

ŚRĪ GURU TATTVA VIJÑĀNA & ŚRĪ BHAKTA TATTVA VIJÑĀNA



two essays by

PAṄḌITA ŚRĪ ANANTA DĀSA BĀBĀJĪ MAHĀRĀJA

ŚRĪ GURU TATTVA VIJÑĀNA &
ŚRĪ BHAKTA TATTVA VIJÑĀNA

— *The Guru-principle & The Devotee-principle* —

TWO ESSAYS BY
RĀDHĀKUṆḌA MAHĀNTA PAṆḌITA
ŚRĪ ANANTA DĀSA BĀBĀJĪ MAHĀRĀJA

PUBLISHER: ŚRĪ ANANTA DĀSA BĀBĀJĪ MAHĀRĀJA
PUBLISHED FROM ŚRĪ KRṢṆA CAITANYA ŚĀSTRA MANDIRA

THIS FILE IS A SAMPLE OF THE BOOK.
THE BOOK IN ITS ENTIRETY IS AVAILABLE FROM
WWW.KRISHNACAITANYA.COM.

PUBLISHER: Śrī Ananta Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja
COPYRIGHT © Śrī Ananta Dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Translated by Advaita Dāsa
Printed in Rakmo Press, New Delhi

BOOKS WITH ENGLISH COMMENTARIES OF
ŚRĪ ANANTA DĀSA BĀBĀJĪ MAHĀRĀJA

ŚRĪ GURU TATTVA VIJÑĀNA – The Guru-principle
ŚRĪ BHAKTA TATTVA VIJÑĀNA – The Devotee-principle
MĀDHURYA KĀDAMBINĪ – The Cloudbank of Sweetness
PREMA BHAKTI CANDRIKĀ – A Moonray of Prema-bhakti
RĀGA VARTMA CANDRIKĀ – A Moonray on the Path of Rāgānugā-bhakti
ŚRĪ-ŚRĪ ŚIKṢĀṢṬAKAM – The Eight Teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

WEBSITE: www.krishnacaitanya.com
E-MAIL: info@krishnacaitanya.com

BOOKS ARE AVAILABLE FROM:

ŚRĪ KRṢṆA CAITANYA ŚĀSTRA MANDIRA, VRAJĀNANDA GHERA
281504 - Rādhākūṇḍa, District Mathurā, U.P. India

SAMSKṚTA PUSTA BĀṄḌARA

38. Vidhāna Saraṇī, 100006 - Calcutta

KUNDEŚVARĪ BOOK STORE – Rādhākūṇḍa Parikramā Road

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ŚRĪ GURU TATTVA VIJÑĀNA

THE PRINCIPLE OF ŚRĪ-ŚRĪ GURU	3
THE NECESSITY OF TAKING SHELTER OF THE LOTUS FEET OF ŚRĪ GURU	5
THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SAD-GURU	8
THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A SAD-GURU	10
THE SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF A SAD-GURU	10
THE SPECIALITY OF THE GURU'S GRACE	11
THE MEANS TO ATTAIN A GENUINE GURU	11
SHELTER OF THE FEET OF ŚRĪ GURU	12
INITIATION	13
DĪKṢĀ-MANTRA	16
DĪKṢĀ-GURU AND ŚIKṢĀ-GURU	17
THE SERVICE OF ŚRĪ GURU	18
SPECIAL GURU-SEVĀ	20
THINGS TO BEWARE OF WHILE SERVING ŚRĪ GURU	22
SOME THINGS THAT SHOULD BE ESPECIALLY NOTED	24

ŚRĪ BHAKTA TATTVA VIJÑĀNA

WHO IS CALLED A BHAKTA?	33
THE ONLY CAUSE FOR ATTAINING BHAKTI IS THE ASSOCIATION AND THE GRACE OF THE BHAKTAS	48
THE COMPANY OF THE BHAKTAS FULFILLS ALL HUMAN PURSUITS	57
THE GLORIES OF SERVING THE BHAKTAS	64

ŚRĪ GURU TATTVA VIJÑĀNA

— *The Guru-principle* —

*Offered to
the lotus hands
of the most worshipable
Śrī-Śrī Guru Mahārāja*

ŚRĪ GURU TATTVA VIJÑĀNA

THE PRINCIPLE OF ŚRĪ-ŚRĪ GURU

Svayaṁ Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa defined the principle of Śrī Gurudeva as follows to His dear devotee Śrī Uddhava (*Bhāg.* II.17.27):

*ācāryaṁ mām vijānīyān nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta sarva devamayo guruḥ*

Śrī Bhagavān said: “O Uddhava! You should consider the *ācārya*, meaning *gurudeva*, to be I Myself, and never disrespect him. Do not find faults in him, taking him to be an ordinary human being, for Śrī Guru is the aggregate of all the gods.”

