

International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness  
Founder acarya: His Divine Grace A.C Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada  
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## Journal of a Struggling Sadhaka - Volume 7, Part 6

By

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Wednesday, 21 February 2007-Regent Hotel, Dubai

Late Afternoon: I booked into a hotel in Dubai for an eighteen-hour stopover. This will give me some time to read and chant. My main thoughts are Giriraja Govardhana and how fortunate I was to be allowed to stay there for two months. In one sense, why would I even want to leave? Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu's mission is to distribute the glories of Vrindavana all over the world. This was Srila Prabhupada's mood and since he is my link to the Vrindavana atmosphere it is only proper that I comply with his desires. Also, "familiarity breeds contempt." If I was to stay too long in Vrindavana there is the chance that I would become offensive. Another appropriate saying is, "absence makes the heart grow fonder." Later this year I want to spend more time at Govardhana, perhaps three months.

On the plane I sat next to a large overweight Indian gentleman. It was an interesting experience. I could smell his garlic breath and within two minutes he fell asleep. Ordinarily that's alright but he snored. His head continually rolled from an upright position, to his chin touching his chest. He was fast asleep firmly holding the menu card in his right hand. He never made it to eat anything finally he awoke three hours later when the plane was about to land; sneezing every ten seconds for fifteen minutes!

If I was H. H. Indradyumna Maharaja or H.H. Kesava Bharati Maharaja or any other advanced realized devotee I would have preached to him. But alas I am a struggling sadhaka with no genuine compassion for the suffering of others.

Now that I have left Vrindavana I need to make some mental adjustments. I haven't preached for a while. Also I have to adjust the type of preaching. There is no use in talking about esoteric pastimes of Lord Krishna when it is debatable whether the audience is even following the four regulative principles. Srila Prabhupada very much stressed the basic foundation of "vaidhi-sadhana-bhakti"-to strictly follow the rules and regulations and surrender to Lord Krishna in a general way. I use the word "general" as opposed to specifically serving Krishna in one of the five main relationships of love. The general body of devotees struggle with following the basic principles and therefore lacks a certain type of "sambandha-jnana". "Jnana" means knowledge and "sambandha" means our relationship. "Sambandha-jnana" starts with theoretical knowledge of the soul, reincarnation, life after death. That theoretical knowledge then gradually becomes realized. Krishna is unlimited therefore we can never fully understand Him. There is no limit to the depth of "sambandha-jnana". Gradually "sambandha-jnana" results in knowledge of Vaikuntha and the superiority of Goloka Vrindavana, then the different types of bhaktas according to the five "sthayi-bhavas" (permanent relationships with Krishna). A higher category of "sambandha-jnana" is perfect realized knowledge of our spiritual identity and it's eleven characteristics.

Monday, 26 February 2007, Midrand

Evening: The last two nights I attended some programs. The first one was a Gaura Purnima festival held in a local hall. About three hundred people

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attended. I spoke about Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu being the "yuga-avatara" and the importance of chanting. The second program was the weekly Sunday festival at the Pretoria temple. I continued talking about the same theme and how intelligent people praise the Kali-yuga.

kalim sabhajayanty arya  
guna jnah sara-bhaginah  
yatra sankirtanenaiva  
sarva-svartho 'bhilabhyate

Those who are actually advanced in knowledge are able to appreciate the essential value of this age of Kali. Such enlightened persons worship Kali-yuga because in this fallen age all perfection of life can easily be achieved by the performance of sankirtana.  
(Bhag. 11.5.36)

The word "aryah" means people who know about the progressive values of life. Such people praise ("sabhajayanti") the Age of Kali because of the effectiveness of chanting the names of God.

After the talk I stood outside the temple room next to an open window and enjoyed the kirtan. After twenty minutes I sat in a shaded area in the garden and spoke to various devotees. The acaryas write (and it is obvious) that you can access where someone is by their questions. Of course sometimes, devotees try to impress you by asking questions beyond their realization. But generally the questions asked are good indications of their level of Krishna consciousness. These are some of the questions I got:

1. A devotee from the congregation asked if he could get married. I asked how many rounds of japa he was chanting and he replied one! Surprised I asked him to chant at least four and not over endeavor for anything material like marriage.
2. An elderly Indian woman, who really didn't seem to know what she was doing, told me that she used to be a Christian. She asked if chanting Hare Krishna would help her family.
3. I asked a married couple how often they come to the temple. Although they only live ten minutes walk away from the temple they come once a month!
4. Another young lady who is initiated confessed that she doesn't even chant!

And so it went on for perhaps two hours, actually I overdid it; I should have kept the meetings to thirty minutes.

When I returned to my room I read from Jaiva Dharma, Chapter 36, which describes the "anubhavas" of "anuraga" and "mahabhava". Although I've read it many times before I like to go over it again to refresh my memory. Later I thought what a contrast: reading about the characteristics of "mahabhava" and preaching to devotees who chant one round a day and visit the temple once a month!

Lord Caitanya didn't preach to the general masses. He preferred to encourage them in kirtan. He only discussed philosophy to high-class devotees like Sanatana Goswami, Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, and Ramananda Raya.

