

Who is "Krishna dasa"?

Svami Sadananda Dasa 1954

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My dear Vamandas!

I think it is time to write you a very *strong* letter. I think you need it. [...]

You yourself must be clear about and also make clear to others that people in the west do not have any idea of the concept of the "*atma*", only a vague notion (Eckhart). Bhakti is *nirguna*, beyond the gunas of Maya, it is: (1) *neither* a function of the "soul", the mind, the consciousness nor the heart. Even the very first stage of bhakti is *nirguna*. How much more then sadhu-sanga and the practise of bhajana in the form of shraavanam, kirtanam, smaranam etc. It is not the heart, the soul, the "*I*" who has shraddha, but the *atma*, who is completely unknown to the soul, the heart etc. (2) This *nirguna* bhakti, which is higher than mukti in a narrow sense – in the meaning of knowledge of one's own self or atma, which is just a by-product of bhakti –, is by no means a function of the free atma. It is a gift, originating in *God's grace*. It is nirguna Krishna's gift of grace, the same energy of knowledge, through which He experiences and knows Himself.

When this gift of Him, this power of grace, touches the *atma*, it beams back to Him, and then this little "part" of this power of grace is called bhakti, which essentially is nothing but His Own shakti, through which He, in the form of bhakti and through the medium in the form of the atma, experiences and knows Himself etc. [...]

Accordingly, neither the heart, the soul, the consciousness nor anything else that we are or know empirically, can perform seva, service for God, or know himself and call himself "Krishna dasa".

Consequently, there can be no splitting into "John" and "Krishna dasa" in the empiric "I". "Krishna dasa" is an address to the *atma*, the most essential part of man, which is already transcendent, *beyond human nature*. Neither the emotional life, the heart, nor the soul etc. is "Krishna dasa".

Due to the influence of Maya the atma imagines himself to be the soul, the

spirit, the body etc. As he turned away from God, he immediately came in contact with the gross and subtle material coverings of Maya: body and mind. And as iron gets red-hot by fire, soul and body apparently get filled with life through the contact with the atma.

The atma calls himself soul and body, and soul and body call themselves atma. Consequently, “I” is the result of mutual misidentification. [...] When the mind, the soul, the consciousness etc. muses: “I” am not “John” at all, I am “Krishna dasa”, this is nonsense, and such splitting of our personality is the outcome of ignorance of the concept of the atma and bhakti. Consequently, the question, “How shall I serve?”, is so meaningless, as this “I” can *never* serve.

The Shastrams propound a strict discipline, what this “I” shall do – as I don’t know anything but this empiric I – *if the atma* for the first time in his timeless ignorance, by Divine grace, will be touched by God’s Own energy of knowing Himself, manifesting as the first stage of bhakti, shraddha, the firm conviction that the eternal meaning of life is seva, to serve God.

Outwardly, we lead a fully *normal* life, and what we are and what we have we know to be given by Krishna, and we look after it as loyal “trustees”. We don’t do this, because it is *our* body and *our* spouse, but because *God* has given us these as body and spouse, and our home and our life must be better and more joyful than the home and life of those who don’t have this shraddha. And in addition to this we shall listen to the Bhagavatam and sing the Name.

The *next* stage is: Krishna *Himself* solves the problem of the life of the *atma*, i.e. when the atma is almost awakened. – What shall we do then? Nothing at all. Krishna does everything. – Worldly problems? Krishna does not solve any, we must solve them ourselves.

“John” cries for his *own* sake, not for Krishna’s sake. The atma is Krishna’s dasa, His servant, not the soul, the heart. The *awakened* atma knows, I am “Krishna dasa”, not the heart – the heart, the soul knows: I am the outcome of ignorance, of Maya. I have no independent existence. “John” must serve “Krishna dasa”, as Schulze Sadananda [Sadananda’s former German name was Ernst Georg Schulze]. This, however, takes place without *any breakage* in our life, in the eyes of the

world. What Sadananda *is*, *Sadananda* will never reveal *outwardly*. It is a secret. The outer world sees the Hindu Schulze, and he takes care, that the world sees *only* the Hindu Schulze.

This stage, however, is yet distant and inaccessible for “John”. That I call him “Krishna dasa” *means*: dwelling in you is an *atma*, who is and is called “Krishna dasa”. What he, the *atma*, is, will always be unknown to you, because the soul will *never* be able to know the *atma*. But if you, the soul “John”, will do what the Shastrams say is right for you on your present stage, then you don’t have to worry about the consequences of your actions. Perform your duty, “John” will perish, his soul will turn into dust. Within you resides the eternal *atma*, “Krishna dasa”. He will awake some day. Don’t worry. You are a trustee. If Krishna reclaims His property or if He wastes it – *His* property.

You in the west all suffer from “*mysticism*”. *Bhakti* is *knowledge* in the form of His Own self-love. *Bhakti* knows no groping in the dark, regarding the world or ourselves. *Sentimentality*, piety, means the end of all *bhakti*.

Always,
Sadananda