*guru kṛṣṇa rūpa hon sāstrera pramāṇe
guru rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā korena bhaktagane
(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)*

“The *guru* is another form of Kṛṣṇa, that is proven by the scriptures. Kṛṣṇa bestows His mercy upon the devotees in the form of the *guru*.”

Through all this scriptural evidence, it can be known that Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears in this world in the form of the *guru* to extend His grace upon the devotees. This grace consists of the treasure of worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and the fruit of this *bhajana* is the treasure of *prema* which is bestowed upon the surrendered disciple. *Yo’ntar bahis tanu-bhṛtām aśubham vidhunvann ācārya-caitya vapuṣā svagatiṁ vyanakti* (*Bhāg.* II.29.6). Śrī Uddhava told Śrī Kṛṣṇa – “O Lord! You remove all the people’s obstacles to *bhajana* in the form of sensual desires, granting them realisations about

You, externally in the form of Śrī Guru, who is giving instructions in spiritual truths, and internally in the form of the *antaryāmi* (the inner overseer) as good consciousness.” Therefore, formally, Śrī Gurudeva is as worshipable as Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but he is not the ultimate object of worship like Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The *guru* is the special devotee-manifestation of the Lord.

*yadyapi āmāra guru caitanyera dāsa
tathāpi jāniye āmi tāhāra prakāśa
(Caitanya Caritāmṛta)*

“Although my *guru* is the servant of Śrī Caitanya, still I know him to be the Lord’s manifestation.”

Śrī Gurudeva must be known as a special manifestation of the Lord in the form of a *mahā-bhāgavatottama* (topmost saint) – this is the true form of Śrī Guru. In his *Manaḥ Śikṣā*, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has written: *śaci-sūnum nandīśvara pati sutatve guru-varaṁ mukunda preṣṭhatve smara param ajasraṁ nanu manaḥ* – “O mind! You should always remember Śaci-suta Śrī Gaurasundara as Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Gurudeva as Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dearest devotee!” Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has also written in his *Gurvaṣṭakam*:

*sākṣād dharitvena samasta śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhiḥ
kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī caraṇāravindam*

“All the scriptures proclaim Śrī Guru to be Lord Hari Himself, and the great saints also think like that, but he is also Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dearest devotee – I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of that Śrī Gurudeva.”

The purport of this is that although Śrī Gurudeva is perceivable as Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s dearest devotee, the disciple considers him

to be the direct manifestation of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If the disciple does not think like that, he might consider the *guru* to be an ordinary mortal being, and that will result into a great offence which will make all of his *sādhana-bhajana* fruitless, like the bath of an elephant.

THE NECESSITY OF TAKING SHELTER OF THE LOTUS FEET OF ŚRĪ GURU

One who wants to worship the Supreme Lord must first of all take shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru. *Bhajana-sādhana* is far removed from one who does not take shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, because this is the gate through which one enters to the path of *bhakti*. This does not only count for the path of *bhakti*, there is no practice in the world that does not require the shelter of a *guru's* (teacher's) feet! If it is necessary to accept a learned and experienced teacher to learn something in this mundane world, then it is needless to say that one needs to take shelter of the feet of a *guru* to learn *bhakti*, which is the highest form of wisdom in the spiritual world. Another special feature of devotional knowledge is that the merciful Śrī Bhagavān has personally appeared within this world in the form of the *Guru* to teach *bhakti* to the people of the world.

