

uttamā-bhakti-sudhā-laharī

Nectarean Waves of Supreme Devotion

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POSITION OF PREMĀ AND ŚRĪ RĀDHĀ IN OUR PHILOSOPHY

posted by New Śrī Haridās Nivās

In the previous issues we spoke about the indispensability of a *sad-guru* in achieving *prema-bhakti* and showed the position of Śrī Rādhā in Śrī Gadādhara Parivāra. The following article highlights the status of both *premā* and Rādhā in our philosophy.



According to Caitanya-Caritāmṛta, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu told Rāmānanda Rāya, "Recite a verse from the scriptures about the ultimate goal of life." Rāmānanda replied, "**Viṣṇu-bhakti through performing one's prescribed duties** (is the ultimate goal of life)," and gave this proof from Viṣṇu-Purāṇa (3.8.9): "The Highest Person, Lord Viṣṇu, is worshiped by properly performing one's prescribed duties according to one's *varṇa* and *āśrama*. There is no other way to satisfy Him."

Śrī Caitanya answered, "That is external. Tell Me another means." Rāmānanda replied, "**To offer one's activities to Kṛṣṇa is the essence of all perfection**," giving the evidence from Bhagavad-Gītā (9.27): "Whatever you do, or eat, or sacrifice, or give, whatever austerity you perform, O son of Kuntī, offer that unto Me."

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Śrī Caitanya said, "That is also external. Please proceed." Rāmānanda Rāya replied, "**To give up one's dharma is the essence of perfection**," supplying the ŚB 11.11.32 and BG 18.66: "Although understanding the qualities and faults of *dharmas*, and knowing they have been prescribed by Me (Kṛṣṇa), the first-class person gives them up completely to render service unto Me" and "Giving up all *dharmas*, take refuge in Me alone. I will liberate you from all sins, do not grieve."

The Lord, however, asked him to go deeper, upon which Rāmānanda Rāya said that ***bhakti* mixed with *jñāna*** is the essence of perfection, following the BG 18.54: "Characterized by uncovered consciousness free from all misconceptions, that person who is a pure *ātman* in the form of Brahman does not lament for an object that has been lost or hanker for an object that is not attained. Seeing all living beings equally (seeing Bhagavān everywhere), he attains *parā-bhakti*, or *bhakti* having the characteristics of *premā*, unto Me."

On further urging, Rāmānanda Rāya said, "***Bhakti* without *jñāna* is the essence of perfection**," quoting ŚB 10.14.3: "Those who, even while remaining situated in their established social positions, discard the process of *jñāna* and with their body, words and mind offer all respects to descriptions of Your personality and activities, dedicating their lives to these narrations, which are made resonant by Your pure devotees, certainly conquer You, although You are otherwise unconquerable by anyone within the three worlds."

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At this point, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu replied, “This is fine, but still go on.” Rāmānanda Rāya then replied, “**Prema-bhakti is the essence of all perfection,**” giving the Padyāvalī 13 and 14 verses: “One may elaborately worship the friend of the distressed souls with all the richest paraphernalia, but the devotee’s heart will only melt with joy when it is filled with *premā* for Him. For is it not that for only as long as the belly knows hunger and thirst do the delicacies of food and drink bring pleasure?”

and “If you ever happen to be offered, for sale, a state of consciousness imbued with the relish (*rasa*) of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti, then purchase it at once. The value of such a state is only in the intense desire it creates (for savouring the pastimes of the Lord). And pious deeds of several lifetimes cannot enable one to acquire such a state of consciousness.”

Śrī Caitanya made then Rāmānanda Rāya expound gradually on *premā* in the moods of *dāsyā*, *sakhya*, and *vātsalyā*, before reaching the final and ultimate stage: *mādhuryā* or *kāntā-premā*.

