

PATRIKA 4

The Speciality of Uttama-Bhakti- Part 2

Sri Haridas Shastri (Nyayacharya)

2- Shubhada

In the previous issue of the Patrika, we had taken up the description of Sadhana Bhakti, the primary step in Uttama Bhakti. While describing the specialities of Sadhana Bhakti, the first one, kleshaharatva (the property of destroying all kleshas), was described in some detail. Now, we will describe some other specialities like Shubhada, etc. Shubhada means having the quality of bestowing all auspiciousness. First of all, it is necessary to know what can really be termed as “shubha” (“auspicious”).

In this regard, it is mentioned in Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu as follows:

*shubhani prinanam sarva jagatam anuraktata
sadgunah sukhamityadinyakhyatani manishibhih*

“Intelligent people, by the term “auspicious”, refer to the loving disposition of a devotee towards the world, the loving disposition of the entire world towards him and the saintly qualities like happiness and so on (by “and so on” other qualities are to be understood like the ability to enchant others or causing welfare of others).”

“Loving disposition of a devotee towards the world and the loving disposition of the world towards him” – even though these two are included in saintly qualities, the reason for mentioning them separately is because these two qualities are the best of all. In other words, even though these two are considered as saintly qualities, they actually occur only in a devotee. These saintly qualities cannot be seen anywhere else. It is mentioned in Dhruvacharitra in Srimad-Bhagavatam (4-9-47):

*yasya prasanno bhagavan gunairmaitradibhir harih
tasmai namanti bhutani nimnamapa iva svayam*

“Just as water flows downwards by itself, similarly, due to the presence of qualities such as friendliness, all the living entities bow down before a person with whom the Supreme Lord is pleased.”

It is also mentioned in Padma-purana:

*yenarccito haristena tarpitani jagantyaapi
rajyanti jantavastatra jangamah sthavara api*

“One who has worshipped Sri Hari has made all the living beings in this world happy and all the living entities, both non-moving and moving are pleased with him.”

The third “shubha” (“auspiciousness”) is bestowing saintly qualities etc. Bhakti bestows all the saintly qualities. An example for this can be found in the Srimad-Bhagavatam (5-18-12)

*yasyasti bhaktirbhagavatya kinchana, sarvaairgunairtatra samasate surah
haravabhaktasya kuto mahadguna, manorathenasati dhavato bahih*

The suras (“sura” means divine personalities, i.e. Bhagavan, His associate devatas, the sages etc.) along with all the saintly qualities perpetually reside in a person who has akinchana bhakti (bhakti where the goal is bhakti itself) of Bhagavan in his heart. But, wherefrom can such great qualities ever occur in one who is not a devotee of Bhagavan? Such a person only keeps running towards fickle external matters as a result of his varying convictions.

The term sadguna (saintly qualities) refers to jnana (knowledge), vairagya (renunciation), yama and niyama (rules and regulations of self-restraint) etc.

The fourth shubha (auspiciousness) is **sukhapradatva** (bestowing happiness). Happiness is of three types: vishayamaya (pertaining to material objects), Brahmamaya (pertaining to Brahman – impersonal and energy-less manifestation of God) and Ishvaramaya (pertaining to God Himself).

The property of bestowing happiness as being one of the specialities of Bhakti is mentioned as follows in the tantras-

*siddhayah paramascarya bhuktirmuktisca sasvati
nityancha paramanando bhavedgovindabhaktitah*

“From bhakti of Govinda, the following are attained – astonishing siddhis (mystic perfections), bhukti (complete material enjoyment), perpetual mukti and eternal Supreme bliss.”

In the verse quoted above, “siddhis” refer to mystical powers like anima (contracting) etc. The term “bhukti” refers to vishayamaya happiness (i.e. material happiness experienced through the sense organs). Even mystical perfections like anima are a kind of vishayamaya happiness only. Mukti is brahmasukha or happiness pertaining to brahman (an aspect of God) and by pariseshya nyaya (the rule of the remainder) the last one – paramananda (supreme bliss) is happiness pertaining to God Himself. The experience of all these forms of happiness occur due to bhakti of Govinda.