We have briefly discussed the *guru*-principle above. When the gravity (*gurutva*) of the *guru*-principle is understood, then there will be no more doubts about the importance of taking shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru. What is the intrinsic status of Śrī Guru, what is the nature of *guru* and what is the auspicious result of taking shelter of Śrī Guru's feet? An ignorant person has different doubts about these questions on taking shelter of Śrī Guru's feet. Knowledge on all these *guru*-principles is acquired in the association of the *sādhus*. Without the company

of the devotees of the Supreme Lord, the principle of *guru* cannot be understood. Hence the scriptures and the great saints first of all advise the people who wish to do *sādhana-bhajana*, and who desire the highest welfare, to associate with the saints. In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, Lord Śrī Kapiladeva has told His own mother Devahūti:

*satām prasāṅgān mama vīrya samvido
bhavanti hṛt karṇa rasāyanāḥ kathāḥ
taj joṣaṅād āśvapavarga vartmani
śraddhā ratir bhaktir anukramisyati
(Bhāgavata, 3.25.25)*

“When one attains the excellent company of the saints, topics that indicate My glories become like nectar for the heart and the ears. Anyone who lovingly relishes these topics, which are the swift pathway to the cessation of ignorance, will gradually develop faith, attachment and devotion for Me.”

The purport of this is that by hearing topics on the Supreme Lord from the great saints, one first attains faith, then one attains the shelter of a genuine *guru* and engages in *bhajana*, as a result of which *rati* and *prema* gradually develop. By the Lord’s wish, the living beings have been wandering through different species of life since beginningless time and by the Lord’s grace they have attained this human body, which is the gateway to liberation from the repetition of birth and death. The most fortunate amongst these human beings will attain the association of the saints. While hearing topics of Śrī Kṛṣṇa from the mouths of the greatly realised devotees of the Lord, the heart, which is polluted by attachment to sense objects, will be somewhat purified, and one will realise that the body and everything related to it is temporary, and the ocean of temporary material existence seems impossible to cross. Then, the heart will become eager to

cross the impassable and miserable ocean of material existence, which is filled with the crocodiles and sharks of lust and anger, to attain the eternally blissful lotus feet of the Lord and to find a suitable captain for the sturdy ship of the human body – Śrī Guru. In *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has told Uddhava:

*nṛ deham ādyam sulabham sudurlabham
plavam sukalpam guru karṇa-dhāram
mayānukūlena nabhasvateritam pumān
bhavābhim na taret sa ātma-hā
(Śrīmad Bhāgavata, 11.20.17)*

“O Uddhava! This human body is the *ādyā*, the root cause of all welfare, and *sukalpa*, expert in accomplishing its goal. The living entity attains this rarely attained human body, which is like an excellent boat with Śrī Gurudeva as its captain. On top of everything, I am providing favorable winds to steer it in the right direction. A person who does not endeavour to cross the ocean of material existence despite receiving this body is destroying himself.”

We have already discussed that in the company of the saints one comes to realise that one must take shelter of the feet of a *guru*. Thus we must understand that association with the *bhaktas* has not taken place if one has not realised the necessity of taking shelter of the feet of a *guru*. Wherever the association of the devotees is attained or is going on and there is no realisation about the obligation to take shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, or such shelter has not yet been taken, we must understand that the real association of saints has not taken place yet, or that due to some mischief the results of association with the saints are not yet tangible. As long as the shelter of Śrī Guru’s feet has not been attained, the fruit to be attained from the association of devotees is the taking shelter of the feet of Śrī Guru. It is so

because *bhajana* begins only after one receives *dīkṣa* (initiation) and *śīkṣā* (instructions) from a genuine *guru*.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SAD-GURU

When a person wishes to be blessed with the fruits of *sādhana bhajana* and he desires to take shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, it is absolutely necessary that he takes shelter of the feet of a genuine *guru*. When the *guru*-potency awakens within a saint, he becomes known as a *sad-guru*. This *guru*-potency awakens within a saint in the following way: Those who have removed the dirt from their hearts through their practice of *sādhana-bhajana*, in whose hearts *bhakti* has awakened and who have become ornamented by saintly qualities such as compassion and kindness, their hearts melt when they see the misery the conditioned souls experience in the material world of *māyā*. By instructing the conditioned souls in the practice of *bhajana*, they destroy their miserable condition and they are eager to bless them by giving them the relish of *bhakti-rasa*. By the Lord's wish, the *guru*-potency emanates from Him and appears within the hearts of such *bhakti-siddha-mahāpuruṣas* (His pure devotees). A person who covets devotion to the Supreme Lord is blessed by taking shelter of such a qualified and genuine *guru*. The characteristics of such a genuine *guru* have been described in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* (II.3.21):

*tasmād guruṃ prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreyah uttamam
śābde pare ca niṣṇātaṃ brahmaṇyupaśamāśrayam*

“Therefore a person who inquires about the highest welfare should take shelter of the lotus feet of a genuine *guru*, who is *śabdabrahma* and *parabrahma-niṣṇāta*, and *upaśamāśraya*, or free from lust and greed.”