Rāmānanda Rāya then admitted that it is true that whatever relationship a particular devotee has with the Lord is the best for him; still, upon studying all the different methods from a neutral position, it can be understood that there are higher and lower degrees of *rasa*. As the qualities of previous *rasas* are to be found in the succeeding *rasas*, the qualities found in *śānta-rasa*, *dāsyā-rasa*, *sakhya-rasa* and *vātsalyā-rasa* are all manifested in *mādhuryā-rasa*, just as the element of earth contains the qualities of all the remaining elements.

Rāmānanda Rāya then said that the glories of *mādhuryā-rasa* are so big that even Kṛṣṇa Himself is unable to proportionately reciprocate devotional service in this *rasa*, and therefore always remains in debt to such devotees (*gopīs*).

Here Śrī Caitanya recognizes that this is the limit of what can be achieved. On getting asked whether there is even something more to say, Rāmānanda Rāya describes the glories of Śrī Rādhikā, **the best of the gopīs, and the best possible personification of mādhuryā-rasa.**

--taken from Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta, Madhya-Līlā 8.57-117

--pictures from vicitri.com and bhakticollective.com

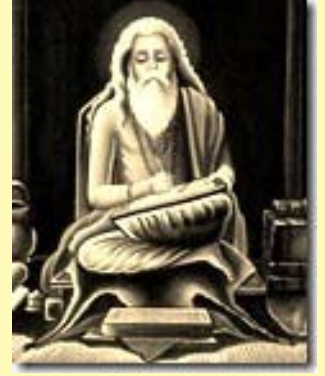


BHAKTI GIVES FULL SATISFACTION

posted by New Śrī Haridās Nivās

This article is a summary of ŚB verses 1.4.16 - 1.5.13, written according to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s commentary. Similar to the previous text, it shows the superiority of *bhakti* to other processes.

Foreseeing problems of the people in the forthcoming Kali-yuga, compassionate Veda Vyāsa thought how he could help them. Considering Vedic rites purificatory for all those who were not qualified for the path of *jñāna*, *yoga* or *bhakti*, he divided one big Veda into four smaller ones (plus the fifth Veda in form of Itihāsas and Purāṇas) for easier understanding, and entrusted them to various sages for further division. For those who were not qualified to study the Vedas, he wrote The Mahābhārata.



Yet even despite his best efforts, he felt unsatisfied, and after finding a solitary place on the bank of the Sarasvatī, began to introspect himself. He was aware of having described with a lot of detail the four goals of human life (*kāma* – gratification of senses, *artha* – rightful acquisition of wealth and ethical behavior, *dharma* – social and religious duties, and *mokṣa* – liberation from the material world), but suspected that he might not have sufficiently described the *bhāgavata-dharma*.

(As it is not possible for Vyāsa, who is *avatāra* of the Lord, to be dissatisfied or confused, it should be understood that this situation was produced by Kṛṣṇa Himself in order to manifest the Bhāgavatam, the crest jewel of all the scriptures.)

Vyāsadeva’s intuition was confirmed by Nārada Muni who happened to arrive there: “My dear Vyāsa! You have not described sufficiently the spotless glories of the Lord – the superior position of Bhagavān’s *svarūpa* above all other *svarūpas*, and the supreme attractiveness of His *līlās* and *bhakti*.”

V: “But I have written the Vedānta-Sūtra...”

N: “I consider that work to be insufficient. If you, as the author of *Vedānta*, are dissatisfied with this, then how will those who continually study it be satisfied? You are the proof that this book is insufficient.”

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V: “But I have described the wonderful qualities and *līlās* of Kṛṣṇa in scriptures like Padma-Purāṇa and others.”

N: “You have not described the glories of Kṛṣṇa as much as you have described *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma* and *mokṣa* as the goals of human life, even though they are much inferior to the greatness of Kṛṣṇa. Although His greatness is the crest jewel of human goals, you have not presented it as such. You may have described it variously in many places, but in the end you have shown it as a means for liberation. How can then your mind be satisfied if you have neglected something which is to be given the most regard?

