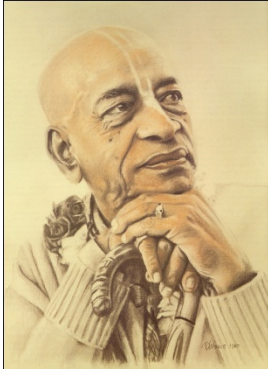


International Society for Krishna Consciousness
Founder-Acarya His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada



Ocean of Nectar

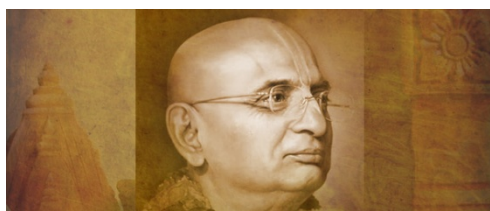
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1. The Spirit of Service

↓ By serving the Supreme Lord one gives the best service to the family

On the topic in the spirit of service I have selected a quotation from Srila Prabhupada's books. Srila Prabhupada is saying that by serving the Supreme Lord one gives the best service to the family because if one becomes a pure Vaishnava the whole family up to fourteen generations they become liberated. We should not divert our attention for any other service. We should simply consider for rendering service to the Supreme Lord this is the conclusion. So Prabhupada is pointing out how serving Krishna actually everyone derives benefit.

↓ I remember when I became a devotee

In this aspect I remember when I became a devotee I actually read the Nectar of Devotion and decided to become a devotee. I then enquired where Srila Prabhupada was and that was in Calcutta. I was told that Srila Prabhupada was in the United States. I thought that until Srila Prabhupada went back to India I would travel to different places where Caitanya Mahaprabhu and Krishna performed Their pastimes. I am thinking that the first place that I went to was Sridham Mayapur and Mayapur as you all know is an extremely beautiful place. In those days I would say that Mayapur was even more beautiful. It was very serene and I arrived in the evening, the whole atmosphere was so serene and tranquil. The devotees were so warm and kind hearted like whoever I spoke to practically everyone asked me to stay on and become a devotee. So the next morning I shaved up and went to the Ganges took a bath, threw out away my old clothes and wore dhoti and Kurta and became a devotee. After a while when my father got to know I actually wrote to him and he asked me if I would come because there was some important thing to take care of and so I went and when I went I was shaved up wearing dhoti. He thought that I was just visiting, I went to Mayapur to just visit but he didn't realize that I had become a devotee. So when he saw me he got a shock and he was very upset and then I explained to him that I could stay and I could take care of him only as long as he would be on this planet. Now that I have become a devotee I can actually take care of him even in his next life and I quoted this verse where Prabhupada mentioned that when one becomes a devotee ten generations before and ten generations after become liberated. That

actually left some deep impression and he realized that I was serious in what I was actually practicing. Since then although he did not wholeheartedly accept my involvement in Krishna Consciousness but he did not prevent me from becoming a devotee.

↓ Krishna is the root of everything

The greatest benefit that we can render to everybody around us whether they are family members or friends whoever is connected to us derive some spiritual benefit because of our involvement in Krishna Consciousness. The best service that we can render to the world around us is actually becoming a devotee of Krishna. In this respect Srila Prabhupada gives a very wonderful example of watering the root of the tree. The tree has various branches, leaves and twigs but when we want to benefit the tree we do not have to separately water different sections of the tree, we simply water the root of the tree. Since all the roots and branches are connected to the tree they derive the benefit by getting the water from the root. Krishna is the root of everything therefore when you serve Krishna then everyone becomes served. When we give people Krishna Consciousness then everyone actually derives the highest spiritual benefit.

↓ He asked Srila Prabhupada what you are doing for the welfare of the people.