In the same way, it is mentioned in Hari-bhakti sudhodaya as follows:

*bhuyo'pi yace devesha tvayi bhaktirdridha'stu me
ya mokshantacaturvargaphalada sukhada lata iti*

“O Lord of the Devas! I only beg this from you again and again that you please give me firm bhakti. This bhakti is in the form of a creeper that bestows the four types of fruits viz. (dharma, artha, kama and moksha) as also happiness.” Here, the term “sukhada” refers to ishwariya happiness (i.e. happiness pertaining to God).

3- Mokshalaghutakrit

The third speciality of Uttama-bhakti is that it makes one experience even moksha as something very insignificant. When uttama-bhakti proceeds from the level of sadhana-bhakti and enters the level of bhava-bhakti, then such experience becomes apparent. It is said:

*manageva prarudhayam hridaye bhagavadratau
purusharthastu chatvarastrinayante samantatah*

“When even a little rati (attachment) towards Bhagavan rises in the heart (mind), then all the four purusharthas (human objectives) are totally reduced to the level of grass.”

In the same way, it is mentioned in Sri Narada-pancharatra:

*hari bhakti mahadevyah sarva muktyadisiddhayah
bhuktayascadbhutastasyas cetikavadanuvratah*

“all the siddhis (perfections) such as mukti and material enjoyments of the most wonderful order follow that great empress of Hari-bhakti just like servants”

4- Sudurlabha

The fourth speciality of uttama-bhakti is that it is sudurlabha (very difficult to obtain). Hari-bhakti is sudurlabha in two ways.

*Sadhanaughair anasangair labhya suchiradapi
harina chasvadeyeti dvidha sa syat sudurlabha*

“Hari-bhakti is difficult to obtain in two ways: 1- being anasanga or devoid of attachment (devoid of taste) if one does many sadhanas (practices towards a goal), one still does not get Hari-bhakti even after a very long time. Similarly, 2- even if one performs all the sadhanas with asakti (attachment), still Sri Hari does not bestow bhakti immediately.”

The significance of the word “anasanga” means that bhava-bhakti is always unattainable through all the sadhanas when one is anasanga i.e., when the sadhanas are performed without asakti (attachment). Here, asakti is the stage penultimate to bhava in the spectrum of

bhakti starting with sraddha, sadhu sanga, bhajana-kriya, anartha-nivritti, nistha, ruchi and asakti. Rati or attraction arises only after asakti is there as described in the shastras. It is said in Sri-Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu (1.3.8):

*sadhane'bhiniveshastu tatra nishpadayan ruchim
haravasaktimutpada tatra sanjanayedritam*

“nishtha or resolute attachment in sadhana first produces ruchi or taste in bhakti and thereafter makes bhava-bhakti arise by producing asakti in Sri Hari.”

This has to be understood in this manner. Even if one performs sadhana with asakti, still Sri Hari does not grant bhava-bhakti immediately but grants it only with some delay. Amongst the two types of difficulties (in getting bhava-bhakti) , the first is described in the tantras as follows:

*jnanatah sulabha muktir bhukti yajnadipunyatah
seyam sadhanasahasrair hari-bhaktih sudurlabha*

“Mukti (liberation) is easy to attain through jnana (knowledge) and bhukti or material enjoyment is easy to attain through pious activities like yajna (sacrifice) but even through thousands of sadhanas Hari-bhakti is very difficult to attain.”

