

Sudama Vipra

Quotes from Bhakti Siddhanta Saraswati Thakur on Sudama in “Amrta Vani – Nectar of Instructions for Immortality”

22. What kind of Vaiṣṇava has no possessions?

Those who want nothing from this world are actually akiñcana, devoid of possessions. Such Vaiṣṇavas have understood that there is nothing in this world that can give them eternal happiness. The material world is a prison house for conditioned souls. Because we have been averse to Kṛṣṇa, we have been imprisoned here and have suffered the material miseries.

Although Prahlāda Mahārāja was an emperor, he had no possessions. Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa was extremely impoverished, and he too was akiñcana. Both devotees were free of material desire.

The akiñcana devotees know well that the material world simply contains ingredients for the service of Hari, guru, and the Vaiṣṇavas. They do not see this material world in the spirit of personal enjoyment, nor do they become indifferent to it. Rather, they engage everything in this world in the Supreme Lord’s service. Unless we worship Lord Hari, we have no right to take even a blade of grass from this world. Akiñcana devotees realize this fact.

The devotees are convinced that by rendering devotional service to Kṛṣṇa they can attain happiness and auspiciousness. By constantly and offenselessly chanting Kṛṣṇa’s holy name, they realize the essential characteristics of Vaiṣṇavas, devotional service, and the Supreme Lord.

We have to hear Kṛṣṇa-kathā from the spiritual master and the Vaiṣṇavas and then preach it to others. This is how we cultivate Kṛṣṇa consciousness. If we are not cultivating Kṛṣṇa consciousness, we will certainly cultivate attitudes unrelated to Kṛṣṇa.

The Padma Purāṇa states: ārādhanānām sarveṣām, viṣṇor ārādhanam param/ tasmāt parataram devi, tadīyānām samarcanam: “Of all types of worship,

worship of Lord Viṣṇu is best, and better than the worship of Lord Viṣṇu is the worship of His devotee, the Vaiṣṇava.” Therefore, better than worship of Kṛṣṇa is the worship of the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu, of Nanda and Yaśodā, of Śrīdāmā and Sudāmā, and of Raktaka and Patraka.

Further Glorifications of Sudama

8.1.1 Padyavali 8.8 & Sri Caitanya Mangala Madhya Khanda 1

*vyādhasyācaraṇam dhruvasya ca vayo vidyā gajendrasya
kākubjāyāḥ kim u nāma rūpam adhikam kim tat sudāmno dhanam
vaṁśaḥ ko vidurasya yādava-pater ugrasya kim pauraṣam
bhaktyā tuṣyati kevalam na ca guṇair bhakti priyo mādhaveḥ*

“Did the hunter named Dharma have any piety? Did age disqualify the five-year-old Dhruva? Did Gajendra, who lived by Trikūṭa Mountain, possess any learning? Did Mathurā's Kubjā, the maidservant of Kāmsa, have any beauty? Did Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa, the friend of Kṛṣṇa, have any wealth? Did the social status of Vidura disqualify him? Did the prowess of Ugrasena, the King of the Yadus, disqualify him? Mādhave was pleased with their devotional service, He is not pleased by material qualities.”

8.1.2 Caitanya Bhagavata Madhya-khaṇḍa 23.460-465

Even if He is thirsty, the Lord does not glance at the water offered by a proud person in an opulent, jeweled watercup. The Lord eats with full satisfaction any item offered by His servant, regardless of whether the offering was made according to regulations. Even if His servant does not offer an item because he considers it too insignificant, the Lord forcibly eats it. The evidence of this was when the Lord ate Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa's broken rice in Dvārakā. The Lord even accepts the remnants of His servants. This was seen during the Pāṇḍavas' exile

to the forest when the Lord ate the remnants of Yudhiṣṭhira's leafy vegetables. Kṛṣṇa's father, mother, wife, and brother are all His servants. Kṛṣṇa does not recognize anyone other than His servants. The Lord accepts the form that His servant meditates on, and Kṛṣṇa's servant can even sell Him.

BhaktiSiddhanta's Commentary: If anyone in the material world has many possessions, then he naturally becomes proud. Such a proud person then takes shelter of misconceptions like: “I am the best, I am rich, I am the best collector of ingredients for worshiping the Lord, I am a great devotee, and Vaiṣṇavas like Śrīdhara Svāmī are Māyāvādīs.” Lord Śrī Gaurasundara does not even glance at such people or desire to accept any of their offerings. The awe and reverence of this material world is unable to oblige the Supreme Lord, who is the object of viśrambha-sakhya (friendship in equality), vātsalya (parenthood), and mādhyura (conjugal love) rasas, or transcendental mellows. The Supreme Lord forcibly yet affectionately takes even an insignificant item that is given by His poor devotee, and the Lord ignores items offered according to proper etiquette by wealthy proud persons. The Supreme Lord affectionately accepted the broken rice offered by Sudāmā Vipra, who was a resident of Sudāmāpurī, Dvārakā (modern day Porbandar). The Lord accepted with pleasure the leafy vegetables collected in the forest and offered by Yudhiṣṭhira during his exile. The wife, father, mother, friend, and servant of Kṛṣṇa, who is the object of worship, are certainly all His servants. The Supreme Lord's service, which is the wealth of those servants who are associates in the Lord's eternal pastimes, is executed by different servants in different rasas.

8.1.3 Prayers for Offering Prasādam (Naivedyārpaṇe vijñaptiḥ) from Padyavali

TEXT 117

*dvija-strīṇām bhakte mṛduni vidurānne vraja-gavām
dadhi-kṣīre sakhyuḥ sphuṭa-cipita-muṣṭau mura-ripo
yaśodāyāḥ stanye vraja-yuvati-datte madhuni te
yathāsīd āmodas tam imam upahāre 'pi kurutām*

SYNONYMS

dvija—of the brāhmaṇas; strīṇām—of the wives; bhakte—in the food; mṛduni—palatable; vidura—offered by Vidura; anne—in the food; vraja—of Vraja; gavam—of the cows; dadhi—the yogurt; kṣīre—and milk; sakhyuḥ—of Your friend Sudāmā Vipra; sphuta—manifested; cipita—of chipped rice; muṣṭau—a handful; mura—of the Mura demon; ripuḥ—O enemy; yaśodāyāḥ—of Yaśodā; stanye—in the breast-milk; vraja—of Vraja; yuvati—by the young gopīs; datte—presented; madhuni—palatable foods; te—to You; yathā—just as; āsīt—was; āmodaḥ—happiness; tam—this; imam—this; upahāre—in the offering; api—also; kurutām—may be done.

TRANSLATION

O Lord Murāri, I hope that just as You enjoyed the palatable food presented by the wives of the brāhmaṇas, the meal offered by Vidura, the milk and yogurt of the cows in Vraja, the handful of chipped rice from Your friend Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa, the breast-milk of Mother Yaśodā, and the delicious foods prepared by the young girls of Vraja, You will also enjoy the offering I now place before You.

—Śrī Rāmānuja

8.1.4 Garga Samhita 6.12.17

arāsandha-nirodhārta-
nṛpānām mokṣa-kāriṇe
nṛgasyoddhāriṇe sākṣāt-
sudāmne dainya-hāriṇe

jarāsandha—of Jarasandha; nirodha—in the prison; ārta—suffering; nṛpānām—of the kings; mokṣa-kāriṇe—giving liberation; nṛgasya—of King Nṛga;

uddhāriṇe—the deliverer; sākṣāt—directly; sudāmne—to Sudāmā; dainya—the poverty; hāriṇe—removing.

To You, who rescued the kings suffering in Jarāsandha's prison, delivered King Nṛga, and ended Sudāmā's poverty, I offer my respectful obeisances.

8.1.5 Sri Kṛṣṇa Samhita:

sudāmnā prīti-dattaṁ ca taṇḍulam bhuktavān hariḥ

pāṣaṇḍānām pradattena miṣṭena na tathā sukhī

If the most relishable item is offered by a nondevotee, the Lord does not accept it. But if an ordinary item is offered with love, the Lord accepts it. This was demonstrated when the Lord ate the rice that Sudama offered.

In Hari namamṛta vyakarana, Jiva Goswami gives the meaning of Sudama as: suṣṭhu dadāti—sudāmā, which means “one who gives liberally”. In South India, Sudama is also called as Kuchela (primarily in Narayaneeyam, a condensed rendition of Srimad Bhagavatam by Narayana Bhattatiri at Guruvayur, Kerala).

Local History:

Sri Sudama Puri is the birthplace and residence of Sudama, the childhood friend of Lord Sri Krishna. Sudama Puri is in the town of Porbandar, 104 km (2 hours) from Sri Dwarka Dhama. Porbandar is a coastal harbour city situated on the western coast of Saurashtra, Gujarat, along the Arabian Sea. In the 10th century Porbandar was known as "Pauravelakul" and thereafter renamed as "Sudamapuri".

Sudama Lila

King Parikṣit's Eagerness for Hearing about Kṛṣṇa

King Parikṣit was hearing the narrations of the pastimes of Lord Kṛṣṇa and Lord Balarama from Sukadeva Goswami. Sukadeva Goswami narrated the 9 cantos of Srimad Bhagavatam, the appearance of Kṛṣṇa and his pastimes in Vṛndavan, Mathura and Dwaraka including the marriage of the different queens in Dwaraka, the performance of the Rajasuya Yajna by Yudhistira in which Kṛṣṇa received the honor of first worship and also the slaying of Jarasandha, Sisupala, Salva, Dantavakra and Paundraka. Sukadeva Goswami also narrated the pastimes of Balarama killing Romaharsana as well as demon Balvala. Nonetheless, Parikṣit Maharaja was not satiated. At the end of Chapter 79, Sukadeva Goswami said

*yo 'nusmareta rāmasya
karmāṇy adbhuta-karmaṇaḥ
sāyam prātar anantasya
viṣṇoḥ sa dayito bhavet*

WORD-FOR-WORD MEANINGS

yaḥ—whichever; anusmareta—regularly remembers; rāmasya—of Lord Balarāma; karmāṇi—the activities; adbhuta—amazing; karmaṇaḥ—all of whose activities; sāyam—at dusk; prātaḥ—at dawn; anantasya—who is unlimited; viṣṇoḥ—to the Supreme Lord, Viṣṇu; saḥ—he; dayitaḥ—dear; bhavet—becomes.

TRANSLATION

SB 10.79.34: All the activities of the unlimited Lord Balarāma are amazing. Anyone who regularly remembers them at dawn and dusk will become very dear to the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Viṣṇu.

Jiva Goswami comments at the beginning of this chapter, “Thinking the story was finished, Parikṣit asks in longing to hear more. The last verse of the previous chapter mentioned that one becomes the object of the Lord’s mercy. That mercy is developing taste. Having attained a special taste from hearing the story, Parikṣit asks for more.

bhagavan yāni cānyāni mukundasya mahātmanaḥ

vīryāṅy ananta-vīryasya śrotum icchāmi he prabho
ko nu śrutvāsakṛd brahmann uttamaśloka-sat-kathāḥ
virameta viśeṣa-jñō viṣaṇṇaḥ kāma-mārgaṇaiḥ

WORD-FOR-WORD MEANINGS

śrī-rājā uvāca—the King (Parīkṣit) said; bhagavan—my lord (Śukadeva Gosvāmī); yāni—which; ca—and; anyāni—others; mukundasya—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; mahā-ātmanaḥ—the Supreme Soul; vīryāṅi—valorous deeds; ananta—unlimited; vīryasya—whose valor; śrotum—to hear; icchāmi—I wish; he prabho—O master.

kaḥ—who; nu—indeed; śrutvā—having heard; asakṛt—repeatedly; brahman—O brāhmaṇa; uttama-śloka—of Lord Kṛṣṇa; sat—transcendental; kathāḥ—topics; virameta—can desist; viśeṣa—the essence (of life); jñāḥ—who knows; viṣaṇṇaḥ—disgusted; kāma—for material desire; mārgaṇaiḥ—with seeking.

TRANSLATION

SB 10.80.1-2: King Parīkṣit said: My lord, O master, I wish to hear about other valorous deeds performed by the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Mukunda, whose valor is unlimited. O brāhmaṇa, how could anyone who knows the essence of life and is disgusted with endeavoring for sense gratification give up the transcendental topics of Lord Uttamaśloka after hearing them repeatedly? (SP: I therefore wish to hear about His other pastimes of which you may not have spoken as yet.)

Jiva Goswami writes, “Pariksit Maharaja exclaims to Sukadeva Goswami, “O omniscient Śukadeva (bhagavān)! I desire to hear other powerful stories of the Lord who frees one from all suffering (mukundasya) and who has the best nature (mahātmanaḥ).” The prayer expresses the imperative mood. This will not happen from hearing the glories of other persons since Kṛṣṇa alone has unlimited powers. I desire to hear only these topics since they have such power. These stories are unlimited. Please tell all of them. You (Sukadeva Goswami) may question, “You will live only two or three more days. How is it possible to fulfill that desire?” You can give enough lifespan to me, since you are capable (prabho)! He desires more satisfaction from the topics. Sukadeva Goswami can say, “You have heard many

stories. Why do you want to hear more?" After repeatedly hearing about the Lord who could give up those topics? No one could. This is because the Lord's glory is most excellent (uttama) or is beyond ignorance and suffering (ut—tama). These topics are the best (sat) among all topics of the Lord since they are about Kṛṣṇa. "But we see many people give up the topics." The person who realizes the special sweetness and powers of Kṛṣṇa (viśeṣa-jñāḥ) does not give up those topics. Let that be. Having realization, one does not give up the topics but also in order to destroy suffering which is experienced at all times one does not give up the topics. That person is disgusted with searching for material enjoyment, or is suffering from the arrows of material enjoyment.

SP: The Supreme Lord is called Mukunda because He is the bestower of both liberation and love of God simultaneously. Anyone who becomes a devotee of the Lord automatically attains liberation without having to make a separate attempt. Because the Lord is unlimited, His pastimes and activities for creating, maintaining and destroying the whole cosmic manifestation are also unlimited. Maharaja Parikṣit is telling Sukadeva Goswami: "My dear master, the conditioned souls within this material world have been frustrated by searching out the pleasure of happiness derived from sense gratification. Such desires for material enjoyment are always piercing the hearts of conditioned souls. But I am actually experiencing how the transcendental topics of Lord Kṛṣṇa's pastimes can relieve one from being affected by such material activities of sense gratification. I think that no intelligent person can reject this method of hearing the transcendental pastimes of the Lord again and again; simply by hearing, one can remain always steeped in transcendental pleasure. Thus one will not be attracted by material sense gratification." In this statement, Maharaja Parikṣit has used two important words: visanna and visesajna. Visanna means "morose." Materialistic people invent many ways and means to become fully satisfied, but actually they remain morose. The point may be raised that sometimes transcendentalists also remain morose. Parikṣit Maharaja, however, has used the word visesajna. There are two kinds of transcendentalists, namely the impersonalists and the personalists. Visesajna refers to the personalists, who are interested in transcendental variegatedness. The devotees become jubilant by hearing the descriptions of the personal activities of the Supreme Lord, whereas the impersonalists, who are actually more attracted by the

impersonal feature of the Lord, are only superficially attracted by the Lord's personal activities. As such, in spite of coming in contact with the pastimes of the Lord, the impersonalists do not fully realize the benefit to be derived, and thus, due to fruitive activity, they remain in exactly the same morose position as the materialists.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī comments herein that we see many persons who, even after hearing the topics of the Lord repeatedly, give up their spiritual dedication. The jñānīs fixed on the impersonal Brahman are an example of those who give up those topics. But one who has realized that the essence of life (viśeṣa-jñāna) is to constantly relish Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form, qualities and pastimes never gives up those topics. One who experiences the taste of hearing about Kṛṣṇa's fascinating pastimes automatically becomes disgusted with the inferior taste of material pleasure (viṣaṅṅaḥ kāma-mārgaṅaiḥ). Hearing anything other than topics of Kṛṣṇa is useless. These two qualities (taste for hearing and disgusted with sense gratification) are complementary. One who has experienced the real taste of Kṛṣṇa consciousness automatically becomes disgusted with the inferior taste of material pleasure. Such a genuine hearer of the topics of Kṛṣṇa cannot give up hearing about the Lord's fascinating pastimes..