Sometimes people ask what are you doing for the welfare of the people, little do they know that the highest welfare is actually Krishna Consciousness. In this respect I remember one incidence with Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada was visiting a very wealthy family in Pune related to the Birlas in those days were the richest Indian family. The person Srila Prabhupada was visiting he asked Srila Prabhupada what you are doing for the welfare of the people. "Like you are asking everybody to chant Hare Krishna and become a devotee of Krishna but what are you doing to really benefit the people?" He meant why are you not feeding people or opening hospitals or doing such welfare activities. Prabhupada told this gentleman, "Look you are a relative of Birlas now if one of the sons of Birla becomes mad and runs away from home because he became mad he would not have any memory of who he is, who is father is and which family he belongs to. He will be wandering in the streets like a madman and even for a handful of food he would have to struggle so much and has to undergo so much insult and tribulations. If you see him in that condition will you just give him five rupees and tell him to go and have a meal? Or will you tell him that don't you know you are the son of Birla, come I will take you to your father. When he comes to his father all his problems will be solved."

↓ We all are children of Krishna

Similarly we all are children of Krishna the Supreme Personality of Godhead, He is our father. Unfortunately we became mad, we lost our memory, we lost our father's home and we are wandering in the streets like raving madman trying to get some food here, trying to get some shelter there and undergoing so many insults while doing that. What is going to be the greatest welfare activity rendered to us if someone wants to render it? It would be to remind us that Krishna is our father and we have to go back to him. Srila Prabhupada pointed out that this is what we are doing. We are simply reminding everybody that he is a son of Krishna or she is a daughter of Krishna. We are reminding everybody about their lost relationship with their Supreme father. By doing that we are actually rendering the greatest service to everyone. Krishna is the root and when we water the root then everybody becomes satisfied.

↓ Service actually means?

Now when we speak of service we actually mean service to Krishna and Krishna's devotees. The materialistic attitude is to Lord over because we all think in the material nature that we all are Lords and Masters. Why? Because material nature is inferior and we all are coming from Krishna's superior energy. This material nature *apara* means inferior and beyond this inferior material nature there is a superior nature. The living entities the *jivas* are coming from that superior energy of Krishna. They are exploiting the material nature. The living entities in the material nature have only one business to exploit this inferior energy of Krishna. Everyone in this material nature is simply trying to exploit and what is the outcome of that endeavor for exploitation? The more we try to exploit the more we suffer. It has been very nicely pointed out in a book called *Prema-vivarta* by Jagadananda Pandita an associate of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, *krsna-bahirmukha hana bhoga vancha kare nikata-stha maya tare japatiya dhare*. As soon as a living entity looks away from Krishna he tries to enjoy this material nature because that's the natural outcome. As soon as the living entity looks away from Krishna where does he look at? After all everything is Krishna so looking away from Krishna means looking at Krishna's inferior energy the material nature? As soon as he comes into contact with the inferior material nature then he immediately develops a tendency to Lord over and exploit because that is the natural tendency of the superior over the inferior. He immediately wants to enjoy and exploit this material nature. What does the material nature do at that time? The material nature *Maya* who is standing nearby actually side by side, Krishna's internal potency and immediately next to that is Krishna's external potency and in between there is a thin line separating the external from the internal and that is the marginal potency the *jivas*. As soon as the *jiva* looks at Krishna's inferior material energy he develops a tendency to lord over and immediately *Maya* grabs him and tightly embraces him. In most cases madness is caused by

one becoming haunted by ghosts. When one becomes haunted by a ghost he loses his memory, he loses his sanity. A living entity bewildered by *Maya* develops a similar condition therefore Srila Prabhupada gave the example of Birla's son becoming mad. When he becomes mad then he loses his memory. he forgets who he is. He does not have any awareness of who he is, where he comes from, and what he is meant to do. A living entity in this way becomes entrapped by the material nature. The cause of this entrapment is first looking away from Krishna and the consequent outcome of developing a tendency to lord over. It's natural and inherit you can't actually avoid it. As long as we are looking towards the material nature we won't be able to help the tendency to lord over. Now what is the remedy? How can we rectify that diseased condition?