V: “But I did say that *bhakti* is superior to liberation in many places. For example, Bhagavad-Gītā (18.54) states: ‘That person who is a pure *ātman* in the form of Brahman does not lament for an object that has been lost or hanker for an object that is not attained. Seeing all living beings equally, he attains supreme *bhakti* unto Me.’

The same idea is expressed also in Padma-Purāṇa: ‘The grand fruit of visiting holy places is liberation, but *bhakti* to Hari, prayed for by the liberated souls, can be obtained at Mathurā.’”

N: “The problem is that you have not done so repeatedly. This is necessary because it is known that the meaning of scriptures is conveyed by repetition. Your mind will only be satisfied when you describe very clearly and repeatedly the glories of the Lord, since those glories alone are finally the most excellent.

A work whose words do not portray the greatness of the Lord — which purify even the whole world composed of speakers and listeners, what to speak of the author — is impure, like a dead body. But not only are the words important. The work is useless if it is devoid of *bhakti*. Indeed, all the processes [as listed next] are useless without *bhakti*:

Sakāma-karma, or actions filled with desires for enjoyment, cause pain at all times --during practice and at the time of receiving the result. But even if the *karma* is performed without such desires (*niṣkāma*), it will bear no fruits without *bhakti* (i.e., without being offered to the Lord).



Further, the stage of *jñāna* where one’s *karma* has been destroyed (*naiṣkarmyam*) does not appear wonderful if it is devoid of the mood where one sees the Lord as having the form of knowledge and bliss. As it is said in Viṣṇu-Bhakti-Candrodaya, ‘He who does not follow the Lord in His chariot when He moves becomes a *brahma-rakṣasa* even though he has destroyed all *karmas* with the fire of knowledge.’

And even if *bhakti* is present in *jñāna* but one thinks that the Lord’s body is touched by the material *guṇas*, such inferior and offensive attitude will not result in liberation. Though devoid of ignorance, though one has realized knowledge, what is the use of that knowledge? What then to speak of unrealized scriptural knowledge?

One should not say that liberation can be achieved just by destroying ignorance, as by the inconceivable energy of the Lord the destroyed ignorance again arises. The *Parīṣiṣṭā-Vacanam* of the *Vāsanā-Bhāṣya* says: ‘Even the liberated persons get again bound by *karma* if they commit offense against the Lord, possessor of great, inconceivable powers.’

Therefore, Oh fortunate one! since you have efficacious vision, spotless fame, dedication to the Truth and determined intelligence, you should remember with concentrated attention the pastimes of the Lord, and describe His glories (so that people might get attracted to *bhakti*, the most elevated process there is).“

--pictures taken from <http://krishnasmrty.blogspot.com.es> and www.kidsgen.com

BEEF IN ANCIENT INDIA? (part 2)

posted by Āditya dās, Israel

The Vedas prohibit not only cow-slaughter, but the slaying of all kinds of herbivorous animals (see the heading ‘Were cow-slaughter, meat-sacrifice and meat-eating prevalent in the Vedic Age?’). Scriptures of our and other faiths propound the creed of non-violence (*ahimsā*) (for details see “Non-violence is supreme in religious scriptures”).

Inspite of this, one may find references to act of slaughter and meat-eating here and there in the Scriptures. These passages should be understood in their appropriate contextual setting as to whether such indications are enjoined as ‘obligatory duties’, or whether they are a way out for preventing evil tendencies of meat-eating.

Among sentient beings we find various kinds of evil propensities which are ingenerate, such as adultery born of passionate sensuousness, alcoholism, etc. etc. To prevent the tendency of indiscriminate cohabitation of man and woman it has been enjoined that a person should delimit his relations to one woman after entering into matrimonial sacraments with her and he should thus be considered on par with a *brahmacārī*.



In a similar manner, to check the flesh-eating tendencies of meat-eaters, wherever there are references to meat-eating, though the ulterior and real objective is prevention of meat-eating and forbidding of violence (*himsā*), and vegetarian food and *ahimsā* have been promulgated as the prime *dharma* - when such passages are considered duly well and pondered over, it will be found that meat-eating and acts of violence have not been enjoined as 'obligatory duties'.