Śrīdhara Svāmī writes in his commentary on this verse: *śābde brahmaṇi vedākhye nyāyato niṣṇātām tattvajñam. anyathā samśaya nirāsakatvāyogāt. pare ca brahmaṇi aparokṣānubhavaena niṣṇātām. anyathā bodha sañcārāyogāt. para brahma niṣṇātatva dyotakam āha upaśamāśrayam iti* – “That the genuine *guru* is *śābdabrahma-niṣṇāta* means that he is a knower of the Vedic literature and a knower of the truth. If he is not, then he cannot remove the doubts of the disciples who take shelter of him. Then again he is *parabrahma-niṣṇāta*, which means that He is a devotee, or that He is endowed with transcendental realisations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If he is not, then he cannot infuse realisations on *bhajana* within the heart of his disciple.”

One may ask here: “We may be able to see that the *guru* is *śābdabrahma-niṣṇāta* by seeing and hearing his scriptural knowledge, but how will we know if he is *parabrahma-niṣṇāta*, or filled with transcendental realisations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa?” The answer to this is that he should be *upaśamāśraya*, or devoid of lust, anger and greed. The heart of anyone who is enlightened by *bhakti* cannot be covered by the darkness of lust and greed and so on. Therefore the definitions of a genuine *guru* given by the *śāstras* are as follows:

1) He is filled with realisations about the Personality of Godhead due to his firm faith and his firm adherence to the *bhajana* of the Lord. He has attained the grace of his own *guru* by being similarly devoted to his *guru's* lotus feet.

2) He is very learned in the Vedas and in *bhakti*-scriptures that outline the meaning of the Vedas, such as *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. Thus he can destroy the doubts in his disciples.

3) Because he has transcendental realisations about Śrī Kṛṣṇa, he has attained His mercy-potency. Thus he has become so powerful that he is able to bring the disciple onto the path of *bhakti* and infuse this power within him.

4) He is not overcome by vices like lust and greed.

A saint who is endowed with such attributes and who is filled with parental love for his disciples can attain the position of a genuine *guru*. Such a genuine *guru* is able to destroy different obstacles the disciple may find in his *bhajana*, bless him with *prema* and bring him to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. On the other hand, a person who desires to be known as a *guru* may have many virtues, like high birth and so on, but if he does not have the abovementioned characteristics, he will not be counted amongst the genuine *gurus*. Therefore a faithful person who is eager to do Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*bhajana* should take shelter of the lotus feet of a *mahāpuruṣa* who is endowed with the right qualities, receive initiation into Śrī Kṛṣṇa-*mantra* from him and learn *bhajana* from him.

ŚRĪ BHAKTA TATTVA VIJÑĀNA

— *The Devotee-principle* —

*Offered to
the lotus hands
of the most worshipable
Śrī-Śrī Bhagavat-bhaktas*

ŚRĪ BHAKTA TATTVA VIJÑĀNA

WHO IS CALLED A BHAKTA?

Primarily, those who have devotion for God, Bhagavān, are called *bhaktas*. Śrīmad Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written: *tad bhāva bhāvita svāntāḥ kṛṣṇa-bhaktā itīritāḥ* (*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 2.1.273) – “Those whose hearts are filled with feelings for Kṛṣṇa are called *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*.” There are two kinds of *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*, namely *sādhakas* and *siddhas*.

*utpanna ratayah samyak nairvighnyam anupāgatāḥ
kṛṣṇa sākṣāt kṛtau yogyāḥ sādhakāḥ parikīrtitāḥ
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, 2.1.276)*

“Those whose *rati* (attraction) towards Kṛṣṇa has awakened, but who have not yet become free from all obstacles, and those who are qualified to meet Kṛṣṇa face to face, are called *sādhakās*.”

