conceived personality" starts to crack up. Krishna is only interested in people whom He finds sufficiently crazy for Him to meet up with. One's chanting cannot be performed without "Prayojana" or the Ultimate goal. Shastras say that Nama (the name of the Lord) and Naami (The Lord Himself) are one. We believe all this, but our belief has actually maimed us essentially because we feel somewhere that intellectual understanding and experience is same!! This is why we do not find a Surdas or a Meerabai commonly .

When chanting becomes our very breath, it is at that time that we see ourselves transcending the limitations of the material world. Today we are surrounded by too many things tagged upon us as aparadha (misgivings against the Holy name), so many that it has dumped us into a corner where we find ourselves comfortable with the world.



Bhakti is actually "madness", madness to rocket towards our source, Sri Krishna.



## ASSOCIATION WITH SADHUS

The Core of Vaishnava living is "Sadhu Sanga" or association with pure devotees. Without Sadhu Sanga, one may chant any mantra for millions and millions of life-times; yet one may find oneself in the same old position. The real process is to first "pray" to the Lord for association with pure devotees or Uttama Adhikaris and then one receives "Shiksha" (guidance and knowledge about Bhakti) from such Sadhus; one must then surrender at the feet of the spiritual master during the course of Sadhu Sanga. When one surrenders thus to the spiritual master; the master recommends such a sincere sadhaka to the Lord and then the "Key" to the spiritual world is handed over by the spiritual master to the disciple. When the disciple thus chants the holy name under the guidance of such a realized master; Krishna reveals Himself. This is the bonafide process. The problem today is where do you find such sadhus who are self as well as God-realized? One should thus enquire and seek the assistance of the Lord through "earnest" prayer. It is then that the sadhu comes to the aid of the sadhaka. Without the guidance, inspiration and encouragement of pure devotees progress in Bhakti is not possible.



## HOLY DHAMA AND BHAKTI

Holy Dhama represents the spiritual “energy” zone where Bhakti Devi (The goddess of devotional service) will prosper. For Gaudiya Vaishnavas there are a selective few places which enhance the mood of devotional service in the context of achieving the goal of Bhakti that is to attain the eternal service of Sri Sri Radha Krishna in the eternal realm. Holy Dhama is also the representation of the “mood of attainment”. When one is performing Raganuga Bhajana, one aspires to become the eternal maid-servant of Srimati Radharani; hence the sadhakas crave to develop the mood in places which are dear to Srimati Radharani. Undoubtedly Sri Vrindavana Dhama will be the personal favorite dhama (place of sadhana) of the sadhakas who wish to attain “nitya seva” (eternal service). Sri Vrindavana Dhama represents the mood of “madhura” or mood of sweet attachment to the object (Sri Krishna). When the sadhaka spends time in the “energy zone” of Sri Vrindavana Dhama with the “intent” of attaining eternal service and performs bhajana there as far as possible, one will find one’s mood drifting to the eternal space of natural and spontaneous attraction to the “eternal realm”; from “Sri Bhauma Vrindavana” (The physical Vrindavana Dhama) on this plane to Goloka Vrindavana on the eternal perfect plane.



## BHAKTI IN THE NEW AGE

The movement of Sriman Mahaprabhu needs to be understood in the proper perspective as to "What is exactly meant by devotional service". In simple terms anything done for the pleasure of Lord Krishna alone is termed as Devotional Service? This is the general understanding and rightly the correct understanding. However the "mood" is where the entire ideology can get mangled and what we call pleasure of Krishna can turn into a saga of "unending hypocritical nightmare".

Why do we need to engage in devotional service meaning solid actions with our senses using sense objects and the mind for the pleasure of Krishna? In reality Bhakti proper only involves surrendering the senses to Krishna and if one is suitably able to serve Krishna for 24 hours with the mind in a way that one is totally absorbed in that, it represents perfect devotional service. Unfortunately we have not heard much about this one at least with regards to the prevalent Krishna Conscious ideology. However it is the oldest and most sublime Vedic protocol which represents the highest and the most genuine form of devotional service.