SB 10.80.3-4: King Parikṣit continued: "Actual speech is that which describes the qualities of the Lord, real hands are those that work for Him, a true mind is that which always remembers Him dwelling within everything moving and nonmoving, and actual ears are those that listen to sanctifying topics about Him. An actual head is one that bows down to the Lord in His manifestations among the moving and nonmoving creatures, real eyes are those that see only the Lord, and actual limbs are those which regularly honor the water that has bathed the Lord's feet or those of His devotees."

SP: One's mind can be peaceful only when one simply thinks of Kṛṣṇa in full Kṛṣṇa consciousness. This does not mean that one has to be very thoughtful; one simply has to understand that Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute Truth, is all pervasive, by His localized aspect as Paramatma. If only one can think that Kṛṣṇa, as Paramatma, is everywhere, even within the atom, then one can perfect the thinking, feeling and willing functions of his mind. The perfect devotee does not see the material world as

it appears to material eyes, for he sees everywhere the presence of his worshipable Lord in His Paramatma feature." Maharaja Parikṣit continued by saying that the function of the ear can be perfected simply by engagement in hearing the transcendental activities of the Lord, and the function of the head can be fully utilized when the head is engaged in bowing down before the Lord and His representative. That the Lord is represented in everyone's heart is a fact, and therefore the highly advanced devotee offers his respects to every living entity, considering that the body is the temple of the Lord. But it is not possible for all men to come to that stage of life immediately, because that stage is for the first-class devotee. The second-class devotee can consider the Vaisnavas, or the devotees of the Lord, to be representatives of Kṛṣṇa, and the devotee who is just beginning, the neophyte or third-class devotee, can bow his head before the Deity in the temple and before the spiritual master, who is the direct manifestation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Therefore, in the neophyte stage, in the intermediate stage or in the fully advanced, perfected stage, one can make the function of the head perfect by bowing down before the Lord or His representative. Similarly, one can perfect the function of the eyes by seeing the Lord and His representative. In this way, everyone can elevate the functions of the different parts of his body to the highest perfectional stage simply by engaging them in the service of the Lord or His representative. If one is able to do nothing more, he can simply bow down before the Lord and His representative and drink the caranamṛta, the water which has washed the lotus feet of the Lord or His devotee.

VCT: Parīkṣit Mahārāja said, "Not only the ears, but all organs of the body become useless without a connection with Kṛṣṇa." In the Second Canto, Third Chapter, verse 20 Śaunaka Ṛṣi made a similar statement: *jihvāsati dārdurikeva sūta*, "The tongues of those who fail to sing of the Lord are useless as those of frogs." The senses should work together in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In other words, whatever the eyes or the ears experience, the mind should simply remember Kṛṣṇa, who is within all things. The eyes which see the both the Deity form of Viṣṇu and His devotees, the head which bows to those two forms (*ubhaya-liṅgam*), and the limbs which receive the foot water of Viṣṇu and His devotees are fortunate. The word *aṅgāni*, "limbs" refers to those limbs which are above the navel, since pouring *caranāmṛta* on one's body lower than the navel is offensive.

Conversation between Sudama and his wife

SB 10.80.5-7: Sūta Gosvāmī said: Thus questioned by King Viṣṇurāta, the powerful sage Bādarāyaṇi replied, his heart fully absorbed in meditation on the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Vāsudeva. Śukadeva Gosvāmī said: Lord Kṛṣṇa had a certain brāhmaṇa friend [named Sudāmā] who was most learned in Vedic knowledge and detached from all sense enjoyment. Furthermore, his mind was peaceful and his senses subdued. Living as a householder, he maintained himself with whatever came of its own accord. The wife of that poorly dressed brāhmaṇa suffered along with him and was emaciated from hunger.

JG: Parīkṣit is here called Viṣṇu-rāta, he who was given life by the Lord, since his prema increased on realizing the Lord's mercy to him. Śukadeva was questioned by him with great longing (sam—prṣṭaḥ). Śukadeva knew the truth about the pastimes of the lord and was the crest jewel of all knowledge (bhagavān). He was the son of Vyāsa who knew the essence of the Vedānta. On being questioned, his heart became completely absorbed in the son of Vasudeva, full of all powers and mercy. He then spoke, remembering the particular mercy of the Lord in the stories.

SP+JG: On hearing these statements of Maharaja Parikṣit, Sukadeva Gosvami was overwhelmed with devotional ecstasy because of King Parikṣit's advanced understanding of the Vaisnava philosophy. Sukadeva Gosvami was already engaged in describing the activities of the Lord, and when asked by Maharaja Parikṣit to describe them further, he continued with great pleasure to narrate Srimad-Bhagavatam. There was a very nice brahmana friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa by name Śrīdāmā¹, a friend of Kṛṣṇa who is an ocean of good qualities and mercy, attractive to all minds. Bṛhat-sahasra-nāma says śrīdāmarāṅka-bhaktārthaṁ bhūmyānīndra-vaibhavaḥ: Kṛṣṇa gave the wealth of Indra to earth for his starving devotee Śrīdāmā. He was not only a brāhmaṇa but the best knower of the meaning of

¹ The Brahmana Sudama is called Śrīdāmā by Jiva Goswami and by Rupa Goswami in Bhakti Rasamṛta Sindhu. There was also a childhood friend of Kṛṣṇa in Vraja by name Śrīdāmā. Additionally, in Mathura there was a florist by name Sudama who offered a garland to Kṛṣṇa as recounted in SB 10.41.43-52. In Gopala Campu it is stated that Kṛṣṇa liked Sudama because his name reminded him of his friend in Vraja.

the Vedas (vittamaḥ). As a perfect brahmana, he was very elevated in transcendental knowledge, and because of his advanced knowledge, he was not at all attached to material enjoyment. Therefore he was very peaceful and had achieved supreme control over his senses. This means that the brahmana was a perfect devotee, because unless one is a perfect devotee he cannot achieve the highest standard of knowledge. It is stated in the Bhagavad-gita that a person who has come to the perfection of knowledge surrenders unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead. In other words, any person who has surrendered his life for the service of the Supreme Personality of Godhead has come to the point of perfect knowledge. The result of perfect knowledge is that one becomes detached from the materialistic way of life. This detachment means complete control of the senses, which are always attracted by material enjoyment. The senses of the devotee become purified, and in that stage the senses are engaged in the service of the Lord. That is the complete field of devotional service.

Although the brahmana friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa was a householder, he was not busy accumulating wealth for very comfortable living; therefore he was satisfied by the income which automatically came to him according to his destiny. This is the sign of perfect knowledge. A man in perfect knowledge knows that one cannot be happier than he is destined to be. In this material world, everyone is destined to suffer a certain amount of distress and enjoy a certain amount of happiness. The amount of happiness and distress is already predestined for every living entity. No one can increase or decrease the happiness of the materialistic way of life. The brahmana, therefore, did not exert himself for more material happiness; instead, he used his time for advancement of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Externally he appeared very poor because he had no rich dress and could not provide a rich dress for his wife. Because their material condition was not very opulent they were not even eating sufficiently, and thus both he and his wife appeared very thin.

JG: Since he was fixed in bhakti to the Lord, he was detached from sense enjoyment. Why? He was most peaceful because his mind was devoid of lust and lamentation. Why? His senses were controlled.

SB 10.80.8: The wife was not anxious for her personal comfort, but she felt concerned for her husband, who was such a pious brahmana. She trembled

due to her weak health, and although she did not like to dictate to her husband, she spoke as follows.

VCT: Sudāmā's chaste wife was also poorly dressed, and whatever food she obtained she gave to her husband. Thus she remained fatigued from hunger. According to Śrīdhara Svāmī, the chaste lady was especially unhappy because she could not obtain food to feed her husband. Further, she was fearful to approach her husband because she knew that he did not want to beg for anything other than devotion to the Supreme Lord. Sudama's wife exhibited the same qualities (tathā-vidhā) such as tolerating hunger (kṣut-kṣāmā). The word ca implies that she was even more tolerant than Sudāmā, because whatever she received as food she served to him, remaining hungry herself.

*nanu brahman bhagavataḥ
sakhā sākṣāc chriyaḥ patiḥ
brahmaṇyaś ca śaraṇyaś ca
bhagavān sātvaṭarṣabhaḥ*

SB 10.80.9-11 [Sudāmā's wife said:] O brāhmaṇa, isn't it true that the husband of the goddess of fortune is the personal friend of your exalted self? (SP: You are also a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and He is always ready to help His devotee. Even if you think that you are not rendering any devotional service to the Lord, still you are surrendered to Him, and the Lord is the protector of the surrendered soul.) That greatest of Yādavas, the Supreme Lord Kṛṣṇa, is compassionate to brāhmaṇas and very willing to grant them His shelter. O fortunate one, (SP: You are the most fortunate person because you have as your friend the Supreme Personality of Godhead.) please approach Him, the real shelter of all saints. He will certainly give abundant wealth to such a suffering householder as you (SP: so that you can live very comfortably). Lord Kṛṣṇa is now the ruler of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas and is staying at Dvārakā. Since He gives even His own self to anyone who simply remembers His lotus feet, what doubt is there that He, the spiritual master of the universe, will bestow upon His sincere worshiper prosperity and material enjoyment, which are not even very desirable

VCT+JG: From her statements quoted here one can see that Sudāmā's wife anticipated every possible objection her husband might make to her request that he go to Kṛṣṇa to beg charity. If Sudāmā might say, "How could the husband of the goddess of fortune befriend a fallen soul like myself?" his wife replies by saying, "Śrī Kṛṣṇa is brāhmaṇya, very favorably disposed toward the brāhmaṇas."

Sudāmā: "But I do not have the qualities of such a brāhmaṇa."

Wife: "Kṛṣṇa gives shelter (saranyaś) to anyone who surrenders to Him."

Sudāma: "He may give shelter to the saintly, but I am not saintly."

Wife: But you have great fortune, otherwise how could you make friends with him?

Sudāmā: "Since I have no devotion, I do not even have the quality of surrender."

Wife: "Kṛṣṇa is the omniscient Bhagavān, therefore, He will take note of your unhappiness and be merciful to you. You may not consider yourself a sādhu, but you are definitely in a wretched condition. Seeing that you are struggling to support your family and worthy of charity, Kṛṣṇa will surely give generously. The word ca following sādḥūnām implies that Kṛṣṇa is also the final shelter of those who are wretched."

Sudāmā: "Kṛṣṇa is equally disposed to all the countless unhappy conditioned souls suffering the fruits of their own karma, so why should He give wealth to me?"

Wife: "Kṛṣṇa is the master (rṣabhah:patih) of the devotees (sātvatas). He may not give but the devotees who serve Him by fanning and other actions will mercifully give you some charity. Since Kṛṣṇa maintains the Yadus (sātvatarṣabhah), what burden or fault is it for Him to maintain you?"

Sudāma: "Since it is not proper, I am afraid and ashamed."

Wife: "He is the shelter of saintly persons like you. Since he is the only shelter, it is not proper not to surrender to him because you are fearful."

Sudāmā said, "But Kṛṣṇa may be in Indraprastha, Dvārakā or some other place killing the demons."

Wife: "Kṛṣṇa has now put aside His weapons and does not leave His capital of Dvārakā. Since Kṛṣṇa is the ruler of the Bhojas, Vṛṣṇis and Andhakas, if these opulent rulers merely acknowledge you as a personal friend of Kṛṣṇa's, they will give you everything you need."

Sudāmā: "But I am embarrassed to ask anything from Kṛṣṇa."

Wife: “Kṛṣṇa gives Himself unto any person who just remembers (*smarataḥ*) Him even without asking for anything. What to speak of Kṛṣṇa giving material wealth and sense gratification to His devotee, which are not very much desirable (*nāty-abhīṣṭān*) for Him to give because in the long run they are tasteless. Moreover Kṛṣṇa is the benefactor of the universe (*jagad-guruḥ*), and thus He gives to those who entreat Him, even what they have not specifically begged for. Therefore, if you go to *Dvārakā* and just remain silent, Kṛṣṇa will give you the abundant wealth you desire. Since He is your true benefactor, He will also give you the sweetness of His lotus feet.”

SB 10.80.12-13: In this way, the wife of the brahmana again and again requested, in great humility and submission, that he go to Lord Kṛṣṇa. The brahmana thought that there was no need to ask any material benefit from Lord Sri Kṛṣṇa, but he was induced by the repeated requests of his wife. Moreover, he thought, "If I go there I shall be able to see the Lord personally. That will be a great opportunity, even if I don't ask any material benefit from Him." When he had decided to go to Kṛṣṇa, he asked his wife if she had anything in the home that he could offer to Kṛṣṇa, because he must take some presentation for his friend.

JG: *Bhārya* or wife means “one whom the husband must support.” He had to follow her words in order to maintain her. The word *vipra* here means “one who fulfills someone’s wish in a particular way (*viśeṣeṇa pratikāmam pūrayati*).”

SB 10.80.14-17: The wife immediately collected four palmfuls of chipped rice from her neighboring friends and tied it in a small cloth, like a handkerchief, and gave it to her husband to present to Kṛṣṇa. Without waiting any longer, the brahmana took the presentation and proceeded toward *Dvārakā* to see his Lord along with some local *brāhmaṇas*. He was absorbed in the thought of how he would be able to see Lord Kṛṣṇa. He had no thought within his heart other than Kṛṣṇa. (Sudama took a boat to reach the island of *Dvārakā*). It was of course very difficult to reach the palaces of the kings of the *Yadu* dynasty, but brahmanas were allowed to visit. When the brahmana friend of Lord Kṛṣṇa went there, he, along with other brahmanas, had to pass through three

military encampments. In each camp there were very big gates, and he also had to pass through them. After the gates and the camps, there were sixteen thousand big palaces, the residential quarters of the sixteen thousand queens of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The brahmana entered the palace of Rukmini² which was very gorgeously decorated. When he entered this beautiful palace, he felt that he was swimming in the ocean of transcendental pleasure. He felt himself constantly diving and surfacing in that transcendental ocean.

Sudama Meets Kṛṣṇa

At that time Lord Acyuta was seated on His consort's bed. Even from a considerable distance He could see the brahmana coming to His home, and He could recognize him as His friend. The Lord immediately stood up, went forward to meet him. *Lord Kṛṣṇa is the reservoir of all transcendental pleasure, yet He Himself felt great pleasure upon embracing the poor brahmana because He was meeting His very dear friend.*

JG: Kṛṣṇa (acyutaḥ) did not deviate from friendship however it originated (SKD: I believe the translation meant that unlike Drupada who dishonored his friend Drona after he became the King, Kṛṣṇa did not consider the current impoverished status of Sudama as an impediment to their relationship), from proper behavior and qualities. Śrīdhāma was his friend, since they played together under the same teacher. Among all the friends he was dearest (priyasya), the object of special prema. He was a brāhmaṇa and a sage, who knew the glories of bhakti to the Lord. Kṛṣṇa was blissful and most affectionate (prītaḥ) to him.

The lotus-eyed Supreme Lord felt intense ecstasy upon touching the body of His dear friend, the wise brāhmaṇa, and thus He shed tears of love with intensity from his most beautiful lotus eyes. After embracing him a long time, he made him sit on the bed by force, since Sudāma was afraid to do so. Then the Lord, who purifies the whole world, personally brought articles of worship,

² In SB, it is mentioned that Sudama entered the palace of a queen, but Jiva Goswami quotes a reference from Padma Purana to say that it was the palace of Rukmini. In Garga Samhita's rendition of this pastime, the queen is explicitly mentioned as Saibya.

offered him various tokens of respect and washed his feet, O King, after which He sprinkled the water on His own head and purified the whole world. Though he was the Lord, and purifier of the worlds, he took the water on his head. These actions show Kṛṣṇa's gentle character. He anointed Sudama with divinely fragrant sandalwood, aguru and kuṅkuma pastes and happily worshiped him with aromatic incense and arrays of lamps (arati). Kṛṣṇa decorated Sudama with special patterns on his limbs. After finally offering him betel nut and the gift of a cow, He welcomed him with pleasing words. By fanning him with her cāmara, the divine goddess of fortune Rukmini personally served that poor brāhmaṇa, whose clothing was torn and dirty and who was so thin that veins were visible all over his body. (Sudama's body was discolored (malinam) because of suffering from cold. From the description of his condition it was not proper for Rukmiṇī to worship him. And yet, Rukmini, the goddess of fortune worshipped him because she is affectionate to brāhmaṇas.)

