

TENDER AS A FLOWER
HARD AS A THUNDERBOLT

Words of Truth and Love

SVAMI SADANANDA DASA

Into English by
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Cover photo: Svami Sadananda Dasa in Calcutta 1946

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Table of Contents

Introduction	13
A Bridge for the Atma	19
A Homely Samsara	19
A Pointless Fight between One Self against the Other	20
A Pyramid of Seva	21
A Turn from the Egocentric to the Theocentric Point of View	22
Ajamila and the Power of the Name	23
An Infinitesimal Spark of Sat-Cit-Ananda	25
An Intellectual or Emotional Novelty	28
Anugatyam and Gopi-bhava	29
Attempts to Bribe Krishna	30
Belief – Knowledge – Experience	31
Bhagavan and All the Different Tattvas Coexist Eternally	32
Bhakti Is for Those Who Are Atmically Disordered	34
Business Relations with God	35
Can Krishna Do what He Wants?	36
Carvaka and His Mayfly Philosophy	37
Casting Pearls before Swine	38
Change of Attitude	38
Change of Chains	39
Delusions of Grandeur	39
Dharma, Artha, Kama and Pratishta	40

Different Conceptions of the I	41
Different Paths	42
Divine and Mundane Ignorance	43
Divine Love and Freedom	46
Eight Million Four Hundred Thousand Births	47
Eligibility	48
Emotional Ties to a Person	49
Encountering Opposition	51
Eroticism is God's and His Shaktis' Monopoly	51
Eyes, Blinded by Dogmatism	52
First I Tear Down	53
Five Primary Requirements for the Gopi Sentiment	54
Flight from Responsibility	55
Freedom Always Means Freedom for the Other	56
Genuine Liberation	56
God Does the Opposite of What We Expect	57
God's Dynamics	58
God's Greatest Joy	58
God's Three Modes of Being	59
<i>Hari</i>	60
<i>Hari</i> – the Thief of All Thieves	61
Hari-Katha	62
How Does the Samvit-shakti Work?	63
How to Cross the Ocean of Ignorance	64

How to Deal with Other Living Beings?	64
How to Describe the Fifth Rasa	64
How to Read the Shastrams?	65
How to View the Lilas	66
I Love Spontaneity and Shun the Affected, the Artificial	66
I Want People to Be Interested in Krishna – not in me	67
In the Gaudiya Math	67
In the World – in spite of the World – beyond the World	68
Inner Sincerity	69
Intellect and Instinct Is Like a Useless Firefly before the Sun	72
Is There a Caitanya Theology?	74
It Is Krishna Who Uses the Guru as an Instrument	75
It's All about Those Noble-Spirited Ones	75
Jesus Christ as a Shakti-Avesha-Avatara	76
Jiva-atmas Are Eternally Different	77
Karma-Dharma-Determination of Will	77
Know Thyself?	84
<i>Krishna-Karnamritam</i> 1.104	85
Krishna Must Come into the Heart through the Ear	92
Krishna's Intense Desire	92
Like Birds Fleeing a Burning Forest	93
Listen – Obey – Serve	93
Man as Such Can Never Do Seva	95
Maya as the Tendency to Deprive Everything of Its Own Nature	96

Maya's Drop-Scenes	97
Melting of the Heart – In the Frying Pan of Sentimentality	98
Metaphysics from God's Point of View	100
Modern Temples Are Godless	102
Mother India's Soil	103
My Gurudeva's Piece of Advice	105
My Mission	106
Nama and the Mountain Peak of Pride	106
Nirguna-bhakti	107
No Joy to Be Dasa Anymore, but to Be Great	108
No Panacea	109
No Prayer – Except for His Love – Does Ever Reach Him	110
No Progress without Conflicts	110
Not under Compulsion	112
Nothing of Vraja Can Be Understood through Language	112
Nothing that Is Perishable Can Ever Serve God	113
Obstacles as One's Best Friends	114
Offer Our Suffering to Krishna	114
One Cannot and Shall not Condemn Anyone	115
One Reason for Mahaprabhu's Descent	116
Our Great Difficulty	117
People Want Miracles, Abnormality	118
Personality Cult	119
Razor-sharp Clarity	121

Removing the Root Cause of Suffering	121
Samvit-shakti	122
Self-denial	122
Spiritual View	124
Stages of Development of Bhakti	126
Standing on the Shores of the Ocean of Rasa	127
Straitjacket	128
Submission to Our Fate	130
The Absolutely Revolutionary Metaphysics	131
The Abyss of Sentimentality or Intellectualism	133
The Accounts of His Lila Devalue the World of Maya	134
The Atma and the Covers	135
The Atma as a Gem	137
The Atma Is Always Free	139
The Awakening of the Atma	140
The Basics	141
The Basis of Religion	143
The Be-All and End-All	143
The Beautiful Trouble of Emotion	144
The Belief in the Immortality of the Mortal Soul	145
The Best Access to the Mystery of Krishna's Lila	146
The <i>Bhagavatam</i> Is Nothing to Be Consumed	146
The <i>Bhagavatam</i> Is the Sun in Kaliyuga	147
The Bhakta Is the Mouth of the Spring	148

The Concoction of Religious Hotchpotch	149
The Desire to See Him is the Greatest Obstacle to See Him	150
The Divine Sun of Wisdom	151
The Eligibility for the Different Paths	152
The Erotic Principle	152
The Eternal Co-players Constitute Two Groups	155
The Five Goals	156
The Fruit of the Contrast – The Most Wonderful	157
The Full and Pure Eroticism	159
The <i>Gita</i> and the <i>Bhagavatam</i>	159
The Goal of True Religion Is not Eternal Bliss	161
The Grace of not Getting What One Wants	163
The Greatest Possible Responsibility	164
The Guru Is no Puppeteer	164
The Healing Power of the Name in a Hostile Atmosphere	165
The Inner Conclusions Remain Unexpressed	166
The Intention of the Promises in the <i>Vedas</i>	166
The Knot of the Heart	167
The Light of the Revelation Is Clear and Sharp	168
The Lila Like Human Beings	169
The Love for God Does not Slumber in Every Heart	169
The Master Gives Only the Directions	170
The Mermaid’s Shimmering Hair	170
The Misconception of Difference Between You and not-You	170

The Moon and the Waters	171
The Most Stupid Mistake	172
The Mouth of the Spring Rather Conceals Than Reveals	174
The Novice	175
The Ocean and the Cloud	175
The Offensive Smell of Selfishness	176
The Principles of Time and Space	178
The Purgatory	179
The Railway Station	180
The Relation between God and the World	182
The Seed	182
The Seeming Divergence of the Vedic Religions	184
The Separation from God – Its Nature (Viraha-Tattvam)	185
The Shattering of One’s Existential Security	188
The Simultaneous Presence of God, the World and the Jiva	188
The Smallest Parts Are so Immensely Important	189
The Spirit and the Time-conditioned Apparel	190
The Succession in Gaudiya Vaishnavism	190
The Superiority of the Lila on Earth	195
The Three Paths of Yoga in a Nutshell	197
The Trap of Emotion	198
The Trojan Horse	200
The True Entrance to the Path of Bhakti	201
The Two Modes of Being of Bhagavan and His Realm	202

The Two Radically Different Meanings of the Term Maya	203
The Voice of the Absolute Master	204
The What, How and Why of All Existence	205
The Will to Experience, to Know – or to Serve	208
The Wire Brush	208
The Wish to Enjoy Makes Man Mean	209
The Word Dasa Is Necessary	210
The Word of the Revelation	210
The Workings of Yoga-maya and Maha-maya	216
There Are Two Groups of People	218
There Is no Liberation of Mankind	222
Thirty Different Gurus	223
Time and the Timeless	223
To Deserve to Depreciate Oneself	224
To Search for God Is Still Maya	225
Transcendental and Earthly Ignorance	225
Transcendental Sounds	226
Under Narasinha’s Protection	227
Vamandas at Loggerheads with Walther	228
Varieties of Self-expression within the Absolute	228
Waves in the Current of Bhakti – or of Selfishness?	229
We Are Never Alone	231
What Does it Mean to Be Rich?	232
What Does Krishna Care for?	232

What Does Liberation Mean?	233
What Does the Term Shastram Mean?	233
What Is Bhakti?	235
What Is the <i>Bhagavatam</i> ?	236
What Is the Highest Goal?	239
What Is True Kindness?	239
What Kind of Prayer Reaches Krishna's Heart?	241
What Must Be Absolutely Clear	242
What We Can Learn from the Transcendental Rasa	242
When an Eternal Bhakta Descends on Earth	243
Who Are to Be Delivered?	244
Who Can Be Liberated and Who Suffers?	245
Who Can Tread the Path of Bhakti?	245
Who Is a Bhakta?	246
Who Is a Millionaire?	247
Who Is the Guru?	247
Who Performs Sadhana?	248
Who Received Mahaprabhu's Extraordinary Grace?	248
Why Can't We See Bhagavan?	249

Introduction

This book is a compilation of extracts from different texts of Svami Sadananda Dasa. Some of the texts are from originals in English, but the great majority are written in German. The title of the book is a quotation from *Caitanya-Caritamrita* 2.7.71 and describes the character of the true guru, the one who is truly existing, the premabhakta.

Sadananda

Svami Sadananda Dasa (Ernst Georg Schulze) appeared in the world in Germany in 1908. In the early 1930s he became a disciple of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati who before some of his native disciples once said, “You, Sadananda, and I, we have always been together.”

In 1933 Sadananda first met Svami Hridaya Bon Maharaja, when the latter gave a lecture at the Lessing Hochschule in Berlin.

In 1934 Sadananda went to London, where Indian monks of the Gaudiya-Vaishnava Mission had established a centre, and where he soon, in the name of Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, became initiated.

In 1935 he travelled with Svami Bon to India, where his guru gave him his spiritual name “Sadananda Dasa”.

After his guru’s disappearance in 1937, Sadananda worked independently of organizations, devoting himself to the seva of the

Shastrams (serving God’s Word form).

In 1954 he received sannyasa from a diksha disciple of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, by name Svami Satyabastabya Brajabasi (“Barasvami”), who used to explain the *Bhagavatam* on the bank of the river Ganges in Benares.

In 1961 he returned to Europe, where he stayed till his disappearance in 1977, and where he among other things worked on German translations from Sanskrit and Bengali. By this, in the background, he assisted his disciple Vamandas (Walther Eidlitz) with his publications, lectures and courses. Sadananda himself only gave instructions to a small circle of Swedish, German and Swiss friends in the theological principles of bhaktiyoga and he never published anything in his own name. Recently we have, however, published his text *Krishna’s Damodara-Lila*.¹

Vamandas

Vamandas, i.e., the Austrian Walther Eidlitz (1892–1976) was a successful writer even as a youth. Some time before the outbreak of the Second World War, he felt an irresistible yearning for going to India to study its ancient religion, and went there in 1938, shortly before the outbreak of the war. As his family was Jewish,

¹ (In English) printed at tryckning.nu | h:ström - Text & Kultur AB, Umeå, Sweden, 2014. This book can be ordered at www.sadananda.com.

Vamandas' wife and son were forced to flee from the Nazis, who had occupied Austria in 1938, and eventually they found refuge in Sweden. Meanwhile Vamandas, as a foreigner in India, was interned in an English-Indian camp, where he met his guru, Svami Sadananda Dasa, who in that place began his uninterrupted teaching of Vamandas.

After Vamandas' release from the internment camp, in 1946, Bhakti Hridaya Bon Maharaja gave him initiation into the Gaudiya-Vaishnava disciplic succession. A few days after his initiation in Bombay, Vamandas returned to Europe and Sweden and worked there continuously to spread the knowledge of the Shastrams, the Word Revelation, through lectures, courses and books. All this time, Sadananda assisted him with untiring devotion by providing him with material and correcting his misconceptions.

Vamandas' books

All of Vamandas' books were published under his common name, Walther Eidlitz. In *Unknown India*,² Vamandas gives a vivid description of his life and experiences during his long stay in India during the war. In *Der Glaube und die heiligen Schriften der Inder*³

² London 1952, New York 1953; Swedish edition: *Den glömda världen*, Stockholm 1948 and 1972; German edition: *Bhakta – eine indische Odyssee*, Hamburg 1951.

³ (The Faith and Holy Scriptures of the People of India), Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau 1957.

he gives a survey of Indian spirituality.

Some of these earlier books (and especially *Die indische Gottesliebe*⁴) unfortunately contain many errors, because Sadananda did not have the possibility to check his translations in advance at that time. The later books, however, and above all his work *Krishna Caitanya, Sein Leben und Seine Lehre*,⁵ give a brilliant survey of the essence of Shastric Revelation.

Livets mening och mål i indisk tankevärld,⁶ concentrates on the physical and psychological structure of man and the paths of yoga.

In spite of the mistakes Vamandas had made in the beginning, Sadananda wrote in one of his last letters to him: “Tell your friends that everything they do for you, they do for me as well.”

By his lifetime achievement Vamandas broke new ground, presenting in a European language a knowledge, which at that time was practically unknown in the West.

The majority of the following texts were addressed to Vamandas.

⁴ (The Indian Love for God) Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau 1955; Swedish translation: *Krishnas Leende*, Stockholm 1955.

⁵ Stockholm 1968; English translation: *Krishna Caitanya, The Hidden Treasure of India, His Life and His Teachings*, printed at tryckning.nu | h:ström - Text & Kultur AB, Umeå, Sweden, 2014; Swedish translation: *Krishna Caitanya, Indiens dolda skatt, Hans liv och Hans lära*, printed at tryckning.nu | h:ström - Text & Kultur AB, Umeå, Sweden, 2014. These two books can be ordered at www.sadananda.com.

⁶ Stockholm 1972; German edition, *Der Sinn des Lebens*, Olten und Freiburg im Breisgau 1974; English translation, *The Meaning of Life in the Indian World of Thought*. Downloads of all the three books are available at www.sadananda.com.

They are entirely Sadananda's own words, except for some clarifications inserted within square brackets and the titles of the texts that were selected from each text to reflect its subject.

Many of the texts are extracts from the *Corrections* that were written by Sadananda to Vamandas in 1956 regarding his book *Die indische Gottesliebe*. *The Harmonist* was a Vaishnava journal in English, published by the Gaudiya Math from 1927 to 1936, in which Sadananda wrote a few articles 1935–36.

The different reflective texts were written under a period of four decades, and we have found their topics so overlapping that we simply chose to present them in alphabetical order.

It is our hope that these revolutionizing words will be a source of inspiration and an incitement to learn more of the subjects touched upon.

For more information about Svami Sadananda Dasa's life and teachings, please visit www.sadananda.com.

A Bridge for the Atma

The most precious potential of man is that he can constitute a bridge for the *atma* in him – a bridge built on perfectly *clear* principles and an understanding of what God, the world, etc., are – a bridge that can also withstand the tide of opposition of different world views.

Letter 1957

A Homely Samsara

All human ideals depend on the empiric character of man and not the real nature of man, and because the enjoying temper of one person or group is always in disharmony and conflict with the enjoying temper of another person or group, discord naturally constitutes the character of the history of kaliyuga – a discord which is not the result of the conflict between the will to serve and the desire to enjoy as in previous yugas, where this conflict had the domination and intensification of the serving temper for its aim.

He who feels inclined to serve Krishna as He is, must serve Him without the least attention to the problems of humanity. It is not easy for a person in this age, kaliyuga, to free himself from the erroneous opinion that human society itself has some value, and to overcome the enticing influence of the loftiest ideals of justice and

humanity, so much propagated as the last hope of man in the present age.

Many are allured by the charming picture of an utopian society, each member of which wants to serve the other – in reality to secure the proper means of the utmost degrees of aversion to the service of Krishna, consisting in the desire to make this ephemeral world, at least temporarily, a place of enjoyment by the maximum elimination of the obstacles that stand in the way of such enjoyment.

It is Maya in her most deluding form who comes to make man believe that it is worthwhile to fight for a homely samsara.

Notes, internment camp in India

A Pointless Fight between One Self against the Other

If one expects wonder from the path one tries to follow – by mantras and the Guru's transmission of power, etc. – and then becomes disappointed because nothing extraordinary has happened, then this is due to incorrect teachings or misunderstanding of *correct* teachings.

The essential thing is not *what* one does and shows to others, but one's inner attitude – while outwardly, or as seen from the outside, one behaves like other people who seem to lack all interest

in religion or are quite ordinary citizens.

If one believes one has to be something special and makes too great demands on oneself, it will lead to self-inflicted stress, violence against oneself and despair, because one has not attained one's so-called goal and has got into a pointless fight between one [part of the divided] "self" against the other.

Letter 1975

A Pyramid of Seva

It is a pyramid of seva, where the foundation is to know oneself to be dasa-dasa-anudasa [a servant of the servant of those who serve Radha and Krishna]. On this foundation the whole lila develops, and this is why Radha-Krishna love the dasa-dasa-anudasas so much.

We must always take care not to inflate ourselves, [wanting] to become a Raktaka or Rasala (servant), a Subala or Sudama (friend), a Yashoda (parent) or a sakhi (female friend), and this is why Raghunatha Dasa Gosvami in a dialogue with Radha prays: "To be Your sakhi or female friend, no, no! – May I receive the gift to serve You at a distance, to have love for, a special liking for becoming one of Your dasis!"

Letter 1954

A Turn from the Egocentric to the Theocentric Point of View

Even in this country – the land of spirituality as one often erroneously calls India in the West – I am fairly alone. Gold lies scattered on the ground here, but it is the cheap glittering trinkets of the Europeanized “isms”: materialism, communism, socialism – furthermore completely misunderstood and strangely mixed with superstition (remnants of past high religiosity) – which have totally blinded and led astray this country I have chosen as my homeland.

In the West, on the other hand – according to the degree that God is still being asked for and searched after as a reality – man is completely at the centre, with all his needs and obsessions; and God is the authority who is supposed to relieve us from our grief and sorrows.

Endless cosmic worlds – the immense greatness within Godhead. Still, all the worlds together don't even compare to the remote hem of His garment; the one side of Him, the one face of Him – evoking reverent love in us: God related to the worlds.

But then: the secret of infinite beauty, everlasting tenderness; melody, power, entirely – yet seemingly childlike – the other face, enchanting us completely, almost making the worlds disappear, evoking most intimate love and devotion: God as He is in relation *to* Himself and *in* Himself – untouched by man's selfish thinking which readily, always wants to relate God to himself.

It is a turn from the egocentric to the theocentric point of view, which leads to a more fundamental and radical revolution than the turn from the geocentric to the heliocentric [cosmic paradigm].

The great and yet so terrible world tree disappears, and as spring breezes carry a blue lotus petal the powerful thoughts of the love for God [samvit shakti] carry a Divine figure to your country, a Divine figure of eternal youth and beauty, pure melody, with an effulgence resembling the deep, dark blue autumnal rain clouds.

Letter 1953

Ajamila and the Power of the Name

Unfortunately, there are even in India only a few persons who are aware of what the Shastrams actually say about the Name. In the *Bhagavatam* there is an account of a Brahmin called Ajamila. Uncultivated people say that he attained mukti in spite of being a sinner, simply because on his deathbed he desperately called out to his son, whose name was Narayana. Nothing can be farther from the truth.

Ajamila had been a man of firm character and had made great progress in his religious life, which had followed what is proclaimed in the Shastrams. But to his great misfortune his progress became interrupted by a major moral lapse. He had strived hard, but eventually he fell a victim to the temptations of the flesh and

lived for years together with a woman of weak character. Their youngest son was called Narayana.

When Ajamila was at death's door, he called out "Narayana", having his son in mind. But in accordance with Krishna's words saying that "His bhakta will never perish", he became once again clear about what he had heard regarding Narayana and what he had done during the course of his former seva, in his spiritual life preceding his moral lapse, and now the name "Narayana" came to his mind again – not as the name of his son, but as the Name of Bhagavan. Because of the power of the Name he then uttered, the messengers of Death could not bring him along – and instead Narayana's messengers came and rescued him.

By associating himself with Narayana's bhaktas he then decided to start a new life, fully dedicated to actual loving service of Bhagavan.

This account proclaims that Ajamila was not an aparadhi when he first uttered the name Narayana and only thought of his son. He was a moral sinner and consequently did not isolate himself from the power inherent in the name Narayana, which he had done if he had nursed ideas of Bhagavan that were contrary to *His Own* accounts.

From your [Vamandas'] accounts of the shadow of the Name, nama-abhasa, you give the impression that the Shastrams don't give any clear instruction about this. If I had read something like this twenty-three years ago, I had taken such a book, [together]

with everything that is said about the Name in India, and thrown it into the wall.

Please be absolutely clear about the following:

1. If the Name is uttered with bhakti, and is listened to with bhakti, it reveals Krishna's form.
2. If the Name is uttered with bhakti, and is listened to without bhakti, it can – if the person concerned is not an aparadhi – not only liberate from sins, but also grant bhakti.
3. If the Name is uttered without bhakti, and is listened to without bhakti, but is uttered and is listened to without aparadha, it can liberate from sins – if the person concerned does not commit an aparadha.

Corrections

An Infinitesimal Spark of Sat-Cit-Ananda

God and the atma – both consist of true being, knowledge and joy (sat-cit-ananda). The atma, however, is only an infinitesimal spark of this, minute as a thousandth of a tip of a single hair: “The atma is to be understood as a hundredth of a tip of a hair that is split into hundred parts.” (*Shvetashvatara Upanishad* 5.9) He is uncountable (there are countless jivas).

God is the fullness and He has willpower. The atma has willpower as well. God, however, can *perform* what He wants, the

atma cannot. To be able to enjoy, in his state of aversion to God, the atma needs the material [the subtle and gross coverings] and the I-illusion, which are provided by Maya. – To be able to serve God he needs the power of bhakti, the potency that enables him to serve God with love and knowledge.

“One may perceive the atma, but as long as it happens independently of God, the straying in the world of change, under the influence of Maya, does not cease. Consequently, even the great seers fall into the whirlpool of the world of change, because they are averse to the intimate devotion to You.” (*Bhagavatam* 3.9.9–10) Even the atma who knows himself is completely unable to know God, i.e., to serve Him lovingly.