Kaliyuga is a "gross" age and the mind is polluted to the maximum extent. Our Acaryas (spiritual stalwarts) have thus introduced the various modes of devotional service keeping in view the contamination of the mind. The idea is that when one is seriously interested in serving Krishna, one uses the senses and sense objects to serve Krishna with surrender in the mind which says "Krishna please see... I am doing this for you...Please recognize my service and pay me by means of accepting me as your eternal servant...pay me by means of Bhakti and give me more such service". The mood in



fact is most important and if somebody is not holding this mood consciously in one's mind...That service can by no means called devotional service...

Since the advent of Kaliyuga man finds himself wrapped with muck. His actions are defiled; hence through this system of devotional service; by offering the mind every time to the Lord and serving with the senses; the senses and mind of the servitor are slowly purified because the Lord purifies the heart of the servitor taking into account the servitor's sincerity. However we see that nowadays people appear to be performing devotional service all their lives but there is hardly any change in their mood except that now they have a new dress (devotee) code. People are busy living their material lives through the mask of devotional service. There are clashes of ego between devotees and there is unwarranted competition in devotional service!! This is indeed ridiculous. If this is happening there is something seriously wrong with our concept of devotional service. What is the use of being a popular movement if it does not make one's heart melt? Where preaching becomes more important than following the precepts of the Sampradaya meticulously? When rules become more important than concern for Vaishnavas? Are we on the right path?



## FREE-WILL

The Shastras proclaim that we have minute free-will and the Lord does not interfere with this minute independence of the living entity. However with respect to material life this minute free-will is all that matters!! After rendering the Bhagavat Gita the Supreme Lord Krishna told Arjuna that He has put before Arjuna all that He could and now Arjuna should decide!! Could that Supreme Lord not control Arjuna and make him do whatever He wanted? Magicians with minute mesmerism powers take full control of individuals through their practiced powers so what to say about that Supreme Lord Krishna. Yet the Lord has given this independence to the living entity and never ever interferes with this facility given to the living entity by Him.

Free-will is the one greatest power completely at the disposal of the living entity and intelligence has to be used while exercising this free-will. With regards to material life this free-will is the only aspect which causes chaos in the material world. Free-will was given so that we can use it to express our love to the Lord because there is nothing called "forced love". If the Lord had not provided free-will how could there be a loving relationship between the living entity and the Lord?

However when free-will is applied in the service of Maya Devi mayhem results. One uses feeble pretexts to defend one's inherent weaknesses saying "The Lord is yet to show mercy on me ...I am not a good devotee because I am undergoing karma ...When will the Lord show mercy"...Etc... This is the typical ranting of a stealthy living entity that has the deep-rooted tendency of sense-enjoyment but outwardly appears to cry for mercy!! One has to be extremely sincere in one's endeavors to attain the Lotus feet of the Lord. The contamination in the heart weakens the tendency to surrender and one uses free-will to





comfortably enjoy in the material world. Such an approach is as good as being under the direct influence of Mayadevi. One's life becomes cyclic without tangible benefits devoid of transcendental thrill. One should pray to the Lord all the time to engage oneself in the service of the divine couple. Although the Lord provides such opportunities He does not interfere with free-will. Intelligence has to be sharpened with "Uttama" Sadhu-sanga so that free-will is appropriately engaged in the service of the Lord!!