The second type of difficulty is described as below in the 5th Canto of Srimad Bhagavatam (6.18)-

*rajan! patirgururalam bhavatam yadunam
daivam priyah kulapati kva cha kinkaro va
astvevamanga! bhajatam bhagavan mukundo
muktim dadati karhichit sma na bhaktiyogam*

“O king! Bhagavan Sri Krishna Himself is the protector, guru, dearest deity, well-wishing friend and kulapati (chief of the family) for the pandavas and yadavas so much so that sometimes He even becomes their obedient servant. In the same way, He can do various activities for other devotees also. He even grants them mukti (liberation) sometimes, but not Bhakti-yoga.” This means that He rarely gives Bhakti that surpasses even mukti.

In the previous verse, by saying “He does not grant them”, it must be understood to mean that “He grants sometimes”. In sanskrit the two suffixes “chit” and “chan” (just as in this verse-karhichit) occur when the intended meaning is that of incompleteness (not in totality). Therefore it is said here “sometimes” and not “never at all”. Hence, even if one performs the sadhana of bhakti-yoga directly, with asanga or asakti, as long as deep asakti (attachment) to that bhakti-yoga which is produced as a fruit of such sadhana does not occur, Sri Hari does not grant bhava-bhakti. The purport here is that, Sri Krishna actually bestows bhakti (bhava-bhakti) only to that devotee who has asakti in matters pertaining to Sri Krishna Himself.

The entrance to Uttama-Bhakti

Bhagavat-Prapanna-das (MA Sanskrit)

Those devotees who are beginners and have not performed sravana (hearing) and manana (contemplation) along with sraddha (faith in shastras) and seva (pleasing service) as prescribed in the bhakti-shastras (scriptures focussed on bhakti) sitting close to a Sri Guru who is shastriya, (an expert in shastras and lives as per shastras) generally keep getting tormented by doubts. Their unfulfilled concern is that, which angas(limbs) of bhakti must they take up and act and they are unable to properly determine the answer to this concern.

Beginners on the path of bhakti often face doubts regarding their duty. Such beginners are generally they who have not heard from a shastriya Guru the Bhakti-scriptures with shraddha accompanied by seva. Due to their confusion they are unable to determine which aspects of Bhakti they should focus on.

Several angas (limbs or aspects) of bhakti and their greatness have been described in shastras. At various times, a devotee hears from different people on these angas and their greatness or he himself studies them, but he is unable to resolve as to which anga he should practice. For example, sometimes he thinks that it is mentioned in the shastras that in kali-yuga, Hari-nama (the holy name of Sri Hari) is the only refuge for everyone and hence he wonders whether he must leave everything else and only engage himself in chanting Sri Hari-nama. Sometimes he questions the need to take shelter of a Guru when Sri Hari-nama alone is the refuge for everyone in kali-yuga. However, he sees that every senior, advanced Vaishnava is initiated into a sat-parampara (disciplic succession of saintly and scholarly devotees) and hence he feels that he should accept diksha too. The next question he thinks is, after diksha, should he simply chant Hari-nama or serve Sri Guru or rather, accepting the statement from Sri-Rupa-gosvami's Upadeshamrita as the most authoritative, take shelter of Sri Radha-Kunda situated on Govardhana hill with undivided resoluteness? He again thinks that if he takes shelter of Sri Radha-Kunda, then service to Sri Gurudeva who resides in Vrindavan will not be possible and therefore, will lead to aparadha (displeasing conduct). Again, according to Sri Gautamiya Tantra, service to Go yields that which is the most cherished for the worshippers of Sri Gopal and hence, he wonders whether he must dedicate his body, mind and wealth only in serving Go. In this way we see that the devotee mentioned above is in such a position where he is tormented by doubts and is inconclusive with regards to following the various angas of bhakti. Now, as a reconciliation of the subject matter, the Gaudiya siddhanta (conclusive truth) is being presented here.

