

To Whomsoever it May Concern

Svami Sadananda Dasa

in the internment camp hospital in India 16 July 1945

Within square brackets, footnotes and

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The following lines are neither meant as an accusation of others nor as a justification of my own self. If they help anybody – and I am a bit doubtful myself from the very start – to avoid the mistake of judging and measuring spiritual-transcendental facts from the standpoint of material- or intellectualists and according to the standards of ordinary human, all-too-human life, thereby committing an offence [aparadha] against one's own eternal welfare – by jumping to hasty conclusions henceforth – then I consider them to have served their highest purpose, i.e. to direct the attention of the reader to the All-beautiful and All-attractive Centre of all conscious and unconscious gravitation – i.e. Shri Krishna.

The spiritual ecstasies experienced in the cult [service] of Shri Shri Radha Govinda are of such an uncommon and extraordinary character, that though of Divine origin, the spiritual madness and intoxication appear to those who have not realised them, as symptomatic of insanity, epilepsy or lunacy. The Krishna-dedicated souls are, therefore, instructed to hide these experiences from the view of outsiders, nay, it is considered base and low to expose any of these experiences to the view of those who are averse to the unconditional service of Shri Krishna and indulge in the intellectual or emotional exploitation of whatever they come across in their so-called human life, which is – in reality – only another form of bestial life – being void of the *true* meaning of life: to serve God unreservedly and unconditionally.

There is not the slightest tinge of self-gratification in the attitude of the devotees; whatever they do, think, believe, in or outside the temple, all is exclusively done in the exclusive service of Krishna and the gratification of *His* transcendental senses. What this means actually, cannot be explained because it is beyond the grasp and comprehension of the non-dedicated intellect.

It was the order given to me by my Divine Master that I should devote every energy I can spend to the study, exposition, translation and explanation of Shrimad Bhagavatam and Shri Caitanya-Caritamritam. The hostile attitude of the authorities and the co-internees in the wings towards a “renegade” of European civilization, the complete failure to instinctively apprehend the real nature of myself and the purpose of my life made it advisable to adopt every means to pretend to be a sahib and European. I know it for definitely that had I strictly adhered to the principles of my cult, i.e. strict Hindu-diet, dissociation from atheists and non-vaishnavas and insisted on the exercise of my cult and worship, the authorities would have been pleased to send me to a lunatic asylum to get cured of the religious frenzies. I did not care for the opinion of others but was eager to adopt any means to keep the body physically fit to provide the strength at least for a few hours of study and translation of the Shrimad Bhagavatam.

As regards politics the guiding motives were consideration for my mother, to spare her the tortures of concentration-camps, and the unwillingness to submit to any form of religious or political terror in the wing. Besides, wherever I was, I tried by a sort of mimicry to adjust myself to the ways of my surroundings to have the chance to come in contact with other internees for the purpose of clearing the misunderstandings about religion in general and Krishna-cult in special (Sanskrit and philosophy *classes* to the Christian missionaries, priests; lectures etc.).

Whenever I appealed to the authorities to grant me the required Hindu diet and a place for my worship, it was refused. I did not think it wise to continue fasts or starvation to death, because I felt I should rather get sick and finally be ruined physically by operations, by wrong diet and to use the intervals for carrying out the order of my Gurudeva, than to die untimely and disobey the order of my Gurudeva.

To an outsider this appears as inconsequence – but what else could be done. To insist on my cult and diet was the way of a troublemaker – “let him die if he is so foolish and fanatic” – and when *apparently* I followed the advice – “you adjust yourself to the camp-life” – I was criticized for not being sincere in my religion, being a fake sadhu. It is time now to bring home to the

intolerant mind of the authorities and co-internees that I am not a fake *sadhu* but a fake *sahib*.

I can boldly renounce the mask I was wearing because the chance has gone to continue and fulfil the order of Shri Gurudeva, due to physical weakness and extreme agonies of separation from Krishna and His devotees.

It appears to me ridiculous that I am considered as a queer fellow (Major Hunt) because I, a born Protestant, went through various stages of religious and spiritual development. Is a person a fake or suspicious because he is serious in his search after Truth and does not feel shy to take the adherence to certain forms of cult seriously?

The ways in which the interview with my superior Svami Bon was arranged, was in striking contrast to that of Catholic Bishop or heads [of] Protestant Missions. At every step I was made to feel that I am considered renegade. I am sure also that if Krishna had come to see me some would say – “what this cowboy wants here?”, and if Christ came – “what this beggar and chit-wala wants here?”

The fact that consideration of my case for release to continue any spiritual life under the care of Svami Bon on *his* security and responsibility is depending on a health certificate shows that I as a Hindu am treated worse than German Catholic Missionaries or notorious homosexuals or labourers for sausage manufactories.

The remark by Major Hunt to Svami Bon that I am imagining to be sick only and the fact that I was repeatedly operated and also refused discharge from the hospital on medical grounds, make it evident that there is no willingness to do justice to me.

As a matter of fact, now I would take an uncompromising life of a sadhu also if things and conditions were different. To those who want to force a religious life and progress into the “bed of Procrustes”¹ according to their own

¹ Procrustes was a host who adjusted his guests to their bed. Procrustes, whose name means “he who stretches”, was arguably the most interesting of Theseus’s challenges on the way to becoming a hero. He kept a house by the side of the road where he offered hospitality to passing strangers, who were invited in for a pleasant meal and a night’s rest in his very special bed. Procrustes described it as having the unique property that its length exactly matched whomsoever lay down upon it. What

limited intellects it may be told that I am today not the same as in 1939 or 1944. The pangs and agonies of separation from Krishna and His devotees, the extreme hardship of being deprived of the possibility to live the life of my cult have increased to such an extent that not only my physical health has broken down but my own inner freedom from external consideration has been achieved. I prefer to live a few days of exclusive spiritual discipline in preparations of my journey to join my Divine Master rather than to continue to struggle in the deadlock of intrigues and hostilities against me.

To my own conscience I have fulfilled my task as an eternal servant of Krishna and Prabhupad, born in a European body. I am glad that I was spared *no* difficulty and trouble, because it fostered my will to find new and new ways to serve Him.

So long as there was no permission [by] Krishna to join Prabhupad I tried sometimes to eradicate His picture from my heart by throwing myself apparently into the currents of a life which a religious man is supposed to avoid. Now the vipralambha or separation ends in union and in preparation to it my ways will be that of an eternal companion of Prabhupad with all the religious frenzy and madness (lunacy!) as hinted at in Tirtha's² book on Caitanya.

Procrustes did not volunteer was the method by which this “one-size-fits-all” was achieved, namely as soon as the guest lay down Procrustes went to work upon him, stretching him on the rack if he was too short for the bed and chopping off his legs if he was too long. Theseus turned the tables on Procrustes, fatally adjusting him to fit his own bed. (Wikipedia)

² Probably Svami Bhakti Pradip Tirtha, whom Sadananda met in London before going to India.