The people in the royal palace were astonished to see Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of spotless glory, so lovingly honor this shabbily dressed brāhmaṇa.

VCT: Sukadeva Goswami addresses Kṛṣṇa while speaking about the astonishment of the residents of Dvaraka as amala-kīrtinā (spotless fame) implying that henceforth Kṛṣṇa's fame, which personally attends Him, would assume the form of the glories of His having delivered Sudāmā from poverty. Sudama was called as Avadhūtam by Sukadeva Goswami which means "one whose clothes were unclean."

[The residents of the palace said:] "What pious acts has this unkempt, impoverished brāhmaṇa performed? People regard him as lowly and contemptible, yet the spiritual master of the three worlds, the abode of Goddess Śrī, is serving him reverently. Leaving the goddess of fortune sitting on her bed, the Lord has embraced this brāhmaṇa as if he were an older brother (because Lord Kṛṣṇa used to embrace only Rukmini or Balarama, and no one else.)."

SP: They wondered how Lord Kṛṣṇa could personally receive a brahmana who was poor, not very neat or clean, and poorly dressed; but at the same time they could realize that the brahmana was not an ordinary living being. They knew that he must

have performed great, pious activities; otherwise why was Lord Kṛṣṇa, the husband of the goddess of fortune, taking so much care for him? They were still more surprised to see that the brahmana was seated on the bedstead of Lord Kṛṣṇa. They were especially surprised to see that Lord Kṛṣṇa had embraced him exactly as He embraced His elder brother, Balaramaji

[Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] Taking each other's hands, O King, Kṛṣṇa and Sudāmā talked pleasantly about how they once lived together in the school of their guru. The Supreme Lord said: My dear brāhmaṇa, you know well the ways of dharma. After you offered the gift of remuneration to our guru and returned home from his school, did you marry a compatible wife or not?

VCT: Though Sudāmā was dressed as a householder, he did not appear to be enjoying any material pleasure. Therefore, Kṛṣṇa asked him if he was married or not.

BBT: Among civilized human beings, the question of āśrama, or spiritual order, is significant. In other words, every human being must execute prescribed duties as a celibate student, a married man or woman, a retired person or a renunciant. Since Lord Kṛṣṇa could see that the brāhmaṇa was poorly dressed, He inquired if His friend had been properly married and was executing the duties of household life. Since he was not dressed as a renunciant, he would be without a suitable āśrama unless he were properly married.

[SB 10.80.29-30](#) — Even though you are mostly involved in household affairs, your mind is not affected by material desires. Nor, O learned one, do you take much pleasure in the pursuit of material wealth. This I am well aware of. Having renounced all material propensities, which spring from the Lord's illusory energy, some people execute worldly duties with their minds undisturbed by mundane desires. Such unattached persons haven't the least desire to accumulate wealth and prosperity for sense gratification, but sometimes they are found to collect money just to exhibit the exemplary life of a householder. They act as I do, to instruct the general populace. They show how by proper distribution of wealth one can become an ideal householder and at the same time a

great devotee. Such ideal householders are to be considered followers of My footsteps.

VCT: Kṛṣṇa said, “Even though you are not speaking out of embarrassment, I know the actual situation.” Kṛṣṇa reveals this in this verse. “Sudāmā, though you are a householder, your heart is not disturbed by lust. O wise one (vidvan), I know that because you understand the temporary nature of material enjoyment, you have little attraction for wealth, clothing and other things. Therefore, these material things have not been given to you.” The two words *prāyo* (for the most part) and *ati* (very much) imply that “for the sake of your wife you are displaying a favorable disposition toward material wealth.” This indicates that Kṛṣṇa will give these things later. Kṛṣṇa said, “Just see! Though this man is a householder, he is without desires and does not want anything from others. Even if he is given some charity by force, still he will not accept it.” At this time Kṛṣṇa thought, “To broadcast Sudāmā’s fame in Dvārakā, I will not reveal his desire to anyone, nor outwardly give any charity to him here.”

Kṛṣṇa said, “I know very well that you did not take *sannyāsa* like others, even though you are renounced. Those who are detached engage in work even though their minds are not attracted by material desires. By working in this way they give up the perverted propensity of the mind to create desires for material enjoyment. As a householder, I act according to the scriptural injunctions in order to teach the people in general.”

Kṛṣṇa continued to talk to Sudāma about the glories of the service to the spiritual master. Given below is an account of how Kṛṣṇa and Balarama went to study under Sandipani Muni and their behavior while staying in the ashram of Sandipani Muni (from Gopala Campu). The conversation between Kṛṣṇa and Sudāma will continue after the sub-section below.

Kṛṣṇa and Balarama Studying Under Sandipani Muni

(Gopala Campu)

(The following pastime is narrated by Madhukaṅṭha and Snigdhaṅṭha, disciples of Narada Muni to the Vraja-vasis. This sub-section gives insights into why Kṛṣṇa chose Sandipani Muni as His Guru, the manner in which Kṛṣṇa served Sandipani Muni without wanting to be recognized and His feelings of separation from the residents of Vraja while staying at the ashram.)

When Rohiṇī arrived in Mathurā, Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa offered respects and met her. Yaśodā appeared there vividly in the mind not only of the two sons but in the mind of Rohiṇī as well. The conduct of prema is beyond intelligence. See its astonishing nature. Ah! When Kṛṣṇa fell at Rohiṇī's feet, Yaśodā appeared in his heart. He cried and Rohiṇī in the same mood cried like an osprey. After Kṛṣṇa with tears heard of Yaśodā's actions on the day before separation, Balarāma inquired from Rohiṇī and she revealed the non-difference of herself and Yaśodā. On another day when Rohiṇī met her co-wives along with Vasudeva, she spoke while understanding they did not want to hear about Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. Affection personified in this universe is Kṛṣṇa in Vraja. It is also strongly evident in Yaśodā there. If Kṛṣṇa is your son, what fault is there for Vraja (in also claiming him as their son)? When Vasudeva and Devakī, not wanting to hear this, remained silent, other women laughing said, “O Rohiṇī! You are greedy for the yogurt and milk of the cowherds. Therefore your words are not unsuitable.” Hearing this and understanding their minds, and feeling remorse for Yaśodā, she remained silent.

When Vasudeva was determined to have the sacred thread ceremony, Rohiṇī did not propose bringing the people of Vraja. Though Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma were eager for this ceremony—understanding that the Yadus were rather indifferent to the people Vraja in their minds and actions, and considering it would be painful for the Vraja people—they decided not to invite them, though all citizens were invited. What is the use of our wanting to describe this event to them? But through Sudāma, the garland maker, they had Nanda hear a sweet letter: “O father! Tomorrow in the morning the Yadus will accept us as their sons by the sacred thread ceremony, showing us to be kṣatriyas. I will accept this external show as a kṣatriya but internally I am still a cowherd. Ah! Previously I said that I would come to see you, my relatives. How can I, your son, do the opposite

with my tongue? O Nanda! Do not lament that you will not be present at the sacred thread ceremony. In Mathurā I hide my real nature for the benefit of your friends the Yadus. Perform the gāyatrī initiation ceremony for my Vraja friends who are my very form and make my vow complete.”

Hearing this letter, Nanda, Upananda and others began to think. “From this letter, combined with the previous advice, it seems that he is not indifferent to us. We have already thought that we should perform this ceremony, which is recommended for us vaiśyas. Therefore we will perform the ceremony using his friends who are his representatives-- who are one with him internally but identify themselves otherwise externally.”

When the ceremony for second birth was completed in both places, the two boys wanted to learn the four Vedas and their aṅgas. They decided that they should follow the same process as others do. “According to the ancient sages one should study by going to the gurukula. Though Vyāsa and others of great stature would be suitable as gurus and are well known, they will think that we two already have all knowledge. Therefore they will show some hesitation to be our guru. They are the highest Vaiṣṇavas and have realized the Vaiṣṇava philosophy. We should study and that will be attractive. Though we have knowledge by our natures, it is best that we go to the gurukula. If we break the rules it will not be auspicious for the world. A person who is fixed in Brahman and worships Śiva would be the best guru. The great soul Sāndīpani of a dynasty from Kāśī is a worshiper of Śiva. He previously went to Prabhāsa and now lives in Avanti, a place emanating happiness and near to a Śiva temple. We should go there, but in such a way that others do not know. Otherwise, if it is widely known that we have gone far away, the enemies will give problems to the Yadus. And people of Vraja from our father’s family down to the paid servants will give up their bodies. What to speak of your mother Yaśodā who displays the most intense pain to all people.”

After considering in this way, the two made a plan to inform the Yadus and fool all others. They decided to fool everyone by making a show of performing vows alone in their houses. Thus, going far away, secretly, will prevent others from coming. Kṛṣṇa spoke to Vasudeva, Devakī and Rohiṇī, who were filled with

sorrow: “If Balarāma is with me, then ten million people will come. If I am with Balarāma a hundred million people will come. We derive unlimited power from your blessings. With those blessings, who in the three worlds can defeat us?”

Hearing this Vasudeva and Devakī became relieved because of the boys’ powers but Rohiṇī was full of grief. On the path, Kṛṣṇa saw some brāhmaṇas wearing red cloth, who knew his intentions. Seeing Kṛṣṇa, they were eager to give him their begged food but he did not accept. Since one should not accept a vehicle until brahmacārī life is finished the two brothers accepted their own strength as their carriage (they walked.) Kṛṣṇa, along with Balarāma, saw many picturesque villages on the way. When they saw cowherd villages they would stop there for the night and become stunned. Eventually they arrived at Avantī. Though dressed in brahmacārī clothing, they attracted all people’s eyes because of their effulgence. But no one could recognize them. When the people of Avantī saw Balarāma they recognized the highest light, but when they saw Kṛṣṇa they were puzzled whether it was light or darkness. Wherever Kṛṣṇa went, the hearts of the people of the town and all beings in the forest melted. “He will increase his beauty on the lap of some fortunate crest jewel among woman. He will play displaying his arts on the breasts of some woman.” He was pleased to hear women speculate about him in this way, but he plugged his ears, afraid of developing desire for them.

Separated from their friends in order to hide their identity, they went to the assembly of Sāṅdīpani who was blissful with all knowledge. The gathering began to speculate about the two boys. “If these two are not equal to Kārtikeya, capable of destroying all darkness, they must be a dark monsoon cloud and an autumn white cloud. We can compare them to the sun and the moon, but that comparison does not do them justice. One shines with black splendor, and destroys the comparison completely.”

Wearing two pieces of silk cloth, kuśa rings, sacred threads, grass belts made of mūrva, deer skin and holding khadira staffs, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma endowed with auspicious natures entered the assembly of the guru as true brahmacārīs endowed with kṣatriya aura. Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma entered into the assembly of Sāṅdīpani resplendent with thousands of brāhmaṇas, like the sun and moon

entering the sky with Jupiter (guru) and all the stars. Seeing their symptoms of being kings, the members did not rise up. That seemed to be proper because in front of great persons inferiors should not have elevated status. Though their bodies did not offer respect because of their pride as brāhmaṇas, the beauty of the two boys, becoming warm, melted their hearts. Filled with strong devotion, displaying power as they held fire wood in their hands and begging for knowledge, they impressed Sāndīpani. Introducing themselves by their varṇa and gotra, calling themselves “the white and the black” they offered respects with devotion. Offering respect they said, “Possessor of all opulence, born of a great family! O crown jewel of brāhmaṇas! Ocean of knowledge, endowed with the truth of Vedic dharma! We surrender to your feet. Deliver us from suffering due to ignorance.”

Because they were incognito, they did not offer gifts, but they did offer a variety of pure forest fruits brought from a distance. On being questioned by the guru, they replied in a disguised manner that they were the sons of a person of the Yadu dynasty famous as a gem (vasu). Their cleverness made everyone also understand the truth from the secondary characteristics since that cleverness of concealment produced the best results. Greeting them, Sāndīpani said, “Time for study is very rare. O dedicated students! I will keep you here for a long time to study. Giving up your identity as kṣatriyas, you must first learn how to beg with the brāhmaṇa students.”

Accepting the two and having them leave, the guru then spoke to those present: “Seeing these boys my heart develops affection (snigdha). I can clearly conclude that since birth they have lived with butter and other soft substances (snigdha—or in affectionate conditions) and thus internally and externally are oozing with affection. Though the white and the black one are filled with affection, my intelligence concludes that the white one is the root. Surpassing all the marks of greatness mentioned in the scriptures describing auspicious bodily features, the white and black are worthy of worship. The effulgence of the white one bewilders my intelligence.”

When they all went for begging food, the two boys were actually the life maintenance of all. Since the two boys in going with the others needed nothing,

the others begged and carried the food. But when the two begged, things reversed. When they begged, the householders gave just on seeing them. The two did not look at the young women donors as mothers, but the women, though in the prime of youth, looked at them with motherly affection. The two boys went begging to all the places with which the other students were acquainted. It was improper to go to other places. Since the two followed proper conduct, they joined the others in order to conceal what they had renounced and feigned ignorance of the places where the other boys accompanying them had previously approached for food. On the pretext of following the guru's order, gaining respect daily, they would bring increasing amounts of begged food and other articles to the guru. Distributing the begged goods with excitement, the guru developed great attraction for the two boys. Attracted to them, he did not make them work since they were young and tender. But the two, with great devotion, engaged in excellent work when the guru was not present.

One day the guru's wife asked, "O master! Among all your students who are the most devoted?" Sāndīpani said, "The two kṣatriya sons."

She said with a smile, "I do not see them serving you."

He said, "Out of affection I forbid them from serving. Visibly they follow the order, but when no one is looking they serve. I have observed this."

Though there were hundreds of students with equal qualities, Kṛṣṇa was attracted to Śrīdāma Śarma since he had the same name as his dear friend in Vraja, just as he showed affection for Pāṇḍava Arjuna and for Sudāma, the garland maker. In that group Śrīdāma and others applied themselves to studies with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, but what can come of such efforts? There were many students who came to study under the guru with Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma but can the swans who think they are most beautiful associate with Garuḍa? Living as brahmacarīs, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma, though in the introductory class, defeated all those versed in the Vedas and even those who had graduated. Studying only once, they learned all the Vedas and were praised by all others who had studied many times. In sixty-four days the two boys mastered the sixty-four branches of

knowledge, placing that knowledge in their hearts like pictures, since in their hearts lay the whole universe, which their guru could not understand. It is well know that Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma learned from Sāndīpani and Sāndīpani gave up many errors in knowledge because of Them.

While staying in the gurukula, in the evening while lying in bed, Kṛṣṇa would talk with Balarāma about Vraja: “O brother! In order to forget the topics of Vraja I am carefully recalling all the topics about the people of Mathurā. But those topics make me remember Vraja. Hearing the word “mother” I think of Yaśodā. Hearing the word “father” I remember only Nanda in Vraja. Hearing the word “friend” I think only of my cowherd friends. What should I do? How should I pass my time? Mother is remembering me now. Father, with weak body, getting up from bed, is remembering me. They stay together in the house. Since his body is on fire, how can friends embrace him? Who desires to fall into that fire? What to speak of remembering my mother, father and friends, remembrance of Vraja burns my heart completely!” With tears in his eyes, Balarāma consoled him. “O brother! Giving up everything, I want to go there. Showing some restraint, you should conceal your feelings. When you remember them in order to gain consolation, you immediately forget everything else, for without going there you see them.” Kṛṣṇa said, “Ah! It is true. It is true. Seeing them as if in a dream, I experience them as a reality. What can I do?” Embracing each other with tears in their eyes they fell asleep.