Around two-ish I went for a swim at a local health club. It was tough because I wasn't fit. I managed to swim one kilometer despite an aching left shoulder and a heartbeat of 180 per minute. I have a theory that maybe my frozen shoulder will improve if I swim. This was the third time I swam in three months so I'm completely out of practice.

Wednesday, 28 February 2007 - Midrand

Midnight: Just returned from giving a talk at the Pretoria temple. The mood was friendly and intimate. The kirtan was explosive. It's nice to see so

many black-bodied devotees dancing ecstatically in kirtan. The Pretoria temple is important because it's our main center in South Africa for preaching to the Black community. Krishna consciousness is not some ethnic Hindu movement; it's universal and non-sectarian. Preaching to the Hindu community is the path of least resistance and if we exclusively preach to the Indians, there is the danger of ISKCON South Africa becoming Hinduish. ISKCON temples in the UK and the US are already experiencing this phenomenon. The Indian community, especially the Gujaratis are financially supporting the temples but in exchange for that support, the temples are losing their non-sectarian identities. It's a fine balance, which many temples have not mastered.

Saturday, 3 March 2007-Lenasia

Sri Gaura Purnima

Midnight: Today is the Appearance day of Lord Caitanya. I was eager to celebrate it at the Lenasia temple, in front of Sri Sri Nitai-Gaura-hari. Jayatirtha Prabhu originally installed these Deities in 1979 at the Cato Ridge temple. They have been worshipped for twenty-eight years in the South African yatra. I gave a lecture on Sri Caitanya Mahprabhu's most important instructions to an audience of three hundred devotees.

yare dekha, tare kaha 'kṛṣṇa'-upadeśa  
amara ajnaya guru hana tara' ei deśa

#### TRANSLATION

"Instruct everyone to follow the orders of Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa as they are given in the Bhagavad-gītā and Śrīmad-Bhagavatam. In this way become a spiritual master and try to liberate everyone in this land." (Cc. Madhya 7.128)

Srila Prabhupada often quotes this verse, especially when addressing Indian audiences. The words "amara ajnaya" means "under My order" and "guru hana" means "becoming a spiritual master". What type of guru is not specified because there is dīkṣa-guru and śikṣa-guru. Srila Prabhupada writes, "It is best not to accept any disciples." (Cc. Madhya 7.130, purport). Based on this warning it could be assumed that the words "guru hana" means become a śikṣa-guru. In the first line of Cc. Madhya 7.128, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu says whomever you meet; tell them about Krishna... this also refers to śikṣa.

A doubt arose in my mind because Srila Prabhupada says, "it is best not to accept any disciples." How can I justify my actions in initiating disciples? One answer is that Srila Rupa Goswami writes, "without accepting disciples you cannot increase the preaching mission." Also Srila Gour Govinda Maharaja, who I accept as a "nitya-siddha maha-bhagavata", gave dīkṣa initiation to many disciples. The fact that the GBC have authorized it doesn't necessarily make it right. With the greatest respect to the GBC, they have made mistakes in the past. As a member of ISKCON I accept and abide by Srila Prabhupada's desire that the decision of the GBC is the ultimate in material and spiritual matters. I will always honor their decision but that doesn't mean I necessarily agree with everything they say and do. This is something I need to talk about with some of my Godbrothers whom I take shelter of.

After the talk I offered arati to Sri Sri Nitai-Gaura-hari and then joined the kirtan. I sang for twenty minutes and as usual overdid it. I then sat outside in the garden and met devotees for two hours. I felt happy that I had contributed to the festival. I could have gone to Durban but there were already three of my sannyasi Godbrothers attending the festival there. I thought it would be more practical for me to stay and assist the Johannesburg Gaura Purnima festival.

Monday, 5 March 2007, Lenasia

Evening: The last week or so my bhajan has been intense I guess I must have pleased someone upstairs. My swimming has faded into the background. I've been only once since returning to South Africa. Instead I'm spending more time chanting and studying. I feel more enlivened doing this and let's face it swimming in a chlorinated pool is not going to save me from drowning in the ocean of repeated birth and death. I am still studying Jaiva Dharma, Chapter 36. There is a stage of intense love between Radha and Krishna called "sva-samvid dasa". This elevated stage of love causes Radha and Krishna to lose Their identities and Their minds merge. The Divine Couple is not aware of Their separate identities as the enjoyer and enjoyed and only taste "prema" or pure love.

Although for me reading about these expressions of love is theoretical, still I find it fascinating. I've also started to meditate on these characteristics while chanting my rounds. Such esoteric subject matters nourish my chanting and my ardent prayer is that one-day I will actually have some realization about them. We have to start somewhere and having some theoretical understanding is the beginning. Gradually through praying and mercy more will be revealed.

Understanding the characteristics of "anuraga", "rudha-mahabhava", "adhirudha-mahabhava", "madana", "modana" and "mohana" opens an unlimited ocean of sweetness. Although I'm something like a dwarf trying to catch the moon, still I can't help but get excited when I read and contemplate such lofty and exalted exchanges of love between Lord Krishna and His pleasure potency Srimati Radharani.



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