Just as Sri Ram is called "Maryada-purushottama" because of educating the world on practising maryada (behavioural standards) by personally observing maryada, similarly, because of practising Uttama-bhakti which is the most excellent of all education and because of bestowing that education of Uttama-bhakti to the whole world, Sri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is called

as the educator of bhakti. On account of being the educator of bhakti, he got many books that give the conclusions on bhakti authored through his various associates such as Srila Rupa Gosvami for the benefit of devotees belonging to all levels of devotion. One amongst these books is Sri Bhakti Rasamrita Sindhu. The author of this work is Srila Rupa Gosvami Prabhupada.

In this work, the most subtle and the esoteric conclusions on bhakti have been presented with great expertise. The second wave in the eastern ocean of this book is called as sadhana-bhakti. In this wave, the author has described the well-known 64 angas (limbs or aspects) of bhakti. These are drawn from the various shastras which were manifested by previous acharyas such as Vyasa. These angas are – taking shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Guru, studying bhagavata-dharma from Sri Guru beginning with Sri-Krishna-mantra-diksha, seva to Sri-Gurudeva with complete sraddha, following the path of the saintly devotees,, Sri Hari-nama-sankirtan (glorification of the holy name of Sri Hari), hearing Srimad-Bhagavatam, staying in a dham (holy abode) of Bhagavan, seva to Sri Vighraha (divine deity) and so on.

Having described the twenty main angas (limbs or aspects) of Bhakti, he has written a shloka that answers the doubt raised above. He has written (BRS 1.2.83):

*asyastatra praveshaya dvaratve'pyangavimshateh
trayam pradhanamevoktam gurupadashrayadikam*

“Even though these twenty angas are the door to enter into the path of uttama-bhakti, the three angas starting with Sri Gurupadashraya (taking shelter of the lotus feet of Sri Guru) are the principal angas.”

The purport here is that, amongst the 64 angas, the first twenty which have been described in the book are the door for entering into uttama-bhakti. But, even amongst them, the first three angas are to be primarily performed. They are:

- 1) Taking shelter of Sri Guru
- 2) Studying bhagavata-dharma from Sri Guru beginning with Sri-Krishna-mantra-diksha
- 3) Seva to Sri-Gurudeva with complete sraddha

We see that these three main angas are all of the nature of having a direct relationship with the personality of Sri Guru. Here, it is indicated that the devotee does not get entangled in any doubt at all and practises uttama-bhakti following Sri Guru. Whatever instructions are given by Sri Guru, he should accept that as his sadhana as well as sadhya (goal for sadhana). In this way, he must get himself endowed with an intelligence having a tendency of absolute conviction i.e., having an undivided resoluteness towards Sri Gurudeva. At appropriate times, according to the eligibility of the devotee, Sri Guru also gives instructions on the other necessary angas of bhakti and the devotee of undivided resoluteness follows these instructions exactly as intended by Sri Guru. This undivided resoluteness has been presented in Srimad Bhagavadgita (2.41) as below:

*vyavasayatmika buddhih ekeha kurunandana
bahushakha hyanantasca buddhayo'vyavasayinam*

“O dear one of the Kurus! In the path of bhakti, vyavasayatmika buddhi or intelligence with absolute conviction is just one (undividedly resolute). But, the intelligence of those who are devoid of such conviction, (being bahirmukha or unfavourably disposed to bhakti) is boundless and multi-branched.”

Some excerpts of the commentary on this verse written by Srila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura are in the following manner- “That intelligence which is centred on bhakti-yoga is superior to all other kinds of intelligence. This is what is being said through the verse starting with vyavasayatmika buddhih. In this bhakti-yoga, the vyavasayatmika buddhi (intelligence with absolute conviction) is just one. Glorification and remembrance of the Lord, physical service to His lotus feet, goseva and other activities instructed by my Sri Guru are my only sadhana (practices pertaining to the path of bhakti) and they alone are my sadhya (the goal of the ssadhana) and this alone constitutes my life. I am incapable of renouncing them in both states of sadhana and sadhya. This alone is my desire and this alone is my activity. Leaving these, I have no other activity or desire even in my dreams. Whether I have to face happiness or misery because of this, whether my bondage to material existence is destroyed or not – I am not affected by it in anyway. This sort of niscayatmika buddhi is possible only in nishkapata bhakti (i.e. bhakti devoid of any form of duplicity or deceit in the mind, whether subtle or gross)”.

