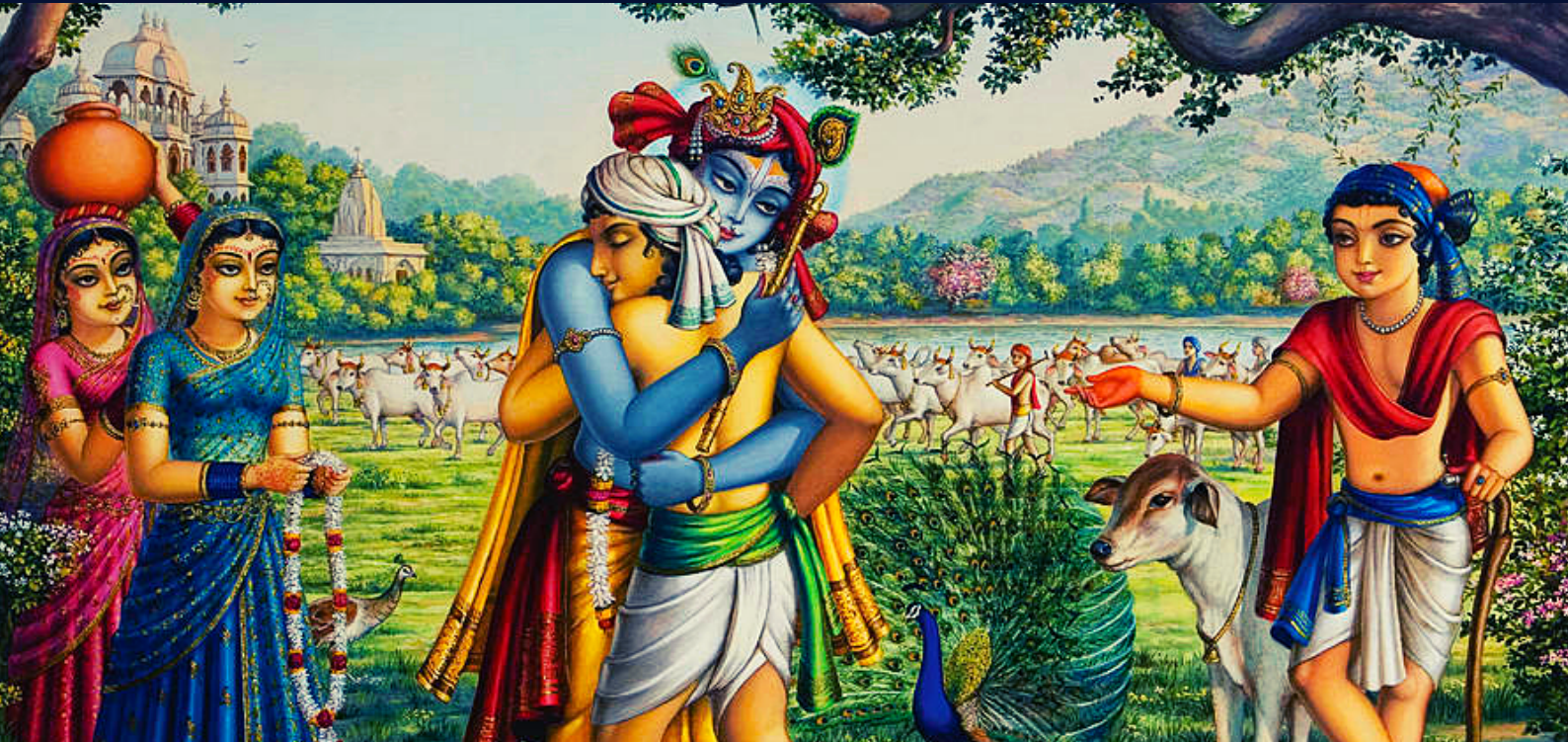


Bhāgavatam Rasamālayam

The Abode of Supreme Nectar

Meditations & Reflections from the lectures of His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami

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Getting Closer to Krishna

Lord Brahma went to the Vaikuṅṭha planet and there he saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In the previous verse, it has been described that, "The goddess of fortune in her transcendental form is engaged in the loving service of the Lord's lotus feet, and being moved by the black bees, followers of spring, she is not only engaged in variegated pleasure — service to the Lord, along with her constant companions — but is also engaged in singing the glories of the Lord's activities." [SB 2.9.14].