This fact hits man hard: man is nothing – and now even the atma is nothing! The *Bhagavatam*, however, continues hard and unrelenting, yet encouraging and inviting: “The words of the Shastrams tell who You are and show the way to You. Oh Lord, You live in the heart of him, whose heart is like a lotus, as it is completely permeated by the power of bhakti. The bhaktas, whose hearts are permeated by bhakti, think of You intensively. To show them grace, You appear to them in the very Divine form they want to serve in love.” (*Bha.* 3.9.11)

“When man *listens to* Your Divine pastimes, he turns to You.” (*Bha.* 10.33.36) The play of God is rooted in God Himself and is without any cause. “Man”, i.e., *the atma in man, the atma who has turned away from God*, can be liberated when he listens to the

Divine play, as it is described in the Shastrams.

Self-centred, man wants to *see* God, because by this he expects an intensification of *his* own joy – or liberation, *mukti*. But only when he does not strive for *his* own joy anymore, only when he wants to serve *Him* alone, he can behold Him. And only when bhakti enters his heart, he can have the *will* to serve and *actually* serve.

This power of bhakti, however, comes either from God Himself – when He is avatara, and the power of bhakti wants to give itself to someone who yearns for it; or else – as is the usual case – it comes through His bhaktas, who dwell on earth.

Grace means communion with the true bhaktas. Therefore, Rudra, a form or avatara of Sada-Shiva, says, “Let this be Thy Grace: let us have communion with the true bhaktas. (*Bha.* 4.24.58) When the heart, as a gift of Grace, has been seized by their bhakti, only then one can see, in one’s heart, who You are. (59) It is the breeze of the Words of the Shastrams, which enters the ears, and carries the scent of His lotus feet into the heart. He enters the bhakti lotus in the hearts of those who are His Own – through the ear. (*Bha.* 3.9.5)”

The atma who is averse to God loses his true nature. He experiences himself as body and mind in selfish search for happiness, but he does not experience himself as atma. “To his nature the atma is meant to serve God”, because only then he can attain his nature as atma. He can, however, only fulfill this aim

when he receives the gift of Grace of bhakti.

By himself, he can experience himself – but by no means God. The power of bhakti does not belong to his own nature. It is God’s Own power. It is only when this power touches him, and only then, from this moment on, that the atma has bhakti.

As we have seen already: “On account of the close association with the bhaktas talks take place, which by themselves are the knowledge of my lilas. By serving these words, listening to them, shraddha, bhakti and Divine love [prema] – one by one – will arise.” (*Bha.* 3.25.25)

Corrections

An Intellectual or Emotional Novelty

You must not feel dejected when you experience that many of those who listen to Vamandas’ message are driven into perplexity and rationalizations. What we say is so totally, so completely against what one calls man’s natural instinct and habits of thinking. Apart from God Himself – Shyama Krishna and Gaura Krishna, when They make Themselves directly visible – *no one* is able to create a movement of bhakti in the hearts of people. There are only a few very noble souls who are truly ready, from their own nature, to experience something of the preciousness of this seva, which grows in intensity for eternity. For most people it will only be an

intellectual or emotional novelty, a sensation that will soon fade away.

Letter 1954

Anugatyam and Gopi-bhava

To translate ‘anugatyam’ as ‘to follow’ is not clear enough. This word awakens the association that the bhakta – in his later received cit-body – shall do what those do who are Krishna’s Own eternal beloved. This is completely wrong.

Ga = someone who walks;

anuga = someone who walks anu, i.e., in accordance with.

Someone is called anuga when he walks, i.e., behaves as he was taught.

The correct behaviour of an anuga is called anugati.

The abstract noun of anugati is anugatyam.

Anugati does not imply imitation, succession, emulation or to tread in someone’s footsteps – by no means.

The word ‘gopibhava’ does not imply *the feeling of* being this or that gopi who serves Him directly, or that one *is* a gopi who serves him directly. It means to serve Him with the *same purity as they do* – i.e., to be free from every expectation of experiencing joy, experiencing selfishly.

It is a matter of *how* one shall serve, not *that* one shall do *what*

they do in their service.

Corrections and Shrila Prabhupada's Vani

Attempts to Bribe Krishna

I think, in all modesty, that I could help to get India better understood in the West if I could come there and tell what I have learnt in India during twenty-five years and what has made me identify with Indian civilization and culture. Tears come to my eyes when I think of how badly I was treated by the Indian coolies – earlier and later in the camp – because they despised me as a renegade of western civilization and for my love for this country.

A good Krishna-bhakta, an older, now retired JP magistrate and former landed proprietor, came yesterday night and asked me how it is possible that I, during such endeavour for bhakti can meet so many difficulties.

My answer to him and myself: “There is no greater delusion than to think that Krishna could be bribed by our wish for bhakti or seva, to remove obstacles and spare us the tragedies of our personal lives. During and after a physical crisis (operation, etc.), for example, we only pray for the power always only to remember *Him* but not to be spared the operation.”

Letter 1959

Belief – Knowledge – Experience

It is not that God first reveals Himself and then the bhakta is able to see Him, which then – in turn – would lead to the bhakta loving Him. Instead the bhakta loves and serves Him simultaneously, because the bhakti on the stage of bhava (rati) grants *knowledge* of what God is; [it does so] no longer through the means of the teachings of the Shastrams, which the disciple received in a serving attitude – but this *bhava-bhakti* gives knowledge of God, because it is knowledge in itself.

Prema-bhakti, however, does not only give correct knowledge but also the possibility to *experience* God as the object of the serving love.

Rati or bhavabhakti is *knowledge* of who God is and the knowledge that the service of God is the eternal purpose of the life of the atma, etc., whereas the first form of bhakti is *firm faith/confidence* [shraddha] in service – but not yet knowledge.

So first firm faith, then knowledge.

Prema, however, is characterized by the cognizance of a *direct sense of belonging* and a *personal relation between Bhagavan and the bhakta*: “I am Yours”, and this to the degree that the bhakta is bereft of self-reflection; he becomes carried away by prema to such a degree that there is no more time or opportunity to reflect: “Who am I, who is Brahma, Who is the Paramatma and Who is Bhagavan, what is the world, etc.?”

God is simply his One and All – and in the same way the bhakta becomes His One and All.

Corrections

Bhagavan and All the Different Tattvas Coexist Eternally

According to the Hindu Shastrams Bhagavan as He is in and to Himself has no interest in the external lila of the universes. Reality consists of Bhagavan, His energy [shakti], His halo [the attributeless Brahma] and His rays, which are the atmas. All these are eternally coexistent.

It is said in *Bhagavatam* 11.2.37: “When an atma has turned away from God, he forgets himself under the influence of His maya (the power of ignorance) and believes the opposite, namely that the body and mind are his real self. The body and mind are supplied by the material of Maya in the form of matter. Being absorbed in the second thing, i.e., his body and mind, fear arises (to lose the happiness he has and not to get the happiness he wants). Thus a wise man should worship the Lord with undivided, exclusive bhakti, considering his guru as Divinity and dearest to him (because the guru instructed him and gave him the energy of bhakti).”

Freedom of will is inherent in the nature of the atma just as it is

an inherent property of the sunray to be light.

In the western theology the problem has often been discussed how God's goodness can be established in face of the suffering of the creatures of the world. Many a tortured soul has asked, "Why has God created this world?" because he has heard that God created the world of His Own free will.

According to the Hindu Shastrams God did not create the atma. The sun exists. It is inherent in its nature that it has rays. In the same way the atmas coexist with God as His rays. The rays are made of the same stuff as the sun itself; the rays, however, can be covered by darkness.

God cannot change His Own nature. Man has to accept the fact that jiva-atmas exist from eternity, just as He exists and so long as *He* exists, and they will not cease to exist. Thus the question of God's responsibility for the existence of the atma does not arise at all.

Moreover, coexistent with the sun and as the negation of light, there exists eternal darkness or ignorance. As long as God is, there exists and will exist the opposite of God, namely darkness. Even at a time when all the universes will be dissolved and have returned into their latent bed of nature, from which they arose, the energy of Maya will exist.

Furthermore, as there are an infinite number of atmas, there will never come a time when there are no atmas under the influence of ignorance. The process of evolution and dissolution of universes

will always continue.

Corrections

Bhakti Is for Those Who Are Atmically Disordered

My dear, dear Vamandas,

May Krishna give you strength! You must not feel too dejected when poor fellows like Maharshi catch the foul fishes from the surface of the water, when the idiotic worship of the so-called Indian has gone so far that the poor souls are stupid enough to think and believe that a so-called mantra without shakti [can lead to Bhagavan], without any notion of who, what and how Bhagavan is, and who it is that is to be led to Him. They do not realize that this cannot be more than a curiosity, like when foreigners in India get souvenirs in the form of tiger claws and relics from Taj Mahal.

We want serious people, who truly have the ability to search, understand and believe. Initially, all kinds of neurotic types probably have to turn up at your lectures – the faster they drop off the better. Bhakti is for those who are atmically disordered, for those who are in want of knowledge of the atma and the Param-atma, as they are not able to serve Bhagavan, and for those who understand that all kinds of exploitation are nothing but delusion – but not for those who are *mentally* disordered and people who first of all should consult a psychiatrist in order to become decent,

normal people, so that they later could long for bhakti.

It is so enormously important that people come to Krishna *through* you, and do not stick to you for your sake instead of proceeding further. Your strong, noble personality is a danger.

Hella seems to bother herself about the fact that Prabhupad's [Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's] "disciple" failed. Prabhupad knew this and warned, and he anticipated that nothing of this large group as such would remain after his departure. It is surprising, though, how many noble and good people there are who carry deep in their hearts his power and message, without appearing to be more than ordinary citizens. – Strength in crises and a clear answer to the deepest questions, these are the signs of true grace.

Letter 1961

Business Relations with God

You are right; those who go other ways than the path of prema, i.e., without expecting anything in return for their spiritual efforts, are much worse than atheists, because to treat God as if He were not at all is less dangerous than to entertain business relations with Him.

We are sufficiently selfish but need not degrade Him to become an object of our selfish expectation for peace or rest or happiness. Of course, one thing is certain: there are few people who will be able to come to a high standard of pure prema, free from selfish-

ness – and if they are, it is not the outcome of the awakening of the self [atma] but the result of being touched by the Energy of His Grace, which alone enables one to love Him.

Letter 1954

Can Krishna Do what He Wants?

To us, ‘adrishta’ is our unknown but self-deserved ‘destiny’, a necessary result of our own conduct. In the case of an avatara of Bhagavan, for example *Krishna*, it is the frame wherein the whole avatara-lila *has to* take place, factually and chronologically, and to the rules of which He voluntarily submits.

Krishna is completely absorbed in the Vraja-lila. After the Keshi-badha (deliverance of the demon Keshi), Narada secretly visits Him in the forest and not only prepares Him for the Mathura- and Dvaraka-lila, etc., but explains to Him in detail how long each and every lila is to last and how long it *must* take until He is to return to Vraja and the gopas.

When not even Krishna imagines escaping the law of the lila, how could the bhakta possibly imagine escaping *the result of his own karma?*

In reality, by itself, the power of bhakti nullifies *all* karma, but the bhakta does not utilize this possibility. Freedom from karma is a siddhi, and the bhakta couldn’t care *less*, he does not even reflect

upon it.

Letter 1960

Carvaka and His Mayfly Philosophy

Carvaka preached materialism, agreeable-delightful (caru) words (vakyam) for those who take delight in getting their mayfly (one life) philosophy confirmed by a wise old man. Nowadays this philosophy is more popular than ever. Our era is called the Age of Discord. Ca. 5 000 years of it have now passed and ca. 427 000 years still remain.

There was a time when it was not only man's intellect – which helps him to exploit the objects of his senses more thoroughly and sustain his ego – that distinguished man from animals, but also modesty, inner and outer purity, compassion with everything that suffers, and truthfulness.

Pride in what you are and achieve, sexual excesses and cruelty – stimulated by intoxicants, liquor and drugs – have already almost destroyed the good qualities of man in this age. In some way, mankind has sustained itself on a rotted pillar of truthfulness. But now dishonesty has almost destroyed even this last pillar.

Delight in gambling – taking part actively or watching – delight in intoxicating oneself with drink, etc., delight in sexual lust, delight in cruelty and delight in combat; these five forms of delight

make man his own enemy. (Cf. *Shrimad Bhagavatam* 1.17.24–25)

The Three Paths And the Philosophies

And Religions of the World

Casting Pearls before Swine

Neither God nor the avatara ever wanted to turn the world or even India into a paradise, but they wanted society to be set up in such a way that it would be possible for man to rise above the beast [in him].

People, however, prefer to remain beasts and consequently the society is not arranged according to God's principles.

God, the avatara and the bhaktas taught and practised true love for God, which only one or two among millions can have. Teaching about the Absolute for those who *want* to remain beast is like casting pearls before swine.

Letter 1955

Change of Attitude

Courage and strength for us all, and please, change of place of residence and surroundings don't matter at all, only the change of our *attitude* to the surroundings. Each and everyone has become

what he became *despite* the circumstances, *not due to* the circumstances. Heart, strength and thanks to all who sail together in the boat across the gruesome waves of samsara.

Letter 1957

Change of Chains

Mr. E. is of the opinion that “Sweden is too small for Sadananda”. – Tell him that the *world* is too small for me. I may find two or three persons in a whole continent who can understand what rasa is and who are able to appreciate a work of rasika as the *Bhagavatam* or *Caitanya-Caritamrita*. Here in India there may be two or three persons?

To me it is as for Angira Muni in *Bhagavatam* 6. He came to Citraketu and wanted to offer him the highest gift there is – but found him longing for descendants. Everyone longs for something else – not for inner freedom. Everyone wants to remain a slave, just a change of clothes and chains; no one wants to cast them aside.

Letter 1960

Delusions of Grandeur

The Shastrams give a *non-human* view of the world, etc., all seen

from the perspective of *God*, from Reality – and not from the principles of knowledge and experience that man in his delusions of grandeur assumes to be valid. As if there were no higher being and intellect than man and his thinking! The cow and the ant also believe what they experience to be reality!

It is simply *human* to expect that God is interested in manifesting Himself, in revealing Himself: “Here I am!” And then it is supposed to be a miracle because man thinks God breaks through the laws of nature. No, the Shastrams do not flatter this desire of man to know and experience. God does not encourage this desire to know Him. He is concealed and pretends not to be God even when He becomes avatara. Man may desire to exploit the world, but he can only know God when he wants to *serve* Him.

Corrections

Dharma, Artha, Kama and Pratishta

The first is *dharma*, striving for virtue. I shall act so virtuously that in my next life I will necessarily have a better position than in the present one. The second is *artha*. I must accumulate so much wealth that I can look forward to my hundredth birthday without risk. *Kama* is the satisfaction of desire.

But the most dangerous is *pratishta*, name and fame – because one can trace the other three fairly well, or others can point them

out. – Dharma, artha, kama, pratishtha. For the sake of pratishtha, to be regarded as a great holy man, a person can perform the most incredible things: sit on a pillar for years without washing, letting himself be buried under ground, etc.

Tape recording from the 1960s

Different Conceptions of the I

The subtly material I [ahamkara], or if you understand it better, the “organ, the instrument” of the I, which gives the ability to know oneself as an I at all, *is* really something: it is real.

The ignorance [avidya] I does not consist of anything at all, just as, for example, the horn of a hare, because it just does not exist [i.e., the conception of the atma to believe himself to be the material coverings, and the conception of the subtly material I to be the atma, i.e., the real I, is a misconception, a delusion].

Animals, plants? – They also say *I* to the body, etc., only less consciously, more instinctively, because the dog withdraws its paw when I pass it so I cannot tread on it, and he fights for his *I* when another dog approaches his bone. The conception of the *I* results in *mine* and *yours*. An amoeba defends itself against a medicine, withdraws, etc., tries to preserve its *I*, knows, “my body is *I*”.

According to Shankaracharya’s teachings everything is very simple, because the prakriti of the gunas *is* mere illusion, the body

as well as the I. There is, however, *no* evidence for this in the Shastrams. – Maybe an *unscientific* idea can help you: The I-organ is an ability, a *pot*; a pot must be there – whether one fills it with true or magical contents is a secondary question.

If a brahmajñani-mukta or a bhakta talks about his I, he means the atma, still his finger withdraws from a hot plate. Thus the prakṛita I-organ is certainly there and effective, but not the hypnotic-I, i.e., the atma does not identify itself with the body, etc., and the prakṛita-I does not identify itself with the atma-I.

Letter

Different Paths

Yes, there are different paths to different goals, but each path involves a strict discipline and there isn't any yoga in the Shastrams that leads like a rocket to union with God.

It is a fact, however, that simple folk wish for and seem to need cheap things: belief in miracles, superstition and expectations of quick solutions through psychological tricks – these inspire most people of all races and social classes: panaceas for problems. Only a few have the strength to receive grace and tread the path of the noble.

I have already indicated this when Vamandas so often encountered such positive response in people's hearts; the human

heart is fickle and after the first sweet tasting comes the sobering down and the distinct, steep path. Krishna is noble and wants those who are noble and wants to make them His Own. It is not so easy to become noble and Godlike in this sense. Seva-ananda [the joy of serving God] is infinitely higher – and more difficult – than bhoga-sukha [taking pleasures in enjoying, experiencing], and the latter is what most people desire.

Krishna Himself never interferes with man's freedom. Everyone is free to be on the wrong track, to go astray or to make a detour, and I don't see how we could be so presumptuous to maintain that we could or should prevent others from wandering on the wrong track, going astray or making a detour, when they actually insist upon it. But you can very well tell Mrs. E. that I am very sad to hear that she desires trinkets and will forsake the gold.

Letter 1960

Divine and Mundane Ignorance

God's realm is not transcendent in the sense that it is far away in *space, beyond the end of the world*. The Shastrams teach that it is *eternally present everywhere*, even where the realm of time and space is present, but it does not *reveal itself in visible form*. At certain advanced stages of prema, however, God's objectively eternally omnipresent realm becomes directly visible to the bhakta

concerned.

Maya's universes, all consisting of her material, are strictly supervised by the laws of time and space, the biological, physical and logical laws, under which the human soul feels at home. All the individual atmas, however, who are present in all these universes, in everything that lives and has its own power and movement, are victims of the great delusion, enchanted by the powerful Maya.

As a consequence of his aversion to God, Maya makes the atma believe that he is the individual "soul", mind and body, etc., and she also makes the individual "soul" believe that he is the actual self, the atma, succumbing to the delusion of considering himself eternal and immortal.

This is the greatest delusion, but also the only one. Everything that God's Own potency of true knowledge in the form of direct serving love experiences, perceives and comprehends is infinitely more real than the world of time and space that the individual soul, consisting of sheer delusion, experiences. Where God and His Own potency of pure knowledge work, there is no delusion, no fantasy and no deception.

When it comes to Krishna and His Own, such deception is out of the question – here on earth [in Gokula] as well as in Goloka, where body, soul, emotions, heart and everything totally consist of God's Own power of pure knowledge and love. Their Divine bodies and forms consist of His power of true knowledge and love,

and through this power they serve, love and dedicate themselves to Him, without ever coming to an end, because God and His potency are infinite.

The atma who has forgotten God receives a mental and physical covering, which indeed is perishable – but real. This is in contrast to God’s eternal companions in Vraja who do not have such a covering. The atma also thinks he is the covering and the covering thinks it is the atma.

Before the atma can enter God’s realm, he must abandon this covering and get a body, etc., of cit. The companions in the eternal lila – when it takes place on earth – have an eternal body and mind consisting of God’s Own shakti, and consequently they can carry God in their arms, touch Him, embrace Him and give Him the breast.

In order to intensify this lila, now when it becomes visible on earth, the eternal companion very often thinks – due to concentrated power of knowledge and love – that his body is a body of flesh and blood, that he is nothing but a human being subjected to the laws of the world, just as Krishna’s eternally beloved gopis think that they are married to someone else, etc., without really being so. This makes the loving service stronger, more complex and even more wonderful; creating obstacles that must be overcome within God’s realm.

In contrast, the obstacles Maya creates are outside of God’s realm, where God’s realm does not make its presence manifest and

perceivable. They keep the atma away from God's realm and knowledge of his true self, as long as he does not want to use the means God offers him in the Word Revelation, the means to get rid of his delusion.

The eternal companion thinks he has a body of flesh and blood, and he thinks so because this perception is a form of service. The atma who is under the delusion of Maya thinks he is a man of flesh and blood, and this perception is an expression of greatest aversion to God, a result of being averse to seva, not wanting to serve, but to experience and enjoy.

Corrections

Divine Love and Freedom

It is not possible to express or understand what Divine Love actually is, neither through emotions nor intellect, but it is certain that the very first prerequisite, from the human point of view, is the sincere willingness to see all conceivable problems – biological, social, ethical, financial, political, aesthetical, philosophical-religious, yes, most of all the Divine problems – no longer from our point of view, but from the centre of all conscious and unconscious gravitation, from the point of view of Krishna, i.e., to search lovingly for the answers to the questions what and who God actually is from His point of view – not only from our point of

view – i.e., what and who He is in Himself, without all the fuss of infinite universes.

The prerequisite of Divine Love is absolutely clear knowledge of Him, Whom this love relates to, and that such Love, originating in and leading to Him, must be completely free from every form of depravation, every expectation of “repayment”, all speculation about reward.

Another prerequisite is that the object of this Love is no dictator, that He not only wants, but also sees to it that those who love Him are completely free and love Him in freedom. As sparks of fire share the qualities of glow and light, the atma shares God’s quality of freedom. This freedom is so great that the atma is free to give up his own freedom and become a slave to his emotions, his “soul”, his mind, body, society, etc. – but even during his deepest downfall, he can regain his freedom, if he truly wants to.

Letter

Eight Million Four Hundred Thousand Births

Those who tread the path of the Shastrams – karma, jnana, bhakti – slowly, step by step, become better human beings and bhaktas till they finally attain mukti or service in God’s realm.