Shrimad Bhagwata 11th canto, 5th chapter prescribes:

*loke vyavāyāmiṣa-madya-sevā nityās tu jantor na
hi tatra codanā | vyavasthitis teṣu vivāha-yajña-
surāgrahair āsu nivṛttir iṣṭā ||11||*

Man is naturally inclined towards the enjoyment of sexual pleasure, flesh and wine. No rules enjoin him to indulge in them. A certain check is provided over these tendencies (by the Sastra) by permitting sexual commerce with one's wedded wife, meat-eating at the end of an animal sacrifice, drinking of wine during a Sautramani sacrifice (in the case of those who are addicted to these); the (real) intention (of Sastra) is to turn man away from them. (11)

*yad ghrāṇa-bhakṣo vihitaḥ surāyās
tathā paśor ālabhanam na himsā |
evam vyavāyah prajayā na ratyā imam
viśuddham na viduḥ svadharmam ||13||*

They do not understand the pure essence of their religion. Only smelling of wine is sanctioned and touching the animal is allowed and not its killing (in a Sautramani sacrifice). (13)

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*ye tv anevam vido'santaḥ stabdhāḥ sad-abhimāninaḥ
paśūn druhyanti viśrabdhāḥ pretya khādanti te ca tām
||14||*

Those who are ignorant of this real Dharma and, though wicked and haughty, account themselves virtuous, kill animals without any feeling of remorse or fear of punishment, and are devoured by those very animals in their next birth. (14)

So wherever there are sentences which seem to support violence (*himsā*), or meat-eating, or enjoin rituals entailing meat, they should be deliberated with due consideration as to whether they are inhibitions to prevent evil tendencies, or they are 'obligatory duties'. If such sentences are in the form of 'obligatory duties', then they are invalid and they should be treated as interpolations (see the proof cited under the heading 'What to do if there is contradiction between Śruti and Smṛti').

It is stated in the Śānti-Parva of the Māhābhārata:

*lubdhair vitta-parair brahman nāstikaiḥ
sampravartitam | veda-vādān avijñāya sa-
tyābhāsam ivānṛtam || (śānti-parva 263.6)*

"O Brahmana! Atheists pursuing efforts to amass wealth and covetous, having not understood the injunctions of Vedas have spread falsities which have a semblance of truth." (263.6)

*surā matsyā madhu māmsam āsavaṁ
kṛsaraudanam | dhūrtaiḥ pravartitam hy etan
naitad vedeṣu kalpitam || (śānti-parva 265.9)*

"Liquors, fish, mead, meat, spirits, rice cooked with sesamum (til) seeds, - all these have been inserted into *yajña* by the wicked people. Vedas have not prescribed their use in *yajña*." (265.9)



In the Mahābhārata, it is very clearly specified that in the *yajña*, there is no place for violence to animals. Śānti-Parva, chapter 337, verses 4-5 provide that according to Vedic Śruti seeds should be offered in oblation in a *yajña*.

*bījair yajñeṣu yaṣṭavyam iti vai vaidikī śrutiḥ |
aja-samjñāni bījāni cchāgam no hantum arhatha ||
naiṣa dharmah satām devā yatra vadhyeta
vai paśuḥ || (śāntiparva 337.4-5)*

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The seeds are named as *aja*. As such it is not justified to kill a goat [*aja* means both “seeds” and “goat”]. Wherever animals are sacrificed in *yajña*, it is not the norm of the Virtuous. (337.4-5)