This is how the Lord resides in His spiritual abode. Kṛṣṇa is eternally situated in the transcendental reality, in the spiritual sky in Vaikuṅṭha and Vrindavana. There, He is eternally served by His eternal associates. In the spiritual sky, everything is eternal. As the spiritual nature is eternal; everybody in the spiritual nature is also eternal.

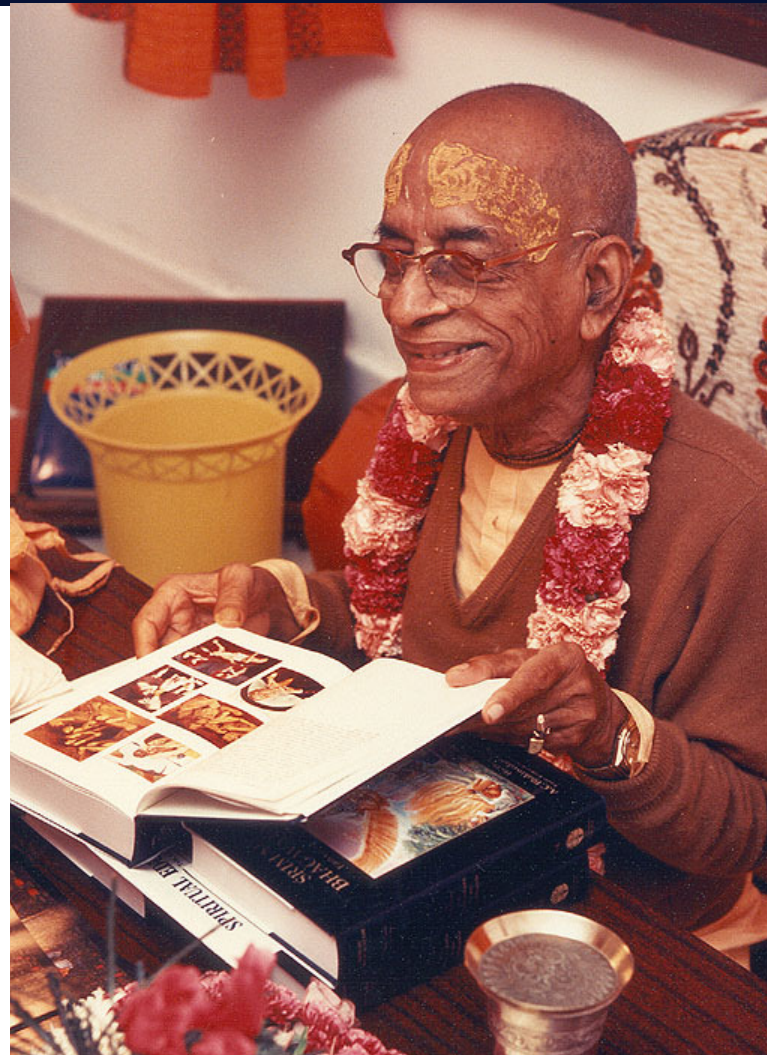
The Lord is enjoying the transcendental bliss due to the loving exchange between Him (the Lord) and His devotees. **Actually, whenever we think of joy, the basis or ultimate source of joy is love.**

The Supreme Personality of Godhead is the Supreme Enjoyer and He is deriving that enjoyment from the loving exchanges with His devotees.

In the spiritual sky, this transcendental joy is constantly increasing. The spiritual sky has been compared to an ocean of joy or ecstasy. Although that ocean is endless, still it is continuously increasing. It is an endless ocean of joy and that ocean is continuously increasing due to the loving exchange between the Lord and the devotees.

As soon as we become rid of our conditioning and turn our faces toward Kṛṣṇa; then immediately, He reciprocates and allows us to come closer to Him.

This process of getting close to Kṛṣṇa, begins with sādhu saṅghā – the favorable association of devotees. Devotional service is the means by which one can become situated on the spiritual platform and become related to Kṛṣṇa once again. But the process of loving devotion begins with the association of devotees. The association of devotees begins with ajñāta-sukṛti. How does one develop devotional service? It has been described that by the mercy of the devotee, one develops devotional service. Now, how does one receive the mercy of the devotee? It is by ajñāta-sukṛti that one receives the mercy unknowingly. Somehow, one comes in contact with the devotee and becomes favorably disposed to him, does something for him and as result of that, he acquires the ajñāta-sukṛti. That ajñāta-sukṛti or unknown transcendental piety is what pushes him further to become engaged in devotional service.