Kṛṣṇa, the ocean of anurāga for the gopīs, on waking began to consider: “Oh! I see a dream like the rāsa dance everywhere. This is not a dream, for my limbs are fragrant with the gopīs’ perfume. My brahmacārī life is finished! This was not intentional. Therefore I have no fault. Rather they were delivered from the fire of separation. Actually serving these gopīs who are my life is not contrary to brahmacārī life. Durvāsā revealer of the Gopāla-tāpanī Upaniṣad has revealed this (He said, “He will be your husband.”)”

The Glories of Service to the Spiritual Master

[SB 10.80.31](#) — My dear brāhmaṇa, do you remember how we lived together in our spiritual master’s school? When a twice-born student has learned from

his guru all that is to be learned, he can enjoy spiritual life, which lies beyond all ignorance.

SP: I hope, My dear brahmana friend, that you remember all those days of our school life when you and I were living together at the boarding house. Actually, whatever knowledge you and I received in life was accumulated in our student life. If a man is sufficiently educated in student life under the guidance of a proper teacher, his life becomes successful in the future. He can very easily cross over the ocean of nescience, and he is not subject to the influence of illusory energy.

VCT: In his mind, Sudāmā doubted, “Because Kṛṣṇa worships me in this way though I am so lowly, does He actually recognize who I am or not?” To dispel this doubt, Kṛṣṇa reminds Sudāmā of their school days together in twelve verses (Sb10.80.31-43). Kṛṣṇa said, “Do you remember our living at the gurukula? By knowing (vijñeyam) the true nature of the Supreme Personality of Godhead a brāhmaṇa can transcend material existence (tamaśaḥ)”

[SB 10.80.32](#) — My dear friend, he who gives a person his physical birth is his first spiritual master, and he who initiates him as a twice-born brāhmaṇa and engages him in religious duties is indeed more directly his spiritual master. But the person who bestows transcendental knowledge upon the members of all the spiritual orders of society is one’s ultimate spiritual master. Indeed, he is as good as My own self.

SP: My dear friend, everyone should consider his father to be his first teacher because by the mercy of one's father one gets this body. The father is therefore the natural spiritual master. Our next spiritual master is he who initiates us into transcendental knowledge, and he is to be worshiped as much as I am. The spiritual master may be more than one. The spiritual master who instructs the disciple about spiritual matters is called siksa-guru, and the spiritual master who initiates the disciple is called diksa-guru. Both of them are My representatives. There may be many spiritual masters who instruct, but the initiator spiritual master is one.

VCT: Kṛṣṇa said, “In human life there are three gurus: one’s father, the one who gives upanayanam, and the one who teaches about Me. Of these the last is most worshipable. The father, who makes possible our birth (sambhavaḥ) in this world

(iha), is the first guru (ādyah). He who gives upanayanam, teaches Gāyatrī mantra, and engages one in sanctified activities (sat-karmaṇām) is the second guru. But he who gives knowledge to the people in the four āśramas, and who teaches about Me is to be worshiped on the same level as Me (yathāham:mat-tulyah).”

[SB 10.80.33](#) — Certainly, O brāhmaṇa, of all the followers of the varṇāśrama system, those who take advantage of the words I speak in My form as the spiritual master and thus easily cross over the ocean of material existence best understand their own true welfare.

VCT: In this verse Kṛṣṇa describes how the third guru delivers his student from the material world. Kṛṣṇa said, “Certainly (nanu:niṣcitam eva), among those following the varṇāśrama system, they who know the highest truth easily cross the ocean of material existence by hearing from a bonafide guru who teaches about Me and initiates them into My mantra. Such a guru is My very form (mayā guruṇā).”

BSST: Kṛṣṇa is śrī guru’s [the spiritual master’s] Own Self

SP: "My dear friend, I am Paramatma, the Supersoul present in everyone's heart, and it is My direct order that human society follow the principles of varna and asrama. As I have stated in the Bhagavadgita, human society should be divided, according to quality and action, into four varnas. Similarly, everyone should divide his life into four parts. One should utilize the first part of life in becoming a bona fide student, receiving adequate knowledge and keeping oneself in the vow of brahmacarya, so that one may completely devote his life for the service of the spiritual master without indulging in sense gratification. A brahmacari is meant to lead a life of austerities and penance. The householder is meant to live a regulated life of sense gratification, but no one should remain a householder for the third stage of life. In that stage, one has to return to the austerities and penances formerly practiced in brahmacari life and thus relieve himself of the attachment to household life. After being relieved of his attachments to the materialistic way of life, one may accept the order of sannyasa.

As the Supersoul of the living entities, sitting in everyone's heart, I observe everyone's activity in every stage and order of life. Regardless of which stage one is in, when I see that one is engaged seriously and sincerely in discharging the duties

ordered by the spiritual master and is thus dedicating his life to the service of the spiritual master, that person becomes most dear to Me. As far as the life of brahmacarya is concerned, if one can continue the life of a brahmacari under the direction of a spiritual master, that is extremely good; but if in brahmacari life one feels sex impulses, he should take leave of his spiritual master, satisfying him according to the guru's desire. According to the Vedic system, a gift is offered to the spiritual master, which is called guru-daksina. Then the disciple should take to householder life and accept a wife according to religious rites." These instructions given by Lord Kṛṣṇa while talking with His friend the learned brahmana are very good for the guidance of human society. A system of human civilization that does not promote varna and asrama is nothing but a polished animal society. Indulgence in sex life by a man or woman living single is never acceptable in human society. A man should strictly follow the principles of brahmacari life or, with the permission of the spiritual master, should get married. Single life with illicit sex is animal life, for the animals have no such institution as marriage. Modern society does not aim at fulfilling the mission of human life, which is to go back home, back to Godhead. To fulfill this mission, the system of varna and asrama must be followed. When the system is followed rigidly and consciously, it fulfills this mission, but when followed indirectly, without the guidance of superior order, it simply creates a disturbing condition in human society, and there is no peace and prosperity."

[SB 10.80.34](#)—I, the Soul of all beings, am not as satisfied by ritual worship(ijyā), brahminical initiation (prajāti), penances (tapasā) or self-discipline(upaśamena) as I am by faithful service rendered to one's spiritual master.

JG: There are two types of knowledge: about Brahman and about Bhagavān. In Śrīdhara Svāmī's rendition as given above, the knowledge is concerning Brahman. (Thus his explanation refers to āśramas.) If knowledge is that of Bhagavān, then ijyā means worship, prajāti means vaiṣṇava-dīkṣā, tapasā means "by samādhi" and upaśamena means "by being fixed in the Lord".

The above verse is used as the concluding verse in anucheda 237 of Bhakti Sandarbha in which Jiva Goswami establishes the

VCT: One can ask a question: “Can one not conquer the sense by rules and then attain the Lord?” Because one becomes completely dedicated to these processes (*tad-antāḥ*), these processes do not produce meditation on the Lord (*yogān*), what to speak of attaining the Lord. Since they do not accomplish this, they are useless labor. What doubt is there about this?

Srila BhaktiSiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur quotes the above verse (SB 10.80.34) in his *Anubhāṣya* commentary to Sri Caitanya Caritamṛta (Madhya-līlā 2.24.332). In that section of the Caitanya Caritamṛta, Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu instructed Sanatana Goswami to write a book of instructions on Vaishnava ritual (*Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*) and also he gave him an outline of subjects that should be discussed therein. In explaining the word *guru-sevā*, Srila Bhakti Siddhanta Sarasvati Thakur, quotes the SB 10.80.34 and following series of verses in his *Anubhāṣya*:

“One should first show reverence to the spiritual master and then go on to worship Me. One who worships in this way attains perfection; otherwise, one’s religious activities are useless. One who worships any other person while near his spiritual master comes to misfortune. All his acts of worship are fruitless.” (*Hari Bhakti Vilas* 4.344-5, from *Mahārṇava*)

“Service to the spiritual master is the topmost religious activity. There is no religion or piety that is more holy than this.” (*HBV* 4.355)

The scripture usually ordains the disciple to perform the five-part *puraścaraṇa* vow after taking initiation from the spiritual master in order to effect the power of the mantra. This direction is found in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*: “There are five aspects to the *puraścaraṇa* observance: puja three times a day, constant chanting of japa, oblations of water, daily fire sacrifice and feeding of the brahmins.” (*HBV* 17.11)

This means that if one takes the vow to chant the mantra 10,000 times, then he must also offer 1,000 oblations of water, 100 oblations into the fire sacrifice, and feed 10 brahmins. Of course, it is very difficult to undertake such an observance without any flaw. So for less qualified, the scriptures have prescribed a simplified process that consists of serving the spiritual master. We would do better to follow the simplified process. (The commentary in this paragraph is by H. H. Bhakti Pramode Puri Maharaja)

“Alternatively, one should satisfy the guru by meditating on him in the form of the deity. He should think of himself as devotedly following the guru like a shadow. One should constantly worship the guru who is the basis of all of one’s spiritual activities. Even if one does not perform the *puraścaraṇa*, one can attain perfection in chanting the mantra through service to the guru. Of this there can be no doubt. For as it is said, ‘Just as copper becomes gold through the touch of specially treated mercury, so does a disciple take on the qualities of Vishnu through the association of his guru.’” (HBV 17.241-3)

In his commentary on these verses, Sanatan Goswami makes the following statement: “In the following three verses, the author changes the subject by saying that the *puraścaraṇa* ritual can be perfected simply by serving the spiritual master. In conclusion, it may be said that service to the spiritual master is supremely beneficial. All perfections can be achieved through serving the spiritual master. Krishna himself appears as the spiritual master and gives the surrendered disciple the treasure of his heart—love for Krishna.

In CC Adi 1.45,

guru kṛṣṇa-rūpa hana śāstrera pramāṇe
guru-rūpe kṛṣṇa kṛpā kareṇa bhakta-gaṇe

TRANSLATION

According to the deliberate opinion of all revealed scriptures, the spiritual master is nondifferent from Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa in the form of the spiritual master delivers His devotees.

PURPORT

The relationship of a disciple with his spiritual master is as good as his relationship with the Supreme Lord. A spiritual master always represents himself as the humblest servitor of the Personality of Godhead, but the disciple must look upon him as the manifested representation of Godhead. “Krishna gives his blessings to the devotees through his manifestation as the spiritual master.” The disciple should therefore

never let himself be distracted from serving the spiritual master in the way that he wishes.

Likewise in SB 11.17.27, Kṛṣṇa says to Uddhava,

ācāryam mām vijānīyān
nāvamanyeta karhicit
na martya-buddhyāsūyeta
sarva-deva-mayo guruḥ

TRANSLATION

“One should know the ācārya as Myself and never disrespect him in any way. One should not envy him, thinking him an ordinary man, for he is the representative of all the demigods.”

H. H. Bhakti Pramode Puri Maharaja gives further scriptural references in consonance with the above verse (SB 10.80.34):

Krishna accepts us as a part of his own entourage to the extent that we surrender ourselves in body, mind and words to the spiritual master. He takes possession of us, as it were, transforming our bodies and making them spiritual so that we will be able to serve him directly.

When asked how love for God develops, Prahlād Maharaj told the other boys in his school: guru-śuśrūṣayā bhaktyā sarva-labdhārpaṇena ca, “through serving the guru, being devoted to him and by offering him all of one’s gains.” (SB 7.7.30) Śrīla Viśvanath Chakravartī Thakur comments on this verse as follows: “Service to the guru means serving him through such things as bathing and massaging him; offering the guru all of one’s gains should be done with devotion and not out of personal motivations, such as the desire for personal prestige, etc.”

In the Bhagavatam, after telling Yudhiṣṭhira how to conquer over various character defects, Narada summarizes by saying: “We can conquer over all these defects by rendering devotional service to the spiritual master.” (SB 7.15.25)

In other words, the only way to conquer over lust, anger, greed, fear, lamentation, bewilderment, pride, envy, the three miseries and the three modes of material nature is by surrendering to the spiritual master. But if a disciple thinks the spiritual master to be nothing more than an ordinary mortal, then all his spiritual practices and worship of the Lord are simply a wasted effort.

“We should consider the spiritual master to be directly the Supreme Lord because he bestows transcendental knowledge for our enlightenment. Consequently, for one who maintains the material conception that the spiritual master is an ordinary human being, everything is frustrated. His enlightenment and his Vedic studies and knowledge are all like the bathing of an elephant.” (SB 7.15.26)

*In the commentary to this verse, Visvanath Chakravarti Thakur writes the following: “It is essential to note that even though someone engages in intense practices of devotion to the Lord, it is all useless if he thinks the spiritual master is an ordinary man. This is being pointed out in this verse. The words *sākṣād bhagavati* clearly indicate that one must think of the guru as the Supreme Lord Himself, and not even as a mere expansion of the Lord. [He, who is the source of all expansions and the object of all devotional service, has become incarnate in the form of a servant to Himself. This is expressed in the words of the *Gurvaṣṭaka*: *kintu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya* – “his identity with Krishna is due to his being most dear to Him.”] Alternatively, even if the Lord, the supreme object of worship, is personally present as the spiritual master, if one has the demented intelligence to think of him as an ordinary mortal, then whatever he has heard from him—the mantras received at the time of initiation or instructions on the scripture and devotional practice—cease to have any effect. This is the intention of this verse.”*

Narada follows this statement by giving an example in the subsequent verse (7.15.27): “The Supreme Person Sri Krishna personally appeared in this world. He is the supreme lord, the master of all the universes, and the master of yoga. His lotus feet are the ultimate goal of all life, yet the people of this world think of Him as an ordinary man.” (SB 7.15.27)

Though people may think of Krishna as an ordinary man, this does not make it an actuality. Similarly, a spiritual master’s parents, children or neighbors may see him

as just another person, but a good disciple recognizes him as the visible manifestation of the Supreme Lord Himself. Therefore, in the following two verses from the *Viṣṇu-smṛti* quoted in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, we are advised: “Never do anything unpleasant to your spiritual master, even if you are humiliated and beaten. Never disregard his words, and never act in a way that is displeasing to him. Do things that are pleasing to your spiritual master with your life and your wealth, with your work, your thoughts and your speech, and you will go to the supreme destination” (HBV 1.99, 100, from *Viṣṇu-smṛti*)

It is never appropriate to criticize the words or deeds of the spiritual master by saying things like, “My spiritual master should not have said that, or it was improper for him to have done some particular thing.” By doing so, we reveal our mundane concept of the guru and ultimately we become offensive by showing disrespect to him. This is the offense known as *gurv-avajñā*.

The orders of the spiritual master are to be obeyed diligently without reserve or delay—*ājñā gurūṇām hy avicāraṇīyā*. If one is incapable of following his orders, then one should fall down at his feet and pray to him with urgency for the strength and ability to do so. If the spiritual master rebukes or condemns the disciple, the disciple should still not attempt to make his case heard, even though it may be painful to listen in silence. If the disciple argues with the spiritual master, it is counted as the offense of disrespecting the guru. The disciple thus becomes unteachable and, due to his independence, falls down into indiscipline and wantonness, inevitably resulting in suffering.

Six kinds of unsatisfactory disciples are described in the scriptures: “These six are the ‘bee’ (*ali*), so called because of his fickleness; the arrow (*bāṇa*), who talks back, piercing his master like an arrow; the procrastinator (*jyotiṣaka*); the servant who is lazy and inactive (*stabdhībhūta*); the one who refuses to try to do anything on his own (*kimekaka*), and the one who passes the buck (*preṣita-preṣaka*).” All such unsatisfactory disciples (*sevakādhama*s) demonstrate an ignorance of the spiritual master’s divine nature by their lackadaisical attitude to service. They thus end up as offenders to the spiritual master and the Holy Name. Any disciple who wishes to attain perfection in the spiritual practices given him by his spiritual master must pay careful attention not to offend him in this way.

JG: Having glorified service to guru, Kṛṣṇa now shows how to serve him in order to teach the people by giving the example of how Kṛṣṇa, Balarama and Sudama served Sandipani Muni. The example shows that by suffering together the two established firm friendship. Kṛṣṇa addresses Sudāmā as brāhmaṇa frequently to destroy his shyness and fear. Calling out to him, making the friendship firm, he makes him raise his head in order to see Kṛṣṇa and thus give him joy.