Srila Narottamadasa Thakura has also said in Sri Prema Bhakti Chandrika –

*sri-guru-carana-padma, kevala-bhakati-sadma, vando mui savadhana mane
jahara prasade bhair, e bhava toriya jai, krishna-prapti hay jaha hane
guru-mukha-padma-vakya, hridaye kariya aikya, ar na kariha mane asha
sri-guru-carane rati, ei se uttama-gati, je prasade pure sarva asha
chakshu-dana dilo jei, janme janme prabhu sei divyajnan hride prakashita
premabhakti jaha haite avidya vinasha jate vedegaya jahara charita*

It means: “The lotus feet of Sri Guru is the only way to advance in Bhakti. I worship them with a cautious mind. It is by his mercy by which I cross over material existence and achieve Sri Krishna. Having made my heart one with the statements emanating from the lotus-like mouth of Sri Guru, I do not have any other desire in my mind. The supreme goal is to achieve a spontaneous attraction for the feet of Sri Guru. By his mercy all desires are fulfilled. He who provided eyes to me by manifesting transcendental knowledge in my heart, is my Lord life after life. Premabhakti is achieved from him, ignorance is destroyed by him, the Vedas glorify him.”

It is written in the Sri Gurushtakam in Sri Stavamritalahari by Sri Vishwanath hkravarty Thakura:

*sakṣad-dharitvena samasta-shastrair,uktas tatha bhavyata eva sadbhih
kintu prabhor yah priya eva tasya, vande guroh shri-caranaravindam*

*yasya prasada bhagavat-prasado, yasya prasadan na gatih kuto 'pi
dhyayan stuvams tasya yashas tri-sandhyam, vande guroh shri-caranaravindam*

I offer my obeisances to the lotus feet of Sri Gurudeva who is glorified in all the sastras as Sri Hari Himself and is also considered to be so by the learned saintly devotees, but is pre-eminently dear to Lord Sri Hari. (7)

I offer my obeisances to the lotus feet of Sri Gurudeva by whose grace one gets the grace of Sri Bhagavan and by displeasing whom one loses all refuges whatsoever. I glorify and meditate upon his glory during the three sandhyas (8)

From the descriptions above it becomes known that a devotee must perform all the activities of seva only by following Sri Guru. Without being entangled by doubts in any way, whatever instructions are given by Sri Guru both scriptural and colloquial or whatever orders are given by him, he must carefully endeavour to carry them out to the very best of his ability. Whatever doubts may arise in him, he must take shelter of Sri Guru himself. Only from this do activities of seva become possible in a pleasant manner and all anarthas (useless tendencies) are destroyed and mamatva (belongingness) in Bhagavan occurs. This alone is the essence of all the shastras.

Body- A Divine Asset

Lila dasi (BHMS, Pune)

Some people in this world, on seeing adversities, think that an easy way to escape from them is to give up their life. But, even if the body is destroyed, the sense of "I" (or the atma) remains as it is and because of prarabdha (see patrika 2), distress comes again. Therefore, forsaking one's body is not an intelligent act. If we analyse deeply, we will come to see that this entire universe is actually the work of God. He alone is the Lord of this universe. This body of ours, then, is His creation only, and therefore He alone is its owner. Hence, no one has the authority to destroy this wealth that belongs to someone else. God, out of His compassion, has given us an opportunity so that we can use this body in activities of His seva and thus make our life fruitful. But, an ordinary human being does not generally understand these matters. Just to teach this knowledge, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu performed a pastime with a special associate of His – Sri Sanatana Gosvami. A detailed description of this is found in chapter 4 of antyalila in Sri Chaitanya Charitamrita. A brief description of the same is as follows-

The close associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sri Sanatana Gosvami, who used to live in Mathura & Vrindavan, once travelled to Puri to meet Mahaprabhu. He walked the long trip alone, through the forest areas of Jharkhand. Neglecting his food, he was fasting for most of the trip. The water from Jharkhand had an adverse effect on him. Consequently, he developed a disease of severe itching on his entire body. On scratching, blood used to ooze from his skin.