Srila Prabhupada's Mercy

We can see how wonderfully Srila Prabhupada made arrangements to distribute that ajñāta-sukṛti all over the world. One of our main services is actually to distribute books and when we distribute books, we are actually distributing ajñāta-sukṛti for these conditioned souls. As they buy the books and become favorably disposed to the devotees, they actually acquire ajñāta-sukṛti.

As soon as they touch the book and start to appreciate the book, they acquire ajñāta-sukṛti, then what to speak of when they start reading the book. Similarly, these temples that Srila Prabhupada built all over the world – when people come and see the Deities and associate with the devotees, become favorably disposed; they actually start to pave their way back to Godhead.

Faith in Krishna

Hence, when one begins his devotional service by somehow or other acquiring some ajñāta-sukṛti, he comes closer to the devotees and then the real sādhu saṅghā begins. By ajñāta-sukṛti, one develops śraddha and when śraddha matures, one begins to associate with the devotees. Then, when one becomes favorably disposed to the devotees and starts to associate with them, one finds that the devotees are concerned about his spiritual advancement and so they engage him in transcendental devotional service - thus, bhajana kriya begins. One becomes engaged in direct devotional service to the Lord. As one becomes engaged in devotional service under the direction of a bona fide spiritual master, he becomes totally free from all his material anarthas; all his material contaminations. This is how one gradually makes spiritual advancement and finally, he goes back to the spiritual sky.



When he goes back to the spiritual sky, like Brahma (saw the Supreme Personality of Godhead), he also sees Kṛṣṇa surrounded by His associates. Kṛṣṇa is never alone. *eko bahūnām yo vidadhāti kāmān* [Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.13] Although Kṛṣṇa is one, He multiplied Himself into many. His expansions are of two kinds: *svāmśa* and *vibhinnāmśa*. He expands Himself in different incarnations – they are known as *svāmśa* and when He expands as parts and parcels, they are known as *vibhinnāmśa*. The jivas are the *vibhinnāmśas* or part and parcel. They are separated, fragmental parts and parcels. However, the *svāmśa* expansions are complete: He expands Himself into innumerable such forms - 'as He is,' without any deterioration.

Krishna's resides in the heart

In the spiritual sky, He expands Himself into innumerable Vaikuṅṭha forms and Narayana forms. In relation to the material nature, He expands into six different kinds of incarnations. He further expands as the Supersoul of every living entity. Like, in every living entity – what to speak of living entities – in every atom, He is present as the Supersoul. aṅḍāntara-stha-paramāṇu-cayāntara-stham- [Brahma Samhita 5.35] All those expansions are non-different from Kṛṣṇa, Himself. His entire potency has been invested in those expansions.

Kṛṣṇa as Supersoul situated in the hearts of living entities is absolutely non-different from Kṛṣṇa in Goloka Vrindavana. He is the same Personality with the same potency. That is why when a devotee develops a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa in the heart, he sees Kṛṣṇa eternally performing His pastimes. The devotee's heart thus becomes transformed into Vrindavana. Therefore, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu is praying: "... hṛdaya — mana, mora mana — vṛndāvana," "My heart is Vrindavana," and in that heart, Mahaprabhu explains that He is seeing Kṛṣṇa performing His pastimes. [CC. Madhya 13.137]

Nāhaṁ tiṣṭhāmi vaikuṅṭhe yogināṁ hṛdayeṣu vā [Padma Purāna] Kṛṣṇa may not stay in Vaikuṅṭha, He does not stay in the hearts of the yogis, but He is present where His devotees sing His glories. Kṛṣṇa resides eternally in the heart of His pure devotee. Actually, Kṛṣṇa in the heart of the living entity as Supersoul, remains as Supersoul only as long the living entity is conditioned, but as soon as the living entity develops his loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa – He as the Supersoul reciprocates and according to the love, He manifests Himself to the devotee.

The devotees, who develop a loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa in Vrindavana mood, will see Him in their heart in His two-armed form.

In this verse, it has been explained how Laxmi Devi is continuously rendering service to Lord Narayana, Vaikuṅṭha-pati – śriyaḥ patiṁ, yajña-patiṁ, sātvatāṁ patiṁ, and jagat-patiṁ – Kṛṣṇa. She is constantly considering how to give pleasure to Kṛṣṇa, and everyone in Vaikuṅṭha is assisting Laxmi Devi. Similarly, in Vrindavana, Srimati Radharani is constantly considering how to give pleasure to Kṛṣṇa, and everyone in Vrindavana is assisting Srimati Radharani to render devotional service to Him.