[SB 10.80.35-36](#) — O brāhmaṇa, do you remember what happened to us while we were living with our spiritual master? Once our guru’s wife sent us to fetch firewood, and after we entered the vast forest, O twice-born one, an unseasonal storm arose (*in winter, which is unusual*), with fierce wind and rain and harsh thunder.

[SB 10.80.37](#) — Then, as the sun set, the forest was covered by darkness in every direction, and with all the flooding we could not distinguish high land from low (and we were lost in the dark jungle.).

[SB 10.80.38](#) — Constantly besieged by the powerful wind and rain, we lost our way amidst the flooding waters. We simply held each other’s hands and, in great distress, tried to find our way out (BBT: wandered aimlessly about the forest). We passed the whole night in that way.

Śrīla Śrīdhara Svāmī points out that as the two young boys wandered about, they continued to carry the firewood they had secured for their spiritual master.

[SB 10.80.39](#) — Our guru, Sāndīpani, understanding our predicament, set out after sunrise to search for us, his disciples, and found us in distress.

[SB 10.80.40](#) — [Sāndīpani said:] O my children, you have suffered so much for my sake! The body is most dear to every living creature, but you are so dedicated to me that you completely disregarded your own comfort.

The following is the rendering of the same pastime in Gopala Campu:

One day, seeing unseasonal rain, the wife called some students to bring wood, excluding the two boys. “O sons! Bring wood from somewhere.” The students in fear said, “How can we go to the forest in the afternoon?” Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma heard

this. Immediately, with great devotion they went off separately deep into the forest to find the best wood. Seeing them go, the others followed. When they entered the huge forest, heavy rain blocked all visibility. The other students could not join them when this happened. But Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma collected the best wood and, feeling successful, remained there. But since night was approaching they could not return. In the morning Sāndīpani became furiously angry. Castigating his wife, neglecting his morning rites, he went to the forest. Though tired, the two boys, most attractive in their clothing, carrying the wood and showing devotion to guru, were joking with the other students about how they spent the night. They became embarrassed however on seeing their guru, who had come there with difficulty through the dense growth of creepers, since their guru had heard their joking words. Thus they did not immediately take the wood back. Giving him happiness, the two bowed their heads to their guru. He embraced them with affection and blessed them in his mind that they would have a revelation of all knowledge. He bathed them in a stream of tears. Quickly the two kings of the twice born, full in all arts and sciences, graduated.

The guru took the wood, put it on the heads of other students, and returned home. Arranging the wood with his wife, he made the students study. The activities of the teacher, outstanding because of his fatherly attitude, purified all minds.

SB 10.80.41 — This indeed is the duty of all true disciples: to repay the debt to their spiritual master by offering him, with pure hearts, their wealth and even their very lives.³

VCT: Sāndīpanī Muni said, “All true disciples (sat śiṣyaiḥ) should repay the debt to their guru by offering their body (ātmā), which is the basis of the material conception of “I,” and all their assets (sarvārthā), which is the basis of the conception of “mine.”

BBT: One engages one's body to realize one's purposes. The body is also the basis of the material conception of "I," while one's fortune is the basis of the conception of "mine." Thus by offering everything to the spiritual master, one realizes one's self to be an eternal servant of the Lord. The spiritual master does not exploit the disciple but rather engages him fully in Kṛṣṇa consciousness for the disciple's eternal benefit.

[SB 10.80.42](#) — You boys are first-class brāhmaṇas, and I am satisfied with you. May all your desires be fulfilled, and may the Vedic mantras you have learned never lose their meaning for you, in this world or the next.

BBT: Cooked food left sitting for three hours is called yāta-yāma, indicating that it has lost its taste, and similarly if a devotee does not remain fixed in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the transcendental knowledge that once inspired him on the spiritual path will lose its "taste," or meaning, for him. Thus Sāṅdīpani Muni blesses his disciples that the Vedic mantras, which reveal the Absolute Truth, will never lose their meaning for them but will remain ever fresh in their minds.

SB 10.80.43-44 — [Lord Kṛṣṇa continued:] We had many similar experiences while living in our spiritual master’s home. Both of us can realize that without the blessings of the spiritual master no one can be happy. By the mercy of the spiritual master and by his blessings, one can achieve peace and prosperity and be able to fulfill the mission of human life.

SP: The brāhmaṇa said: What could I possibly have failed to achieve, O Lord of lords, O universal teacher, since I was able to personally live with You, whose every desire is fulfilled, at the home of our spiritual master?

VCT: Sudāmā said, “What lack of bliss was there for us? It was completely blissful for us to live in the gurukula with You, whose every desire becomes fulfilled (satya-kāmena). Living in the gurukula was by Your wish alone. The difficulties of wind and rain we encountered while fetching wood were due to Your own desire, since You wanted to teach devotion to the spiritual master. Other than that, what power do the wind and rain have over You? The Taittirīya Upaniṣad (2.8) says: bhīṣāsmād vātaḥ pavate, ‘The wind blows out of fear of You.’ It was my great fortune to have lived there with You.”

JG: By the mercy of guru all one’s desires are fulfilled and one attains liberation in the form of the highest happiness and realization of Bhagavān (prasāntaye).

BBT: Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa wisely understands his extraordinary good fortune of having lived with Śrī Kṛṣṇa at the residence of their spiritual master. Thus whatever

external difficulties they experienced were actually an expression of the Lord's mercy, to teach the importance of service to the spiritual master. Śrīla Prabhupāda renders the learned brāhmaṇa's feelings as follows: "[Sudāmā said:] 'My dear Kṛṣṇa, You are the Supreme Lord and the supreme spiritual master of everyone, and since I was fortunate enough to live with You in the house of our guru, I think I have nothing more to do in the matter of prescribed Vedic duties.' "

SB 10.80.45: O almighty Lord, Your body comprises the Absolute Truth in the form of the Vedas and is thus the source of all auspicious goals of life. That You took up residence at the school of a spiritual master is simply one of Your pastimes in which You play the role of a human being.

My dear Lord, the Vedic hymns, ritualistic ceremonies, religious activities and all other necessities for the perfection of human life, including economic development, sense gratification and liberation, are all derived from one source: Your supreme personality. All the different processes of life are ultimately meant for understanding Your personality. In other words, they are the different parts of Your transcendental form. And yet You played the role of a student and lived with us in the house of the guru. This means that You adopted all these pastimes for Your pleasure only; otherwise there was no need for Your playing the role of a human being."

VCT: Sudāmā said, "Your body comprises the Absolute Truth in the form of the Vedas, and it is the source (āvapanam:kṣetram) of all auspicious goals. You lived in the gurukula only to teach others."

Kṛṣṇa snatches flat rice from Sudama

SB 10.81.1-2: Lord Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the Supersoul of all living entities, knows very well everyone's heart. Although Lord Kṛṣṇa is Bhagavān, the supreme, independent Lord, He is always pleased to reciprocate with those who are priya, His cherished servants. He is especially inclined to the brahmana devotees who are additionally qualified by unconditional devotion to Him. Lord Kṛṣṇa is also called brahmanyadeva, which means that

He is worshiped by the brahmanas. Therefore it is understood that a devotee who is fully surrendered unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead has already acquired the position of a brahmana. Without becoming a brahmana, one cannot approach the Supreme Brahman, Lord Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is especially concerned with vanquishing the distress of His devotees, and He is the only shelter of pure devotees. While the Supreme Lord, the goal of all saintly persons, conversed in this way with the best of the twice-born, He laughed and spoke the following words to that dear friend of His, the brāhmaṇa Sudāmā, all the while smiling and looking upon him with affection.

Since Lord Kṛṣṇa knows the minds of everyone, He could tell at once that His friend Sudāmā had brought some flat rice for Him and was ashamed to present it. According to Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī's further explanation of this verse,

Lord Kṛṣṇa smiled at this moment, thinking "Yes, I am going to make you show what you have brought for Me." His smile then turned to laughter as He thought, "How long are you going to keep this precious gift hidden in your cloth?"

Kṛṣṇa glanced toward the bundle hidden inside His friend's garment, telling Sudāmā by His loving glance, "The veins showing through your emaciated skin and your ragged clothes astonish everyone present, but these symptoms of poverty will last only until tomorrow morning."

SB 10.81.3: *Then, just to enjoy the company of an old friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa began to smile and asked, "My dear friend, what have you brought for Me? Has your wife given you some nice eatable for Me?"*

While addressing His friend, Lord Kṛṣṇa looked upon him and smiled with great love. He continued: "My dear friend, you must have brought some presentation for Me from your home." Lord Kṛṣṇa knew that Sudāma was hesitating to present Him the paltry chipped rice, which was actually unfit for His eating.

VCT says that Sudāmā replied, "I am very embarrassed to show it because it is meager." In the text of SB by BBT, it is said that Sudāma was too embarrassed to reply.

Kṛṣṇa responded,

patraṁ puṣpaṁ phalaṁ toyam

yo me bhaktyā prayacchati

tad ahaṁ bhakty-upahṛtam

aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ

SB 10.81.4: “I regard as great even the smallest gift offered by My devotees in pure love, but even great offerings presented by nondevotees do not please Me. If one offers Me with love and devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit or water, I will accept it.”

The use of the words bhaktyā prayacchati and bhakty-upahṛtam may seem redundant, since they both mean "offered with devotion," but bhaktyā can indicate how the Lord reciprocates the devotional mood of whoever offers Him something with love. In other words, Lord Kṛṣṇa here declares that His reciprocation in a pure loving exchange is not dependent on the external quality of what is offered. Kṛṣṇa says, "Something may or may not be impressive and pleasing in its own right, but when My devotee offers it to Me in devotion, with the expectation that I will enjoy it, it gives Me great pleasure; in this regard I make no discrimination." The verb aśnāmi, "I eat," implies that Lord Kṛṣṇa eats even a flower, which is supposed to be smelled, bewildered as He is by the ecstatic love He feels for His devotee.

Someone might then question the Lord, "So, will You refuse an offering made to You by a devotee of some other deity?" The Lord answers, "Yes, I will refuse to eat it." This the Lord states by the phrase prayatātmanaḥ, implying "Only by devotional service to Me can one become pure in heart."

Sudāmā refused to give his four handfuls (prasṛtim) of chipped rice to Kṛṣṇa due to embarrassment (vrīḍitaḥ). The phrase pataye sriyaḥ “husband of the goddess of fortune” indicates that Sudāmā was thinking, “How can the Lord of Śrī eat this hard, tasteless, stale flat rice?”

By bowing his head Sudāmā revealed his meditation: “O Lord, do not mock me. Though You have requested me many times, I have decided that I will not give it to You.”

On the other side, Kṛṣṇa was thinking, “The intention you had fixed in your mind while coming here must not be frustrated, for you are My devotee.”

Kṛṣṇa momentarily wondered, "How has it come about, despite My omniscience, that this devotee of Mine has fallen into such poverty?" Then, Kṛṣṇa thought, "In the past My friend has never worshiped Me out of a desire for material opulence, but now he comes to Me to satisfy his chaste and devoted wife. I will give him riches that even the immortal demigods cannot obtain."

But someone may point out that Sudāmā should not have been so poverty-stricken, since appropriate enjoyment comes as a by-product of service to God even for a devotee who has no ulterior motives. This is confirmed in Bhagavad-gītā (9.22):

ananyāś cintayanto mām

ye janāḥ paryupāsate

teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānām

yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy aham

"But those who always worship Me with exclusive devotion, meditating on My transcendental form—to them I carry what they lack, and I preserve what they have."

In response to this point, a distinction must be made between two kinds of renounced devotees: one kind is inimical to sense gratification, and the other is indifferent to it. The Supreme Lord does not force sense gratification upon the devotee who is extremely averse to worldly enjoyments. This is seen among such great renunciators as Jaḍa Bharata. On the other hand, the Lord may give limitless wealth and power to a devotee who is neither repelled nor attracted by material things, such as Prahlāda Mahārāja. Up to this point in his life, Sudāmā Brāhmaṇa was totally averse to sense

gratification, but now, out of compassion for his faithful wife—and also because he hankered to have Kṛṣṇa's audience—he went to beg from the Lord.

Then again Kṛṣṇa thought to Himself. “Even the desire of Sudāmā’s wife was motivated by loyalty to her husband (*pati-vratāyās*) alone. Thus she is also without personal desire at all. Therefore I will give them riches that even the immortal demigods cannot obtain.”

SB 10.81.8-9: Kṛṣṇa saw the bundle of chipped rice which was hanging on the shoulder of the poor brahmana, packed in one corner of his wrapper. Thinking of Sudāmā’s great *bhakti*, he took the rice by force, (JG: suggesting that the rice and the cloth of Sudāmā was purifying) and said, “What is this? My dear friend, you have brought Me nice, palatable chipped rice! Do not think that this flat rice is unsuitable for Me because it is stale and tasteless. I like it very much.” He encouraged Sudama Vipra, saying, “I consider that this quantity of chipped rice will satisfy not only Me but the whole creation.” It is understood from this statement that Kṛṣṇa, being the original source of everything, is the root of the entire creation. As watering the root of a tree immediately distributes water to every part of the tree, so an offering made to Kṛṣṇa, or any action done for Kṛṣṇa, is to be considered the highest welfare work for everyone, because the benefit of such an offering is distributed throughout the creation. Love for Kṛṣṇa is distributed to all living entities.

SB 10.81.10: While Lord Kṛṣṇa was speaking to Sudama Vipra, He ate one morsel of chipped rice from his bundle (JG: in order to perfect the brāhmaṇa’s wealth since otherwise one cannot procure what is not given (*adatvam nopatiṣṭhate*)), and when He attempted to eat a second morsel, Rukminidevi, the goddess of fortune herself, checked the Lord by catching hold of His hand.

By grabbing Kṛṣṇa’s hand, Rukmiṇī implied to Sudama, “If You eat all of this wonderful treat Your friend brought from his house, what will remain for my friends, co-wives, sisters-in-law, servants and myself? There will not be enough left to distribute even one grain to each of us. Even if I distribute one particle of rice to each person, it will not be sufficient.”

To her personal maidservants Rukmiṇī said by her gesture, “This hard rice will upset my Lord’s tender stomach.”

To Kṛṣṇa, she implied by her gesture, “This much of Your grace is sufficient to assure anyone vast riches, which are merely the play of my glance. But please do not force me to surrender myself to this brāhmaṇa, as will happen if You eat one more handful.”

Rukmiṇī’s statements were communicated internally. It was not spoken externally, because if it were then Sudāmā would understand her words and not speak verse twenty.

Kṛṣṇa spoke through His eyes, “In order to give My dear friend great wealth, I must eat more than one handful.”

SP: This indicates that when food is offered to Lord Kṛṣṇa with love and devotion and He is pleased and accepts it from the devotee, Rukminidevi, the goddess of fortune, becomes so greatly obliged to the devotee that she has to go personally to the devotee's home to turn it into the most opulent home in the world. If one feeds Narayana sumptuously, the goddess of fortune, Lakṣmi, automatically becomes a guest in one's house, which means that one's home becomes opulent.

SB 10.81.11-13: [Queen Rukmiṇī said:] This is more than enough, O Soul of the universe, to secure him an abundance of all kinds of wealth in this world and the next. After all, one's prosperity depends simply on Your satisfaction.

Sudama reminisces his visit to Dwaraka while returning to Porbandar

SB 10.81.14: [Śukadeva Gosvāmī continued:] The brāhmaṇa spent that night in Lord Acyuta's palace after eating and drinking to his full satisfaction. (JG mentions that one translation of the verse can mean that Sudama slept with Sri Kṛṣṇa. However, the metre of the Sanskrit verse would be deficient by one syllable. Such a poetic construction would still be admissible according to JG as Sukadeva

was in ecstasy while narrating this pastime). He felt as if he had gone to the spiritual world. Actually he was living in Vaikuntha, because wherever Lord Kṛṣṇa, the original Narayana, and Rukminidevi, the goddess of fortune, live is not different from the spiritual planets, Vaikunthaloka. The learned brahmana Sudama did not appear to have received anything substantial from Lord Kṛṣṇa while at Kṛṣṇa's palace, yet he did not ask anything from the Lord as he was too shy to beg for it on his own. The next day, Sudāmā set off for home while being honored by Lord Kṛṣṇa, the self-satisfied maintainer of the universe. Śrī Kṛṣṇa accompanied Sudāmā on the road for a short distance and finally parted with the brāhmaṇa after bowing down to him and speaking some respectful words. The brāhmaṇa felt greatly delighted, my dear King, as he walked along the road.