↓ Akbar, Birbal and the chalk line

In this respect I remember one incidence that took place between Akbar and his minister. Akbar was a great Mogal King in India and was very famous for his intelligence and wit. Akbar had in his court he had a minister called Birbal who was famous for his intelligence and people used to complaint to him why he was so partial and bias towards Birbal. He tried to explain to them because of Birbal's extraordinary intelligence he was so attracted to him. They were still not convinced about it so one day Akbar came to the court and he drew a line on the floor with a chalk and he asked if anyone was able to make that line shorter without rubbing it off. Everyone was quite baffled how was it possible to make the line shorter without rubbing it off. None of the ministers could actually do anything about it. Then finally Akbar asked Birbal and he said yes. Birbal went there picked up the chalk and drew a line longer than Akbar's line and said, "now your line is shorter." Greater and smaller is a consideration of relativity. When we are looking towards the external inferior energy of the Lord in relation to that nature we all are superior and therefore we naturally develop a tendency to lord over but if we become exposed to someone who is greater than us then we will become inferior to them. Our attitude will then change what to speak of when you become exposed to the greatest the Supreme Personality of Godhead?

↓ The remedy is to become aware of Krishna.

Therefore the remedy is to become aware of Krishna. Krishna is the greatest and when we become properly exposed to Krishna with proper understanding then we recognize our position being inferior. Krishna is superior and we are inferior and then naturally we develop a tendency to serve Krishna. It is the natural tendency of the inferior to serve the superior. That is how Krishna Consciousness gives us a very practical and a very scientific process. We do not have to artificially do anything; we simply have to become aware of Krishna. Therefore Srila Prabhupada named this institution the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. This is

an institution a society where everyone is getting an opportunity to become Krishna conscious, conscious of Krishna and when you become conscious of Krishna then we naturally develop our service attitude which is the beginning of real spiritual life. There are other processes yoga, meditation and so and so forth but those processes are not practical they are only an intermediary step to come to the platform of devotional service. A yogi when he attains perfection of his yoga samadi then what happens? In samadi he actually gets to perceive the Supersoul. A minute spirit soul perceives the Supersoul, the Supreme Personality of Godhead naturally recognizes greatness then what happens automatically he surrenders unto Him and that surrender is the beginning of that devotional service.

↓ Surrender unto Me

This surrender is the ultimate outcome of yoga siddhi. In this way after one attains the perfection of yoga he gets an opportunity to become a devotee. Similarly we use another expression which is almost the same that is *Çaraëägati* which means surrender and we know that the foundation of devotional service is *Çaraëägati*. *çré-kāñëa-caitanya prabhu jéve doyâ kori' swa-pārñada swéya dhâma saha avatari' atyanta durlabha prema koribäre dâna çikhâya çaraëägati bhakatera prâna*, Sri Krishna Caitanya Mahaprabhu in order to bestow His mercy upon the conditioned souls He descended with His associates and His abode. In order to bestow and award this very rare love of Krishna, He is teaching the process of surrender which is the life and soul of devotional service. So that is the process Surrender to Krishna. In Bhagavad Gita Krishna is also saying the same thing *sarva-dharmân parityajya mām ekaâ çaraëââ vraja* giving up your nonsense and just surrener unto Me. *çaraëââ vraja and çaraëägati* the same meaning surrender unto Me. When one surrenders unto Krishna then only devotional service begins. Service must be rendered toward a superior. There is another higher consideration, apparently service is rendered to the Supreme being but when you go deeper then we learn there is another criteria for service and what is that criteria?

↓ LOVE

LOVE. When you love somebody we serve that person. A mother loves her baby and she stays up through the night, she doesn't eat anything just takes care of her baby, for the sake of her baby she is prepared to undergo so many difficulties. Why? Because of her love for her baby. In this way the material nature the tendency is not of exploitation but obviously it is our selfish motivation that we render some service. An example to illustrate this point is like an employee serves his employer. Why? Is it out of love? No it is because of money, he gets a salary so he is serving but actually that is not service but rather some selfish exploitation again. Employer is trying to exploit the employee and employee is also trying to exploit the

employer. Srila Prabhupada said the only somewhat selfless service we see in this material nature is the mother's attitude towards her child but then again Srila Prabhupada pointed out that although it appears to be some selfless it is a matter of extended selfishness. Selfishness extends beyond our own selfish identity to those who are related to us. Those who are related to this body they are our relatives and out of that relationship we do some service. The mother would serve her baby but not anybody else's baby. In this way material nature is actually natural exploitation. Everyone here is trying to exploit everybody else.