Srimati Radharani is the dearest devotee of Kṛṣṇa and everybody else is rendering service to Kṛṣṇa under Her guidance, or to assist Her in Her service to Kṛṣṇa. Similarly, Lord Balarama is another dearest devotee of Kṛṣṇa in the mellow of friendship and those who are related to Kṛṣṇa in friendship are rendering service to Kṛṣṇa through Balarama. Similarly, Nanda Maharaja and Mother Yasoda are the dearest devotees of Kṛṣṇa, the most intimate associates of Kṛṣṇa in the spiritual sky rendering service to Kṛṣṇa in the mellow of parental love, and those who are related to Kṛṣṇa in parental love are assisting Nanda Maharaja and Yasoda. This is how there are different group leaders for different mellows of devotional service but all these mellows are actually assisting the most elevated of all mellows: unnatojjvala-rasāṁ. [CC. Adi 3.4] That is the conjugal loving relationship with Kṛṣṇa, where Srimati Radharani is the reservoir or source.



Helping each other and being happy for each other

In Vrindavana, Srimati Radharani is the dearmost devotee of Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa is very attached and attracted to Her. Not only Srimati Radharani, Kṛṣṇa is actually attracted to all His devotees. When a devotee begins to render service to Kṛṣṇa, He reciprocates in a very loving and affectionate way and this is how everyone in the spiritual sky becomes perfectly situated. There is no such competition in the spiritual sky, no one is thinking, "Why does Radharani have the most advanced and elevated position; why not me?" No one thinks like that in the spiritual sky. On the other hand, everyone is perfectly satisfied in the spiritual sky. Everyone feels that Kṛṣṇa loves him the most. Therefore, there is no such unwanted and unpleasant competition in the spiritual sky. That is why there is no envy in the spiritual sky and everyone is perfectly satisfied, receiving the love of Kṛṣṇa. Everyone thinks that Kṛṣṇa loves him the most and being so satisfied, everyone is helping everyone else to render devotional service. That is the spiritual nature. In the spiritual nature, there is no envy. In the spiritual nature, there is only love. Everyone is trying to help everyone else to render service to Kṛṣṇa and for himself, he feels completely unqualified to render any service. He feels so fallen and unqualified that he cannot actually render any service. But for others, he appreciates them as pure devotees of Kṛṣṇa and His intimate associates. Hence, they are always helping others to render service to Kṛṣṇa.

Srila Prabhupada has given us this International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness which is non-different from the spiritual sky. Srila Prabhupada actually brought the spiritual sky in this material nature in the form of ISKCON and somehow or other, due to some good fortune and ajñāta-sukṛti, we have come to ISKCON.

Let us develop these qualities of the devotees and thus, become properly situated in the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness. Let us not fight with each other. Let us not envy each other. Instead, as Prabhupada emphatically told us, let us develop our relationship based on love and trust. Let us try to cooperate with each other. As we start to cooperate, we'll see that Kṛṣṇa consciousness will spread automatically. Actually, Kṛṣṇa consciousness spreads only by Kṛṣṇa's mercy. *kṛṣṇa-śakti vinā nahe tāra pravartana* [CC. Antya 7.11] Kṛṣṇa consciousness cannot spread by any other means besides Kṛṣṇa's own mercy.

Kṛṣṇa will become merciful upon us, only when we cooperate with each other to spread Kṛṣṇa's glories all over the world. As we start to cooperate and develop that cohesive spirit of *saṅkīrtana* – *saṅkīrtana* means 'collective' endeavor to glorify Kṛṣṇa – Kṛṣṇa consciousness will spread in leaps and bounds all over the world. Nothing can actually stop it. Although, it is a degraded age – *kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann* [SB. 12.3.51]: this age has been compared to an ocean of sinful activities - but through this *saṅkīrtana* movement, this sinful effect of this material nature will be very easily eradicated. How easily? Just as easily as when with the appearance of light, darkness immediately disappears. Intense darkness is impenetrable but as soon as the light comes up, there is no more darkness. This world is like an ocean of sinful activities and to us, it may appear to be impossible to counter the sinful state of this material nature in the age of Kali. But as soon as this *saṅkīrtana* movement spreads - as soon as the congregational glorification of Kṛṣṇa and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu takes place, then immediately, all the sinful reactions will disappear and the spiritual light will prevail all over the world. That spiritual light is the knowledge of Kṛṣṇa, the love for the devotees and love for Kṛṣṇa, Himself.