We are here reminded that Lord Kṛṣṇa maintains the supply of desirable objects for the whole universe. Therefore it is to be understood that He was about to manifest for Sudāmā opulence greater than Indra's. Being sva-sukha, perfectly complete in His own bliss, the Lord has an unlimited capacity for bestowing gifts.

All the way home he simply remembered the dealings of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and he felt very happy to have seen the Lord. Sudāmā expresses his bliss in four verses (SB10.81.15-18). The brahmana thought: "Lord Kṛṣṇa is known to be devoted to the brāhmaṇas, and now I have personally seen this devotion. Indeed, He who carries the goddess of fortune on His chest has embraced the poorest beggar. Who am I? A sinful, poor friend of a brāhmaṇa. And who is Kṛṣṇa? The Supreme Personality of Godhead, full in six opulences. Nonetheless, He has embraced me with His two transcendental arms.

BBT: Sudāmā was so humble that he considered his poverty to be his own fault, a result of sin. Such a mentality is in accord with the saying, dāridrya-doṣo guṇa-rāṣi-nāśī: "The discrepancy of being poor ruins heaps of good qualities."

JG: Sudama thought: "Am I some special jīva? Is not Kṛṣṇa Svayam Bhagavān? Moreover I am poverty stricken, sinful with no good fortune. But he is the abode of Lakṣmī. By his nature he is full of all wealth. He is full of all śaktis. He embraced me because I am a brāhmaṇa not because I am a friend." By this Sudama expresses his

extreme lack of qualification. He praises the Lord for being affectionate to brāhmaṇas, rather than being affectionate to devotees.

SB 10.81.17-20: He treated me just like one of His brothers, making me sit on the bed of His beloved consort. Moreover, he did this with great respect and affection, as if I were his younger brother like Gada. How can I appreciate my obligation to Him? And because I was fatigued, Srimati Rukminidevi, the goddess of fortune personally fanned me with a yak-tail cāmara. She never considered her exalted position as the first queen of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Although He is the Lord of all demigods and the object of worship for all brāhmaṇas, He worshiped me as if I were a demigod myself, massaging my feet and rendering other humble services. Devotional service to His lotus feet is the root cause of all the perfections a person can find in heaven, in liberation, in the subterranean regions and on earth. Worship of his feet is the cause of all wealth and power on earth or lower planets, for destruction of saṁsāra and attainment of Svarga. Even if one performs perfectly other methods, there are obstacles, whereas if one just remembers his lotus feet one attains the goal perfectly. “Worship of his feet” means performance of bhakti. But I did not perform bhakti since I only offered him a handful of chipped rice. Thinking "If this poor wretch suddenly becomes rich, he will forget Me in his intoxicating happiness," the compassionate Lord did not grant me even a little wealth.

VCT: Sudāmā's statement that Lord Kṛṣṇa bestowed on him "not even a little wealth" may also be taken to mean that instead of giving him wealth that was abhuri, "slight," the Lord in fact gave him the immense treasure of His association.

SP: An ordinary man who is very poor and prays to the Lord for benediction in material opulence, and who somehow or other becomes richer in material opulence, immediately forgets his obligation to the Lord. Therefore, the Lord does not offer opulences to His devotee unless the devotee is thoroughly destitute. Rather, if a neophyte devotee serves the Lord very sincerely and at the same time wants material opulence, the Lord keeps him from obtaining it.

Sudama endowed with opulence

SB 10.81.21-23: Thinking in this way, the learned brahmana gradually reached his own home. But there he saw that everything was wonderfully changed. He saw that in place of his cottage there were big palaces made of valuable stones and jewels, glittering like the sun, moon and rays of fire. Not only were there big palaces, but at intervals there were beautifully decorated parks, in which many beautiful men and women were strolling. In those parks there were nice lakes full of lotus flowers and beautiful lilies, and there were flocks of multicolored birds. Seeing the wonderful conversion of his native place, the brahmana began to think to himself, "How am I seeing all these changes? Does this place belong to me or to someone else? If it is the same place where I used to live, then how has it so wonderfully changed?"

SB 10.81.24: While the learned brahmana was considering this, a group of beautiful men and women with features resembling those of the demigods, accompanied by musical chanters, approached to welcome him. All were singing auspicious songs. *Sudāmā accepted the servants within his mind, deciding, "My Lord must want me to have them."* Noticing the change in *Sudāmā's* attitude, *the servants then approached him as their master.*

The night before, Sudāmā's poor, emaciated wife had been sleeping in rags under a crumbling roof, but when she woke in the morning she found herself and her house wonderfully changed. Only for a moment was she confused; she then realized that this opulence was the Lord's gift to her husband, who must be on his way home. Thus she prepared to greet him.

SB 10.81.25: The wife of the brahmana was very glad on hearing the tidings of her husband's arrival, and with great haste she also came out of the palace. The brahmana's wife appeared so beautiful that it seemed as if the goddess of fortune herself had come to receive him. Since Lord Kṛṣṇa had turned *Sudāmā's* home into a heavenly abode, everyone living there now possessed beautiful bodies and attire appropriate to the residents of heaven.

SB 10.81.26-27: As soon as she saw her husband present before her, tears of joy fell from her eyes, and her voice became so choked up that she could not even address her husband. *She simply closed her eyes in ecstasy. But with great love and*

affection she bowed down before her husband, and within herself she thought of embracing him. With her intelligence she offered respects thinking, "The husband is the one guru for women." When attraction becomes prominent, one may offer embraces just by a decision of the mind. She was fully decorated with a gold necklace and ornaments, and while standing among the maidservants she appeared like the wife of a demigod just alighting from an airplane. The brahmana was surprised to see his wife so beautiful. Sudāmā still had his old cloth and protruding veins. Kṛṣṇa kept him in his wretched state so that his wife would recognize him. As he wondered, "Who is this demigod's wife who has approached such a fallen soul as me?" the maidservants informed him, "This is indeed your wife." At that very moment Sudāmā's body became young and beautiful, bedecked in fine clothing and jewelry. The word *prītaḥ* here indicates that these changes gave him considerable pleasure. ⁴When the brahmana entered his personal apartment in the palace along with his wife, he saw that it was not an apartment but the residence of the King of heaven. The palace was surrounded by many columns of jewels.

SB 10.81.29-34: The couches and the bedsteads were made of ivory, bedecked with gold and jewels, and the bedding was as white as the foam of milk and as soft as a lotus. There were many whisks hanging from golden rods, and many golden thrones with sitting cushions as soft as lotus flowers. In various places there were velvet and silken canopies with laces of pearls hanging all around. The structure of the building stood on excellent transparent marble, with engravings made of emerald stones. All the women in the palace carried lamps made of valuable jewels. The flames and the jewels combined to produce a wonderfully brilliant light. When the brahmana saw his position suddenly changed to one of opulence, and when he could not determine the cause for such a sudden change, he began to consider very gravely how it had happened.

⁴ The famous "Thousand Names of Viṣṇu" hymn of the Mahābhārata immortalizes Sudāmā's sudden opulence in the following phrase: *śrīdāmā-raṅka-bhaktārtha-bhūmy-ānītendra-vaibhavaḥ*. "Lord Viṣṇu is also known as He who brought Indra's opulence to this earth for the benefit of His pitiful devotee Śrīdāmā [Sudāmā]."

He thus began to think: "I have always been poor. Certainly the only possible way that such an unfortunate person as myself could become suddenly rich is that Lord Kṛṣṇa, the supremely opulent chief of the Yadu dynasty, has glanced upon me. *The Lord is self-sufficient, the husband of the goddess of fortune, and thus He is always full with six opulences. He can understand the mind of His devotee, and He sumptuously fulfills the devotee's desires. After all, my friend Kṛṣṇa, the most exalted of the Dāśārhas (were especially renowned for their generosity) and the enjoyer of unlimited wealth, noticed that I secretly intended to beg from Him. Thus even though He said nothing about it when I stood before Him, He actually bestowed upon me the most abundant riches. In this way He acted just like a merciful rain cloud. My beautiful dark friend Kṛṣṇa is far more liberal than the cloud, which can fill the great ocean with water. Without disturbing the cultivator with rain during the day, the cloud brings liberal rain at night just to satisfy him. And yet when the cultivator wakes up in the morning, he thinks that it has not rained enough. If Kṛṣṇa has bestowed this wealth upon me, then why did He not tell me about it when we met in Dvārakā? Certainly my friend directly speaks and gives abundant wealth to beggars like myself. I surmise that Kṛṣṇa did not mention how He was going to fulfill my unspoken request because at that time He was thinking, "My dear friend has given Me these grains of rice, which are greater than all the treasures I own. Even though in his own house he had no such gift to bring Me, he took the trouble of begging it from a neighbor. Therefore it is only proper that I give him something more valuable than all My possessions. But nothing is equal to or greater than what I possess, so all I can do is give him such meager things as the treasures of Indra, Brahmā and other demigods. Similarly, the Lord fulfills the desire of everyone according to his position, yet one who is not in Kṛṣṇa consciousness considers all the gifts of the Lord to be less than his desire. On the other hand, when the Lord receives a little thing in love and affection from His devotee, He considers it a great and valuable gift. The vivid example is me. I simply offered Him a morsel of chipped rice, and in exchange He has given me opulences greater than the opulence of the King of heaven."*

SP: What the devotee actually offers the Lord is not needed by the Lord, for He is self-sufficient. If the devotee offers something to the Lord, it acts for his own interest because whatever a devotee offers the Lord comes back in a quantity a million times

greater than what was offered. One does not become a loser by giving to the Lord; he becomes a gainer by millions of times.

SB 10.81.35-37: Sudama continued to think, “The Lord considers even His greatest benedictions to be insignificant, while He magnifies even a small service rendered to Him by His well-wishing devotee. Thus with pleasure the Supreme Soul accepted a single palmful of the flat rice I brought Him. The Lord is the supremely compassionate reservoir of all transcendental qualities. Life after life may I serve Him with love, friendship and sympathy, and may I cultivate such firm attachment for Him by the precious association of His devotees. To a devotee who lacks spiritual insight, the Supreme Lord will not grant the wonderful opulences of this world-kingly power and material assets. Indeed, in His infinite wisdom the unborn Lord well knows how the intoxication of pride can cause the downfall of the wealthy.”

As explained by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī, the humble brāhmaṇa Sudāmā considered himself unworthy of the Supreme Lord's most rare and valuable benediction, pure devotional service. He reasoned that if he had any true devotion, the Lord would have granted him perfect, unflinching devotion rather than the material riches and servants he had received. Lord Kṛṣṇa would have protected a more serious devotee by denying him such distractions. The Lord will give a sincere but less intelligent devotee not as much material wealth as he desires, but only what will promote his devotional progress. Sudāmā thought, "A great saint like Prahlāda Mahārāja can avoid becoming contaminated by immeasurable wealth, power and fame, but I must always be wary of temptation in my new situation."

We may understand that this humble attitude assured Sudāmā Vipra final success in his execution of bhakti-yoga by the standard process of hearing and repeating the glories of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

SP: The unborn Supreme Personality of Godhead, Kṛṣṇa, knows that many great personalities have fallen from their positions because of extravagant opulence. Therefore, even when His devotee asks for some opulence from Him, the Lord sometimes does not give it. He is very cautious about His devotees. Because a devotee in an immature position of devotional service may, if offered great opulence, fall

from his position due to being in the material world, the Lord does not offer opulence to him. This is another manifestation of the causeless mercy of the Lord upon His devotee. His first interest is that the devotee not fall. He is exactly like a well-wishing father who does not give much wealth into the hand of his immature son, but who, when the son is grown up and knows how to spend money, gives him the whole treasury house."

VCT: Someone might ask, "So you have devotion and the result of that devotion is gaining wealth?" In this verse Sudāmā replies by saying, "No, I do not have bhakti, and attaining material wealth is not the result of bhakti."

SP: Sudāmā thought, "A great saint like Prahlāda Mahārāja can avoid becoming contaminated by immeasurable wealth, power and fame, but I must always be wary of temptation in my new situation." After obtaining wealth, Sudāmā thought, "What is the use of it?"

Although surrounded by material opulence, Sudāmā only enjoyed what was necessary to maintain himself. Fixed in his vows, Sudāmā continued sleeping on the earth. He became completely absorbed in hearing and chanting about Kṛṣṇa and rendering other forms of devotional service. Kṛṣṇa does not give as much material wealth as a neophyte devotee may desire, but only what will promote his spiritual advancement. However some say that Kṛṣṇa will give unlimited wealth to assist the devotional service of His premi-bhaktas, loving devotees.

The learned brahmana thus concluded that whatever opulences he had received from the Lord should be used not for his extravagant sense gratification but for the service of the Lord. The brahmana accepted his newly acquired opulence, but he did so in a spirit of renunciation, unattached to sense gratification, and thus he lived very peacefully with his wife, enjoying all the facilities of opulence as prasadam of the Lord. He enjoyed varieties of foodstuff by offering it to the Lord and then taking it as prasadam. Similarly, if by the grace of the Lord we get such opulences as material wealth, fame, power, education and beauty, it is our duty to consider that they are all gifts of the Lord and must be used for His service, not for our sense enjoyment. The learned brahmana remained in that position, and instead of deteriorating due to great opulence, his love and affection for Lord Kṛṣṇa increased day after day.

Material opulence can be the cause of degradation and also the cause of elevation, according to the purposes for which it is used. If opulence is used for sense gratification it is the cause of degradation, and if used for the service of the Lord it is the cause of elevation. It is evident from Lord Kṛṣṇa's dealings with Sudama Vipra that the Supreme Personality of Godhead is very, very pleased with a person who possesses brahminical qualities. A qualified brahmana like Sudama Vipra is naturally a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Therefore it is said, *brahmana vaisnavah: a brahmana is a Vaisnava*. Or sometimes it is said, *brahmanah panditah*. Pandita means a highly learned person. A brahmana cannot be foolish or uneducated. Therefore there are two divisions of brahmanas, namely Vaisnavas and panditas. Those who are simply learned are panditas, but not yet devotees of the Lord, or Vaisnavas. Lord Kṛṣṇa is not especially pleased with them. Simply the qualification of being a learned brahmana is not sufficient to attract the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Not only must a brahmana be well qualified according to the requirements stated in scriptures such as *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam*, but at the same time he must be a devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. The vivid example is Sudama Vipra. He was a qualified brahmana, unattached to all sorts of material sense enjoyment, and at the same time a great devotee of Lord Kṛṣṇa. Lord Kṛṣṇa, the enjoyer of all sacrifices and penances, is very fond of a brahmana like Sudama Vipra, and we have seen by the actual behavior of Lord Kṛṣṇa how much He adores such a brahmana. Therefore, the ideal stage of human perfection is to become a *brahmana-vaisnava* like Sudama Vipra.

SB 10.81.40: Sudama Vipra realized that although Lord Kṛṣṇa is unconquerable, He nevertheless agrees to be conquered by His devotees. He realized how kind Lord Kṛṣṇa was to him, and he was always in trance, constantly thinking of Kṛṣṇa. By such constant association with Lord Kṛṣṇa, whatever darkness of material contamination remained within his heart was completely cleared away, and very shortly he was transferred to the spiritual kingdom, which is the goal of all saintly persons in the perfectional stage of life.

Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī mentions that Sudāmā's last trace of illusion lay in the subtle pride of being a renounced brāhmaṇa. This trace was also destroyed by his contemplating the Supreme Lord's submission to His devotees.

SB 10.81.41: Sukadeva Gosvami has stated that all persons who hear this history of Sudama Vipra and Lord Kṛṣṇa will know how affectionate Lord Kṛṣṇa is to the brahmana devotees like Sudama. Therefore anyone who hears this history gradually becomes as qualified as Sudama Vipra, and he is thus transferred to the spiritual kingdom of Lord Kṛṣṇa.