↓ Krishna Consciousness revolutionizes

Krishna Consciousness revolutionizes the concept from the world of exploitation we are transported to the world of service and that is what the spiritual nature is. Material nature is the world of exploitation and the spiritual nature is the world of service there everyone is serving. Why? Out of their love for Krishna, expressing their love for Krishna out of their love for Krishna they are compelled to serve Krishna out of their love and that is what devotional service actually is.

↓ Srila Prabhupada came here to teach us how

Srila Prabhupada came here to teach us how to spiritualize our material existence. We all are in the material nature but there is a very thin line between material and spiritual. When we put ourselves in the center that is material and when you put Krishna in the center that is spiritual. When we put ourselves in the center we become selfish and our tendency is to exploit for the sake of our sense gratification trying to exploit the material nature to enjoy through our senses whereas the spiritual world is Krishna is the center. We may be here is this material nature but here if Krishna becomes the sole center of all our activities then this nature becomes spiritual. Krishna Consciousness is a process of transforming the material nature into spiritual and transporting this to the spiritual sky through this alteration of our attitude whether we are going to put Krishna in the center or whether we going to put ourselves in the center. That is the ultimate consideration if we put ourselves in the center we will lead a self centered life of exploitation which leads to suffering. However when we put Krishna in the center then we will become transported to the spiritual sky. This nature becomes transformed to spiritual reality and that is the world of service and there our attitude is what can I do for Krishna? What can I do for Krishna's devotees who are serving Krishna? How can I assist those devotees who are serving wonderfully? The more this attitude develops the more we make spiritual advancement. Often devotees ask how I will understand if I am making spiritual progress. The simple answer to that is how much service attitude you have developed.

↓ Is the service attitude developing or diminishing?

Is the service attitude developing or diminishing? If the service attitude develops that is a sure sign of spiritual advancement. It is not that when we become an advanced devotee we become a superman. No. When you become an advanced devotee we become the servant of the servant of the servant of Krishna. This is the world of service. Krishna consciousness is a movement of creating that service opportunity for everyone and thus become transported to the spiritual sky. Sometimes while practicing Krishna Consciousness we do become affected by Maya. We think like now I am a big devotee and everybody should serve me and that is a very dangerous situation and this is Maya's test. Maya will always test us. When you try to become a servant Maya will give us the opportunities to become masters but we have to understand that under all circumstances we are nothing but the servants of the servants of the servants of Krishna. The higher we go the bigger of a servant we become. This can also be graphically exemplified. The structure of the material nature is like a pyramid the lowest one is at the bottom and the highest one is sitting on top of everyone.

↓ The big boss means what?

The big boss means what? He is riding on the shoulders of his subordinates. The spiritual structure is diametrically opposed to that, it is also like a pyramid but an inverse pyramid there the highest one is shouldering the burden of everyone and who is the highest and the greatest? Krishna and what is He doing? He is catering to everyone's demand. He needs milk, he needs water, and he needs air. So Krishna is constantly supplying or making all the arrangements to provide for all that we need. In this way Krishna is maintain us. If we become a representative of Krishna if we truly become an advanced devotee in our spiritual life then what do we have to do? We have to shoulder the burden of others those who are engaged in service to Krishna. In that way we become the servants of the servants of the servants of Krishna.