## PROCASTINATION

Procrastination is a self-defeating habit. Especially in the domain of Bhakti, procrastination is a poisonous weed that sucks the life out of the Bhakti creeper. Laziness and inertia are the two fangs of the cobra called procrastination. When a living entity takes to Bhakti and plans to surrender one's worldly mood to the Lord, Mayadevi enslaves the mind with procrastination which is debilitating to Bhakti. As one takes up to the Bhakti process with the initial surrender of the living entity at the feet of Gurudeva/Krishna, Krishna with the assistance of Yogmaya Devi inspires the living entity towards devotional service. As one prods on this path... worldliness looms large on the mind of the practitioner simultaneously. If there is a thought of going to the nearest Krishna temple, a counter thought always accompanies this, "let me finish this piece of work or let me rest a while and then I will go to the temple". Often if one is inspired to go to Vrindavana and take Darshana of the Dhama , a counter thought creeps in "I need to plan the visit.." or "Let me book the ticket quite in advance..." or "I may not be able to go because I have important meetings in office...let me postpone the visit for the next year.." etc. One always finds excuses to put oneself in the best shape.. on the pretext of being prepared so that one can have a peaceful Dhama visit. Even while hearing Hari katha one is reminded of important mundane chores at home or office and one simply deserts Hari Katha in preference to a mundane activity. We should understand that all such things are onslaughts of Mayadevi. One procrastinates in many ways to give way to material activities in preference to devotional service. This is what delays the experience of the Lord. Thus such habits stunt many a possibility of experiencing the real mood of Bhajana.



Any thought that appears in the heart of a devotee with respect to devotional service should be regarded as the direct inspiration of the Lord. One needs to take the guidance of the shiksha guru (instructing spiritual master) in understanding the various thoughts instilled in the mind as one performs Bhajana or Bhajana Kriya. With sufficient intelligence one has to surrender to activities related to devotional service if one intends to move towards the mode of Raganuga Bhajana. Raganuga Bhajana is a heartfelt mood where service to the Lord is spontaneous when one performs Bhajana under the able guidance of a Rasika devotee. Such Bhajana can happen when one is totally free from the debilitating influence of procrastination!!



## GROWING IN BHAKTI

"Jiver swarupa haya nitya Krishner das" are the famous words of Sriman Mahaprabhu. This means that even if we are not aware of it; we are anyways the eternal servants of Krishna. A servant who is in search of his Master automatically comes to know when his master approaches him. Similarly when Krishna approaches the living entity; the living entity becomes cognizant of his master even when the master has not manifested Himself in His original form. This is a fact. When our heart resolves for Krishna seva Prapti and forges ahead in sadhana; no one can fool the eager heart. Though the terrain is unfamiliar; the light of the Lord is still flaming from within and lights the path. Due to our past misgivings and distortions it is possible that for a temporary period there may be disillusionment and bewilderment of Maya Devi which is also a test of tenacity; the Indrajala of Maya Devi Herself. However this disillusionment works for the uplift of the living entity because the living entity is sincere in its search. Most of the Institutions that serve as torch-bearers on the path of Krishna Consciousness; one must realize that these have been established by the divine will of the Lord for the true elevation and maturity of the jeeva (individualized living entity). The maximum number of devotees of the Lord only emerge during Kali-yuga though this Yuga apparently may appear unsuitable for Bhajana. These institutions introduce the living entities harassed by Jeeva maya to the basics of Bhakti and serve the Lord's purpose in a very big way. As the living entity progresses on the path of Bhajana it is observed that, the more sincere the living entity gets; things become more difficult. New truths are uncovered and the clearing of the dust from the heart's surface poses heavier challenges than serve to relieve the burden of the living entity. This is the stage of acid test. Those institutions which appeared



as our saviors turn into those which appear to devour our Bhakti Bhava on the contrary. This is verily the nature of Mayadevi. These hurdles are to be crossed with intelligence, introspection and steadfastness. When the living entity places full faith on sadhana resolving to attain Krishna Seva Prapti and nothing less; new doors are opened. No institution is good or bad; all these are arrangements by the Supreme Lord meant to refine one's Bhakti. When one outgrows the size of one's favorite gown; one simply has to get a bigger gown and make it one's favorite while being grateful to the old gown!!