Sudama in Gaura Lila

Navadvīpa Dhama Mahatmya:

O goddess, Śrīdhara's house in Navadvīpa is said to actually be the house of Sudāmā Vipra. O Gauri, in that place is transcendental Viśrāma-kuṇḍa.

Summary from Caitanya Bhagavata:

In Navadvīpa there lived a poor brāhmaṇa named Śuklāmbara, who was attached to the devotional service of Viṣṇu. He offered Kṛṣṇa whatever he collected by begging and maintained his life with the remnants. Yet since he was day and night engaged in singing the glories of Kṛṣṇa, he did not feel any distress due to poverty. Materialistic people considered him a beggar, because no one other than a recipient of Lord Caitanya's mercy can recognize His servant. One day as Mahāprabhu was sitting in the mood of the Supreme Lord, Śuklāmbara came there with a begging bag on his shoulder and began to dance in ecstatic love for Kṛṣṇa. When Mahāprabhu saw Śuklāmbara, He took a handful of rice from his bag and began to chew it while revealing the qualities of Śuklāmbara. When Śuklāmbara expressed fear of his own ruination on seeing Mahāprabhu eat that broken, inferior quality rice, Mahāprabhu informed Śuklāmbara that He always eats with love the foods offered by His devotees and never even looks at the food offered by nondevotees. Seeing Gaurasundara's mercy on Śuklāmbara, all the devotees happily engaged in kṛṣṇa-kīrtana. After

glorifying Śuklāmbara's various qualities, Mahāprabhu awarded him the benediction of ecstatic love of God. When Śuklāmbara received this benediction, all the Vaiṣṇavas chanted the name of Hari in ecstasy.

In arcana-mārga, the path of Deity worship, it is customary to offer foodstuffs to the Lord under certain rules and regulations. Although Śuklāmbara did not offer food in that way to the Lord, Mahāprabhu forcibly ate Śuklāmbara's rice and exhibited the superiority of the path of rāga, spontaneous attachment, over the path of arcana. Being proud of high birth and other opulences, persons who are blinded with material pride cannot recognize the Vaiṣṇavas. Rather, they blaspheme or tease them, considering them poor and foolish. That is why the Supreme Lord, who is affectionate to His devotees, does not accept worship, wealth, etc. from those who offend the Vaiṣṇavas. It is confirmed in all scriptures that Kṛṣṇa alone is the life and wealth of the akiñcanas, those who have no material assets.

8.1.6 Caitanya Bhagavat Madhya-lila 16.104-

Lord Gaurāṅga danced in unlimited ecstasy. Who has the power to describe that dancing? Balarāma and Sarasvatī sing His glories to their full satisfaction.

Purport: The sounds that are vibrated by the tongue when one is overwhelmed with ecstatic love at the time of kṛṣṇa-kīrtana while chanting the glories of one's worshipable Lord appear due to the combination of Baladeva and Sarasvatī. Baladeva sings to His full satisfaction the glories of His Lord through the tongue of Sarasvatī.

Sometimes the Lord lost consciousness, sometimes His body shook, sometimes He took straw between His teeth, and sometimes He became greatly proud. Sometimes He laughed, sometimes He sighed deeply, and sometimes He became morose. In this way the Lord manifest His ecstatic love. Sometimes the Lord sat in the vīrāsana posture, and sometimes He laughed loudly. As He bestowed mercy on everyone according to their good fortune, all the Vaiṣṇavas drowned in an ocean of ecstasy.

Mahāprabhu's various pastimes are seen by His devotees according to their qualification. The impersonalists who are indifferent to the Lord are totally

unqualified to achieve the Lord's mercy. People who are expert in pious activities and are engaged in fruitive work think that they have achieved their desired perfection in temporary material enjoyment by obtaining illusory benedictions. The Supreme Lord is controlled by the love of His devotee in proportion to the devotee's endeavor to engage in His service. The enjoyment of temporary happiness by the selfish fruitive workers and the cultivation of impersonal Brahman by the mental speculators cannot be called "mercy." Due to their piety, the devotees of the Lord become free from the inauspiciousness of unrestricted sense enjoyment, fruitive activities, and mental speculation.

Seeing Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī standing before Him, Lord Śrī Gaurahari bestowed His mercy on him. Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī, who lived in Navadvīpa, was always engaged in his occupational duties, and he was most peaceful. Although no one knew it, he was a great devotee. He would take a bag on his shoulder and go beg alms from house to house in Navadvīpa. He would cry while chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa day and night. People thought he was a beggar and therefore could not recognize him. He was so poor that he had to beg alms to maintain himself.

Being deceived by external vision, foolish people considered that Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī was an ordinary beggar who desired sense gratification. The ideal examples of poverty or deficiency displayed in the activities of Kṛṣṇa' devotees who dress as bhikṣukas, or beggars, cannot be understood by persons who are maddened by three types of false ego. Persons who are puffed-up with false ego and bewildered by the illusory energy consider the Lord's devotees as afflicted by poverty and forced to enjoy the fruits of their karma, but they are incapable of understanding the poverty, deficiency, or lack of material possessions in the Vaiṣṇavas. Although such Vaiṣṇavas are exalted, they visit the houses of the poor householders in order to help the living entities accumulate ajñāta-sukṛti, or some unknown devotional service. In Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 8.39) it is stated:

*mahānta-svabhāva ei tārīte pāmara
nija kārya nāhi tabu yāna tāra ghara*

“It is the general practice of all saintly people to deliver the fallen. Therefore they go to people's houses, although they have no personal business there.” As a result, the giver acquires ajñāta-sukṛti. Only those who can understand this spiritual propensity are able to worship Hari by accepting the dress of a beggar in the temple of devotional service and by helping foolish people who are attached to material objects attain piety. Accepting pure brahminical behavior, the beggars in the temple of devotional service do not engage in self-deceit by remaining on the platform of materialistic brahminical behavior but rather engage all their accumulated alms in the service of Kṛṣṇa. Since Vaiṣṇavas do not abide in the so-called brahmanism based on sense gratification like the brahmanism that is averse to Kṛṣṇa and aimed at enjoying the fruits of karma, they engage everything in the service of Kṛṣṇa and do not allow the fools of the world to understand their characteristics and exalted position.

After begging during the day, the brāhmaṇa offered whatever he received to Kṛṣṇa and accepted His remnants. In the ecstasy of receiving Kṛṣṇa's mercy, he did not know poverty. He would chant Kṛṣṇa's names as he wandered from house to house. Who can recognize a recipient of Lord Caitanya's mercy? Only one who is favored by the Lord is able. Śuklāmbara engaged in the devotional service of Viṣṇu just as the poor Dāmodara (Sudama) did previously. Viśvambhara bestowed such mercy on him that he could remain inside the house to watch the Lord dance. On seeing the brāhmaṇa dance in ecstasy with his bag on his shoulder, the Lord and all the Vaiṣṇavas laughed. As Viśvambhara sat down in the mood of the Supreme Lord, Śuklāmbara danced, cried, and laughed with his bag on his shoulder. While watching Śuklāmbara, the most merciful Gaurāṅga repeatedly called out to him, “Come! Come! You are My poor servant birth after birth. You give Me everything and remain a beggar. I always desire your foodstuffs. Even if you don't give Me, I forcibly take and eat them.”

Śrī Mahāprabhu said to Śuklāmbara, “You are My impoverished devotee birth after birth. You have no desire to enter family life and become a householder. You beg alms door to door as a brahmacārī and offer Me whatever you collect. You are a naiṣṭhika-brahmacārī, or lifelong celibate. You are free from even the mundane false

ego of the gr̥hasthas and vānaprasthas. Being situated in paramahansa-dharma, you have accepted the occupational duties of a renounced akiñcana. Therefore you are a fully surrendered tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu, or Vaiṣṇava sannyāsī. You have been able to fully offer Me all endeavors of your body, mind, and speech. I always long for your offering. You have no preoccupation in enjoying anything other than offering everything to Me. Therefore I forcibly took everything away from you, and as a result you are poor.”

“Did you forget that I forcibly ate your broken rice in Dvārakā? Kamalā, the goddess of fortune, caught hold of My hand.” After speaking in this way, Viśvambhara took a handful of uncooked rice from Śuklāmbara's begging bag and began eating it. Śuklāmbara exclaimed, “O Lord, You have ruined me! This rice is full of broken particles!” The Lord replied, “I eat your broken rice, and I turn My face away from the nectar offered by nondevotees.” The Lord, who is independent, full of ecstasy, and the life of the devotees, ate that uncooked rice. Who could stop Him? On seeing the Lord's compassion, all the devotees began to cry while holding their heads. No one knew who fell where as they cried. Everyone was overwhelmed on seeing such compassion. They then began to chant the glories of Kṛṣṇa in great ecstasy. Everyone cried—from the children on up to the aged. Someone held straw between his teeth, someone offered obeisances, and another said, “O Lord, never leave me.” The pious Śuklāmbara rolled on the ground as the Lord of Vaikuṅṭha happily ate that rice. The Lord said, “Listen, Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī! I constantly enjoy pastimes in your heart. “When you eat, I eat. When you walk about for begging, that is My walking.

The Lord accomplishes His mission of distributing the holy names and love of God through the Vaiṣṇava tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīs, who under the shelter of Śrī Caitanyadeva wander about on the pretext of begging alms.

“I have incarnated to distribute prema-bhakti. You are My beloved servant birth after birth. I now give you prema-bhakti. Know for certain that prema-bhakti is My life and soul.” On hearing the benediction Śuklāmbara received, all the Vaiṣṇavas chanted “Jaya! Jaya! Hari! Hari!” The servant of Lakṣmī's Lord begs from door to door. What fortunate soul can understand the

mystery of such pastimes? Whatever rice Śuklāmbara collected by begging at ten houses was forcibly eaten by Gauracandra, the husband of Lakṣmī.

Śuklāmbara Brahmācārī, the unalloyed devotee of Śrī Gaurasundara, the Lord of unlimited opulences, was not given the opportunity to serve Hari according to his own will with the foods that he had collected from various places, rather Śrīman Mahāprabhu approved the system of begging by personally taking those foods. As a result, persons who are under the shelter of Śrī Caitanya came to know that Śrī Caitanyadeva is the only worshipable Lord of the tridaṇḍi-bhikṣus. The tridaṇḍi-bhikṣus do not collect foodstuffs for the purpose of satisfying their stomachs or for sense gratification, rather they utilize those items for the service of Kṛṣṇa. Remaining aloof from material enjoyment, the brahmācārīs and sannyāsīs take to the path of begging and maintain the principle of accepting only what is required. The Vaiṣṇava sannyāsīs serve the Supreme Lord with the ingredients that they collect by begging. The Vaiṣṇava sannyāsīs' acceptance of various material sense objects like form and taste is not for satisfying the desires of their own senses, rather they do not remain entangled in nondevotional comforts by utilizing those objects in the service of Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas. Persons who are initiated in Śrī Caitanya Maṭha or who have received transcendental knowledge simply follow the celibacy of Śuklāmbara while living in Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha. Since Śrī Caitanyadeva snatches and eats all the food items of the Maṭha residents, they are able to assist Gaurahari in His act of stealing. It is certainly the duty of the residents of a devotional Maṭha to engage everything in the service of Śrī Gaurasundara. This propensity is worthy of being called prema. If pious living entities aspire for prema, they should certainly observe the pure characteristics of the Maṭha residents. The equal vision that is attained by successfully understanding the futility of the fifth āśrama and fifth varṇa for those who are established within the four āśramas and four varṇas is clearly visible in the transcendental character of the residents of a devotional Maṭha. Therefore only those residents of the devotional Maṭhas who are most intelligent, fortunate, and conversant in transcendental mellows understand these topics and after giving up all worldly responsibilities are always anxious to serve the fortunate householders by preaching the holy names and love of God at each and every house.

The Lord, who is the reservoir of transcendental qualities, personally explained through the Vedas the rules for offering foods.

The rules for offering food to the Lord are explained as follows: One should chant the mantra *astrāya phat* while sprinkling water on the offering and protect it by executing the *cakra-mudrā*. Thereafter one should dip his finger into water and chant the *vāyu-bīja* (*yam*) ten times and sprinkle that water on the offering. After purifying the dryness of the offering by this process, one should mentally place a *vahni-bīja* (*ram*) within the palm of his right hand and with his left hand below the right hand display it before the offering. With the fire arising from this, one should mentally burn the dryness of the offering. Thereafter one should mentally place an *amṛta-bīja* (*ṭham*) within his left palm. Then with the right hand below the left, display this before the offering. One should then sprinkle the nectar arising from this *mudrā* on the offering. After that one should sprinkle the previously purified water on the offering while chanting the *mūla-mantra* and consider that the entire offering is nectar. Then, touching the offering with one's right hand, one should chant the *mūla-mantra* eight times. After that, while executing the *dhenu-mudrā*, one should consider that the offering is complete, and one should worship that offering along with Śrī Hari with ingredients such as water and sandalwood paste. Thereafter, taking a handful of flowers, one should worship Śrī Hari and pray as follows: "O Lord, let fire emanate from Your lotus mouth to accept this offering." Thereafter one should consider that fire is emanating from the Lord's mouth and contacting the offering. Then, touching the offering with one's left hand and taking water with sandalwood pulp and flowers in one's right hand and after chanting the *mūla-mantra* ending in *svāhā*, one should chant, *śrī-kṛṣṇāya idaṁ naivedyaṁ kalpayāmi* and throw the water with sandalwood pulp and flowers from his right hand to the ground. Thereafter one should offer the foodstuffs with *tulasī* to the Lord with appropriate mantras. The mantra for offering foods to the Lord is *nivedayāmi bhavate juṣaṇedam havir hare*. Then, chanting the mantra, *amṛtopastaraṇam asi svāhā*, one should appropriately offer water to the Lord for cleansing His hands and mouth and execute the *grāsa-mudrā* resembling a fully blossomed lotus. Factually one should execute the five *mudrās* beginning with the *prāṇa-mudrā* with one's right hand while chanting the five corresponding mantras that begin with *om* and end in the fourth (dative) case and *svāhā*. Thereafter one should touch the two thumbs with

the adjoining index fingers, chant the appropriate mantras for offering, and execute the offering mudrā before the Lord. The mantra to be chanted while executing the offering mudrā is *ṭhau namaḥ parāya avātmāne 'niruddhāya nivedyam-kalpayāmi*. Persons who are engaged in devotional service to the Lord chant their worshipable mantra [Gāyatrī-mantras] and execute the grāsa-mudrāto offer the foodstuffs, but they do not meditate on fire emanating from the lotus mouth of Hari. The main point is that they joyfully feed Śrī Hari according to Vaiṣṇava etiquette. (See Hari-bhakti-vilāsa, Eighth Vilāsa)

He does not accept anything unless it is offered according to those rules. But He breaks all those injunctions for the sake of His devotees. The acceptance of Śuklāmbara's rice is the proof of this. Therefore devotion is the life of all rules. All rules and regulations are servants of devotional service. One who is distressed because of this is vanquished. Vedavyāsa has stated that devotion is the root of all rules, and Gaurāṅga has directly demonstrated this.

In the Padma Purāṇa it is stated:

*smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātucit
sarve vidhi-niṣedhāḥ syur etayor eva kiṅkarāḥ*

“Kṛṣṇa is the origin of Lord Viṣṇu. He should always be remembered and never forgotten at any time. All the rules and prohibitions mentioned in the śāstras should be the servants of these two principles.”