Even though Gosvami had taken birth from a high pedigree, still, due to the influence of the association of the yavana (muslim) rulers, his lifestyle too had become like those of the yavanas. Therefore, he used to consider himself as very lowly. For this reason, whenever he would visit Nilanchal (Puri), he would not even enter the temple of Jagannathji.

Because of his bodily affliction as also due to considering himself as very lowly, he had extreme mental anguish. He then analysed and came to the conclusion that his body was not fit for any worthy activity and therefore, it would only be proper on his part to forsake his body in some holy place. Thus, his afflictions and anguish would be over and he too would attain a good destination. He concluded that he would commit suicide by throwing himself under the wheel of the chariot of Jagannathji during the ratha-yatra. Thus it would be possible for him to give up life while taking darshan of both Sri Jagannathji and Sri Mahaprabhu. He thought that doing so would be the parama-purushartha (the Supreme Goal) in life.

On reaching Nilanchal, Sri Sanatan Gosvami started residing along with Sri Haridas Thakura. There, he met Mahaprabhu and started having His association. Once, while in the course of a conversation, Mahaprabhu suddenly said –

*dehatyage krishna na payi payiye bhajane| krishnapraptira upaya kona nahi bhakti vine||
dehatyagadik ei tamasera dharm| tamo-rajo-dharme krishnera na payiye marma||*

*bhakti vina krishne kabhu nahe premodaya| prema vina krishnaprapti anya haite naya||
dehatyagadi tamodharma patakakarana| sadhaka na paya tate krishnera charana||*

(Sri Chaitanya charitamrita 3.4.55-58)

Meaning- “ Sanatan! One doesn’t get Sri Krishna by forsaking one’s body. That is possible only through bhajana (pleasing devotional service). Other than bhakti, there is no other means to get Sri Krishna. Forsaking the body is the dharma of those in the mode of Tamas (Ignorance). One cannot know the confidentiality of Sri Krishna by tamasic or rajasic dharmas. Sri Krishna-Prema does not rise without bhakti and other than through Prema, He cannot be obtained by any other means. Tamasic dharmas like forsaking one’s body are causes for sin. A sadhaka (one who performs sadhana) cannot attain the lotus feet of Sri Krishna through suicide.”

He then instructed Gosvamipada to leave such crooked thoughts like committing suicide and inspired him towards attaining Sri Krishna-prema through sravana-kirtana (hearing and glorification) without wasting his time.

After this, Mahaprabhu attacked Gosvamipada’s mentality of considering himself very lowly and also ineligible for the path of bhakti. He said – “He alone is the greatest who worships. One who is not a bhakta is actually wretched and abominable. In the worship of Sri Krishna, there is no consideration of one’s jati (caste), kula (lineage) etc.”

On Mahaprabhu’s saying so, Gosvamipada caught His feet and started asking Him as to what gain would be there if he were to continue living. Mahaprabhu replied – “This body of yours is

actually My wealth. You have performed atma-samarpana (surrendering everything including one's self) to Me. Why do you want to destroy the wealth belonging to someone else? Are you not capable of analysing what is dharma and what is adharma? Your body is my main instrument. Using this body, I will fulfill many many purposes". Then Mahaprabhu made him understand what activities He wanted to get done through the medium of Gosvami and said, "You wish to forsake that very body through which I wish to carry out all these activities. How can I tolerate this?"