And when it comes to all the others, the atma in man must pass through 8 400 000 births in lower wombs until he gets a new

chance as a human being! In other words, it is very, very difficult and thereby uncommon that an atma in a human being immediately gets a new human frame in his next birth.

This is important, because the western doctrine of reincarnation often claims that one gets a new chance – over and over again. This destroys and paralyses the sense of responsibility to really make an effort in this life.

No – it is no tempting invitation to pass 8 400 000 births, all those distressing forms, from stone, worm, up to mammals, which the atma till today, since a time without beginning, has passed through innumerable times in innumerable systems of worlds. The impressions of all these lives stay in the mind and break forth as musty images, desires, vasanas that often seem inexplicable to us.

Corrections

Eligibility

Neither the *Bhagavatam* nor the acharyas of the bhakti school have ever said that every man and woman is eligible to study the *Vedas* or to study Sanskrit, because the majority of people do not have the sattvic capacity to do it.

The *Bhagavatam* presupposes that a person is very well versed in all the *Shrutis* and requires great intelligence and profound knowledge of Sanskrit.

The general public, however, is eligible to listen to the *Bhagavatam* when it is recited and to the explanation of its meanings in the language they understand. This refers not only to the *Bhagavatam* but also to the *Itihasas* and *Puranams*.

Just as there were restrictions on the studies of the *Vedas*, however, based on the constitution of the people regarding blood, character and intellect, the bhakti-Shastrams spiritually exclude all those who have no bhakti from access to them. The reason is that even if a person hears the *Bhagavatam*, he will not understand its meaning unless he has bhakti, which alone enables him to grasp its meaning. It requires a certain frame of mind to understand a book of ordinary literature. Is it surprising then that the bhakti-Shastrams require a very special frame of mind?

Corrections

Emotional Ties to a Person

By the way, in a letter last year to D. and others, I made it very clear that one should imagine oneself to be like in a desert – *without* Vamandas, Hella and Sadananda – and *without* emotional ties to a person try to stick to what the Shastrams say and we only are passing on. But no one seems to have paid attention to this.

Emotional ties to a person are like death, and that is why genuine gurus withdraw, over and over again, or else they send

their disciples away in order for them to learn right from the start to develop alone – through the power of bhakti. As soon as we – Vamandas, Hella and I – let us be admired and worshipped, or if it pleases us the least when people praise and worship us, our bhakti is gone – as is the case with thousands of svamis!! Gurudeva’s power vanishes and we are wretched madmen. There is always a risk for this and it results in our playing to the gallery.

Kana, kamini, pratishtha – money, the sexual-erotic, name and honour – are the three greatest dangers, and then to accept too *much* seva of others where it is *not* necessary, conveying the impression of being a bhakta – because one deals with bhakti – and that one must give others the possibility to do seva. Every decent person is able to feel where he should and is able to “help”, to serve. If a person has an ounce of bhakti, he understands where to serve – because Krishna grants him *buddhi-yoga* (intelligence!).

I know this is obvious to the three of us, but we are misunderstood by those who actually do not want bhakti, those who are dissatisfied with other kinds of escapism and now turn to a new escape from reality, bringing and wanting to keep all rubbish in their heart.

Letter 1961

Encountering Opposition

As a matter of fact, there can be no opposition against Krishna and those who want to serve Him, but opponents are deputed by Him to give us the chance to serve Him. Outwardly I might be degraded to an outcaste, but all the denial of cult and food cannot put out the fire of Divine Prema in my heart; it is rather increasing.

All possible opposition from *all* quarters, simply to exhaust all the possibilities to obstruct my serving temper, serve to give me the chance [to prove], that a mleccha [outcaste]-bhakta of Gurudeva never stops and never gives up His service.

Notes, internment camp in India

Eroticism is God's and His Shaktis' Monopoly

The earthly couple constitutes the disastrous maya-distorsion in the realm of absolute aversion to God, the polarity or state of opposition to the Divine Couple of the cit realm. What is the secret indicated in the temples? That the earthly couple is the shadow of the Divine Couple? – No, what one finds is Mahadeva's and Parvati's eternal love play, or a representation of Krishna and the gopis. Eroticism is God's and His shaktis' monopoly, and the person who wants to come to God and serve Him in the temple must leave the disgusting eroticism of the maya-world outside; he

has no right to eroticism when he wants to come to God, because in our world eroticism is the climax of mutual selfish exploitation for the sake of one's own sensual pleasure.

Corrections

Eyes, Blinded by Dogmatism

Let not the original, genuine, dynamic, living beauty of the lila display of Divinity and the charm of the direct and immediate expression of lila in form of abrupt, ecstatic utterances in the religious literature be covered by the ossified and petrified crusts of imitating, static, lifeless, indirect and mediate formulations of hackneyed conventionalism and dogmatism. Let it not be as with poets you read in school days and which the schoolmasters and their helpless and hopeless ideologies and stupid idiosyncrasies made to a nightmare ...

Eyes, blinded by dogmatism –

Drink from the strong and fast moving stream of immediacy,
as it runs in Vrajavilasa,
and trust God in you, that He may guide you,
to experience directly, beyond time, beyond space,
where others adhere to rigidity, to death.

What is really genuine, truly alive, fills you with Love –
and distrust, where the chains of prison ring. –
Look *out of* the windows, through glass or crystal, not *at* them.

Notes 1946

First I Tear Down

I also know that people in the West gather like flies around a jam pot when an Indian of *flesh-and-blood*, a so-called vaishnava or a yogi comes, because a “guru” is expected to do magic, suddenly solve the conflicts of life and work *wonders* – if not physical, at least mental-spiritual.

You know that I don’t give any mysticism, first I *tear down* – then I erect, on a *new* foundation, and no one likes this.

Because I am so *grave*, dry and strict with myself, I just cannot be what people expect from a “guru”. I want to convey to people a completely *different* view of the world and God, help them to reach a new spiritual outlook – a new inner direction – to make a 180° turn from everything man thought and considered himself to know through religion and reason.

Letter 1960

Five Primary Requirements for the Gopi Sentiment

1. Completeness of knowledge of God.
2. Feeling of God being the dearest object of love.
3. Surrender of everything to God.
4. Complete renunciation of desire for personal happiness.
5. Sense of maintaining life only for God's sake and His pleasure.

This is fully manifested in the gopis of Vraja, the embodiments of Joy and Consciousness.

One who possesses fondness for the body and things related to the body, bodily comfort, and whose life current does not uninterruptedly flow towards God does not qualify to cultivate the gopi sentiment.

One who has genuine indifference towards sense enjoyment, whose heart has completely lost the craving for lust, whose senses are anxious to flow inwards and taste the nectar of Divine rasa, which belongs to the Spirit – he is that fortunate soul who is qualified to tread the path of the gopis and to cultivate their sentiment [bhava].

Notebook

Flight from Responsibility

The Indian people have never separated religion and the theory of knowledge (philosophy). Philosophy is a method to experience: What is real?

Prayers motivated by the gunas [sattva, rajah, tamah] never reach *Him*, because He is nirguna [beyond the gunas]. God does not have a central telephone control office for man's contradictory prayers. The Indian concept of God is free from all kinds of sentimentality. Man experiences "bhunjana sva-krita-vipaka", he experiences what he has prepared for himself. (*Bha.* 10.14.8; Brahma-stuti) God lets the atma go his own ways. Puppets controlled by strings, could God love them? – *To love out of freedom*. God will never deprive man of this freedom. We sully our own clothes, and then we want God to wash them for us. Is this flight from responsibility *love* for God?

Bhakti is not piety of the heart, not love for God. *Bhakti is a method* to consciously share in what God is. As long as the atma has a covering of Maya, bhakti is *correct knowledge* of the nature of the atma, God and the world. Later, in His realm, bhakti in the form of prema is direct service.

The Basics of Psychology

Freedom Always Means Freedom for the Other

It all starts with *being who and what one is*, only then one can be and become joyful. To *force oneself* into wearing a spiritual uniform – it may seem ever so fortunate – cannot be anything but the attitude Krishna strongly criticizes in *Bhagavatam* 11. One *can* help one's fellow being to be himself, not in a metaphysical, transcendent way, but in a completely *unaffected, artlessly human* way, with all virtues and vices.

No one should try to jump over his own shadow or make others do this. One must always leave room for the other to be able to be who he is. Freedom always means freedom for the other; otherwise it is no freedom. Why, God wants us to be just as free as He is, He *does not* want *any* slaves.

Letter 1975

Genuine Liberation

To be eligible for the path of bhakti it is not sufficient to believe that God exists and to believe what is said of Him in the Shastrams.

There is only one criterion of a person's eligibility: a strong confidence accompanied by the firm resolution to act accordingly; a strong confidence in the service of Bhagavan, that this service is the eternal purpose of life; service as the means and the end,

irrespective of one's own happiness.

To be turned towards God with the intention to serve – He being the centre and focus of all thoughts and action – that is real liberation from the real bondage of selfishness, of being a slave to one's own desires.

Corrections

God Does the Opposite of What We Expect

God does the opposite of what we expect. We would drum up mankind with loudspeakers and propaganda: “Come here everyone, now watch carefully – here I am, the living God, rejoice at My appearance and play with Me, because I have come to deliver you!”

God is not so cruel, however. Those atmas and humans who don't want to *serve* Him, who only want to *exploit* Him for their physical and mental needs, who don't have any bhakti, no serving love, would only be confirmed in their “original sin” that the meaning of life and the world is to enjoy – in their capacity as humans and individual souls [atmas]. They would only commit aparadhas against God and His Own.

Man talks about love for God, and “loves” Him for his own sake, i.e., blaspheme Him and what He says about Himself. If those who are averse to serving Him knew that He had come here, they

would try to exploit Him, to “experience” Him, etc., and thereby commit aparadha [spiritual transgressions].

Corrections

God’s Dynamics

From our, from human point of view, eternal peace is the most wonderful, namely motionless emotions, “windlessness”, nirvana. Extreme emotion seems to be absolutely dreadful.

In true reality the shanta-bhakta is at the lowest stage, eternal agitation at the highest – all passion, all agitation for His sake is a joy.

The Basics of Psychology

God’s Greatest Joy

God’s form is present eternally and everywhere, and it is complete fullness of pure knowledge and true joy.

His Own power, eternally present everywhere, through which He knows and experiences Himself as joy, seizes the heart, the eternal self [atma] of the bhakta, when God or His eternal co-player choose him.

She is the love for God, the power to fulfil God’s precepts, to

experience Him, and the self [the atma], wherever it may be, from eternity to eternity consume oneself to His joy, in ever increasing ecstasy.

And that He *fully* succumbs to this power of knowledge or most selfless love – which stems from Him – that is His *greatest* joy.

Diary 1954

God's Three Modes of Being

God *is* (eternally) in three modes of His Own Self-expression:

1. *Brahma*: (by time and space) unrestricted and unbounded *being* (sat), fully consisting of pure *knowledge* (cit = jnana) and pure *joy* (ananda), *without* expression of shakti or power (eternal, *quiet* being), “it”, formless, shapeless, inactive.

2. *Paramatma*: *living*, (by time and space) unrestricted and unbounded *being*, fully consisting of pure *knowledge* and pure *joy*, with expression of shakti or power. God as fundamental maintainer and terminus of the cosmos and with expression of:

a) *maya-shakti*, which can manifest something that is actually not in *Him*, i.e., the possibility of the seeming negation of Himself – as mahamaya;

b) *cit-shakti* (yoga-maya), which manifests only partially and helps the worlds of maya to their existence, to a *life* which *is* life, although only a *shadowy* existence – i.e., Vishnu, *He* (with shape,

form, with four arms as expression of absolute greatness and majesty);

c) *tatastha-shakti* or the power on the boundary, the power of transition, in which the infinite number of jiva-atmas originate who are subjected to the influence of maya- and cit-shakti.

3. *Bhagavan: living*, (by time and space) unrestricted and unbounded *being*, fully consisting of pure *knowledge* and pure *joy*, with expression of the *unbounded fullness* of the cit-shakti (yoga-maya), directly and indirectly only experiencing *Himself*, without direct connection with maha-maya and the worlds stemming from her and the beings living in them. Bhagavan has shape, form, and is secondarily equipped with four arms, as an expression of absolute greatness and majesty; primarily with two arms, as an expression of absolute beauty and loveliness.

Letter 1955

Hari

[The bhakta Vritra speaks:]

“My Lord causes impediments if a person makes efforts to attain the three objects of human life: religious merit leading to a perishable heaven, worldly possessions and enjoyment of the flesh. The Mercy of the Lord is to be inferred from such frustrations. He is only attainable by those who have nothing but Him, He is not

attainable by others.” (*Bha.* 6.11.23)

“For this very reason people abandon Me and worship others who are easily satisfied.” (*Bha.* 10.88.11)

You must give this passage properly so that people can understand how different the religion of bhakti to Vishnu-Hari – with all His mode of beings – is from the cults of “the Divine Order-Supplier” of the needs of the mind, body and “soul” in other religions.

Corrections

Hari – the Thief of All Thieves

He steals the heart from all those who truly hear about Him. He steals the mind from all those who only know Him as the Fullness of majesty, glory and might.

From all those who are to be seized by the knowing, serving love, He steals all things – and the attachment to those things – when they obstruct the loving service of Him.

From the wise, those who are fully free from ignorance of the nature of their own atma, He steals the peace and self-assurance, the peace in experiencing the imperishable unity with the tranquil light of Brahma, and the peace in merging into this aura surrounding His transcendental form.

From those who live in the cognizance of the nature of their

atma, He steals their revelling in the clarity of the joy that their own atma is. He deprives them of the joy that is implied in the pure lightening of the Paramatma in the mirror of their pure atma.

He deprives the bhaktas and those who want to become their equals, not only of the attachment to the things of the world of change – and by that the bitter disappointment, necessarily following such attachment – but also every interest in the deliverance from the agony of ignorance.

He is *Hari*, the Thief of all thieves.

Purport, Krishna's Damodara-lila

Hari-Katha

To translate '*Hari-katha*' with 'stories about Hari' is not correct, as even one look at these so-called stories teaches that they are accounts of things that He and His Own really did and do, and that each and every account is *full* of metaphysics – as the Westerner would say – over and over again is filled with explanations of *who*, *what* and *how* God is, explanations of His Abode, His eternal bhaktas, the paths revealed by Him, and the nature of the atma and the world of Maya.

To listen, to serve and to attain knowledge are a unity, and in the degree of serving listening there is power of serving, and in the degree of listening – which is the same as serving – there is

knowledge.

Corrections

How Does the Samvit-shakti Work?

Samvit-shakti, the ability to clearly and completely know itself and impart this knowledge to others, becomes – after having touched the atma and the mind of the novice – bhakti and the ability to consciously serve Krishna for His sake, for His joy.

This samvit-shakti, through which Krishna knows and experiences Himself, streams as knowledge and power of seva through the bhakta and back to Krishna. The contact with this shakti glows as fire through the bhakta's manas, cittam and buddhi, and it is this shakti that knows and comprehends the lila for the sake of seva.

In order not to make the novice passive and indifferent, however, and make him rely on the samvit-shakti, it works so that the novice thinks he himself, his manas and buddhi endeavour to know and experience the lila.

Notes

How to Cross the Ocean of Ignorance

It is only in the human body the atma gets the boat that can cross the ocean of ignorance, with the Guru as helmsman and bhakti as favourable wind.

Corrections

How to Deal with Other Living Beings?

The Paramatma resides in every living being. To know this means not to make make them an object of my exploitation.

Notes

How to Describe the Fifth Rasa

Your task is to clearly comprehend what the substance is and then briefly describe it so that the reader for all times has the general outlines for understanding in what sense these lilas occur and immediately and instinctively rejects the nonsense that translators and poets offer him – in the form of “Indian Love Poetry” and similar attempts to drag the Divine into the dirt or glorify the dirt of the world.

Corrections

How to Read the Shastrams?

It seems evident that during the time when Vrindavana Dasa wrote the *Caitanya-Bhagavata* (ca. 12–15 years after Mahaprabhu's disappearance) there were enough fools who did not understand Bhagavan's lila with His bhaktas and who were displeased with Advaita (who was not present in the world anymore).

Fools cannot appreciate the *hide-and-seek and the revealing* [of secrets] in the course of the inner lila. They want to have God and His co-players according to *their* liking, not according to the Shastrams. They want something from God that He and His Own never do, namely, to do the fools the favour of throwing the brutal, naked, *unambiguous* truths into their faces! Please, compare with how Advaita Acarya *literally wrestled with the meaning of every word and fasted and suffered until Krishna told him the meaning. This is seva of the Shastrams!*

Don't read leisurely, with a good-natured smile, enjoying, like reading some sacred, edifying literature. Please, Vamandas, don't become angry, stay away from the frying pan [of sentimentality]! Don't get *sweet*, remain strong instead, don't be mild, and don't encourage yourself and others in sentimental stews of religious, historical mysticism.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 2.2.158

How to View the Lilas

Each lila is to be viewed from a double viewpoint:

1. As the pure *Play* and the drama and yet supreme happiness that consists in the co-players' infinite service to Him in inexhaustible joy for His pleasure.

2. As *Instructions*, contained in the attitude, questions and answers, comportment and "fate" of the co-players, for the one who wants to know – *because he wants to serve in the right way* – and which attitude and comportment are the sure way to spiritual death.

Corrections

I Love Spontaneity and Shun the Affected, the Artificial

When I come to you all, you must be just as natural and free inwardly as you were *before* my arrival. I love spontaneity and shun the affected, the artificial.

I don't come to poke about in your souls; everyone, as he is, *with* his faults and virtues, must develop freely in seva.

Letter before Svami's return to Europe in 1961

I Want People to Be Interested in Krishna – not in me

I have always disliked appearing in public because, after all, I know that there are only few who understand the things that deal with Krishna, and I want people to be interested in Krishna – not in me.

Letter 1963

In the Gaudiya Math

You must have your own frail, i.e., organic, system tailor-made, no suit off the peg. It is only when you subordinate yourself and your environment to your personal necessities and rules of living that you can render your fellow beings a service. Judges of character can see through your automatic skeleton suit in the same manner as you can see through the armour of conventions, into the corrupt “substance” of the kernel, into the insincerity. Only those who are truly existing [who are sat, i.e., premabhaktas] can teach – and those are the last who adopt the pose of a teacher. The others can “talk about” being more humble than a blade of grass, but cannot live a comrade-leader-fellowship as Christ has done, because in that case they fear – with perfect justice – that they would lose the possibility to be a teacher, in other words: their so-called

respect. In the best possible way you should withdraw from the marketplace and shape your life, in all expressions of your being, as a direct consequence of your true relation to God. Watch out for stereotypes, which will kill you, and what is worse, the thing itself. Be free!

In the Gaudiya Math, Darjeeling 1936

In the World – in spite of the World – beyond the World

We have no message of “peace on earth”; the Earth laughs at the rulers who fight for her – and only their name remains. Still, everything has to go through combat and death. Think of what Arjuna saw: the kings, etc., are dead even before the fight.

There has hardly been any religion that has taken reality as seriously as Vaishnavism, that has seen its tragic nature without the desire to sweep it aside or idealize it, that has wished to endeavour towards the realm of freedom – in the world, in spite of the world, through the world, beyond the world.

How could there be peace, humanity, without perceiving and acknowledging the atma in all beings – and the Paramatma – whose indirect presence in all beings guarantees infallible justice, and whose function ceases when Krishna enters the heart through the ear and thereby makes the atma a citizen in the realm of

freedom, the realm of true love, knowledge and service.

Letter 1957

Inner Sincerity

It seems that the most important aspect of a religious life is forgotten – and on the whole this happens in the practical structuring of every religion. First, unless this is not already the case, one has to become a completely open, straightforward, honest human being, without mental crookedness or deceitfulness, be totally frank.

This inner sincerity is what allows the essence, the authentic in a religion to grow and develop, and as long as this inner sincerity is there, we have “classic” religion. A complete acceptance of oneself – be it as a righteous, orderly citizen, a criminal or a saint – with all consequences – is the sole prerequisite for a man to be able to lead a life as himself and then really be able to devote his life to God.

When the inner courage, the earnest, free daring is missing from the outset, the entire religious development is doomed to end up in a miserable desire to sneak away, in awful escapism, in mental deformity – and this is the actual degradation to which the individuals and the churches, the sects and the religious organizations have irretrievably given way – in the West as well as in the East.

I have often asked myself how many hard blows of fate shall be needed in order to lead a straying individual, who does not know himself, onto the right path, i.e., to bring him to himself, and I'm afraid I have to admit that most people are like the tiny tumblers we used to play with as children. This is just the way it is with the majority, and the heavy persecutions have in no way helped the churches to find their way back to themselves. And it is even worse in the East: here "humbler than a blade of grass" has turned into a downright weakness – already before one is hit by a blow of fate or is the target of "persecution", one's strength is exhausted, has gone up in smoke.

You must wonder why I write a letter like this. The reason is quite easy to see: to me it appears preferable to present – already from the beginning and quite objectively – what the Vedic religion and bhakti is and wants, without revealing oneself to the audience or the reader as a follower of this cult and as a result of that – more or less – be forced to justify oneself to people of other world views and religions and wish to seduce or convince them into adopting a new cult.

The classical Buddhism, e.g., was first presented in this manner to the West and quite objective accounts, not tied to any personality, have helped many westerners to sincerely worship and love Buddha, without externally forming a new cult, without forcing an external dramatic "conversion". When Buddhist groups were formed it already went wrong; and where attempts were made

to bring East and West closer in the “form” of Western philosophy or comparisons with Christian theology, etc., (Otto, Deussen, Dr Radha-Krishnan) all went wrong.

I don't know if I am explicit enough – I mean – one must not involve oneself personally – one's own experiences, emotions, etc. – in the presentation of the subject; this in order to, more or less, also force the listener or the reader, at least for a significant space of time, to remain outside, subjectively. This does not imply that one should be lifeless, intellectual; one should only present the subject itself, and by no means oneself – like Shukadeva does, in the ideal case. Only very rarely does he reveal himself clearly, and only the knower of *rasa* knows where he stands.