Śrī Gaurasundara's pastime of accepting Śuklāmbara's rice out of love without considering whether the rice was parboiled or raw and ignoring the rules for proper offering is the ultimate goal for persons who are on the path of arcana and who follow the path of regulative devotional service based on the Pañcarātras. All Vedic rules and regulations are simply favorable attempts towards devotional service, therefore since the devotees on the path of anurāga (attachment) are situated thousands of miles beyond unfavorable attempts, they never transgress the path of vidhi, or regulative principles. Rather they constantly remain on the path of anurāga while following the regulative principles in the course of their service to Kṛṣṇa. Those foolish materialistic persons who due to material conceptions are unable to

*understand service on the path of anurāga become averse to the service of Kṛṣṇa. That is why the verse *api cet su-durācāro* [For a translation of this verse see the footnote on page 418] has appeared in Śrī Kṛṣṇa's Bhagavad-gītā. This does not mean that sinful life full of selfishness and perversion can be accepted as spontaneous devotional service. But without understanding this, the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*, who are attached to material enjoyment, revolt against the pure devotees and pure devotional service and thus traverse the path to hell.*

*The topics of regulative devotional service and its concomitant rules and regulations that Śrī Vedavyāsa has described in the *smṛtis* and the *Purāṇas* are properly illustrated in the character of Śrī Gaurasundara and His matchless servants.*

The brāhmaṇa did not offer the rice with mudrās, nor did he even offer it, yet nevertheless the Lord eagerly ate it. Persons who are blinded by the pride of material enjoyment cannot understand this mystery. Intoxicated by their children, wealth, and family prestige, they cannot recognize a Vaiṣṇava. Kṛṣṇa never accepts the offerings and worship of one who ridicules a Vaiṣṇava, considering him foolish or poor.

*By Śrī Gaurasundara's ascertainment of the topmost platform of *rāgānuga* (spontaneous love) as the ultimate goal of regulative devotional service, it is understood that the glories and sweetness of *anurāga* is situated beyond all arrangements in the path of *arcana*. Those who think themselves highly advanced in sensually acquired knowledge invite their own destruction by analysing Vaiṣṇavas from a materialistic point of view. Although such people blinded by the pride of material enjoyment may beget many children, may become greatly prosperous, and may take birth in respectable families, they cannot understand that only a Vaiṣṇava can become a guru. Traditions like the artificial worship and the giving of initiation that are found in the families of the *ācāryas* are simply blindness due to pride. That is why the concepts found in the philosophy of the caste *Gosvāmīs* are unable to define a Vaiṣṇava. After prolonged study of the Vedas, learned scholars consider Vaiṣṇavas who have already attained the fruit of Vedic studies as ignorant fools, poverty-stricken, and worthy of ridicule, but Kṛṣṇa never accepts worship or the ingredients of worship from such proud persons. A poor Vaiṣṇava's offering of everything is proof that he is freed from greed for objects not related to Kṛṣṇa,*

therefore until one becomes an unalloyed Vaiṣṇava, he cannot satisfy Kṛṣṇa. In this regard one should discuss the two verses from Śrīmad Bhāgavatam beginning with yeṣāṁ sa eṣa bhagavān and yasyāham anuḡrhnāmi [yeṣāṁ sa eṣa bhagavān dayayed anantaḥ, sarvātmanāśrita-pado yadi nirvyalīkam, te dustarām atitaranti ca deva-māyāmnaiṣāṁ mamāham iti dhīḥśva-śṛgāla-bhakṣye, “But anyone who is specifically favored by the Supreme Lord, the Personality of Godhead, due to unalloyed surrender unto the service of the Lord, can overcome the insurmountable ocean of illusion and can understand the Lord. But those who are attached to this body, which is meant to be eaten at the end by dogs and jackals, cannot do so.” (Bhāg. 2.7.42) yasyāham anuḡrhnāmi hariṣye tad-dhanamśanaiḥtato 'dhanam tyajanty asya svajanā duḥkha-duḥkhitam “If I especially favor someone, I gradually deprive him of his wealth. Then the relatives and friends of such a poverty-stricken man abandon him. In this way he suffers one distress after another.” (Bhāg. 10.88.8)]. Vaiṣṇavas always consider the concepts of attaining material objects to be as insignificant as the concepts found in the state of dream and the attainment of perishable objects to be as insignificant as the state of awakening in this material world. Therefore they are always situated far away from material enjoyers, who resemble the prakṛta-sahajiyās. But on seeing the opulences of foremost devotees like Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi and Rāya Rāmānanda, the materialists' observation of materialistic tendencies in such devotees' sensual activities increases their bewilderment. This is because they are blinded by the intoxication of sense enjoyment. The conviction that “Kṛṣṇa is the only object of enjoyment, there is no object of enjoyment other than Him” is most desirable for the devotees of Viṣṇu. Under the influence of such greed, those who are enthusiastic about Kṛṣṇa's form, qualities, associates, characteristics, and pastimes attain auspiciousness due to having worshiped Vāsudeva in hundreds of previous births; and having taken shelter of the holy names, they receive the opportunity to display their exemplary process of worship on the path of anurāga.

That Śrī Hari is controlled only by His devotees and does not even accept the worship of nondevotees is explained in the Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (4.31.21) as follows: “The Supreme Personality of Godhead becomes very dear to those devotees who have no material possessions but are fully happy in possessing the devotional service of the Lord. Indeed, the Lord relishes the devotional

activities of such devotees. Those who are puffed up with material education, wealth, aristocracy and fruitive activity are very proud of possessing material things, and they often deride the devotees. Even if such people offer the Lord worship, the Lord never accepts them.” All the Vedas sing, “Kṛṣṇa is the life and soul of those who have no material possessions.” Gaurāṅga personally demonstrated this.

Kṛṣṇa is like the life and soul of those akiñcanas who have no attachment for any object in this world. This fact is sung by all the Vedas and the literatures in pursuance of the Vedas. Gaurasundara was the ācārya and preacher of that confidential Vedic truth. Through His devoted servants the Lord revealed the insignificance of material conceptions and expertise in abstracting the essence of the Vedas. Those who hear topics about the pastimes of Śuklāmbara and Gaurasundara have undergone the saṁskāra of piercing their spiritual ears, and while rendering loving service at the feet of Caitanyadeva, they become known as “Gauḍīyas” in the form of beggars in the temple of devotional service. But while identifying themselves as Gauḍīyas, they do not try to commit suicide by remaining far away from the service of Lord Caitanya's lotus feet and thereby becoming averse to the service of Govinda.

One who hears about how the Lord ate Śuklāmbara's rice attains unalloyed devotional service at the feet of Lord Caitanya.

8.2 Srila Prabhupada on Gandhi

Since Porbandar is the birthplace of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the following are some anecdotes with Srila Prabhupada about Gandhi

8.2.1 Remembrance by Bhagavat Das:

One evening I was alone on the roof with Srila Prabhupada, and we were talking about varnasrama. This was just after he gave the varnasrama talks in Vrindavan and he was telling me various things, similar things that he had discussed on the walk. Then he started talking about Gandhi. He said that Gandhi actually

wanted to establish varnasrama throughout India. His plan that he had presented to Nehru and the others was that first every village should become self-sufficient in making their own clothes, food, etc., etc. But he said Sardar Patel and Nehru betrayed Gandhi and they went ahead with the British plan to introduce factories immediately, and he said because of that India has become spoiled. Had they set up the villages first the way Gandhi taught, he said then the spiritual progress of India would have remained intact. Then after that he was almost tearful and he said to me, “I loved Gandhi. He really wanted the best things for India.” I was just amazed that Prabhupada said that. So the next morning we went on a morning walk. Every morning Prabhupada would walk on the beach in Bombay. At different times, some of the Indian gentlemen, Life Members, etc., would join our party. When they would join the party, as is customary they would offer with folded palms pranam to Prabhupada, *namaskar*, and Prabhupada out of respect would do the same to them. So on the morning after this discussion with Srila Prabhupada, we took a much longer walk than usual – way down to the end of the beach. So when we got very far down the beach, and I was on his left-hand side, he turned to his left and he offered his pranam in a very deep and generous way. And when I looked there was no one there, but way up there was a statue of Gandhi under a gazebo. Prabhupada had walked to the end of the beach to offer a respect to Gandhi. Then we’re walking back and some of the Life Members come and join, and one of the Life Members brings up something about Gandhi. So they were saying Gandhi said this and that in the Gita and what did Prabhupada think. Prabhupada said, “Gandhi destroyed the Gita, Gandhi said this, Gandhi said that, he made all mistakes,” and then Prabhupada was going on and on, now criticizing Gandhi’s translation of the Gita and his different ideas and concepts, like that. Then after he finished saying all these things, he turned and he looked at me and he smiled.

8.2.2 Conversation 1 with Dr. Patel

Dr. Patel blamed the spoiling of modern civilization on the atheistic communist philosophers: Marx, Hegel, and Engels.

Śrīla Prabhupāda didn't agree. "Everyone is manufacturing his own ideas," he said, "including Indian leaders like Mohandas Gandhi and others. But if people take to the movement of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the country will change for the better overnight."

8.2.3 Conversation 2 with Dr. Patel

During this morning's walk, with Dr. Patel accompanying us, Śrīla Prabhupāda considerably broadened our perspectives by explaining the real standard of education and its relationship to culture. To describe an educated man he quoted Cāṇakya Paṇḍita, "Māṭṛvat para-dāreṣu: he sees every woman as mother, except his own wife. And para-dravyeṣu loṣṭavat: and other's property, possessions, just like garbage. And ātmavat sarva-bhūteṣu: and feeling for everyone as he himself is feeling the pains and pleasures. If one has attained this stage, then he is considered educated."

Progressing along the soft sands in the pleasant cool of the new dawn, Prabhupāda strongly emphasized that real education is to become upādhi—less (free from material designations). With his razor-sharp intelligence, so finely honed on the strap of Vedic knowledge and insight, Prabhupāda exposed the leaders of the world as devoid of true education. He quickly chopped down to size two popular Indian politicians often held in high regard by the masses.

"What is education?" he challenged. "Bhagavad-gītā says you are not this body. That is the beginning of education. Now education means be nationalist, and drive away and bark. Even in our country, Mahātmā Gandhi was also infected, 'Quit India! Quit India!'"

"He did not mean quit India," Dr. Patel offered. "He meant you quit your matter of ruling. I mean actually ..."

But Prabhupāda insisted, "It was his exact word, 'Quit India!' As soon as you think 'You are my enemy, he is my friend,' then there is no education, that's all. This is standard of education: Sama-darśinaḥ. Kṛṣṇa says, 'Arjuna, you are rascal. It is not the business of the paṇḍita to think like that!' He never thought

that the Kauravas were the enemy, no. That is not the fact. It is duty to fight the just cause. That was His instruction."

"Mr. Nehru said Kṛṣṇa was the greatest warmonger," Dr. Patel said.

"And he is a rascal," Prabhupāda retorted.

Dr. Patel laughed. "He was saying so. He thought himself to be a very big man."

"That is āsuric position," Prabhupāda said. "'Who is like me?' And bhakta, Caitanya Mahāprabhu is teaching: *ṭṛṇād api sunīcena taror api sahiṣṇunā*—this is education. Therefore Kṛṣṇa has spoken of these people as *mūḍha*. 'No, they have credit, they have passed so many examination.' *Māyayāpahṛta-jñānā*. This kind of education has no value because they are forgetting the real point of education."

8.2.4 Conversation 3 with Dr. Patel: Gandhi could not chant the holy name

Kṛṣṇa consciousness means always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, but generally people do some meditation for fifteen minutes and think of something else for twenty-four hours. Prabhupāda described a personal experience he'd had with Mohandas K. Gandhi. "I have seen Gandhi's prayer meeting; I attended. Utmost, five minutes reading Bhagavad-gītā, then again politics, immediately. Immediately politics. I was in Delhi. I attended the meeting when Noakhali prayers... This was his prayer. I have seen. And as a result of this, in that prayer meeting he was killed. He could not chant the holy name."

8.2.5 Srila Prabhupada's letter to Tulasi

"So if we want to be happy in this life and the next we have to worship Visnu. What Gandhi did to satisfy Visnu? He was trying to satisfy his country, and his country killed him. He manufactured so many things which were never found in Bhagavad-gita ... Kṛṣṇa was personally instructing Arjuna to fight, and Gandhi took Bhagavad-gita and preached non-violence. So what was his

understanding? At the end of his life he frankly said, 'I don't believe there was ever such a historical person as Kṛṣṇa.' So what did Gandhi know about Bhagavad-gita?

"My only credit is that I have presented Bhagavad-gita as it is, without any speculation or interpretation. Therefore for the first time in the history of the world people are accepting it and living practically according to the principles of Bhagavad-gita.

8.2.6 Darsan at Hyderabad, Jan. 6, 1976: Gandhi is an attached man

In the early evening Prabhupāda held darśana about half an hour for some guests. They wanted to know why no intelligent, well-educated Indians are coming forward to join ISKCON and why only the Westerners are taking it up when it isn't even their culture.

Prabhupāda told them the Indians are too attached to family life, and he cited the example of M. K. Gandhi. This greatly surprised the guests, as Gandhi is generally revered throughout India as a great renunciate. How could he be an example of an attached person?

Prabhupāda skillfully broadened their perspective by explaining that Gandhi had been so attached to the concept of being Indian that he had to die before giving it up. He explained that this is the *gṛhamedhī* concept—identification with, and attachment to, one's own body, the immediate expansions of the body, and the greater expansion, one's nation. Whether the attachment is immediate or extended, the mentality of bodily identification is the same.

The guests nodded appreciatively as they began to perceive that only Kṛṣṇa consciousness can give real detachment. They could understand that it is not the property of India, but a universal principle that has nothing to do with nationality.

Prabhupāda went on to say that the one advantage Westerners have is that they are generally not as attached to their families as Indians. But lacking a positive alternative, they end up as hippies. "Now," he said, "I am offering something positive, and so many men are coming."

8.2.7 Srila Prabhupada's opinion on the limited value of Gandhi's struggle

Prabhupāda smiled at the irony. "When the Englishmen were ruling over this country and Gandhi had to do so much labor, his life sacrificed, some way or other they were gone. Now the same Englishman (Prabhavisnu Prabhu, from Ireland) is working here as book distributor, who was our ruler. So whose achievement is better—Gandhi's or mine?"

We all agreed: "Yours."

"And one Englishman (Hari Sauri Prabhu) is giving me massage," Prabhupāda laughed, giving me a glance.

8.2.8 Srila Prabhupada on Gandhi's Rural Economics Model without Krsna Consciousness

Lokanātha Mahārāja offered Śrīla Prabhupāda a plate of broken coconut, who graciously popped a small piece in his mouth, and then gave one to each of the men.

Prabhupāda glorified the simple village life and told Lokanātha Mahārāja that M. K. Gandhi had the right idea, although he did not know how to implement it. Gandhi had thought that by providing modern amenities, such as flushing toilet systems, people would be induced to remain in the villages. "Therefore it failed. Because they had no engagement, so why they should remain in the village? There are so many attraction in the city, and they get money. The factory-wallas, they're inviting, 'Come here. You shall get twenty rupees per day.' Why shall he remain in the village?"

"So if you can organize in the villages, they are interested in chanting Hare Krsna mantra and getting nice prasādam, then ... One must have some attachment. In the city there are so many artificial attachments. So on what

ground they'll remain in the village? Mind, always remember this: unless you have got some attachment, there is no possibility. Gandhi's program was very nice, village organize so that they may not come to the city and help the capitalists. Remain satisfied in the village. But where is that satisfaction? That is the failure."

Lokanātha nodded. "If they add the holy name to their lives, they will ... "

"Yes," Prabhupāda affirmed. "If they could understand that; that will be helpful if you chant. Therefore Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's statement will never be false: ceto darpana marjanam. If they chant Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, then gradually the dirty things accumulated within the heart will be cleansed. And if he comes to the understanding, clear idea, that 'I want to eat something, and my necessities. So if I get my primary necessities of life, and satisfaction of mind, then why shall I go to city?' That they can have very easily. If they follow the instruction of Bhagavad-gītā, that 'Your first necessity is food.' So produce food here. Kṛṣi-gorakṣya-vāṇijyam. And you'll find here so much land is lying vacant. Because they have gone to the city for twenty rupees daily to manufacture Goodyear tire. And who will work here? Now I have seen in Delhi, the government is advertising, 'Go back to the village.' Rascal, you are manufacturing wine and keeping them engaged whole day in the work. So after being tired, he requires some wine. And why he'll go? And no spiritual education, no cleanliness. Simply inviting, 'Go to the village,' they will go?"