In the ‘*Syādvādmañjarī*’ of the Jains, *aja* in a *yajña* is to be interpreted as ‘seeds’:

tathā hi kila vede ‘ajair yaṣṭavyam’ ity ādi vākyeṣu mithyādṛṣṭau ’ja-śabdaṁ paśu-vācakaṁ vyācaksate | samyag-dṛṣṭas tu janmā prāyogyam tri-vārṣikam ya-va-brīhy-ādi, pañca-vārṣikam tila-masurādi, sapta-vārṣikam kaṅku-sarṣapādi dhānya-paryāyatayā par-yavasāyayanti |

(Interpretation of verse No. 23, published by Bombay Sanskrit Prakrit Series, 1933, first edition, page 140, lines 49 to 54)

It means - In Vedic injunctions like ‘*yajña* should be performed with *aja*’, the ignorant interpret *aja* as an animal (goat). Those who are not to be reborn in the world, such wise persons interpret it as three-year old barley and rice, five-year old Sesamum indicum (til) and masura lentil, seven-year old panic seed (kangu) and mustard, etc.

In the third chapter (tantra) of *Kākolukīya* of the *Pañcatantra* by *Viṣṇuśarmā*, it is provided:

ete’pi ye yājñikā yajña-karmaṇi paśūn vyāpādayanti te mūrkhā paramārtham śruter na jānanti | tatra kila etad uktam ajair yaṣṭavyam | ajā brīhayas tāvat sapta-vārṣikāḥ kathyante na punaḥ paśu-viśeṣāḥ |

Meaning thereby - Those who kill animals in *yajñas* are fools, because they do not know the correct interpretation of *Śruti*. *Śruti* provides for *aja* to be used for *yajña*. *Aja* means seven-year old rice and not an animal. There the following verse is quoted in support:

vṛkṣāṁś chitvā paśūn hatvā kṛtvā rudhira-kardamam yady evaṁ gamyate svarge varakam kena gamyate
||107||

Meaning thereby - If, by cutting of green trees, by killing animals and playing with their blood, one can attain heaven, then by which action is one likely to go to hell?

--taken from “A Review of ‘Beef in Ancient India’”, pp. 9-12, published as “Introduction”

--pictures taken from celestialhealing.net, creatingbetterlife.net and vrindaproducciones.blogspot.com

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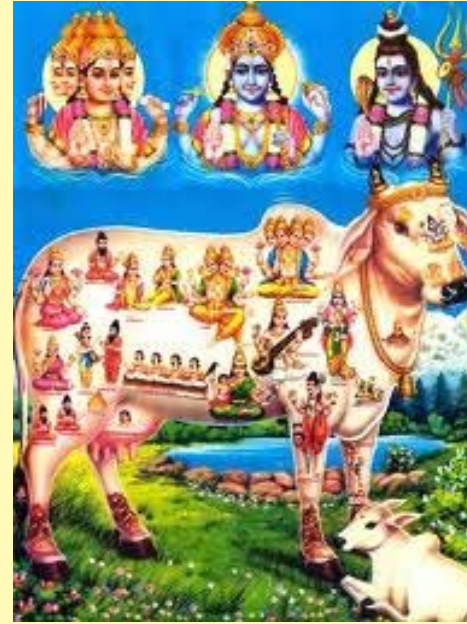
GO AND THEIR ABODE

posted by *Murāri dās*, Argentina

Mahābhārata, *Anuśāsana-Parva*, Book 13, Section LXXXIII, describes that due to their wonderful acts *Go* dwell in a region that is higher than the three worlds:

Brahmā said: “O goddess (*Surabhi*), at this exhibition of your freedom from cupidity and desire and at these penances of yours, O you of beautiful face, I have been exceedingly gratified. I, therefore, grant you the boon of immortality. You shall dwell in a region that is higher than the three worlds, through my grace. That region shall be known to all by the name of *Goloka*.”

Your offspring, ever engaged in doing good acts, will reside in the world of men. In fact, O highly blessed one, your daughters will reside there. All kinds of enjoyment, celestial and human, that you may think of, will immediately be yours. Whatever happiness



exists in Heaven, will also be yours, O blessed one.