Therefore: more of accounts, less of confessions. The listener, the reader must remain outside, subjectively, before he enters of his own accord (without being forced, subjectively). I believe it must end in a catastrophe if one tries in some way to bring the East, or India, closer to the West; one shall describe the eternal, and thereby, first of all, what is human on the whole – to the East as well as to the West.

Letter 1958

Intellect and Instinct Is Like a Useless Firefly before the Sun

Human intellect and instinct is like a useless firefly before the sun. To understand a little bit only, one must first forget all what one thinks, feels, has heard or learnt from books, translations, etc. In Sanskrit ‘desirous to hear’ and ‘desirous to serve’ [‘sushrushu’] are identical terms.

From birth to birth we have been exploiting each other and trying even to exploit *God* for our individual joy and good. But we may try in this life to learn to serve for the sake of the pleasure of the object of our service and love, and not in the hope of improving our own lot thereby; service as aim and not as a means to an end.

Mere intellectualism leads to the idea of a dry, bloodless and lifeless God. Mere sentimentality leads to a shallow, romantic mysticism. Remember, if and when a Revelation by God is given at all, it will be perfectly clear and distinct. When and where it is greater than the capacity of our intellect to grasp, this Revelation will tell us why it is so and what is the way to receive distinct and clear notions by His method. Poetic and mystic nebulous romanticism has done more harm to the cause of religion than the most vehement atheism.

A look at ourselves and the world teaches us that there is something wrong, there is a misunderstanding somewhere. The trouble is, we do not know who we are. The instincts and the desire

to become happy ourselves compel us to remain slaves of our intuitions. Thus, first religion must tell us – if it should have any value whatsoever – what we are and what is the relation between our body, individual soul, mind, reason, heart, etc., to the atma which happens to come under the covers of body and mind. If we want to go beyond the stage of intellectual animals that want mental and emotional satisfaction, we must give up the pride to believe that we are such important creatures in the endless universes, that God should be so much busy with the little tiny affairs of our life.

The sand in the watch [hour-glass] of my life is running out rapidly. I wish so much I could be with you there and tell you certain things in clear and distinct words – which you would not like first, because God's Revelation causes shocks and destroys our self, admiration, complacency and self-assertion. But it is like a life-and-death operation – we escape it and then it becomes too late.

Nobody can cling to the ideas, feelings and instincts one fondles and nourishes like a baby; with those wrong ideas and mysticism – all foolish luggage – one cannot tread the lonely path of serving and realizing God. *Nobody* can try to please both – God and the world – and one's own mind. Everyone has to watch himself carefully – do not trust your own mind or the mind of those who do not want to serve God without expectation of any reward.

Letter 1956

Is There a Caitanya Theology?

The School of Caitanya does not give the words of the Shastrams a meaning that shall or should serve as a foundation or support for a particular theology or dogmatics. Jiva Goswami has often pointed out that there cannot be a more serious offence against God and His Word Revelation than to accept certain *Shrutis* and refuse others – in favour of a certain theology or philosophy – to give the words a meaning that is not evident from the entire text and its context.

One of the aims of Mahaprabhu and the original Gosvamis is to give what the *Shrutis* actually say, without confining them to a monistic or dualistic interpretation – against all traditional ways of thinking and deeply rooted tradition-bound misinterpretations.

One cannot speak of a Caitanya theology at all, only a *theology of the Shastrams*, as they give it themselves, completely objectively, a meaning which reveals itself and becomes accessible to the person who listens to the Revelation with love and perceives every word *without* preconceived theology, a *completely objective* conception of the meaning the Author Himself = Bhagavan has in view.

Letter 1955

It Is Krishna Who Uses the Guru as an Instrument

One thing is certain: whenever we think that this or that person has *made* people “bhaktas”, we are from the very start on the wrong track. The fact is that if a person has *aprakrita sukriti* [bhakti-vasanas or seeds/impressions of bhakti-shakti from previous lives], then the Paramatma makes that person meet the shiksha-guru who is the instrument to instruct the adept.

The guru *never* poses as the great man who imparts *bhakti* to others, because it is the *hearing* of *Hari-katha* [the accounts of Hari] from the lips of the guru that leads to shraddha in His seva, the firm conviction in His service and the determination to act accordingly. It is Krishna Who uses the *guru* as an *instrument*.

Letter 1974

It's All about Those Noble-Spirited Ones

It's all about those noble-spirited ones who are able to tread the most glorious path in this age of discord – as a consequence of their service during former lives – and to assemble those; and secondly, for the future, in words and writings establish that there are such glorious, great Divine things – completely different from what man expects and senses – to help persons like Sadananda to be able to truly perceive the highest truth.

Jesus Christ as a Shakti-Avesha-Avatara

Jesus Christ is a shakti-avesha-avatara, a great human being in whom Vishnu's shakti has entered, and who knows himself to be God's servant or son. In any case, this was the opinion of my teacher, a statement that many other of his disciples have withheld and that has never been published.

Christianity: we have no reason to doubt that actual and real Christ – not what is going on to be given as “Christ” – *is the* way to God the *Father*. In relation to Him we are like children, but this father-children relation is only one of the possible forms of relation the soul [atma] can have to Him, and it implies a great danger to regard Him as the Divine Order Supplier or Department-Store Director to whom we may appeal for redress of our moral, intellectual, physical or spiritual wants and needs.

Christ has not given replies to the most burning problems of our soul [atma] and our relation to God, because possibly, this was not needed or intended by this form of Divine Descent. Christian mystics have tried to express higher individual forms of their own realizations with the vocabulary of Christianity – but *actual* and real revelation expresses itself in *words* and *ideas* and they appear too meagre and lifeless in these mystics. Had they come in contact

with Hindu Shastrams and not late classical philosophy they might have found more encouragement and scope.

Letter 1954

Jiva-atmas Are Eternally Different

We are sorry, unfortunately there is no democracy in God's realm. Because of his constitution, an atma – who has strayed in the world of aversion to God and finally been freed from this aversion and got a mind and body formed from cit-shakti – will eternally be different from those who have been His bhaktas since eternity, whose atmas consist of cit-shakti, His Own [internal] potency.

Corrections

Karma-Dharma-Determination of Will

A certain individual has got a certain gross body endowed with five senses and a subtle body consisting of *manas*, *buddhi* and *ahamkara*. Through the medium of the five senses, i.e., ear, eye, nose, tongue and skin, impressions of the respective qualities of [different] objects are *received* by the mind (*manas*). *Impressions* result from the contact of the object with the sense organ if the proper medium is there to establish the contact. *The impressions*

are received in awareness as conscious impressions or in unawareness as subconscious impressions.

They are followed by actions and reactions instinctively. From the contact arise three kinds of sensations (*vedana*): agreeable (+), disagreeable (–) and neutral (0). *Love*, *aversion* and *indifference* are the mental reactions to them. They are the three forms of desire or *trishna* for continuance of the agreeable, discontinuance of the disagreeable and admixture of both in case of the neutral.

From desire, if allowed to have its free play, a habitual attachment is formed, determining the direction of the metaphysical and morphological situation of the next existence. To what one is attached, there “me” will appear again, i.e., one will get a gross and physical body more or less fit to enjoy those objects one’s will was hankering after.

Immediate result of the action prompted by desire is the *vasana*, i.e., recoil of the action back on the agent, leaving an impression on his nature, character and tendencies. They are seed-forms or potentialities arising from action which in due time begin to germinate, as desires, tendencies, aptitudes, etc. Remote result is the pleasant reward for good action, painful punishment for evil action. This result rarely follows on the heels of action. Good is what is conducive towards the attainment of self-awareness [awareness of one’s true identity, the *atma*], bad the opposite.

The *Shastrams* determine what is conducive for a particular person in a particular situation and what not. This *Shastric*

reference is necessary, because ignorance shrouds the knowledge to a greater or lesser extent and the knowledge of what is conducive to the Self [atma] would require the knowledge and realization of the Self first. Shastrams assist man to be the full expression of his own nature (*dharma*) and thereby to attain fitness for higher tasks than given by his constitution at present.

Buddhi is a function of the subtle body, which discriminates, elaborates, abstracts and deliberates the means leading to the object to which the *desire* pulls a person. It is more or less developed and a person reacts therefore in a way, which depends on the nature of his buddhi – so far as he is not acting *quite* unconsciously.

According to the individual character of senses, manas and buddhi the “person” receives a certain more or less correct impression of the object or the sum total of the objects he experienced – i.e., his world. Moreover, the fundamental distortion in all “normal” cases is this: all experiences are related to the sense of ego or ahamkara, i.e., the “happiness” of the mind, which enjoys through the medium of the senses, is supposed to be the happiness of the whole personality and all things; also the results of the abstracting, etc., faculty of the buddhi are considered exclusively under the view point: are they promoting the gratification of the “ego” and the supposed welfare of the individual.

[Thus] the “normal” man is a *slave of his own nature and acts and reaps fruits of action accordingly*.

But in all is the propelling force of the all-cit-attracting power of attraction emanating from Krishna. They are prompted by this attraction to *act* and they suffer and enjoy according to their actions. This attraction is realized in the degree of the willingness to realize it. So long as ahamkara misidentifies the Self with the gross and subtle body, man is living on the plane of suffering. If man identifies himself only with cit, then all expressions of the attraction-nature are realized as supreme bliss.

If, as the result of good actions, a person has acquired sukriti or the proper opportunity [to receive grace], then the person will come across certain “phenomena” which appear to be less veiled by the material bodies, in contact with more advanced people and their paraphernalia. At best he will experience the grace of the Enlightened One who directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously sends energy-waves penetrating the *subtle* body and contacting his *cit*. In reality all things are cit, they are matter only so long as desire degrades them to matter and ahamkara distorts them.

The outer aura [the citta, the receptive consciousness] of the self-effulgent cit or pure consciousness [the atma] is more or less darkened – like the surface of the ocean in storm is covered with waves distorting the badly reflected outer objects. Under the influence of what is described in the previous paragraph, conscious or unconscious desire or interest is awakened to move towards such a plane of existence, where there is a greater chance to bring

the [spark of] cit to its self-effulgence, i.e., to know Truth in an undisturbed manner.

Various methods will be followed leading to the dissolution of ahamkara. As all fruitive actions prompted by desire were undertaken in the erroneous belief in the phenomenal personality, desire will automatically be eliminated in the degree this ignorance about the Self is removed. Desire and habitual attachment will have to be curbed and this is possible only by the Grace or special self-revelation of the Absolute which is experienced as undeserved but is actually the result of the willing cooperation of the cit-individual and the cit-Absolute made possible by proper action.

Since experiences were made – since there are desires leading to them – desires exist, forming vasanas and engaging the mind in the quest of the desired object. Intellect appears to be in the service of *desire*. Actually both condition each other. But desire-habitual attachment determines the nature of the intellect in the next “life”. *Desire* can be curbed only if ahamkara is removed. Ahamkara is removed if a strong attraction is felt by *cit*, if it awakens. It awakens if citta [the receptive layer of the mind] is less (not) disturbed by passion (desire).

Without the injunctions of the *Vedas*, i.e., the experience of the self-realized souls, which is to be made known to man by education, nobody can acquire sukriti. Whether he is educated in this way depends on the degree how he fulfilled his purely

morphological and ethical responsibilities enjoined upon him by the respective societies.

Solution of the Problem

If human nature would be void of the principle of cit or if this cit would be insentient, life- and actionless, the problem could not be solved as each tendency of will depends on previous experience, etc., ad infinitum. But cit is a living principle, nay, it is due to its nature of being a combination of pure act and intelligence that the system of the physical and mental bodies works as a living unit. Under the sway of desire it appears as if cit is pulled to various directions and covered accordingly by respective obscuring bodies – helplessly like inert matter.

But: the infinitesimal [infinitely small] Absolute of the individual Self-cit is an emanation of the shakti of Divinity itself, from the beginningless beginning of the nature of tatastha, i.e., footed on the borderline between pure cit and its shadow or counterpart: maya.

Being an individual ray of Divine consciousness the Divine nature is inherent in it to know and love *it*-self [the Consciousness-Sun] in a way peculiar to itself. In order to intensify this self-realization it [the Self] is covered by enveloping physical and mental screens, the nature of which is purely of the own making. God is the efficient cause in bringing the latent tendencies of each

individual to fruition. He is neither partial nor cruel. According to the individual character, a person has a predisposition for a certain method or discipline and the respective manifestive aspect of Divinity is revealed to him as inculcated in the method.

On the other side, pulled by desire and due to ignorance of the phenomenal idola, he is induced to look after the preservation and aggrandisement of his biological ego (ahamkara). The phenomenal world is constituted in such a way that it does not offer any permanent satisfaction. This negative valuation would lead only to pessimistic renunciation, not to anything positive, if the *desire to serve* or to be expression of Divine attraction, unconditionally, would not be inherent in the cit which – though apparently dormant – nevertheless prompts from within and creates inner unrest in the mental system: the *conscience* involves the oscillation between desire to enjoy (due to habitual attachment) and desire to serve inherent in the soul [cit-atma]. This conscience is more or less developed according to the degree to which the cit has taken the initiative due to previous association with spiritual facts. The cit is always eagerly attracted and tries to move towards such facts (people who are *self-realized*, places sanctified by their presence, scriptures dealing with their realisations and methods leading to them). Each and every contact with such facts increases this tendency and brings into existence a greater and subtler mental oscillation of the consciousness:

1. In *cit* there is no freedom. It is Divine and seeks to be unhindered expression of the Divinity. (“God is bound to His Own nature.”) [There is only *cit* determining everything and no problem exists.]

2. In [the world of phenomena itself] there is no problem [either].

3. In the ego there is freedom in the degree and intensity of the oscillation of consciousness, which depends to some extent on the self-conditioned physico-mental character, to some greater extent on the attraction or affection of *cit* by spiritual facts.

[Hence freedom can be displayed] only where there are alternations, [i.e.] consciousness-unrest-oscillations.

Notes to Vamandas in the internment camp in India, 1944

Know Thyself?

Over and over again it is emphasized that *bhakti* comes from *Him* when He is present in His avatara as Gauranga. *Bhakti* is not something that originates in the human mind and heart, etc., not at all, not even in the *atma*, whose *shakti* is so infinitesimal that he is not even capable of knowing himself.

This is so important, because all *attempts at introspection*, attempts at “knowing thyself” are futile, because man’s ignorance of his nature and the *atma*’s ignorance of himself are caused by *Maya*’s *shakti* – which makes him entangled in *avidya* (ignorance)

and in the world at the very moment when the atma *turns away from*, becomes *averse* to His seva. In order to attain knowledge of oneself, first of all, the fundamental cause of the entanglement in ignorance – i.e., the *turning away* from God and His seva – must be removed, and the *turning towards* seva is only caused by *bhakti*.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 2.19.1

Krishna-Karnamritam 1.104

To the bhakta, each attempt to think or to do something seems meaningless, as long as his very life is not practically and in every regard meant for the joy and pleasure of God alone. True respect for the Divine in man, a dispassionate knowledge of our true being, makes our mission known, our aim as man: from eternity to eternity, to serve the Divine Centre of all Consciousness; and with loving, knowing devotion dedicate our lives to Him, the figure of unprecedented, supreme beauty. This is the prerequisite for a true life as man, without shame and depreciation of the value of man.

The bhakta rejoices, when at least outwardly an attempt is made to eliminate arbitrariness and violence from the political and social life for the sake of the coming historical future of our globe; to protect the freedom of spiritual and religious progress for the individual as well as for communities of different cults from attacks by confused fanatics of any shade; and to initiate an

outward or formal brotherhood of man, based on common ethical values.

But the gigantic misconception of man, who believes he lives and thinks, the forces of nature work and shape, the breath of history passes in and out, for his sake, for the sake of man, is like a rock on the bhakta's heart, crushing all hopes.

No one is able to let the forces, emanating from the figure of the unprecedented, supreme Beauty of Godhead, the Centre of all Life, Shri Krishna (Shri = beauty; Krishna = centre), shape and work in his own everyday-life, or in a firm voice, through his words and his way of thinking, make these forces discernible and perceptible to his fellow beings – no one who never endeavoured to comprehend and realize these forces, to think and to act through these forces: to please Krishna, for the sake of His joy. How could he, when he does not even dare to assume the existence of a substantial Divine source of his own being and all creatures.

In those days, when the most prominent representative of bhakti (knowing, serving love for God) in India in our times, Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati, was told that in Germany of 1934 there was no room for the cult of Krishna-bhakti (the Caitanya cult), he, my teacher said, by this Germany intentionally had turned away from the Centre of all Existence, and a people will meet with the same fate as an individual when it tries to turn away from the maintaining and supporting Centre of all Existence. He emphasized that the individual as well as the people will quickly meet with its

inner destruction and dissolution, as their lives have lost their meaning.

As a lump of cosmic matter, which diverges from its trajectory and loses touch with the gravitational pull of its centre, dashes through space till it finally dissolves into dust devoid of essence and falls down onto some distant heavenly body – so it is with every human life and every people, who wants to live for its own sake and detaches itself from the Divine Centre of all existence, Shri Krishna.

In an old Sanskrit work, *Krishna-Karnamritam*, the verses of which are often sung by noble men in the South of India and grants comfort and strength to many true friends of God, it says:

premadam ca me kamadam ca me
vedanam ca me vaibhavam ca me
jivanam ca me jivitam ca me
daivatam ca me deva naparam (104)

(Thou, oh Shri Krishna),
granting me Love,
granting me fulfilment of my Wishes,
granting me Feeling,
granting me Knowledge,
granting me Life,
granting me Nourishment,

granting me Light,
oh God (only Thee I seek),
and nothing else
(Only Thee I serve).

This means: You, Shri Krishna, the original figure of all beauty, You grant me prema or enthusiastic, ravishing, joyful Love for You and the Divine in all that is. And as You grant me the highest fruit and the highest aim there is in life, You are kamada or He who fulfils all I wish for, because I wish for nothing else than for the power of Love – emanating from You and leading to You, that originates in Your Beauty – to imbue my life and be so strong, that (through me) in loving humility, it shall sprout and flourish in other people.

I want to feel (vedanam) nothing, except the happiness, the joy and suffering, that are allotted to me in my devotion to You, which implies experiencing Your nature and seeing Your form. And while You are thus, You are my knowledge (vedanam; another meaning) and my understanding. Owing to Your Grace and power I cannot perceive anything as separate, disconnected from You. To me, all that I realise and experience has the most intimate connection with You – even though people around me are unaware of this, and cannot divine, that nothing takes place, if not for Your sake and to intensify Your Own being.

Your greatness and might of beauty and power (vaibhavam) and

my own inability to think and to do everything for Your sake, and to lead other people to the same joyful experience, make me modest. Yet, when I look back at my life and the different ways I tried to reach You, it seems like a miracle, incredibly singular, that amidst the whirlpool around me and the tumult inside me, both trying to carry me away from You with terrible speed into boundless vagueness and uncertainty, I still met the power of vaibhavam. And it originates in You and is Your power, this magnificent attracting power, which unconsciously first, consciously later, I felt working in me. This power enabled me – against all likelihood – to fight back all obstacles, keep my mind focussed on You and stand my ground against the current, trying to sweep me away from You.

You are my life (jivanam), as in the same degree that I move forward to You and can rouse the interest in others in joining into that movement towards the Centre of all being, I realize, that I live for Your sake alone. Considering my own past, a life not dedicated to You seems to be like death to me. And if I were cut off from You, I would be like a dark particle of cosmic matter, separated from the Source of all being by the centrifugal force, darting through the depths of space and soon, without having fulfilled the meaning of it's life, dimming away into darkness and non-existence, losing the little heat left, that did not even originate in it.

Therefore You are nourishment (jivitam) to me. Anything apart from You cannot sustain me. And sapless, dry and indigestible

have become the actions and gossip of the people, who don't revolve around You. You are the light (daivatam), shining brilliantly. You are the perfection of male beauty. And wherever I dedicate myself to You, when I can perceive one ray or the other of Your effulgent form, my own life, thinking and conduct obtains a pale reflection of it through the beauty of my devotion to You.

You, oh Godhead (deva), are everything, and I refuse to bow to anybody else in fear or in adoration, to let others force me to love or devote myself to anything else but You. I won't love anything but You. And for those who are not interested in knowing or getting an idea about You the poet put the final words: nothing else (naparam; na aparam) – implying also, that anything, being not centred around You or being separated from You, is nothing.

All true being is rooted in You, lives through You, originates from You and flows back to You. Who doesn't let himself be captured by the fascination for the objects and ideas, so easily alluring those, who are turned away from Krishna and which they take so seriously, knows, that these things are not worth being. And – regarding them dispassionately – they are in the true sense of the word not real but just appear to be so, because they have no meaning.

The bhakta knows that he is dreaming, when he imagines a world of man, where everybody aids and encourages each other in leading a true life for Krishna's sake and that, in the end, he and his few scattered fellow bhaktas are destined to be quite lonesome and

isolated.

At the same time he is convinced, that there is only one answer to all questions of his life and the lives of the others: to gain perfection in the devotion to God. In the meantime his fellow-men will unconsciously be touched by this power working in him – even if they turn away from him or are mocking at him.

And truly these very few centres of power, transmitting this power, cloaked in the strangest forms, are the ones who are influencing the fate of mankind, without people being aware of it. Like in a parallelogram of forces, where the mass of people moves away from God and a ridiculously tiny minority really aims at and strives for Him, the resultant, judged by externals, appears only as a movement towards higher moral and humanitarian standards – as more than ethical and moral values and conduct cannot be induced by this little force of the very few in the masses, who reject God.

Even if the shaping of a better political and social world [after the Second World War] is not based on the deepest foundations of life, it is just what Indian philosophy calls *naimittika dharma* (temporary world order). For the individual as well as for mankind, a society, based on humanitarian and ethical beliefs, is a prerequisite for becoming influenced and affected by deeper and more essential motives.