↓ I have to take care of them to make them the good children of my master

Under no circumstances we become the master although the titles are given sometimes, spiritual master but ultimately who is the spiritual master? It is not that he becomes the master of his disciples he actually becomes the servant of his disciples. It may sound odd but an example to illustrate this point is that a devotee knows that everyone is a child of Krishna and he knows that he is a servant of Krishna so when someone is put under his care and custody then does he think that he has become their master? No, he actually thinks that they are the children of my master and as a servant of my master it is my responsibility to take care of them

and that is actually the real duty of the spiritual master. He never thinks that his disciples are his property, engaging them is fine but the attitude is that my master's children have been put in my care and I have to take care of them to make them the good children of my master. In this way the spiritual master does his service and although he is identified as a master but actually he is a servant. Ultimately as I have said even Krishna is serving everyone. Therefore Srila Sarasvati Thakur had an expression that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is identified as this father because by identifying Him as a father it's in a way converting Him into a servant because the children demands thing from the father but our business is to serve Him as our Lord and Master and then by His mercy we will develop other relationships. The five different types of relationships we have in devotional service. Krishna's role of the father is not that prominent. *Dāsya* He is the Master, *Sakhya* He is a friend, *vātsalya* He is the child and then conjugal He is the lover of His beloved. So in this way the positive devotional service in the line of *Gaudiya Vaishnavism*

↓ The most wonderful aspect of Vrindavan

Krishna is not really the father. Krishna is not even the master there and that is the most wonderful aspect of Vrindavan. Krishna is the friend, Krishna is the son and Krishna is the beloved. In these three relationships a very intense service is being rendered for the pleasure of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In order to relish these relationships the Lord has become equal to His devotees and subordinate to His devotees. Krishna is placing Himself in the care of His devotees simply in order to experience the joy.

↓ Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to distribute

Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to distribute that and that is the meaning of the word Krishna prema and why is it so rare? It is so rare because that is the only area Goloka Vrindavan where Krishna becomes equal to His devotees; Krishna becomes subordinate or junior to His devotees. In Vaikuntha there is no room for that kind of relationship, there Krishna is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and everyone else is His servant. Whereas in Vrindavan Krishna has assumed a very special role of a friend and son and a paramour. Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu came to give that and to distribute that irrespective of any consideration of qualification and Srila Prabhupada distributed that gift of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu all over the world and they are getting the opportunity to develop this relationship with Krishna by the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

Thank you very much. All glories to Srila Prabhupada!

2. Questions and Answers

↓ When an opportunity for service comes my way how do I respond?

Should I pass the buck to the next junior devotee? Once someone made an observation and expressed it in a joking way. It is not difficult to find out who is the junior most devotee and he told me that. Like I see whenever someone is asked to do something he tells somebody else to do it and he in turn tells someone else to do it and finally the one who does it gets the opportunity but that should not be. Our attitude should be service is an opportunity and its coming our way to render some service to Krishna. Its Krishna's mercy so when it comes we must grab it there is no consideration for more dignified or degraded service. Every service is from the absolute platform. Of course the senior devotees and temple managers and leaders will organize other devotees but the general attitude must be when I get an opportunity to do something let me do it because that is such a rare opportunity to render the service to Krishna. So please deeply consider when some service comes your way how you are going to respond.

↓ If I am asked to perform some service which I do not like how do I react?

In devotional service there is no question of like or dislike. A wonderful example is Arjuna he did not want to fight the battle of Kurukñetra, he did not like to fight but what did Krishna tell him? After Krishna told him Bhagavad Gita what was Arjuna's attitude? Now by Your mercy my bewilderment has been removed and I have become situated in knowledge and I will do whatever you ask me to do. Service means not a question of whether I like it or not but whatever is expected out of me whatever the authorities are asking me I must do it. So that is the real service attitude. Devotional service is actually unconditional there are no conditions and no consideration whatsoever. I have been asked to do it I must do it whether I like it or not.

↓ How can I improve my service attitude for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada?