*avijñātākhila kleśāḥ sadā kṛṣṇāśrita kriyāḥ
siddhāḥ syuḥ santata prema saukhyāsvāda parāyaṇāḥ
(Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu, 2.1.280)*

“Those, who are free from all misery, such as ignorance and bodily consciousness, who are eternally engaged in their service to Kṛṣṇa and who are always dedicated to relishing the bliss of love for Kṛṣṇa, are called *siddhās*.”

In the 11th canto of *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*, the definitions of the topmost devotee, the mediocre devotee and the junior devotee have been described as follows:

*sarva bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed bhagavad bhāvam ātmanah
bhūtāni bhagavatyaṭmanyeṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ
(Śrīmad Bhāgavata, II.2.45)*

“He who sees His beloved Lord in everything conscious and unconscious and also sees within his enlightened heart everything conscious and unconscious in the Lord (the Lord being their shelter), or who sees that all living beings have the kind of love he has for the Lord, he is the greatest devotee of the Lord (basic translation of the *Krama Sandarbha Tikā* on this *śloka*).”

These topmost devotees also have different stages; when their loving attachment to the Lord becomes very deep, they do not see the moving and nonmoving creatures anymore – they just see the Lord face to face. And when their loving attachment slightly slackens, they may actually see the shapes of the moving and non-moving creatures, but in between that, they experience the presence of their beloved Lord. In this essay, different definitions of the topmost devotee are described in a few *ślokas* from the *Bhāgavata*, and we are quoting some of these definitions here. He who sees the whole universe as filled with Viṣṇu, although he actually accepts the sense objects like forms and flavours through his senses, and does not waver in this – he is the topmost devotee. He who is not bewildered by the natural pangs of mundane existence, such as birth, death, hunger, thirst, fear or exhaustion, due to remembering Śrī Hari, is also a topmost devotee. He in the soil of whose heart no seed of fruitive desire can sprout, and for whom Śrī Vāsudeva is the only shelter – he is the topmost devotee. He who makes absolutely no distinction between his own wealth and the wealth of others, who sees everyone’s bodies equally and who has attained topmost peace by seeing all living entities as equal, is the topmost devotee.

In the opinion of the *Bhakti Sandarbha*, there are three kinds of such topmost devotees, who have attained *prema*: 1) *mūrchita kaṣāya* – those whose *kaṣāya* or subtle desires have become *mūrchita* or very tiny, like Śrī Bharata or Śrī Nārada in his birth as the son of a maidservant. 2) *nirdhūta kaṣāya* — those who do not even have a drop of subtle desire, like Śrī Śukadeva. 3) *prāpta bhagavat pārṣada deha* – those who have attained a spiritual body as an associate of the Lord, such as Śrī Nārada. They are considered *mahābhāgavatas* according to the amount of *prema* they have attained. There are two kinds of excessive *prema* – 1) *svarūpādhikya* (excessive by nature) and 2) *parimāṇādhikya* (excessive in quantity). Of *svarūpādhikya*, a distinction must be made between the object and the subject. In other words, he who loves the *aṁśī* (the origin of all *avatāras*), Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is greater than he who loves the *aṁśas*, the other *avatāras*. Considering this, the *mūrchita kaṣāya*, Śrī Bilvamaṅgala, is greater than the eternal associates of the Lord like Śrī Hanumān and Puṇḍarīka. This distinction is based on the object or the worshipable deity. There is also distinction between the different kinds of *rati* of different *bhajana-kārīs* (devotees who perform *bhajana*). The *sakhya-rasa bhakta* is greater than the *dāsya-rasa bhakta*. Greater than him is the *vātsalya-rasa bhakta*, and still greater than him is the *madhura-rasa premika bhakta*. If a *madhura-rasa premika bhakta* is still *mūrchita kaṣāya*, then, in the realm of *rasa*, he is still greater than the devotees in *śānta*, *dāsya*, *sakhya* or *vātsalya* who have already attained a *pārṣada-deha* (spiritual body). The deeper one's love for the Lord is, the greater a *premika bhakta* one is. The more *prema* a devotee has, the dearer he is to the Lord – *prema tāratamyenaiṅva bhakta mahattāratamyam mukhyam* (*Bhakti Sandarbha*, 187).