Internment camp in India 1945

Krishna Must Come into the Heart through the Ear

Never forget that it is impossible to experience Krishna through the eyes. He must come into the heart through the ear. First we must *listen* – and bhakti only is the power to hear and understand the meaning of what one hears. And the first we hear is that God by no means is what our mentality expects. He is totally different! He completely withdraws when we have the slightest tinge of the wish to experience from our side, but He becomes completely submissive when we only want His seva without being the least aware of our own selves.

Letter 1955

Krishna’s Intense Desire

Pondering upon His Own prema for His bhaktas and comparing this with the prema of His beloved bhaktas for Him, and realizing that their prema for Him is much more lovely than His Own prema for them, He became avatara here in Gauda, due to intense desire (lobha) for the prema of His beloved for Him. In the form of a bhakta, of golden lustre, this Hari, in the garb of a sannyasi, Saci’s Son with the name Krishna-Caitanya, He is here in unprecedented, unequalled excellence.

Brihad-Bhagavatamritam 1.1.3

Like Birds Fleeing a Burning Forest

If I had noticed that Caitanyadeva's appearance day had been celebrated in the heart of the surrounding world today, if ever so little, I would have been so grateful.

It seems as if the animosity in the heart of the world, even the unconscious, is directed towards Caitanyadev and Krishna, without touching Them – whereas it pierces the bodies of the unfortunate bhaktas who still persevere in this world.

Krishna and Caitanya, with Their rejection of everything, *everything* that man values, cannot have any scope in this world, and the world's hate *must* be directed towards the bhakta, also when he remains silent. The rich and the poor, both feel the reproach in the bhakta's eyes; his mere presence makes them flee like birds fleeing a burning forest.

Letter from Calcutta 1952

Listen – Obey – Serve

One must have the truly genuine love for God, the will to *serve*, and then only, and to the degree one has this love, one becomes capable of understanding the secret meaning of the lila; consequently, the exact opposite of a mere romantic wallowing in emotions, where one tries to exploit God and His lila for the sake

of one's own joy.

It is obvious that this ecstatic, loving service is completely spiritual [cit], because Krishna has already said that the very first stage of the will to serve, shraddha, the firm conviction that serving God is the eternal meaning of life, is transcendent.

One simply cannot read the *Bhagavatam* or the works of the Gosvamis like one reads a mundane poem, with the same mayic-selfish attitude – the only difference being that God is the subject.

It is more than a coincidence that the word 'sushrushu' means the following two things: 'To be willing to listen *and* to serve'. To listen does not mean *to listen to*, but to *obey-serve; both inseparably united*.

But all of you want to hear – not obey, not let yourself be instructed by the Shastrams, not put aside what *you* think of God, the world and bhakti, etc. You want to adhere to what *you* feel and think, based on what you keep in your mayic hearts. You want to keep this.

Why does Krishna forbid Uddhava and Arjuna to pass on the instructions they have got to non-bhaktas, to those who don't want to serve? For selfish reasons? – No, because those who don't want to serve are incapable of understanding what is said, actually cannot hear what is said at all.

Corrections

Man as Such Can Never Do Seva

Seva is highest when the bhakta forgets his own self while pleasing the Lord and His eternal companion (parishad) by his seva. Man at his best wants peace, eternal bliss. – Man as such can never do seva. The atma requires God's Own power of knowledge and bliss to be able to serve Him. This power is everywhere – always – but becomes manifest through Guru and Shastram.

The Western or Christian conception of the world and man cannot form the basis to understand bhakti.

The presence of the cosmos does not exclude the all-occupying presence of God, His realm and His power – but the experience of the cosmos excludes the experience of God.

God as origin, maintainer, etc., of the universes is only $\frac{1}{4}$ of God as He really is, but even this $\frac{1}{4}$ is all-pervading and all-permeating.

To experience the world, the atma requires the false ego in relation to the guna-maya mind and body. Virtue and sin are relative terms concerning the false ego of man. The atma by constitution belongs to the cit-realm, but as he is an atom of cit only, he requires cit-shakti to realize His and his own nature.

Bhakti is the shakti to know and to love. As soon as this shakti is given, the atma becomes mukta in the original sense of the word. Then he does everything from His point of view, not from the atma's or much less from the point of view of the present ego.

Maya as the Tendency to Deprive Everything of Its Own Nature

Often, used in a purely negative sense, ‘maya’ is another term for enchantment or mental confusion, ignorance, moha. Maya gives the impression that the world she supplies is independent, that there is nothing beyond her. She makes the living being believe that it is his true nature to strive for happiness, either by intensifying his “I” or by radically dissolving it.

In this sense she is thus the tendency, the attitude of measuring, ‘anaya miyate iti maya’. She is the power through which the living being measures and estimates everything he meets – internally or externally – by the measure of its potential to sustain and to intensify the happiness of his selfish “I”, the attitude that deprives everything in this world – the inner and outer – of its own nature, and makes it an object of his own valuation and his own enjoyment.

Corrections

Maya's Drop-Scenes

It is from the loft for stage-machinery, i.e., by the deluding potency of the Supreme Lord, that the infinity of variable drop-scenes is dropped or raised. An infinity of charming drop-scenes is ready to satisfy the enjoying physical, mental or emotional temper of man for a longer or shorter period. The impatient spectators may rush towards the stage and tear the curtain they are tired to see, they may pull down one drop-scene after the other, and after a shorter or longer period they are tired again. Their enthusiasms end in pessimisms. They therefore prefer to close the light in the hall and drop the iron curtain to attain to a plain void of any designative characters, which is inducing them to follow special psychological trainings in order to accommodate their inner condition to this voidness by a process of mental absorption. They are then enjoying a kind of pseudo-peace consisting in temporary elimination of the principle of vitality.

All the time we have been in the hall busy with introspection into our and others' psychological structure and the enjoyment of drop-scenes and even of the iron curtain. We are confined to the hall of mundane, i.e., perishable ingredients. But God is constantly attracting us. We realise it in the form of an echo, by the impulsive desire to get out from the hall, but we find that the door and walls are firm and unshakeable. Then again and again we hear a voice: the door is open though it seems to be closed; it is open for

everyone who is sincerely submitting for the Truth Who out from unknown Mercy has made Himself present in the hall to tell us the method to be followed for our eternal good. He tells us: “Come to Me. I am recruiting from you all those who want to serve the Truth instead of enjoying material and mental objects.”

The Harmonist 1936

Melting of the Heart – In the Frying Pan of Sentimentality

When the atma knows himself, Maya’s gunas cannot bind him anymore, even when he is still in his body and mind. Whatever happens he “remains like stiff”, because his joy is to know his own I as atma (*Bha.* 11.11.5–17). Notice the expression, “he remains like stiff”, and compare this with the opposite effect of *bhakti*, which makes the atma exceedingly nimble, like flowing.

What you [Vamandas] always, in spite of my repeated warnings, describe as “the melting of the heart”, is not the melting of the heart, *but the state of “nimbleness, flowing”, in contrast to “stiffness”*. It is only when the atma has become agile, flexible, “*flowing*”, that he – during his experience of God and the lila – can be seized with joy, despair, fear, etc. *for Krishna’s sake*; and as a result of these cit-emotions one or more cit-symptoms will manifest, as tears, dance, laughter, etc.

Please, keep this in mind now. The word ‘drava’ does not mean ‘melted’ or ‘melting’ in the sense of butter melting in a frying pan, but ‘flowing, nimble’, in contrast to ‘stiff’. The word ‘drava’ is the opposite of ‘jada’ and ‘kathina’, ‘stiff’ and ‘rigid’.

It is not that “the heart melts” when the bhakta beholds the lila, etc., but through the power of bhakti the *atma*, who is *stiff in himself*, becomes nimble, flowing; he has become *agile and flexible* by his will to serve God.

As long as the bhakti has *not* yet become intensified to prema, but to rati, the first stage of the sthaya-bhava, the *atma* becomes soft, ‘masrinya’, but is not yet fully nimble and flowing. First of all, the *atma* must be *pure* through bhakti, i.e., free from all interests and desires other than the wish to serve and please Krishna.

The next level is: Because of the intensified power of bhakti the *atma* simply cannot wish anything but to serve Him. Alert as a gazelle with his neck raised (utkantha) he eagerly awaits the moment when he can get the opportunity to serve.

The *atma* has become ‘drava’ or fully nimble and flexible. He hears or beholds the Damodara-lila – suddenly, within or before himself, he sees Krishna, Who runs away, full of fear of Yashoda. Something unprecedented has occurred – he sees *Him*. He is seized with joy, because he is fully agile. But in the same moment he is seized with fear – for Krishna's sake. Krishna fears His mother – He is afraid of being caught by her. Krishna managed to escape! –

Now the bhakta's bodily hairs stand on end, now he laughs, now he cries for joy. Krishna has escaped – and now he does not see anything anymore.

This was not yet direct service, because he is still in the world, but with his mind and thoughts he has been allowed to serve Krishna; and now He has withdrawn – and dejected, the bhakta cries bitterly.

This happens here, while the bhakta is still on earth. And so much more when he comes to His realm, when – in every moment, through his atma's nimbleness, through bhakti, his will to serve – he is seized and captured with one or more of the cit-emotions that are triggered by the respective lila-situation.

Corrections

Metaphysics from God's Point of View

[In a commentary to *Caitanya-Bhagavata*, addressed to Vamandas and concerning his future book on Krishna-Caitanya, Sadananda writes:]

This is metaphysics from God's point of view, which is as un-Indian as it is un-Western, and it cannot be grasped by anyone. It is for this reason that it is called a-cintya, unimaginable from man's point of view. Without putting this metaphysics at the beginning of your book on Gauranga, the whole book must become a parody, as

all works in the East and the West are.

The modern Indian man [a writer], who is without bhakti, does not understand this metaphysics. Even though it is explained strongly and clearly in every work of the bhakti literature – from the *Upanishads* to the *Caitanya-Caritamrita* – again and again, he withholds them when he writes about these subjects, because he feels embarrassed to tell the modern world such abstruse things. He is afraid to make a fool of himself in a modern world that considers the laws of space, time and mathematics absolutely steadfast. He “reads” the Shastrams and leaves the metaphysics aside, and then he prays to Einstein or Heisenberg, because they teach relativity of time. But to learn about the relativity of space and time he could just as well read the account of Revati in the *Bhagavatam*.

It is no use to offer Mahaprabhu to the Western man as just another incarnation who comes to this world out of grace and as a replacement of Christ and his name. Without the basics of the above explained metaphysics nothing but a “mystical figure” remains, with a lot of phantastic miracles and a heap of Indian “mythology”, which can only fill some crooked hysterics in the West with enthusiasm – and not even for long.

The Hindus of our times don’t know this metaphysics at all, and in the past only the bhaktas who had His Own power of knowledge and understanding did. For the mass of the Indian people the Shastric duty of fulfilling their dharma in accordance with their varna remains – which offers the opportunity to meet a bhakta –

and samkirtanam. Samkirtanam is open to the whole world.

But for the moment, when it all has to start people will ask: *Who* is Krishna? Why an *Indian* expression? And then you have to explain that Krishna is not a name of the Sanskrit language, in the same way as the atma of a human being is neither European nor Indian. The word Krishna of the Sanskrit language is only a perverted shadow of the true Name, which is one with with the sat-cit-ananda form of Krishna Himself.

In the same way, when the bhakta, i.e., Krishna's shakti in him, His Own potency, pronounces the true word Krishna, it is cit through and through and no word of any human language. The word pronounced by the non-bhakta is a mere word, and whoever hears only this word does not gain anything. But when you have bhaktiyoga and you write, only thinking of Him and not of the people and only in order to serve and please Him, then, while reading your book, someone who is truly qualified by dint of his sadhana in earlier lives will experience something of the true Gauranga, Who is not an historical but an eternal personality.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata

Modern Temples Are Godless

All real temples have the Divinity in a shrine that looks almost dark from the outside. One can hardly see it, but the pujari [priest]

in there can. The people made their worship, bowed down, so that *He* could see the bhaktas. Modern temples are *godless*, built so that *we* can see (?) the Divinity.

Letter 1955

Mother India's Soil (Mother Bharat Bhumi)

In the dark hours, when it appears to me that the pangs of separation from those who love Krishna – for whose service I came to India – are unbearable, I have repeated visions of living in overcrowded quarters amidst the scorching blazing heat of a fire consuming the small buildings around me. My tongue is parched and I feel suffocated. So far I've had the strength to overcome the depressions, vanishing like thin, transparent evening clouds before the waxing moon of my hopes.

Now I visualize the hopeless nights with heavy layers of clouds, overcasting the sky without even the chance to catch one ray of the waning moon. I visualize the day when I will be asked as one in a flock of cattle to leave the country in which I was living in the loving service of my beloved Gurudev earlier in my life. Because others, not myself, identify my real person with the perishable covering of flesh and bones, called a German individual.

Perhaps it was not practical, considered from the point of view of sound common sense, to agree to the play of identifying myself sometimes with something I was not. Yet, this was the only chance to try to carry to others, occasionally at least, the outside cover of the exoteric mysteries of the art of love for Krishna.

I apprehend the day when I will know for certain not to be fortunate to bow down to the samadhi [grave] of my beloved Master or to touch the feet lotus of the few great souls left on this earth from all entourage.

I feel, if I would concede to relax for a little moment, that my energy and willpower utilized to the last to keep this physical and mental organism running, it would vanish as water from the open hand. Should it be really worthwhile the effort to try to make this body proceed to a country where I have to miss the invigorating rays emanating from the spiritual soil of India, cut off completely from the chance to support myself by the verbal vibrations of real bhaktas, to live after years of internment again alone with no one to talk to or exchange thoughts and experiences, without the many forms and things in this country which awaken associations with Krishna and His descents?

Oscillating between the two alternatives of proceeding to a desert or leaving this body to the care of Mother Bharat Bhumi, I cannot make up my mind, and trust Prabhupad [Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati] and Krishna will decide and make me realize the decision soon and unexpectedly.

My Gurudeva's Piece of Advice

During my journeys in India I met countless learned and so-called holy men. Some were very good people, but no one really considered the Shastrams to be the “Light” and not their own intuition and their own “experiences”. Believe me when I say that I was startled when I realized that base emotional piety was presented as bhakti and was praised as such.

Gurudev [Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati] used to give the following piece of advice: “When one listens to or reads the Shastrams, first of all one must forget, free oneself from everything one knows from other sources.” Gradually I realized that what people read, project into, and translate from the Shastrams – from the *Upanishads* to the *Bhagavatam* – what they present as the teachings of the *Upanishads*, etc., is not in the texts themselves; that people either are too lazy to see in what sense a word is used in the text itself – or simply are unable to keep their own world of ideas and their own emotions out of the texts.

Letter to Vamandas 1956

My Mission

[In the camp in India during the Second World War, Sadananda went through several operations and was often bedridden. On one occasion when he was hovering between life and death he uttered these words to his disciple Vamandas:]

My mission was just this: to be born as a human being far away from India, in Europe, and in spite of countless difficulties still become Prabhupada's [Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati's] friend. He told me we have always been together since eternity.

Notebook Vamandas

Nama and the Mountain Peak of Pride

'Nama' is derived from the verbal root *nam*; *namayati* = causative: he brings down. Nama is what causes something to be brought down. But who is brought down and where to?

The Name brings down two persons:

1. He who performs Nama-samkirtanam, and
2. He who is identical with the Name, i.e., Bhagavan.

He who is absorbed (*abhinivesha*) in his body and considers it to be his self (*atma*), i.e., every bound *jiva*, has some pride in regard to

something, and as long as this arrogance (abhimana) is present in one's heart, knowledge about Bhagavan's nature is absolutely impossible. By its own power, the Name brings down the one who utters it, brings him down from the mountain peak of his pride, causes his arrogance to disappear and his cittam to become completely pure.

Furthermore, the Name has the shakti to bring Bhagavan down to him who utters the Name, It grants him Bhagavan's darshana (makes Bhagavan appear to him), and causes kripa (seizing grace) in Bhagavan's cittam, so that he who utters the Name attains everything he could possibly wish for.

The Name is a-prakrita (does not consist of maya) and cannot be uttered, heard or thought, etc., by any prakrita-faculty of man, but to him who is turned to seva it appears quite spontaneously, on his lips, in his ears, and in his mind.

Caitanya-Caritamrita 3.20.1–8

Nirguna-bhakti

Nirguna-bhakti has nothing to do with the Indian, the Eastern, it is beyond *every* human emotion, every soul – Eastern or Western. The *Bhagavatam* and bhakti imply something *completely* un-Indian. Being able to appreciate them requires a *complete* break with the Indian *and* Western.

First of all, you must give yourself and the people a *clear*, distinct “psychology” and “philosophy” – as a *foundation*. You are *not* Mahaprabhu who by His mere command: “Say Krishna!” bestowed bhakti-shakti upon the atmas, so that the disciples immediately grasped and could discern what the atma, the cittam, the world, God, Brahma and Krishna and their mutual relation is.

Letter to Vamandas 1954

No Joy to Be Dasa Anymore, but to Be Great

You see how fast the lilas became misunderstood and how want of bhakti entailed nasty things. As soon as those who are eternal co-players (parishadas) disappeared into the realm beyond time and space and mere humans claimed to be gurus and disciples – and there was no joy to be *dasa* anymore, but to be great, to be guru, to teach others – the whole tragedy of the history of the Caitanya movement begins.

[What Svami Sadananda Dasa refers to in this case is Vrindavana Dasa Thakura’s own words in his work *Caitanya-Bhagavata*, where he writes that some followers of Advaita already during Vrindavana Dasa’s time misunderstood Caitanya’s lilas with His eternal co-players, proclaiming that Advaita was Krishna and Mahaprabhu and Nityananda his servants.]

Kaviraja Gosvami in remote Vrindavan and Jiva Gosvami had

also begun to experience the beginning of the dismal situation, which probably has reached its lowest point in our time – with short periods of enlightenment thanks to Bhaktivinoda and Prabhupada [Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati].

Purport, Caitanya-Bhagavata 2.22.145

No Panacea

The purpose of the Word Revelation is not to read it from A to Z and collect what suits us. Firstly, man needs a Guru who is rooted in both Shabda-Brahma [Word-Brahma] and Para-Brahma [Bhagavan], and secondly, who clearly perceives on which level the person concerned is, and who gives him and explains that part of the Revelation he deserves.

Consequently, to the casual observer, the Word Revelation as a whole very often seems to be contradictory, and it perplexes modern man, as he wants a universal panacea for man in general, which is simple and clear.

What counts, as far as the Indian Word Revelation is concerned, is sadhana, to seek, endeavour, to serve – deeper and deeper, more and more.

Letter to Vamandas 1957

No Prayer – Except for His Love – Does Ever Reach Him

Krishna by no means loves the creatures as such. He loves them to the degree that His shakti of serving Love is alive in them – otherwise they are obliged to follow the course of the fruits of their actions through many cycles of existences.

We must not think of God as being sentimental regarding the sorrow of this world. Krishna Himself has nothing to do with it, nor does any prayer – except for His Love – ever reach Him. There are, however, lower and cheaper forms of Him to whom we may appeal for redress of grievances out of our own selfishness.

From the moment he decided to enjoy and not to love and serve God, the jiva has become slave of his own actions. But by his very nature the jiva belongs to Him and His seva and Love, and when a jiva is prepared – in the course of various cycles of lives – to accept His Grace, he will meet Him or the bhaktas who give the shakti or energy to the jiva – in order to empower him to revise his previous decision and associate with His Seva.

Letter 1954

No Progress without Conflicts

You ask about the purpose of the intensified tribulations of sensual

Just as soon as someone wants to tread the path of bhakti. Don't forget that Vishnu – during the churning of the ocean [samudra-manthanam] – strengthens *both* the devas and the asuras. There is no progress *without* conflict – neither here nor there. Think of *Vritra-asura* who had to revenge his brother, because his gunas wanted so – still, he is a bhakta of tremendous calibre.

What takes place in our body and mind shall be regarded as a bad movie that is a bore because one knows what good theatre is. And the senses, etc., become *uninteresting* – and thereby the world and all the mice that “squeak in heaven” – when one knows God's inner realm with all His pastimes taking place there – beyond the fuss of all the universes.

The bhakta, seized by the power of bhakti, acts with his body, mind and atma, all three made red-hot of bhakti-shakti – even the illusory I, which knows itself to be “John”. As long as the shakti is weak, body and mind go their own way – as a horrible movie – till the shakti becomes stronger; as with the *wrestler* who abstains from wine, women and song for the sake of mere honour, because the honour is more worth to him. It is the same with the bhakta, to whom the service of God is *more worth* than the enjoyments of the world.

One must only be clear about what one values, values more, and values most. – Stagnation, standstill is death. Without conflicts no progress, no intensification. Those who are holy already are of no avail, that is why the parishads “play” the part of seekers, who fall,

get lost, and struggle along.

Letters to Vamandas 1957

Not under Compulsion

Read only when you have the incentive, the driving force to do so. Do everything that comes from your heart, from shraddha in His seva, not under compulsion.

Letter 1973

Nothing of Vraja Can Be Understood through Language

Please, nothing, nothing belonging to Vraja can be understood through language, but for the transition period and to help each other in getting a little bit of interest, a little bit of a reflection of the Real Thing in our mind, comparisons, pictures, references of the world known to us are used to refer to the world not yet known to us.

Shriji Radha is said to be of a certain age, but She may display a figure of less, just as the Eternal Play requires. Her age is said to be – in our language – 14 years, 2 months and 15 days. Her complexion is of molten gold, the garment She wears often is called

“meghambara” or “dark cloud”, it *is* – i.e., not a symbol – Her *lajja* or Her sense of decency, shyness. This garment, which veils all Her figure is very dear to Her. From Her waist downward to Her feet, touching them, She wears a cloth of the colour of the early dawn: a combined colour of rose, gold and red, it *is* – i.e., not a symbol – Her *anuraga* or Divine Love in the phase of causing the Object of Love – i.e., Krishna – to be experienced as if She would never have heard His Name or seen Him even. This garment, which touches His Own golden garment, when They happen to stand side by side, is very dear to Him.