He also added – "At the time of diksha, the disciple does atma-samarpan. Immediately, Sri Krishna makes the disciple equal to Himself. He makes his body spiritual and with that same supra-material body, he worships the lotus feet of Sri Krishna".

From this episode, we get the learning that if the disciple actually surrenders himself at the time of diksha, then after the surrender, the sadhaka does not have anything left which can be called as "his". In other words, he does not consider himself to be the owner of any object. He surrenders even his mind and his body to Sri Guru. Sri Guru is actually Sri Krishna Himself. Then each of his activities take place only as per the desire of Sri Guru and he becomes an instrument for accomplishing the activities of Sri Guru. That time, neither happiness nor misery perturbs him.

Gosvami gave up his dejection, went ahead in his service to God and while staying in Vraja-mandala (land of Vraja) accomplished extraordinary and astonishing feats. He collected various shastras from the length and breadth of the country and on their authority, redeemed many lost tirthas of Vraja to their glory. In Vrindavan, he brought to light what is seva to Sri Krishna. He wrote works like Sri Brihat-bhagavatamrita, Sri Hari-bhakti-vilasa etc. He also wrote the commentary to the 10th canto of Srimad-Bhagavatam. Even now, he is counted in the Gaudiya Vaishnava history as one of the foundational pillars.

Go- A foundational pillar of spirituality

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What is the connection between spirituality and Go-seva? To understand this, we must first understand what is the real meaning of "spirituality". Pure spirituality is that where the sadhaka performs very pure seva of God. Seva can be called as 'very pure' when, in the mind of the sevaka (performer of seva), the tendency to obtain results other than seva itself is absent. In his mind, there is only one consideration – how to please his ishtadeva (deity whom he lovingly serves) through seva. In the path of pure spirituality, the happiness and misery of the sadhaka lies in the happiness and misery of the ishtadeva.

Such a kind of mentality i.e., a mood of pure spirituality, is extremely rare in this world, because, generally, people mix spirituality with the desire for achieving some material goal or the desire for liberation. By doing so, the essential form of spirituality does not remain pure. Only the desire to please oneself is prevalent in the minds of the general populace. They do not even

care about things that may please God. They are primarily selfish by their innate nature. When he looks at others' achievements, he longs for it himself. If the object longed for is not obtained, then he starts getting quarrelsome. In this way, the tendencies of selfishness, greed and being quarrelsome are naturally present in ordinary humans. How can he be expected to be pleased by pleasing God? His mental tendency is such that, looking at others' well being, he doesn't become happy but rather gets envious. Therefore, for selfless seva, he has to bring about a transformation in his mental tendency. He has to become happy looking at others' well-being and feel distressed when others are in distress.

How is this possible? By taking birth again and again in various forms of life, this soul has taken upon the nature of only being selfish, greedy and quarrelsome. How can such impressions that have been nourished since beginningless time be transformed? God, out of His compassion, had found a means. He created an ideal creature so as to inspire them in giving up their selfishness and taking up the path of selflessness. That ideal creature is Go. Its speciality is that it is totally niraparadhi (offenseless) and is totally upakari (benefactor to one and all).

Let us now understand these two qualities – being niraparadhi and upakari. The meaning of niraparadhi is that one does not do anything detrimental to anyone. Another form of this quality is to feel the distress of others. When one considers the misery of another as one's own, then he can never ever do something detrimental to others. In other words, he becomes totally niraparadhi. The meaning of upakari is that one always does things beneficial to others. Another form of this quality is to feel happy from others' well-being. When one becomes happy from the happiness of others, then he becomes always intent on other's happiness. In other words, one becomes completely upakari.

Both the qualities of being niraparadhi and being upakari are manifest in Go in their pristine states. For the sake of humans, God has given injunctions in shastras for Go-raksha (protection of Go), Go-seva (seva of Go), Go-puja (worship of Go) etc. God desires that humans accept the ideal qualities of being niraparadhi and upakari knowingly or unknowingly by staying in the vicinity of Go.