The regions, O you of a hundred eyes, that are *Surabhi*’s are endowed with means for the gratification of every wish. Neither Death, nor Decrepitude, nor fire can overcome its denizens. No ill luck, O *Vāsava*, exists there.

Many delightful woods, and delightful ornaments and objects of beauty may be seen there. There many beautiful vehicles, all excellently equipped, which move at the will of the rider, may be seen.

You have asked me, O *Śakra*, and I have answered you in full, O slayer of *Asuras*. Never disregard *Go*.”

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam also describes *Goloka*, *Gokula* and *Vraja* as places full of *Go* where its residents are lovingly engaged in *Go-sevā*:

“*Gokula* resounded on all sides with the sounds of *Go* bulls in rut fighting with one another for fertile *Go* cows; with the mooing of *Go* cows, bur-

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dened by their udders, chasing after their calves; with the noise of milking and of the white calves jumping here and there; with the loud reverberation of flute-playing; and with the singing of the all-auspicious deeds of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma by the *gopas* and *gopīs*, who



made the village resplendent with their wonderfully ornamented attire.

The homes of the *gopas* in Gokula

looked most charming with their abundant paraphernalia for worship of the sacrificial fire, the sun, guests, *Go*, *brāhmaṇas*, forefathers and gods. On all sides lay the flowering forest, echoing with flocks of birds and swarms of bees and beautified by its lakes crowded with swans, ducks and bowers of lotuses." (ŚB 10.46.9-13)

Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: "Surrounded by His blissful companions, who constantly chanted His glories, Kṛṣṇa then entered the village of Vraja, which was decorated with herds of *Go*." (ŚB 10.18.1)

"Between Nandeśvara and Mahāvana is a place named Vṛndāvana. This place is very suitable for *Go* because it is lush with grass, plants and creepers. It has nice gardens and tall mountains and is full of facilities for the happiness of all the *gopas*, *gopīs* and *Go*." (ŚB 10.11.28)

--pictures taken from myspace.com & glimpseofkrishna.com

COUNTERING UNFAVORABLE FEELINGS

posted by New Śrī Haridās Nivās

The person who is following the path of *ramyā upāsanā* must perform this *sādhanā* by attentively listening to the activities of Śrī Hari and the stories of His devotees. This serves as a remedy especially when feelings that oppose *bhakti* arise in his heart.

More specifically, when feelings of violence develop, he must contemplate His *kāruṇya-līlā* (activities that highlight the kindness of Hari and His devotees); when the tendency towards falsehood appears, he must reflect on *satya-niṣṭhā*, or activities that show determination to be truthful; when greed emerges, renunciation and sacrifice must be remembered; when lust and desire for sex come out, then activities characterized by renunciation (*vairāgya-līlā*) must

be pondered over; and when the tendency to accumulate wealth and property arises, he must listen to, sing about and remember works of saints who did not have any residence or belongings.

According to sages, one must consciously and intentionally counter the undesirable and disturbing tendencies such as violence or hatred within oneself by generating feelings that oppose them. If one does not do this, one can neither get any benefit by meditating on one's *iṣṭa-deva* nor derive fruits of true *sevā-bhāva* since genuine *sevā-bhāva* only appears in the heart that is pure and happy.

To achieve such true happiness of the heart, it is essential to practice internal discipline. For example, when the practitioner sees the prosperity of another with whom he lacks friendship, or bears a conflict, he may feel envious of that person. When this happens, he must seek to feel the same happiness that he experiences when someone close to himself becomes prosperous or successful.

Likewise, he must counter the impure feeling of happiness that he feels during the misery of his enemy by thinking over the sadness he would feel when someone dear to himself is miserable. And, when his heart burns with envy upon seeing his enemy or competitor in a successful position, he must appease it by meditating upon the happiness that one feels when someone close to one's heart becomes successful.

--taken from *Mahārājī's Dīna-Candrikā*, pp. 47-48

Dear friends: As other kinds of service require our immediate attention, the next issue of Laharī will be published in January 2013

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