But remember: In Their realm, idea, feeling, emotion, thought, colour, melody, works, form, place, surrounding, things, ornaments and utensils are one; cloth is idea, feeling etc. and feeling is cloth etc. You get a symphony of colours, ideas, things, etc.

Letter 1954

Nothing that Is Perishable Can Ever Serve God

Self-centred, man revolves around himself, and rises against the implacable clarity in the authoritative Revelation of God’s Word, as it fully and sharply destroys everything that man himself considers, experiences and feels to be noble and good, by explaining it as stemming from the *gunas* of *Maya*.

It is impossible to be willing to serve God *and* *Maya*, to be

willing to serve God and, at the same time, neglect what *He* says of Himself, the world and the atma. An unknown God, clouded in a mysterious haze, cannot be served by anyone. And nothing that is perishable can ever serve God, not even the pure atma in himself. He must receive God's Own potency, and then a body and a mind consisting of this potency, to be able to serve Him and His eternal associates in God's Own realm.

Corrections

Obstacles as One's Best Friends

It is a *mistake* if one thinks that change of environment or circumstances will improve the chance to serve Krishna. In the midst of adverse environment, utilize just this environment for *His* seva; then the *obstacles* start to become one's best friends and help on the path of seva. There is *no* place for *escapism* in the realm of bhakti.

Letter 1954

Offer Our Suffering to Krishna

[For many years in India, Svami Sadananda Dasa was more or less bedridden, suffering from serious illnesses.]

With the verses “Yo’ham mamasti”, etc. – “Everything that I am, what ‘belongs’ to me, in this world and later, I dedicate to Your lotus feet”, we also offer our suffering – yours as well as mine – to Krishna.

But as you know, this is not enough; one must free oneself even from the least hope that Krishna then would ease our suffering.

Suffering is a form of our seva, and we suffer to fulfil our own seva – and to give others, who do not have so much bhakti yet, the opportunity – through seva – to share our seva, mentally, physically, etc. Then it is a form of sat-sanga that results from our suffering.

Letter 1957

One Cannot and Shall not Condemn Anyone

One cannot and shall not condemn anyone; everyone has to walk the path that corresponds with his own nature and which is possible because of his seva in earlier lives. One cannot suddenly remove anyone from his *samskaras* [deeply engraved habits of thinking, feeling and living] and *vasanas* [seeds of lust and hate] from infinite lives, and expect that he shall walk *one’s own* path.

Think of the *Gita* where Krishna tells Arjuna, “You must do as I do, not snatch anyone away from his shradhha, but rather confirm

it, even if it is something wrong. Everything must take its own course.”

You must also be aware that it is an *aparadha* [spiritual transgression] to convey the Name and its greatness to those who *don't* have *shraddha*. *Shraddha* is (1) the *firm conviction* that what I have *heard about* God, world, *atma* and their mutual relationship, i.e., *atma to atma*, *Bhagavan's* modes of being to each other, etc. – *this is true*. (2) The path described is *my path* and (3) my goal is *seva*, not *mukti*, etc. – *nothing else but seva*.

People must have a good opportunity to *clearly* listen to all these things until *shraddha* gradually manifests through this listening. Only *Bhagavan* can convey *immediate shraddha* on someone, without the arduous path of listening, and He only does so during His *avatara-lila*.

Shraddha is not only “belief”; it is *insight, knowledge* of God's nature, the path and the goal.

Letter 1974

One Reason for Mahaprabhu's Descent

The mere suffering of the world does not reach God's heart at all, like nothing that stems from *Maya's* three *gunas*. The potency of *bhakti*, however, does; it immediately reaches Him through the *bhaktas'* prayers. When the *bhakta* has compassion for the misery

of the world, and the bhakta suffers because the world does not have any bhakti, then the bhakta's suffering for *His* sake reaches Him.

Neither *material* nor mental, etc., distresses make Him descend. *The bhakti in the bhaktas, however, does.* He descends into the world *to remove the suffering of the bhaktas* who cannot bear that no one in the world has bhakti for Him!

Comment, Caitanya-Bhagavata 1.2.144–145

Our Great Difficulty

People here in India and in the West have from childhood on heard, read, believed, felt and unconsciously adopted certain meanings of the word God, of soul, piety, saviour, deliverance, of the meaning of life, the meaning of religion – and they carry these meanings *into* the words of the Shastrams. Then it is so extremely hard to realize that *everything* we have heard, experienced, believed and thought simply is wrong, that one has to start all over again as if one was a child who does not know, has not thought or heard *anything*.

Letter 1955

People Want Miracles, Abnormality

My dear Vamandasji,

India of today is so different from India before the war. And all those who do seva for a sadhu or a bhakta expect, through the punyam [virtue, piety] they gain (?), that their business will improve, their black market will be protected by Narasinha, etc. – and after a few days, when they see that Krishna ruins them, they quickly find the company of the sadhu or his seva very, very annoying.

Nothing is more arduous than to become a burden to such “mankind”. – I can only say one thing: those poorest of the poor I stayed with in Shivpur Dharamtala [Howrah, Calcutta], who watched by me day and night at the door of my room and endless times carried me to my bed when I lay unconscious on the floor, and together with Ghosh called me back to this world through Hari-kirtan, they have done and suffered immensely, and they all cried when I left them yesterday. They starved to see to it that I had coal and oil for the stove and could pay the horrible bills from the doctor and the chemist’s.

People want *things*, “*God*” (?), miracles, abnormality, *blessings* – no one wants *seva*. This is why bhakti is so *su-dur-labha* [very difficult to obtain]. The mere line, “Yours in the One seva”, ending my letters, triggers nothing but hatred.

You must not take offence at my severe criticism of your faults.

It is because I love you so deeply, Vamandas, for your absorption in the bhakti cult, that I allow myself to be so hard on you, who has sacrificed so much for me. But you may rest assured that your sacrifices will not remain by me; they go like sunshine through wide-open windows to Him and Her.

Letter to Vamandas, Howrah 1952

Personality Cult

You are a renowned writer and have a *strong* personality, which implies a great advantage and a great – don't be frightened – disadvantage. The advantage is that when some W. Eidlitz says and writes something, *most* vividly identifies with something, then people listen where they would have remained unconcerned if an “expert” or someone unknown had done the same. The disadvantage is that your *personality* carries the message, and the message is interesting because of the *personality*, – and when the personality subsides, recedes, then nothing but a weak, personal reverberation of the message will remain.

This does not only concern you. – In the case of Caitanyadeva, for instance, everything rests on *Krishna*; the *Bhagavatam* stands in the foreground and He Himself as Caitanya remains in the background. And thus the *eternal*, impersonal message of the *Bhagavatam*, etc., remains – even when He and His Own have left

the world. The opposite is the case, e.g., with Gandhi and the Congress. The message of ahimsa had Gandhi as its focus, and *nothing* of it survived when he ended his days.

You yourself are experiencing the difficulties arising through the attachment to a person. Whether it is mainly emotional or intellectual is unimportant. People ask you (and me) for mantras, etc., because they feel that something emanates from your personality, your prophetic ability to convince, your assurance, etc. But when you ask them: “What is this world, Who is God, the avatara, what does your picture of the world look like, etc.?” – which by necessity must be *clearly understood* unless the “bhakti” shall simply come to naught (which becomes so clear in the *Bhagavatam* and *Caitanya-Bhagavata*) – it turns out from their replies that they want to enter into bhakti as they are, as they know themselves, with their Indian or Western world view intact, *without* a total, unconditional upheaval of this world view.

It would be a mistake to mean that as the power of *bhakti* includes knowledge, etc., the so to speak *philosophical basis* would not be needed at all – because it was *only* in the days of Krishna, Caitanya, etc., that bhakti-shakti was given *directly*, often at once, to the highest degree. *Without* being deeply shaken, without having been thrown out of one’s secure world view while listening to the world view described in the Shastrams, there can be no *basis* for bhakti whatsoever. And this philosophical basis is completely *dry*, objective and impersonal.

Razor-sharp Clarity

One cannot say: “What does it matter, the main thing is that people can hear about the love for God”, because neither God nor the love for Him are to be found behind a mystic, hazy curtain.

Everything is completely clear, with a razor-sharp clarity, which hurts deeply, because it hurts our human instincts.

Corrections

Removing the Root Cause of Suffering

The suffering of the world, as it is seen and experienced, never touches *Him, Bhagavan*. The living beings suffer in accordance with the laws of karma. Gauranga Deva did not remove the physical and mental suffering of humanity either, but through the gift of bhakti-yoga He removed the real suffering of being void of bhakti – of those who were no aparadhis! However much it offends man, who can only think of himself, Bhagavan *never* intends to remove the suffering of the world: illness, poverty, death, etc.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 2.10.48

Samvit-shakti

Samvit-shakti, the ability to clearly and completely know oneself and impart this knowledge to others – after having touched the atma and the mind of the novice – turns into bhakti and the ability to consciously serve Krishna for His sake, for His joy.

This samvit-shakti, through which Krishna knows and experiences Himself, streams as knowledge and power of seva through the bhakta and back to Krishna. The contact with this shakti glows as fire through the bhakta's manas, cittam and buddhi, and it is this shakti that knows and comprehends the lila for the sake of seva. But in order not to make the novice passive and indifferent and make him rely on the samvit-shakti, it behaves so that the novice thinks he himself, his manas and buddhi endeavour to know and experience the lila.

Notes

Self-denial

To me, it seems that you make one mistake – to *renounce* enjoyment and the wish to enjoy is a side effect, a concomitant of the serving, knowing love for God. Consequently, the young people must be given the *new*, completely new metaphysics, so that they gain an insight into the nature of the different worlds, into

what man consists of – mentally and physically – and into the nature of [the atma], Brahma, Paramatma-Vishnu (i.e., Bhagavan, indirectly connected to the world), and *Bhagavan* Who has nothing to do with the world (“shuddha” [pure] Bhagavan, Bhagavan as He is in Himself and to Himself).

The interest for Bhagavan and His seva will be aroused to the extent that people hear about Bhagavan (the *words* themselves convey the power of bhakti, service and knowledge) and according to the degree of bhakti, vairagya or the state of mind where the *colours* (raga; √ranj, colour) of the sense objects fade, lose their interest.

You should by no means put forward *negative* methods. They are completely *alien* to bhakti and *repellent*, only leading to mere repression of the libido. This involves considerable risks. *First of all*, as a survey, one should present all the different paths and goals: dharma, artha, kama, moksha, bhakti; from the beginning to the highest goal (Vraja), and *then* clearly describe how and where to *begin*, so that the person does not begin at the goal! It is pointless to replace the Christian piety of self-denial with the same piety directed towards Bhagavan!

Bhakti is rare, as you have read in the *Gita*, etc. First of all, most people must learn quite intellectually, academically, that there is a completely different conception and knowledge of the world, God and the atma, than they thought.

When young people listen in a fairly *servicing*, and not

challenging attitude, and you then tell them about God, etc., the interest in God, etc., will be aroused within them, and bhakti seize their heart, and to the extent that they listen and remember what has been said, etc., bhakti, understanding and knowledge of who God is, etc., will grow, and disinterest in everything else but God, service, etc., disinterest in the senses, etc., will come of its own accord.

No, the audience, the readers, etc., have not understood what one calls the “intellectual”, the basics (sambandha-jnanam). They cannot grasp that the atma is fundamentally different from the “I”, from everything one knows oneself to be – and that the atma intrinsically belongs to His realm, and when enjoying the world finds himself in foreign land which is alien to his nature. *When* they have thoroughly grasped this, the rules regarding the avoidance of the sense objects and everything that stirs up or awakens lust apply to them.

Letter to Vamandas 1957

Spiritual View

If the only relation between soul [atma] and God is that of devoted service, then it is a rational conclusion to say that the soul [atma] given to enjoyment through the medium of the senses in subtler or grosser form is unable to grasp anything, which lies beyond the

realm of limited human senses.

The act of posing ourselves as lord and actor, inspector and enjoyer, is an act of nescience. If we aim at objects we are in that attitude actuated by ignorance, avidya, that power of God whose function is to dupe us and which will dupe us as long as we are not prepared to submit to Him. The world seems to be our object, meant to serve us, because we are put into this hall of time and space.

But *sub specie aeternitatis* [under the aspect of eternity] – every stress has to be given on the fact that we are meant to serve. Our eternal inherent disposition is to serve Him. But our whole attention has been misdirected. Instead of adjusting ourselves to the primary manifestation of the Absolute manifest to us in the Absolute Person of the Divine Master and His Associates, we are directing our attention towards the diverted reflection of Vaikuntha.

If we shall be enabled to see us as servitors, we shall have a different view, not lording it over the glittering side of the seemingly manifestive things of this shadowy realm. As long as we are continuing to move on this plane, we are likely to go astray.

But He is attracting us. Krishna is the only Enjoyer and Supreme Attracting Lord. He is our only resort. Only by the strength of His attraction our attention and outlook will be directed from the external side of things to the true substantive Reality underlying and giving them as perversions their – though shadowy

– existence.

The Harmonist 1936

Stages of Development of Bhakti

1. Through extremely good fortune an encounter with a true bhakta has occurred – in the present life or in a former.
2. Through intimate service for this bhakta and above all by listening to the lila from his lips, the disciple will receive shraddha, the firm conviction that seva, to serve God, is the only aim of life (to believe in God is not enough).
3. Through shraddha in seva develops the qualification for bhakti in general.
4. When the disciple – now under the guidance of the guru – devotes himself to the keen, active listening and reflecting upon the lila, keeping it continuously in his mind while practising the other limbs of bhakti, and moreover is so fortunate that he receives a strong yearning for the inner life [bhava] of one of Radha's sakhis or manjaris – whose sole desire is to delight Krishna and bring about His union with Radha and Her sakhis – then he will be qualified to practise raganuga-bhakti in a definite bhava.
5. When he has attained this qualification, his practice of bhakti will more and more consist in listening to the loveliness of the bhava of the sakhis and manjaris, and in a spiritual [cit] bodily

form he now practises his service for the sakhi or manjari he is particularly subordinated to in serving, cognizant love.

6. During the course of this practice it may occur that bhava-bhakti (rati) manifests in him and that the samvit-shakti working in his mind makes it possible for him to perceive what he hears about the lila in a much clearer way.

If he continues this practice of raganuga-bhakti, it may in rare cases happen that bhava-bhakti, the red light of dawn of prema, will be followed by the rise of the real sun of prema.

When this bhakta, now on the stage of prema, listens to the plays of Krishna and His Own, sancari-, sattvika- and anubhavas [mental and physical expressions of prema] may manifest while he is deeply thinking of the lila, and he can become qualified for rasa, to serve directly in the lila.

Notes

Standing on the Shores of the Ocean of Rasa

You need not express so much humiliation. We all are nothing, standing on the shores of the ocean of Rasa that He Himself is. Neither you, nor I, nor anybody's mental or physical or emotional character ever changes, nor helps any sublimation. On the first step we have to guard ourselves against any form of sentimentality,

mental speculations, emotions, to keep the world of the centrifugal Maya and the world of the centripetal Vrindavan strictly asunder.

Later, with due progress, the Energy of Cit, the essence-form of which Shri Radha Herself *is*, gets so profusely infused in the atma, that not only the atma but our whole body and mind, all emotions and mental functions get completely filled with it – just as a slab of iron in fire, kept there for some time [glows from the fire]. The form of the slab, however, does not change in this present life.

So as we are, we must serve and come to Him – Radha knows what we are and we need not worry so much about our defects, but rather worry that we have not sufficient ardent desire to love Her. Self-improvement is neither a motive, nor an index of improvement.

All what we do, aspire after, in beastly life and in highest meditation, is prompted by motives, a purpose lurks somewhere. Highest religious motives, that we are inclined to admire so much, are all irreligious from Krishna's point of view. Just as He is purposeless, motiveless, so His Energy, so Radha, so real Love.

Letter 1954

Straitjacket

Got your letter. There is no need of any philosophy, much less of any dogmatism. Please do not think of Krishna as a separate entity

except as a centre of all pre-, sub- and conscious gravitation – of all centrifugal and centripetal energies.

The question is not to *learn* to know Krishna but to get rid of *all* personal dried up channels of thoughts and feelings. What you need is freedom and the break-through towards the joy of the joy of all joys – i.e. burdenless-ness.

There is no good of thinking repeatedly what others think about the world and God and Self – the thoughts of others are *not* the bounds of *your* own experience.

First you are *not* to understand or imagine yourself as a jnani, as a bhakta or anything else, you please try to start like a child anew and feel the pulsation of life in everything and love everything and you can start to do that if you see everything – persons, plants, animals, stars or what it may be – from *its* point of view not relating it to you – let everything be what it is and do not harm it – just forget to try to master anything not even your own being – why? – because by depriving things, persons and yourself of their own being, you see, realize and dominate shadows, misunderstanding, non-reality.

Freedom *and* bondage are terms of ignorance only – if you have the courage to throw away *all* the rubbish of cliché's others have used you can have a chance to meet me on the path of “Beyond-Reality” as a comrade and friend on the same path.

I try to meet you in Sweden at fall-time – if you feel you should.

Do not force yourself to follow the way of others who “enjoy” vegetating in the strait-jacket of “isms” and musts.

Letter 1975

Submission to Our Fate

There is one thing you must *never* forget: ‘daiva’ [‘divine’; from the devas] or ‘adrishta’ [‘invisible’], the part of our karma that is *unknown* to us, which has its effects in our present life – and *has* to have – is the only determining factor of our future.

It is the *nearness* of Mukhya Kshetrajna = Paramatma, which causes (He is ‘preritri’ [‘preritah’; ‘acts as an intermediary’]) that we receive the sweet or bitter fruit we are entitled to.

Even the greatest bhakta or Bhagavan as avatara, as World Teacher, teach that the adrishta part or daiva part of our prarabdha [“present fate”] must have its effects, and no one revolts against this or throws it off, though he has the power to do so. – The exoteric meaning of Krishna’s, Rama’s and Caitanya’s lila is that the future is predestined, and they teach submission to the daivam.

You are completely wrong when you think that it is my business to *solve* or ease the difficulties for our bhakta friends, their family and marriage problems, etc. They should only pray for the power to remember *Him* in the tragedies of their lives, and never forget *Him*, even for a second.

The Absolutely Revolutionary Metaphysics

The incredible thought that no one void of His power of knowledge (bhakti) does not even dare to think is this: Each and everyone, all of His forms are always present everywhere but are not visible as long as we are ignorant and in want of premabhakti. The Inner Guide (antaryami), the different Vishnus and the different realms of Vaikuntha: Ayodhya, Goloka, etc. – everything is always present everywhere at the same time, and is nothing but Him; each form, each respective “realm” fills everything without gaps in time and space.

The mundane law that only allows *one* thing to be present at a certain place at a certain time does not exist in the realm of Reality, where an infinite number of different cit-forms and cit-realms are present everywhere at the same time. – This is acintya [“Only cognizable through the realization of the unrestricted import of the Shastrams.” (Shridhara Svami in *Vishnu-Puranam*, tika 1.3.2)]. And in accordance with his individual nature the atma experiences, through bhakti, *that* very Divine realm as filling everything perpetually to which he belongs in accordance with his inner nature – and in this realm, where he is at home, he does not experience any other realm or any other form of the Absolute.

Our mundane concepts of time and space only govern the realm where bhakti and knowledge do not prevail, as in the case of the physical laws of gravity and penetration, etc.; when one object is at a certain place in space, another object cannot be there at the same time: I have to push away a book in order to put another one in its place, etc. And when the Shastrams speak of above and below, one realm above the other, etc., it is only to indicate the different degrees of intensity in the different realms of the lila.

What Mahaprabhu says here (*Caitanya-Bhagavata*, Madhya-lila 10.130) is not mysticism or “Indian thinking”. It does not arise from any human brain, Indian or other; it is not possible to grasp for any brain, anywhere on this earth. It is about God’s Own metaphysics that He Himself gives, from His point of view, and no one likes this, neither here nor in the West.

Mysticism appears when man approaches the Absolute from his angle; such mysticism can still be understood in some way, still be sensed intuitively. [The term] Shastram means that which governs us, restrains, corrects, chastises us. It is not the way you think, says the Shastram. What you yourself like, feel, love and think, that the Absolute, etc., must be like this or that – let go of it, altogether. Listen to what I, the Shastram, say, and you must accept it – if you have shradhdha at all – and hear it over and over again, however unpleasant, uncomfortable and totally contrary to your expectation it may be. – And when you receive bhakti, which is nirguna-shakti (free from Maya’s gunas), in order to understand the Absolute and

God's realm, which are beyond the gunas, then you will understand that this, which now seems impossible and abstruse to you, is true. Please, always remember and don't be afraid of hammering into the West this absolutely revolutionary metaphysics, seen from the viewpoint of God. Without a powerful shock, which knocks us off our feet and removes the whole metaphysical foundation we believe in, there is no hope whatsoever of getting even the faintest idea of what God, what Krishna, what Caitanya is.

We don't do anyone a favour by trying to facilitate "the transition" for him. – There is no transition. It doesn't matter if people ridicule, deride your book, and consider you and me mad. If only one single person gets a powerful shock – like I got [When Sadananda came in contact with this for the first time in 1933, through the book *Krishna Caitanya* by prof Nishikanta Sanyal.] – then all the efforts, all the strain of your work have reached Krishna. You must write for God, not for people.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 2.10.33

The Abyss of Sentimentality or Intellectualism

Caitanya and Nityananda gave certain people the power of bhakti and of prema. This power gave them the capacity to truly sing the Name and grasp the different tattvams [fundamental principles].

This proved impossible when His eternal companions became

invisible to this world, and it was for this reason that Mahaprabhu assigned the [six] Gosvamis to clearly present – with the help of the Shastrams – what is absolutely necessary when someone wants to tread the path of bhakti, without falling into the abyss of sentimentality or intellectualism.

If emotional outbursts of sentimentality were enough or what your people call “piety of the heart”, then the *Bhagavatam* with all its details of cosmology, theology, psychology and philosophy would be unnecessary.