It is said in Padma-purana:

*gavo mamagrato nityam gavah prishthatah eva cha
gavascha sarvagatreshu gavam madhye vasamyaham*

“May Go be there in front of me, may Go be behind me, may my whole body be pervaded by Go and may I always be in the midst of Go”.

That person who is always engrossed in Go-seva with no duplicity becomes happy from others' happiness and becomes distressed from others' distress. When this conduct is shown by humans towards their ishtadeva and His creation, then that is called as seva of God or pure spirituality. A description of this has been provided before. Therefore we see that, the mental state which is required for spiritual advancement is seen to rise on its own in those non-duplicitous performers of Go-seva. Even if one is not able to perform Go-seva directly by oneself, one can still get the compassion of the Lord by extending one's hands in a mood of seva while taking part in Go-seva indirectly. Even in such people, the Lord makes the two qualities of being niraparadhi and upakari arise.

Absolute and Relative

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Absoluteness and relativity refer to two levels of reality. Absoluteness is a character of the absolute, non-material reality, whereas relativity is a character of the material (both physical and mental) reality or world. Absoluteness is like light and relativity is like shadow, darkness. Absoluteness is not literal light and relativity is not literal shadow or darkness. Absoluteness refers to that character which is independent of material space and material time. Material space and material time are what living entities observe through their external (eye, ear, skin, tongue and nose) and internal (mind, intelligence and ego) sense organs. Absoluteness cannot be grasped or observed through the material faculty mentioned above. These internal and external (material) sense organs act like a curtain which prevents the living entities from seeing the absolute reality or the truth.

Absoluteness can only be grasped directly (aparoksha anubhuti), without the intervention of the material sense organs, by a person (tattva-drasta) who is free from all material contaminations (four defects as discussed in the previous issues). Relativity embodies finiteness with a beginning as well as an end in both space and time. Finiteness is a character of material space and material time. Material space is indicated by the bulk (observable by the external senses) volume, occupied by any physical body, which begins at one coordinate of space and ends at another different coordinate of space. Material time is indicated by the flow of events which starts at one point of time and ends at another different point of time. Material space and material time are complex in their character and therefore, they always change without any reference, giving rise to haziness, confusion, obscurity, uncertainty, failure etc. Absoluteness is not finite. It neither has a beginning nor has an end. Absolute is both infinite (vibhu), as well as infinitesimal (anu). Absoluteness is free from any haziness, confusion, obscurity, uncertainty, failure etc. Absoluteness is clarity and therefore, is also flawless confidence and hundred percent certainty. There is no tinge of failure in absoluteness. It is all success. Absoluteness is made of simplicity and causelessness. It is fundamental. Absoluteness and relativity are exclusive to each other though relativity is dependent on absoluteness but, absoluteness stands independent of relativity. They never stay together. Truthfulness, honesty, convergence, conclusion, decision, precision, coherence, reversibility, peace, solution, order, unity in diversity are inseparable, internal features of absoluteness, whereas, separation, divergence, falsity, dishonesty, indecision, elaboration, irreversibility, unrest, disorder, contradiction are inseparable, internal features of relativity.

All residents of this physical world have access only to relativity and not to absoluteness. This happens because the residents of this world accept and thereby enjoy relativity. They simply love and embrace relativity. They do not like absoluteness and thus do not accept it. This they do both consciously and unconsciously. By consciously accepting, they develop the tendency (samskar). Once the tendency is developed, they follow it even unconsciously. This phenomenon is beginningless. But though this is beginningless, still, one can take the decision, once for all, of leaving materialism embodied with the character of relativity and embrace absolute reality permanently. With this decision, one becomes liberated and the curtain of relativity is withdrawn and the absolute reality dawns. This is possible with the help of a guru who is expert in revealed scripture and at the same time, is also a tattva-drasta (aparoksha-anubhuti-sampanna). By this process, one can attain absolute reality or peace.