So please deeply meditate on this point how to improve you service attitude for the pleasure of Srila Prabhupada. I will give you a little tip recognize your position as smaller than the smallest. If you think that you are greater than the greatest then you will develop an attitude of exploitation but if you want to improve your service attitude you have to recognize your position how insignificant and minute you are and that is our position. How big are we? We tend to think that we are so great but what is our actual size? One ten thousandth tip of the hair so that is our size but we are thinking that we are so great. Krishna consciousness is an opportunity to recognize how small we are. We must remember the gateway to the spiritual sky is very small

and in order to enter into the spiritual sky you have to become one ten thousandth tip of the hair then only will we be able to pass through that gate not otherwise

3. Srila Prabhupada appreciation

In this respect I remember one incidence with Srila Prabhupada. Srila Prabhupada was visiting a very wealthy family in Pune related to the Birlas in those days were the richest Indian family. The person Srila Prabhupada was visiting he asked Srila Prabhupada what you are doing for the welfare of the people. "Like you are asking everybody to chant Hare Krishna and become a devotee of Krishna but what are you doing to really benefit the people?" He meant why are you not feeding people or opening hospitals or doing such welfare activities. Prabhupada told this gentleman, "Look you are a relative of Birlas now if one of the sons of Birla becomes mad and runs away from home because he became mad he would not have any memory of who he is, who is father is and which family he belongs to. He will be wandering in the streets like a madman and even for a handful of food he would have to struggle so much and has to undergo so much insult and tribulations. If you see him in that condition will you just give him five rupees and tell him to go and have a meal? Or will you tell him that don't you know you are the son of Birla, come I will take you to your father. When he comes to his father all his problems will be solved."

Therefore Srila Prabhupada named this institution the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. This is an institution a society where everyone is getting an opportunity to become Krishna conscious, conscious of Krishna and when you become conscious of Krishna then we naturally develop our service attitude which is the beginning of real spiritual life.

Srila Prabhupada came here to teach us how to spiritualize our material existence.

Srila Prabhupada distributed that gift of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu all over the world and they are getting the opportunity to develop this relationship with Krishna by the mercy of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu.

4. Guru Maharaja's Instructions:

↓ Srila Prabhupada is saying that by serving the Supreme Lord one gives the best service to the family because if one becomes a pure Vaishnava the whole family up to fourteen generations they become liberated. We should not divert our attention for any other service. We should simply consider for rendering service to the Supreme Lord this is the conclusion. So

- Prabhupada is pointing out how serving Krishna actually everyone derives benefit;
- ↓ The best service that we can render to the world around us is actually becoming a devotee of Krishna;
- ↓ Krishna is the root of everything therefore when you serve Krishna then everyone becomes served;
- ↓ We are simply reminding everybody that he is a son of Krishna or she is a daughter of Krishna. We are reminding everybody about their lost relationship with their Supreme father. By doing that we are actually rendering the greatest service to everyone;
- ↓ Krishna Consciousness gives us a very practical and a very scientific process. We do not have to artificially do anything; we simply have to become aware of Krishna;
- ↓ When one surrenders unto Krishna then only devotional service;
- ↓ Krishna Consciousness revolutionizes the concept from the world of exploitation we are transported to the world of service and that is what the spiritual nature is;
- ↓ When we put ourselves in the center we become selfish and our tendency is to exploit for the sake of our sense gratification trying to exploit the material nature to enjoy through our senses whereas the spiritual world is Krishna is the center. We may be here in this material nature but here if Krishna becomes the sole center of all our activities then this nature becomes spiritual;
- ↓ When you become an advanced devotee we become the servant of the servant of the servant of Krishna. This is the world of service;
- ↓ Our attitude should be service is an opportunity and its coming our way to render some service to Krishna. It's Krishna's mercy so when it comes we must grab it there is no consideration for more dignified or degraded service. Every service is from the absolute platform. So please deeply consider when some service comes your way how you are going to respond;
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- ↓ Krishna consciousness is an opportunity to recognize how small we are. We must remember the gateway to the spiritual sky is very small and in order to enter into the spiritual sky you have to become one ten thousandth tip of the hair then only will we be able to pass through that gate not otherwise

(The content of this E-magazine was based on a lecture given by His Holiness Bhakti Charu Swami at Bhaktivedanta Manor entitled "The spirit of service.")

(Compilation & editing by Hemavati Radhika dasi)