Corrections

The Accounts of His Lila Devalueate the World of Maya

This world is the product of that particular potency of God whose task is to be and exhibit the negation of every indication of Divinity. The world has to exist for the sake of those atmas who have forgotten God and whose freedom of choice must be preserved. For their sake this power must execute its “glorious” task, so the wretched atmas can forget themselves and, because of that, seemingly enjoy a world that is in opposition to God.

When God – to the delight of His bhaktas, which is His delight – in a playful contest of service reveals Himself and makes known that the presence of this non-existing (a-cit) world in no way

displaces His eternally present and truly existing realm (it is displaced only from the point of view of the atma who is in want of bhakti), He plays this lila not in order to glorify the world or as an imitation of man – as the sinful human vanity hopes for so ardently, which results in him translating his sinful desires into the Shastrams – but to bring home to him who listen to this lila that an earthly landscape, an earthly relation like that between master and servant, between friend and friend, parents and children, and between the lover and the beloved, etc., through one glance and through listening to the accounts of His realm and His eternal lila become completely devalued and uninteresting.

Corrections

The Atma and the Covers

In itself, the material of prakriti is jada, lifeless and motionless, dead, a-cit, non-consciousness or a-cetanam, without life. The two covers become alive only through their connection with the atma. Without the atma body and mind would be dead matter. The atma is in itself pure light of knowledge or consciousness, i.e., sva-prakasha, shining by itself. It lights up, illuminates and gives life to that which in itself is dark, inert and inanimate.

Because the atma gives life to that which in itself is dead, inanimate, i.e., the covers of mind and body, it is also called jiva

(‘jiv’, ‘jivayati’; ‘he animates’). A ‘tadatmyam’ follows, i.e., literally ‘to be of, have the nature of something else’, as in a red-hot iron bar, for instance, the iron assumes the nature of the fire. The covers and the atma become a seeming unity, which proves to be illusory as soon as the atma leaves the two covers: the inanimate matter of prakriti remains, like the cold iron bar, from which the fire has withdrawn.

In relation to the atma, the covers are like upadhis, foreign elements, which change the natural functioning of the atma’s own nature as soon as the atma identifies with the covers, erroneously considers himself to be the covers, i.e., thinks: I am the body, I am the mind. The upadhi thus has a similar function as the moistness in a piece of firewood. Instead of burning with a steady flame, the piece of wood burns with (dense) smoke. The atma loses its direct power of knowledge and experiences the reality indirectly, i.e., with the aid of the covers, into which he has infused life. The content of this experience is not the cit-reality of his own nature or the processes within himself, but the processes within the outer, physical or inner, psychic covering, which he identifies with. The ignorance of the atma is caused by Maya’s potency of [evoking] illusion. As such, Maya has a double function: she is avaranatmika, i.e., she covers the awareness of the atma, that he is atma; and she is vikshepatmika, i.e., she hurls away, gives him the illusion that he is something fundamentally different from what he actually is, making him believe that he is the covers.

The Atma as a Gem

When the clouds of aparadhas have been driven away, the red light of dawn (rati or bhava-bhakti) may rise in the clear sky. Later, especially when there is lobha or intense longing to serve the parishadas, the eternal co-players, the sun of prema can rise. This is the absolute Sun, which is not a product of the sky; just as little as bhakti would be the “result” of sadhana or the spiritual discipline.

Through bhakti as a discipline, or through bhakti in the form of lobha or an intense longing to serve, all aparadhas are driven away or dispersed like the haze in the sky through the power of the not yet visible sun. Before it rises fully, it appears in the form of the red light of dawn – and now the bhakta realizes that it was not his own deeds, his power that made him sing the Name and polish the temple bells, but bhakti that made this through him. He becomes overwhelmed by the grace and goodness of bhakti, the bhaktas and God, through whom he received this power – which he has not deserved in any way, because it is never an effect of a cause, but as causeless as God Himself.

To the individual atma a special and personal relation to God now appears for the first time, i.e., sthayi-bhava or bhava rises, the first clear sunrays at the horizon. What the nature of this relation

(sthayi-bhava) means in terms of shanta, dasya, sakhya, vatsalya or shringara, and to which of God's eternal modes of being (majesty, sweetness, etc.) it is related, depends on the nature of the bhakta, of his atma – and not his heart, soul, mind, feelings and thoughts. The nature of the sthayi-bhava reveals itself and spreads to the mind, soul, feelings, etc., as the power of the fire reveals itself in a bar of iron, placed in the fire.

Gradually this sthayi-bhava turns into the Sun of prema or the direct loving service of God, which makes the atma worthy of beholding God, etc. – and this happens only rarely within one life as a bhakta, if not God or an avatara is visible on earth at that time and the bhakta comes in contact with Him and receives His grace.

Sthayi-bhava means the permanent form of one's inner relation to God in serving Love, because this relation never changes, as the bhakta has his own individual nature, which is not possible to lose. It is called permanent also because it is not produced, but follows from the individual atma's direct contact with the power of Divine grace, which is always present but has not yet touched the atma.

This power is the light of the pure, serving, cognizant Love that comes to the atma – and touching him, it assumes, like the light in a gem, the individual “colour” of the individual nature of the atma, i.e., the sthayi-bhava (shanta, etc.), and beams continuously back to God in the form of priti or serving Love for His sake.

Thus, sadhana or the religious discipline is the process, through which it becomes possible for the gem, the atma, to experience the

presence of the Sun. “The eternally complete bhava becomes manifest in the heart.” This is what it means when bhakti in the form of sadhana is mentioned (*Bhakti-Rasamrita-Sindhu* 1.2.1). “Becomes manifest” does not mean that bhakti is present in the heart and that the atma in itself would have bhakti in a dormant form. Bhakti is the potency of God, not of the atma, and it comes from God and is given through the bhakta as Divine grace – it does not come from the atma.

In *Bha.* 11.3.31 it is clearly stated: “Horripilation, etc., follows from bhakti (premabhakti) originating in bhakti.” It never says anywhere, in the *Bhagavatam* or elsewhere, that bhakti comes from the atma or is dormant in him.

Bhakti as a discipline may thus lead to the “rising” of bhakti in the form of sthayi-bhava *in* the atma. Please, not *from* the atma. The sun rises in the sky, not from the sky.

Corrections

The Atma Is Always Free

Human beings make each other suffer enough. God is love. He has surrounded us from all sides with His potency [of pure knowledge and true love], which touches us if we *want* to let us be touched! Our *atma* is furthermore *inseparably* joined to Krishna; yes in the *Bhagavatam* it says that bondage and liberation – both are

expressions of ignorance. The atma *is* always free – he is just not aware of it. Our only concern is therefore the body and the mind, which are to be maintained as instruments to serve *Him*, i.e., in the beginning, so that one can read, listen, remember [what one has read, heard], etc.

Letter 1974

The Awakening of the Atma

The atma is unknown; he cannot be realized, seen, imagined or felt. *If* he gets *awakened*, realizes his own being as “I am atma” and *not* body, mind, soul, feeling, etc., *then only* does he know what he is and can make *known* to the soul, mind, etc., “I am atma such and such, and you are not me, and I am not you!” and *then* our mind, soul, etc., realize their dependent existence and subordinate role.

This awakening of the *atma* takes place through the atma’s contact with God’s *Own* shakti or energy, bhakti, and in the degree the atma gets awakened, he will learn who he is and that it is his function to *serve* Him, God, and to engage body, mind, soul, etc., in that *service*.

Letter 1954

The Basics

For all study of the Shastrams you must be absolutely clear about certain fundamental facts, in order not to sink into some kind of religious sentimentality or mysticism.

To our thinking, everything has a certain place where it exists, it is defined by time (past – present – future) and it has an inside and an outside.

God, His realm, His co-players, etc., and the objects in His realm have neither an inside nor an outside, they are eternally coexisting and are not restricted to a certain place, being omnipresent.

In our world, two people cannot sit on the same chair at the same time, but as the objects and the subjects in His realm have neither an inside nor an outside, two or more things can be at the same place at the same time. Consequently, God and His realm, etc., are everywhere. It is not so that His realm has no place where the world is – it is everywhere. But God's realm is not experienced where the world as such is experienced, in spite of being fully present there. This means that God and the world are both factually present at the same time, but are not experienced simultaneously.

When God, His realm, etc., on certain occasions and in certain places become visible in the world – in other words, when they reveal their eternal presence to us, that they are already, eternally present there – we have to keep in mind that they enter into our

world and history (avatara) from the realm of time- and spaceless Reality, without any change whatsoever; in other words: no incarnation.

As we neither can experience space- nor timelessness, God, His realm, the avataras, etc., appear as if they were confined to space and time, without actually being so.

What is future to us, is only future to us. What has a beginning and an end only has a beginning and an end to us, i.e., in our world. From God's point of view, however, there are neither beginning nor end, nor something that lies between a beginning and an end.

The atma in us (as in all living beings) is actually beyond time and space – he just imagines himself to be in time and space, as he imagines himself to be Mrs. Smith or Mr. Anderson. But as soon as he realizes that he is an atma, he shares the timeless presence of God, etc. – and the body and mind, etc., which constitute what we experience as Mrs. Smith, Mr. Anderson, etc., become subordinated to the will of the atma and harmoniously ranged under his new conception of the world.

A spacecraft travels at tremendous speed; the atma is infinitely quicker, because time and space don't exist for him.

Undated early letter

The Basis of Religion

No religion can be built on an unclear conception of God, the atma and the world. The basis of religion is sambandha ('sam', 'in the correct way', 'samyak'; 'bandha', 'connection'). It gives answers to the questions: Who am I? What is the world? What is God? What is the relation between these three?

The Basics of Psychology

The Be-All and End-All

The truly existing ones, the supreme bhaktas, grant the eyes (the realization of the meaning of service and how it is done), they are the sun, rising in the external world, they are the true gods (and not the lords serving as rulers and keepers of powers and goods in a universe), they are the true friends and kinsfolk (and not the bundles of flesh and blood that man considers his relatives on account of his false concept of the self), they are the truly existing ones (all other beings are of maya-nature), they are the be-all and end-all (atma), indeed, they are Me. (*Bha.* 11.26.34)

Notes

The Beautiful Trouble of Emotion

In the beginning there is one great danger, and this I dared to point out in my last note, cruel as I am. We are likely to accept and relish as supernatural and spiritual what are only mental, emotional ecstasies, joys, sorrows and trances. Nobody on this earth is spared the beautiful trouble of emotion; the difference is only this:

The eternal associates, where they descend on this earth, experience the trouble of having to overcome obstacles and opposition, which are put in their way by the Energy of the Divine Play [yogamaya], so that they may have deeper and more intensive joy of serving The Divine Couple than would be the case without such obstacles and obstructions.

The souls who are still not fully or not at all in realization of the Truth, on the other hand, experience obstructions and opposition put in their way by the delusive energy of Mahamaya, the energy which is centrifugal and keeps those who are unwilling to serve away from realization – as long as the unwilling ones choose to be unwilling.

Letter 1954

The Belief in the Immortality of the Mortal Soul

Personal immortality in the sense of a preserved individuality of the so-called soul, an individuality that in some way – however sublime or ethereal – would bear any resemblance to our present, empirical person, simply does not exist. Maya, who keeps us away from what is true and real and conceals our true nature, gives rise to the claim of the aham-kara or the I-maker – for the sake of our “spiritual” satisfaction – that we simply have to adopt something that resembles the Christian belief in the immortality of the mortal soul. Our personal vanity simply cannot bear that nothing of our personally experienced personality *will* or *can* be preserved at the moment when the pure I or the Self [atma] – released from the slavery under body, spirit, intellect, heart or “soul” – knows himself to be in the realm of truth, in *God’s* realm.

As long as we rove about through endless cycles of births, we will carry the delusion of the individual “soul”. But when the true I, the true Self [atma], seized by God’s Own power of knowledge (bhakti), knows God, then – as a *result* of this knowledge – the pure, true I [atma] will know *what*, *who*, and *where* it is, and will experience its *eternal* bodily form and personality, which is fundamentally different from the empirical soul in every respect.

The *Bhagavatam* and the school of bhakti do not consider knowledge of one’s Self as the means to untie the knot of the heart [the knot that binds the atma to the mental and physical coverings],

but knowledge of God, the *result* of which is knowledge of the true Self!

Letter 1955

The Best Access to the Mystery of Krishna's Lila

I think we cannot be grateful enough to Prabhupad [Bhakti-siddhanta Sarasvati] for repeatedly emphasizing that the *best access to the mystery of Krishna's lila* is through Caitanya's lila – and not directly.

Yes, the bhakta's whole inner training is in the bhava of Their *separation* and to strive, through one's conceived cit-form, shaped from the potency of bhakti, to help the parishadas [eternal co-players] to unite Them, and as long as They are separated, to give Them strength, to help Them to bear this dreadful grief [of separation].

Letter 1961

The *Bhagavatam* Is Nothing to Be Consumed

The *Bhagavatam* and its study is the object of spiritual and intellectual exercise of a whole lifetime as it presupposes a profound knowledge of the subtleties and shades of meaning of all

Shastrams and because it deals with subjects that are beyond our range of experience and which our intellect and emotions do not like.

As it is the nature of the Shastrams to point at things only, to give hints, they force the reader to collaborate and for the most part to draw the conclusions by himself, with his own intellect, aglow with bhakti.

Corrections

The *Bhagavatam* Is the Sun in Kaliyuga

I have neither yogic miracles, any sentimental smile nor even tears at my disposal, nor am I interested in any momentary turmoil among the European public.

Please note that since Krishna's and Mahaprabhu's disappearance there is no Krishna-darshana with one's eyes (bahih-sakshatkar), only a sphurana [shining forth] in the heart. All that is said about God's darshana in modern India is nonsense. Neither He nor His parishadas [eternal co-players] nor His dhama [eternal realm] become visible again until a new day of Brahma manifests the three worlds, etc., anew.

The *Bhagavatam*, and all that belongs to it, is the Sun, which shall illuminate the age of Kali – and that nothing else remains is clearly expressed in the *Bhagavatam* and is repeatedly, emphatic-

ally emphasized by Mahaprabhu. It is sheer nonsense when it is said that this or that person had Krishna's darshana and that others saw this or that he showed them this.

Krishna enters the heart through the ear and becomes visible within – if it happens at all. When we have left the body and mind and got a cit-body, etc., then, being accepted to serve, subordinated to the parishadas, we are allowed to behold and serve Krishna and the parishadas – for the purpose of serving Him and them directly.

This cannot be clarified enough, as there are people here and in the West who give people darshana of “Bhagavan”, just as people are shown a calf with five legs at a fair.

Letter from Calcutta, 1955

The Bhakta Is the Mouth of the Spring

The power of the serving, knowing love is just as boundless, omnipresent and eternally present as God and His realm themselves. Just as the boundless realm, without changing its content in the least, once appeared within the boundaries of the district of Mathura [Vraja], the serving, knowing love – unrestricted in its mode of being – makes its appearance through the mouth of the bhakta. Krishna and the secret of His love touch the heart, by entering the ear that longs for serving Him.

The ear that wants to get intoxicated by the words of the lila,

however, is only able to perceive the shadow of these words, and instead of knowledge and true realization, misconceptions and errors enter the heart.

The bhakta is the mouth of the spring, through which the eternal knowledge of God flows. The ear and heart of those who are longing to serve is the chalice. The eternal words of His lila are the very knowledge of God, intelligible through the will and power to serve.

Krishna's Damodara-lila

The Concoction of Religious Hotchpotch

That people consider the bhakti-Shastrams mystical is due to the fact that they don't have the necessary qualification for studying them, viz., bhakti, or God's Own potency of pure knowledge, which alone makes them capable of understanding even one single word and grasp what is said in one passage, without forgetting what was said when coming to the next. This has nothing to do with memory training; only bhakti can give the power to grasp the subtle theological nuances, which seem to be almost unbearable to the uninitiated.

Publishers and others in England and America have published books on foreign religions, which make the sources intelligible without making any comparisons at all. It is quite sufficient to

describe what bhakti is, in accordance with the Sources themselves, correctly and in a beautiful form. One does not have to draw parallels, to comfort the reader (or oneself?). The so-called similarities only appear when one overlooks what differs and is essential.

Modern man's curse of tamasic sluggishness hovers over the concoction of religious hotchpotch, which the modern world loves so much, because it is incapable of appreciating genuine things and simply does not want to take anything seriously.

Corrections

The Desire to See Him is the Greatest Obstacle to See Him

We should not try to visualize (see) Krishna, but pray that He casts a glance of mercy at us. – We shall learn Krishna by our ears, i.e., we must hear what He is.

Krishna is everywhere but is visible only where Love [prema] has become so strong that Love attracts Him to reveal His presence. But the desire to *see* Him is the greatest obstacle to see Him. The desire to *serve* Him, irrespective of the fact that we may never see Him, is the only way to see Him as culmination of the seva or service.

My Gurudeva told me: “As long as we carry on to look on

things, starting from a rose in a garden up to Himself, with the tendency to weigh, how far and to what extent the rose or He Himself can help us to make us happier, we are bound to be disappointed.”

This tendency is called maya, because such measuring distorts reality and we see and experience a world, as it is not in reality. Maya does not mean illusion, the world *is* there, though it is changeable, but what we experience as result of our wrong attitude, that is illusion.

Letter 1954

The Divine Sun of Wisdom

Already for that reason – the fact that the religions outside the Vedic Word Revelation have no clear conception of the most basic principles, not even of the nature of the atma, God’s form, etc. – can the indistinct stammering of these religions on no account lead to God. They can at the very most be a preparation for listening, some time in a later life, to what real Revelation is and learn what the Divine Sun of Wisdom is, compared to the mystic, smoking oil lamp.

Corrections

The Eligibility for the Different Paths

Karmayoga yields the desired result for those who are filled with desires and not yet disgusted with the inferiority of their objectives; *jnanayoga* brings about the fulfilment of the goal of those who are disgusted with the inferiority of the results of desire and have abandoned karma (nyasi); to that person, however, (please note the use of the singular here) in whom, in one way or another, the firm belief in what is said about Me has grown, and who is neither fully disgusted with the world nor too attached to it, to him *bhaktiyoga* is the fulfilment of his striving. (*Bha.* 11.20.7–8)

Letter 1957

The Erotic Principle

In modern times some people who do not understand anything of the Hindu Shastrams have tried to explain the four last rasas metaphorically. They cannot understand that Bhagavan has a real form and His bhaktas therefore can have the following relations to Him: that of a servant to his master, a friend to his friend, a parent to his/her child, and a loving woman to her loving lover or spouse.

The Shastrams give many examples of the bad fate that befell some persons who were very advanced in their spiritual life but who criticized the last rasa when they got a rare chance to behold

Mahadeva and Parvati. Later they learnt that what is the most degenerate and represents the utmost ignorance in our world is the most auspicious in Bhagavan's realm.

The science of eroticism of man is a mere perverted reflection of the transcendent eroticism. This fifth rasa, as all the other three rasas, is lived and realized only by Bhagavan and His eternal co-players. The various roles are played by them alone. We merely assist the co-players.

In the fifth rasa He Himself is the only male person, so to say, and one or a few selected co-players who are forms of His Own potency of pure joy. The other co-players – and all the more all those atmas who join the respective realms of Bhagavan as newcomers at the end of their sadhana – are maids who serve their mistresses and find their own satisfaction in the joy of their mistresses.

Unfortunately, in the course of Indian history of religion, there have been many corruptions and misunderstandings of this principle, completely against the words and the spirit of the Shastrams.

Shri Shukadeva is one of the speakers of the *Bhagavatam*, and he describes this fifth rasa in the lila of Krishna in detail. He was a youth, day and night so much absorbed in the realization of the attributeless Brahma, Bhagavan and Paramatma that he was not at all aware of the external world. Deep in thought, he walked about. He was always atma-conscious. He saw through the bodies and

minds of the people with an eye of pure knowledge and beheld their atma, and no more the external form. Needless to say, he was not aware of his own sex.

At the end of the description of the fifth rasa he says: “If someone listens with real faith to this description or relates it to others, then such a wise and calm person will obtain the highest form of Divine love for Bhagavan, and consequently lust and passion, the greatest disease of the human heart, will be shaken off quickly.” (*Bha.* 10.33.39)

It is evident that the Bhakti-Shastrams that describe this fifth rasa do not intend to praise, to sanctify or encourage any form of erotic phantasies that we are accustomed to in our world. At a very early stage of jnana-, yoga- or bhakti-sadhana the adept advances far beyond the stage of a biological creature. He is by no means to return to it on a higher stage or when he enters the realm of Bhagavan.

Eroticism is God’s and His shaktis’ monopoly, and the person who wants to come to God and serve Him in the temple must leave the disgusting eroticism of the maya-world outside; he has no right to eroticism when he wants to come to God, because in our world eroticism is the climax of mutual selfish exploitation for the sake of one’s own sensual pleasure.

What we call love in this world is the play of utter ignorance of the real nature of this world, the atma and Bhagavan.

Mundane love has its foundation not in Bhagavan but in Maya,

who keeps the atma away from God.

Corrections

The Eternal Co-players Constitute Two Groups

Wanting to serve is the opposite of wanting to push one's way forward into close proximity to God. The higher the degree of true love for God, the deeper is the true humility, which pleases God.

From everything that has been said it is clear that all paths don't lead to the same goal. We will also see later that there are different paths even when it comes to bhakti, and all are leading to their respective goals.

It is also clear that all in God's realm are not principally, fundamentally the same. The eternal co-players in God's realm constitute two groups:

1. The first group stems from God's Own direct power of full being, knowledge and joy;
2. The second group stems from the power on the boundary, tata-stha-shakti, which certainly is higher than maya-shakti, but in *Gita*, for instance, by no means is designated as "My Own power".

Before the beginning of time, some of these atmas [i.e., members of the second group] – using their free will – turned to God, where they lovingly serve the eternal co-players mentioned above, and thereby they also serve God.