Prema is also considered greater according to the holy place with which it is related, for instance the love of a devotee in Śrī

Dvārakā is greater than the love of a devotee in Śrī Vaikuṅṭha. The Mathurā-devotee's love is greater than that, the Vṛndāvana-devotee is greater still, the Govardhana-devotee is much greater than that and the *premika bhakta* of Śrī Rādhākunḍa is the greatest of all.

The greatness of the devotee is also considered according to the amount or level of his *prema*. *Prema* gradually advances to *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and *mahābhāva*. Therefore, one who has attained *sneha prema-bhakti* is exceeded by *premika* devotees who have attained *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga* and the other stages of *prema-bhakti* respectively. One who has attained *mahābhāva* has the greatest amount of *prema*. This *mahābhāva* is not present anywhere aside Vraja. Here, *mahābhāva* is the wealth of the *gopīs*, who are the sole receptacles of *madhura-rasa* for the *aṁśī* Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Considering this, the *anucarīs* (maidservants) who are surrendered to the lotus feet of Śrī Vṛṣabhānundinī, are the greatest of all *premikas*.

In Śrī *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*, five different kinds of devotees have been accepted, namely *jñāna-bhaktas* like Bharata and others, *śuddha-bhaktas* like Ambarīṣa and others, *prema-bhaktas* like Śrī Hanumān and others, *prema-para-bhaktas* like Arjuna and the other Pāṇḍavas, and the *premātura-bhaktas* like Śrīmān Uddhava and the other Yādavas. In *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*, the distinction between them is made through analysis. The best amongst them, Śrīmān Uddhava, desired to take birth in Śrī Vṛndāvana as a blade of grass or a shrub, desiring to attain a single speck of the Śrī Vraja-*gopikās'* footdust – this can be seen in the words of Śrīmān Uddhava Mahāśaya in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata*. When *bhakti* is in the heart, special qualities will arise within the mind and body of the *bhakta*. These must also be considered the characteristics of a Vaiṣṇava.

*sarva mahā-guṇagaṇa vaiṣṇava śarīre
 kṛṣṇa bhakte kṛṣṇera guṇa sakala sañcāre
 ei sab guṇa hoy vaiṣṇava lakṣaṇa
 sab kohā nā yāy kori dig daraśana
 (Caitanya Caritāmṛta)*

“All the great attributes are in the body of a Vaiṣṇava. Indeed, all of Kṛṣṇa’s divine qualities are infused within Kṛṣṇa’s *bhaktas*. These attributes constitute the characteristics of a Vaiṣṇava. They cannot all be described – I am only giving a slight indication here.”

One must remember here that none of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s attributes can be fully infused into anyone else. Mere drops of these attributes are infused within the *bhakta* – only within Śrī Kṛṣṇa are they fully present.

*kṛpālu, akṛta droha, satya sāra, sama
 nirdoṣa, vadānya, mṛdu śuci akiñcana
 sarvopakāraka, śānta, kṛṣṇaika-śaraṇa
 akāma, nirīha, sthira vijita ṣaḍ guṇa
 mitabhuk, apramatta, mānada, amānī
 gambhīra, karuṇa, maitra, kavi, dakṣa, maunī
 (Caitanya Caritāmṛta)*

“(The Vaiṣṇava is) Merciful, free from hostility, truthful, equi-
 poised, faultless, generous, tender, clean, detached, helpful to
 everyone, peaceful, surrendered only to Kṛṣṇa, free from lust,
 harmless, steady, victorious over the six enemies, a small eater,
 free from madness and hysteria, respectful, free from pride,
 grave, compassionate, friendly, poetic, expert and silent.”

Sādhavo ’doṣa darśinaḥ (The *sādhv* sees no faults). This characteristic is also accepted as a main one. Those who have become great souls through following the religion of *bhakti* do

not see faults in anyone. This one single attribute is again shown in three different phases – great, greater and greatest. He who does not look for others’ faults, but rather sees all these faults as parts of people’s virtues, is a *sādhū*, or a great soul (*mahat*). For example, a person may use harsh language, but the great soul considers these harsh words just like medicinal Nim-juice that will cure him and benefit him.

Then again, those who do not see faults in others, but only see virtues in them, are called the greater souls (*mahattara*). For instance, when they see many customers coming to a merchant, they think that “this merchant is very hospitable”. Thus they think that the merchant’s business, aimed at making profit, is a reception for guests.

Those who do not see faults and who consider a slight virtue to be a great virtue are called *mahattama-sādhū*s, the greatest saints. For instance, an armed robber may rob him of his garments, but the *sādhū* will think – “Aha! This person has taken my garment because he felt cold! He is so merciful that although he carried a weapon he did not fire it at me, therefore he is blessed”, and so on.

Then again, those who see virtues everywhere, even where there is no virtue, are the greatest saints of all. They will think, “There is no one bad in this world, everyone is great!” Śrīman Mahāprabhu has called the person who causes *bhakti* to arise in the heart as soon as he is seen the *uttama-bhakta*, the top-most devotee:

*prabhu kobe tumi mahā bhāgavatottama;
tomāra darśane sabhāra dravībhūta mana*

“The Lord said: You are the greatest of *mahā-bhāgavatas* – everyone’s hearts melt when they see you.”

The symptoms of the *uttama-bhāgavata*’s *prema* are as follows:

premera svabhāve bhakta hāse kānde gāya;
unmatta hoiyā nāce iti uti dhāy
sveda kampa romāścāśru gadgada vaiivarṇya;
unmāda viṣāda dhairya garva haṛṣa dainya
eto bhāve premā bhakta gaṇera nācāya;
kṛṣṇera ānandāmṛta sāgare bhāsāya
 (Caitanya Caritāmṛta)

“The nature of *prema* makes the devotee laugh, weep, sing, run here and there and dance out of ecstatic frenzy. Perspiration, shivering, goosepimples, tears, faltering voice, paling of the body, madness, sorrow, patience, pride, joy and humility – these are the moods that *prema* uses to make the devotees dance and float in an ocean of bliss and nectar of Kṛṣṇa-consciousness.”

The characteristics of the mediocre devotee are as follows:

īṣvare tad adbhīneṣu bālīṣeṣu dvoīatsa ca;
prema maitrī kṛpopekṣā yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ
 (Śrīmad Bhāgavata, II.2.46)

The meaning of this *śloka* is explained in the *Krama Sandarbha Tikā* – “He who loves the Supreme Lord and who has *rati* for the Lord, who is friendly towards the Lord’s devotees, who is merciful to those on the sideline who are not devotees, but who also do not despise or hate the Lord or His devotees, and who avoids the haters (those who hate him, the Lord or His devotees) is a mediocre devotee.”

That such a devotee has great compassion for the ignorant is proven from the *Śrīmad Bhāgavata-śloka* “*śoce tato*” (7.9.43) from the *Prahlāda-stava*. Śrī Prahlāda Mahāśaya told Śrī Nṛsimha: “O Lord! I lament for those fools who are disinclined toward Your nectar-topics, and who are simply carrying the heavy burden of household life due to their sensual desires!” Therefore,

the mediocre devotees are very compassionate toward those fools who are disinclined toward topics on the Personality of Godhead, but are not hostile or envious toward the Lord or His devotees. Such devotees are indifferent toward those who hate them personally, because such hatred cannot disturb their consciousness at all. Rather, they are also kind upon those who hate them personally, taking them to belong to the ignorant class of men mentioned above. It is heard that Śrī Prahlāda Mahāśaya showed compassion towards Hiranyakaśipu, who had been extremely hostile to him personally. But the mediocre *bhakta* does not develop compassion toward those who hate the Lord or His devotees, for such hatred will disturb their consciousness. The word ‘hate’ must also be read as ‘*nindā*’ or slander here. *Nindāpi dveṣa samā* (*Bhakti Sandarbha*).

The difference between the mediocre devotee and the topmost devotee is that while the mediocre devotee shows compassion toward the ignorant, the topmost devotee, who perceives love for the Lord or things related to Him everywhere, will feel more friendship towards the ignorant. The mediocre devotee distinguishes between the devotees and the haters of the Lord, but the topmost devotee also abhors the hater of the Lord or His devotees. A *mahā-bhāgavata* (topmost devotee) like Śrī Śukadeva has also shown His aversion to the haters of the Lord or His devotees by saying (in *Śrīmad Bhāgavata* 10.1.35) *bhojānām kula-pāmsanaḥ* – “Kāmsa was a disgrace to the Bhoja-family.”