Those atmas [on the other hand], who come to God's realm from [the realm of] aversion to God, who during their service in the world are seized by the grace of the bhaktas and who, so to say, come from the far distance freed from the coverings of maya, find their full satisfaction and happiness when they can serve the eternal co-players lovingly.

In our world dissatisfaction ensues, because we think we have got less than what – according to our opinion – is our due, and often also because we don't get what really corresponds with our nature. But there, in God's realm, each and everyone is fully what he is, and there each and everyone is absorbed in the ecstatic joy of loving service. Once the atma has arrived there, there is no longer any possibility that he could think of himself; he thinks, loves and feels only for the sake of God, for the sake of serving Him – his only aim.

Corrections

The Five Goals

Each person strives for something that gives life a meaning. This is called *artha* (the desirable, what is worth aiming at).

A gross classification gives four human goals of life.

The first three – *artha* (material or spiritual earthly possessions, the Shastric commands, acquisition of virtue, avoiding vice) – are

an expression of a positive attitude to the world, a positive will to strive and to have, called *pravritti*.

The fourth goal of life is an expression of a negative attitude, *nivritti*, a will to completely withdraw from the will to experience, a striving for *mukti*, i.e., the liberation of the atma from his ignorance (*avidya*) of himself. The happiness of the “I” and the atma is the motive.

Bhakti is fundamentally different from these objectives. What is central in bhakti is neither the happiness of the empiric “I” nor the atma, but the joyful will to conform to the lila or the motiveless self-unfolding of the true Reality (*vastava-vastu*).

Notes

The Fruit of the Contrast – The Most Wonderful

The Shastrams themselves expressively describe the contrast, the contradiction within the Absolute itself and in all that *is* – in the world and in God’s realm, in Himself and in His Own essence. The fullness, which the Absolute is, cannot be the Absolute unless it also contains or includes the opposite of fullness, the infinitesimal or nothingness [the world of Maya]. In contrast to Being, Knowledge and Joy, there must be non-being, ignorance and suffering; without the contrast in the form of darkness the nature of light would be imperfect.

But the darkness, the inert, only exists as a contrast to the light, to the living. They are not two independent powers or poles, because the darkness, the opposite of God, owes its existence to Him. The darkness, the inert, the negation of God, non-Being, intensifies the dynamics of the light, of life, God, Being – as the concept of hard-heartedness increases the greatness of goodness, the separation the strength of the union. What is most wonderful is the fruit of the contrast, of the conflict.

The soul, wearied with conflicts and struggle, is very attracted to the idea that the inert, non-God [the world of Maya] does not exist at all, that it is nothing but an illusion, because it guarantees the thought of an *It*, which is still, undisturbed peace. The feeble soul longs for eternal peace, to be raised above all conflicts. This satisfies man's heart and it can also please his intellect, because when the opposite of the eternal stillness and peace simply is declared to be an illusion, the intellect can cancel itself.

This probably explains the great popularity certain forms of the Mahayana Buddhism and the teachings of Shankara have attained and still do – in the East and in the West. But it is beyond doubt that this doctrine of illusion not only makes man more or less incapable of fulfilling his duties in the world, but also just as incapable of fulfilling his duty to God and of attaining true love for God.

Corrections

The Full and Pure Eroticism

Eroticism has its full purity and beauty in the relationship between *Shaktiman* [the possessor of shakti] and the *Shakti*. To *deny* this is nonsense. It is by no means mere symbolic. Idiotic mysticism in the West may shudder at this, but neither the human soul nor the atma come in direct contact with it.

Shringara-rasa as every other rasa is only for the *nitya-parishadas* and shringara only for Radha and Her *direct* sakhis. When the atma of the sadhaka comes to Goloka, he is a maid-servant, he does seva for Radha and the others and Their love play, and the joy that *She* gives Krishna is the joy of the manjari.

Letter 1955

The *Gita* and the *Bhagavatam*

The *Gita* deals with the conflict (contradiction) between fulfilling two different kinds of duties. On the one hand it is about the duty which is incumbent upon man as man – if he experiences himself as a member of society and belonging to a certain stage of life (ashrama) and a certain class of society (caste) – according to the applicable rules that are laid down in the authority of the Word Revelation (Shastrams) – and on the other hand the joyful wish to serve and fulfil one's duty of service, not as a member of society,

but in one's capacity as Bhagavan's bhakta.

Arjuna plays the part of feeling himself a warrior and that he shall remain so within the prescribed ethic of his class. Krishna teaches him that when God Himself stands before a person, serving God means to do what He considers to be good, to serve Him without any compunction – even if he thereby infringes against man's obligations to society. This is then no sin or violation (aparadha) of the order laid down by the Shastrams.

Arjuna hesitates. Therefore Krishna says, "I assume responsibility for this."

The *Bhagavatam* begins and ends with stages of bhakti, whose first stage consists in the fact that man no longer feels himself a member of society, with the order laid down for it, but experiences himself as atma, who wants to serve God; man, who realizes: "I belong to the world, but my atma has nothing to do with it, it belongs to God." Only occasionally, concerning certain issues, the *Bhagavatam* deals with the duties of man as a member of society, because the fulfilment of these duties offers the opportunity to meet bhaktas, and by associating with them (sadhu-sanga) to make oneself qualified for a higher stage in one's next life.

Consequently, the following is worked out:

In the *Gita*, mainly: What is God in relation to the world?

In the *Bhagavatam*: What is God in relation to Himself, to His Own, and to His Own realm?

The *Gita* ends with the rasa of serving (dasyam) and some of

the rasa of friendship (sakhyam) with Krishna in the fullness of majesty.

The *Bhagavatam* leads to the highest stage, and describes this as bhakti to Krishna in the fullness of sweetness and charm (from dasya to shringara rasa).

Corrections

The Goal of True Religion Is not Eternal Bliss

Religions that hold out the promise of an eternal realm of bliss to those who are self-centred have created the impression in the wretched beings that the goal is eternal bliss. Nirguna-bhakti is the very opposite – it is the bliss of serving God; and the atma who finally comes to His abode is allowed to serve – this is his bliss, and only those who want to serve and who find their bliss in serving God and those who are His Own, and not in experiencing the bliss that God is, may approach God's realm, which is rasa, the realization of service.

Those who cherish the idea that there must be equal rights at least in God's realm, I ask, "What is equal rights? Wanting to experience God and pushing oneself forward into His vicinity?"

The bhakta declines salokya, etc. – to dwell together with Him in His abode, etc. – not because he should not like this as such but because this is 100 % against the nature of bhakti and thereby also

the nature of the bhakta. “To dwell in His realm”, is to be like a fish out of water. The bhakta wants to serve, nothing but serve, and this is why he is so dear to God that He serves the bhakta.

Those who want equality and equal enjoyment of bliss for everyone can join the extreme haters of God or those who strive for sayujya-mukti, because both attain the same happiness – in the moment when the infinitesimal atma is merged in the attributeless Brahma they experience happiness and bliss, which nevertheless immediately comes to an end, because the experience of bliss requires a distinction between what is experienced and the one who experiences. The individual atma then ceases to have an individual existence. The atma has not become the attributeless Brahma; he has disappeared, is submerged in the attributeless Brahma.

No one shall believe that the words of the bhaktas, who pray for becoming servants of God, are nothing but expressions of false humility, and that the bhaktas also, like those who demand bliss and are in want of bhakti, nurture a wish to push themselves forward into the vicinity of God, in order to be able to “experience” God in His close proximity. These wretched beings don’t know what God is, that He Himself *is* rasa – that He Himself is the realization of His selfless serving bhaktas’ unselfish service, because this is what rasa is.

To realize experience and enjoyment is the rasa of the world. Someone experiences rasa when money, which he has yearned and strived after for years, really runs through his fingers; he

experiences rasa when the beloved, whom he has tried to win, really lies in his arms; he experiences rasa when the hero of the poem or the drama is portrayed so wonderfully that the reader or spectator believes himself to be this hero for a while, and then he enjoys this false rasa which a false and unreal hero experiences.

Those who are unaware of the foundations of bhakti don't know that the Word Revelation says that everything, starting with the cosmos to the world of the senses and the human soul, etc., only has a negative value.

Corrections

The Grace of not Getting What One Wants

He who has not received unalloyed bhakti shall focus entirely on this and not think of anything else, just as someone who has lost all his money does not think of anything else. If Krishna bestowed God-experience, etc., upon him, he would never attain pure bhakti and accordingly never attain the realization of the service, i.e., the rasa of the serving love – never be able to experience what service is and the joy it means – and it is only pure bhakti, without any other motive than the service itself, that finally conquers God and makes Him known.

Corrections

The Greatest Possible Responsibility

It is the greatest possible responsibility to write a book about the atma, God, the world, etc., based on the Word Revelation. It must be done with the greatest self-*discipline*, in order not to falsely add anything, not anything at all, from one's own thinking and feeling, which is of no value whatsoever.

Letter to Vamandas

The Guru Is no Puppeteer

As always, it is only meaningful to do what I say when it comes from your own initiative, when you act in freedom. As long as there is no bhakti we are like puppets on Bhagavan's prakriti-wheel, i.e., slaves under the laws of karma, but not when bhakti touches our heart. And even in those cases when we do what the shiksha-guru says, we do this exercising our full freedom – with personal responsibility.

In the Adi-parva of the *Mahabharatam* there is a disciple who is instructed to dam up a brook. The earth is not sufficient; then the disciple – on his own initiative – places himself on top of the earth in the brook, to retain the earth and dam up the brook.

Late at night the guru wonders where the disciple is, searches for him in the dark and finds him lying in the brook. – Therefore:

no puppet controlled by a puppeteer, but the disciple's own initiative which runs parallel to the purport of the teacher's wish – and beyond.

Letter to Vamandas 1964

The Healing Power of the Name in a Hostile Atmosphere

To try the healing power of the Name in such hostile spiritual atmosphere is rather an *aparadha* [spiritual transgression] than *seva*. We must not forget that there is only *One* Mahaprabhu and *One* Nityananda. He can liberate trees, shrubs, animals through the power of the Name *He* utters – we merely speak *of* the power of the Name, not *through* the power.

We can speak *of* the power of the Name to a wild, dying animal or an *inwardly seeking* person, so that they seek after Him together *with* us, but a tiger in the forest would simply devour us and a person inwardly *isolated* [from bhakti] would only maliciously blaspheme Krishna and His Name – inwardly and outwardly.

Letter to Vamandas 1958

The Inner Conclusions Remain Unexpressed

Our Shastrams *never* give the *conclusions*, like dogmatic textbooks in the West. They give material for the most intensive following of their trains of thought, the most intensive co-experience. The inner conclusions remain unexpressed, is intimated, not thrown into one's face.

Letter 1955

The Intention of the Promises in the *Vedas*

The *Vedas* say, "When you have your bathe in the Ganga and call out Hari-nama you will get wealth and children". Then people act accordingly because the *Vedas* say so.

People somehow take their bathe in the Ganga and the power present in the Ganga and Hari-nama causes that they are gradually led to "bhakti". Fools don't understand the intention of the *Vedas* and ignore bhakti and plunge headlong into sensual enjoyments.

Commentary Sadananda: With the promise of sensual enjoyment the *Vedas* encourage people to come in contact with the Ganga and Hari-nama in some way and eventually this may lead them to ask what the Ganga and Hari-nama actually are, and eventually they can become ready to receive bhakti. A wise person who understands the intention of the *Vedas* endeavours for bhakti right from

the beginning. The fools, however, plunge into the sensual enjoyments as such, which are only promised by the *Vedas* in order to attract people, and deprive themselves of the real thing: bhakti.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 2.19.57

The Knot of the Heart

What she needs most of all is the inner emancipation from her empirical I, she must be completely free and relaxed within, and first of all clearly learn to understand the normal structure of the normal human nature and how the psyche (linga-deha), etc., works, so she stops wanting to bring her empirical character into the lila.

You must help her and she you to untie the knot of ahamta [the false I-concept], formed by avidya [Maya's power of ignorance]. What one thinks – Hari-katha [the accounts of Bhagavan] as well – must be free from the personal colouring of one's empirical character.

One can only think, explain to others and write when one *treads* the path of inner emancipation from the empirical I-knot, in complete stillness, without thinking of others and the world.

Letter 1961

The Light of the Revelation Is Clear and Sharp

If someone thinks that human logic determines the laws applicable to God, he can only make me sad. And it is the same when someone calls the contents of the Shastrams “mysticism”, because over and over again our Word Revelation expresses and describes the so-called Inconceivable in very clear terms and does not give any free scope for obscurities, opinions, feelings, suggestions, visions and sentimental simmering.

The light of the Revelation is clear and sharp. It does not leave anyone who really listens in uncertainty – about anything. There is nothing of mystical suggestions that one could expound as one “experiences” them intuitively – through the power of Maya.

In our age, kaliyuga, one cannot expect more than a very few people to clearly perceive the path which becomes clear in the light of the Revelation, not to mention to be willing to really tread this path. To a person who clings to himself and his inner life, his thinking and feeling, like a burdock, all these things must be dreadful, and he therefore denies and distorts them, and after thorough distortion he finds what suits him to accept, reject and criticize.

There is no dearth of cheap religion – in modern India and elsewhere – no want of mystical bread for the people, but I am sorry to say that our Word Revelation does not serve any soup for the poor.

The Lila Like Human Beings

In the lila that becomes manifest (prakata) the co-players are hardly aware of who they are and what they are as eternal co-players; and this applies to every lila. They believe themselves to be ordinary mortals. The awareness [of who they actually are] – when it suddenly becomes manifest and shines forth – does for the most part become concealed again through the cit-shakti or yoga-maya, because the lila “like human beings” would otherwise not be possible.

Comment, Caitanya-Bhagavata 1.2.102

The Love for God Does not Slumber in Every Heart

As I have written before, it is completely wrong to say that “the love for God slumbers in every heart”. To his nature the atma is meant to serve God but he is not a servant of God by nature.

He becomes what he is meant to be only when he has received bhakti, which is not present in him, but comes to him through the grace of the bhakta.

The Master Gives Only the Directions

The Master gives only the directions; it is we who have to work out our way with bhakti, His Own Energy, but by our own efforts.

Letter 1955

The Mermaid's Shimmering Hair

The destitution has its origin. It is always experienced where man puts himself at the centre. As a little boy in the early spring forest, I was amazed by the wonder of the shimmering algae in the small clear rivulet, under the last remains of the melting coating of ice.

In my selfishness I grasped at them – and lifted them up in my crude hand: a loathsome mess of green slime, what had been shimmering as a mermaid's flowing shining hair. – I had made myself a criminal.

Letter 1955

The Misconception of Difference Between You and not-You

Two extremes:

I am obliged, compelled to live the life of others, i.e., my own

life is used to build, nourish and complete the picture or background of the picture of somebody's life.

I live my own life and expropriate others of their own life and use their life for building up my own one.

The ideal one:

Take what you need from others, gracefully; avoid to degrade anything for your own aggrandizement or maintenance, because such is based on the misconception of [there being a] difference between you and not-you.

Diary in India 1946

The Moon and the Waters

The moon, reflected in towering, muddy waters: *tamas*; the moon, reflected in moving waters: *rajas*; the moon, reflected in clear, calm waters: *sattva*. But even the reflection of the moon in clear waters, where the reflection believes itself to be the actual moon, is not the inconceivable nature of the moon. The *atma* is *sva-prakasha*, i.e., he is like the light, which is light in itself and can illuminate or make others visible, while the objects that are illuminated by the the light (*manas*, *buddhi*, etc.) are unable to illuminate the *atma*. *Manas*, etc., cannot know the *atma*, but in principle, according to his nature, the *atma* can know himself, etc.

Notebook, Vamandas

The Most Stupid Mistake

One must not make the stupid mistake that *all* the modern scholars in the West and here in India make, namely, to hold the opinion that *jnana* means theological-philosophical realization and knowledge, and that *bhakti* means piety of the mind and heart, unencumbered by dogmatics, theology and philosophy; the first thus *intellectual*, the second *emotional*.

There cannot be anything more foolish than to make this mistake, and all the historians of religion and Sanskritists make this – and here the Hindus as well – because no one has taken the trouble of looking into what *jnana* means from the point of view of the *jnanis* and *bhakti* from the point of view of the *bhaktas*.

This sin of omission leads to the opinion that a book on *bhakti* and about Caitanya, which is not only meant for the learned but for everyone, must describe the piety of the heart without presenting too much of metaphysics and philosophy – and the result is a lemonade of sickly-sweet, exotic and romantic piety; emotional, nebulous romanticism, where Caitanya is placed on a par with the prophets and the saviours – even if He is sometimes ranked above them.

No – according to the [Shankarite] *jnanis*, the [Shankarite] Vedantists, *jnana* is the knowledge that *nothing else* than the attributeless Brahma exists, the formless pure knowledge, which the *atma* is completely identical with, and that the world and

Bhagavan – God with form – is not only non-eternal, but the world absolute untruth (unreality), and God relative untruth (unreality).

According to the bhaktas Bhagavan is the eternal form of God and bhakti His Own eternal power of pure cognition and experience, which is totally independent of Maya and works in the bhakta as serving, knowing love, bestowing full and clear knowledge of Bhagavan, the world and the atma as a *spark* of Divine power, and bhakti as seva and ananda – and lets one realize that the attributeless Brahma is merely the aura of Bhagavan’s eternal form.

This bhakti-shakti gives the power to serve with body, mind, word and atma, i.e., to think correctly, realistically, to grasp what was heard, to *correctly* formulate what was said about bhakti in the Shastrams, because this knowledge of Bhagavan, world, atma, bhakta and bhakti, given by bhakti, is an absolutely necessary expression of love for Bhagavan for His sake, not for the sake of one’s own “I”.

Bhakti-shakti thus makes both the mind (intellect) *and* the heart *aglow* with bhakti, makes them *dynamic, free from Maya’s gunas*.

It is simply a crime to present bhakti or Krishna or Caitanya as if they were the *centre of love* and sentimentality – or the centre of mere intellectual theology and philosophy. Bhakti is *neither* the noblest form of the holiest power of emotion and heart of the holiest man, *nor* the most mature form of an unheard-of, bold, clear and pure intellect. Bhakti is independent of heart *and* intellect, but

she absorbs heart and intellect, makes one feel, think and know *in serving love* without selfish motives – however noble – whereas heart and mind simply cannot do anything but in one way or the other *degrade “God” to an object of enjoyment*, wanting to exploit Him, enjoy Him.

In bhakti, *seva* – knowing, serving love – is *an end in itself*. In the religions of the heart *and* intellect, “seva” (?) is only a means to an end: to enjoy, to experience something, which is not transient and flawed, like earthly pleasures.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 2.19.132

The Mouth of the Spring Rather Conceals Than Reveals

Often it seems to me that an invisible power choked my mouth, obstructed me from telling too much of the secret behind the Sanskrit text, which like the mouth of a spring rather conceals than reveals.

Jiva Gosvami wrote his unprecedented work *Gopala-Campuh* by the end of his sojourn here – and he begs Krishna and Shukadeva for forgiveness, for revealing and clearly expressing what they both only hesitatingly hint at – and reveal to conceal – so that the searching and finding in love, for the sake of Krishna’s joy, will be able to exhaust itself.

The Novice

Fact is that whoever begins has to get into the exact terminology and start from the very beginning ... one has to proceed step by step.

My experiences in India and Europe have taught me to be very careful when it comes to speaking about or giving things to read to those who lack the necessary qualifications, otherwise it will all end in split personality, mysticism and edifying obscurity.

Only those who think and behave in a matter-of-fact manner can gradually advance. Bhakti doesn't begin with being guided. It starts with one's own initiative, the wish to serve, not as I want myself, but as bhakti says.

The Ocean and the Cloud

The Ocean (Mahaprabhu), through its own water (the bhakti philosophy) nourishes the cloud (the bhakta Raya Ramananda).

The bhakta Raya (the cloud) lets it (the nectar of this bhakti philosophy) rain back to the ocean (i.e., Mahaprabhu hears this

philosophy from Ramananda's lips).

When it rains (and only then), gems (pearls, mussels) are formed.

When Mahaprabhu hears His Own bhakti philosophy from Raya's mouth, He experiences it in a special way.

Caitanya-Caritamrita 2.8.1

The Offensive Smell of Selfishness

To enjoy, to experience – this is something even the true jnani has left behind *since long*. But his atma has gone crazy about the stiff radiance of the attributeless Brahma and become petrified, motionless.

The bhakta's atma has fully *become* serving. He is most alive and swift in serving, because in God's realm the lila-situation changes every moment, and the lila is most intensive in *the* realm of God that constitutes the fullness of delightful exhilaration, because here God Himself, owing to the fullness of sweetness which He is, puts Himself into situations that evoke vehement worries for His sake and demand fully attentive serving – day and night. Wave after wave rush forward – the 33 *waves* in the general rasa, i.e., reactions to the different situations in the lila.

The bhakta does not let himself be caught by these waves, as you say, but the bhakta's heart is identical with this wave of

servicing; he *is* rasa, factual servicing – through and through – but he is not the Embodiment of all infinite rasas and their waves, as Krishna Himself.

Servicing and atma are no longer separated, as in the beginning when the power of Grace in the form of the will to serve first touched the atma, but the power of servicing has now fully absorbed the atma into his its essence, as the fire does with the iron. And so much more in the case of those whose atma is not only a tiny spark of the Paramatma’s oscillating power, but whose atma, body, mind, etc., consist of prema, cit-shakti’s power of servicing Love.

It is an act of treachery to the *Bhagavatam* when you present something that resembles an idyl to your readers. You will never be able to understand what I tell you as long as you want to make something an object of your enjoyment, even if you want to excuse yourself – to yourself – by regarding this as sacred joy.

As soon as you feel, “I take delight and still I do not serve at all; yes, I do not listen and read with any other purpose than forever wishing to fully and concretely serve”, you know you have gone astray, into the stinking swamp of mayic exploitation, and as God and the *Bhagavatam* never yield to exploitation, you experience something which you *imagine* to be God and the *Bhagavatam*.

I am sorry, but there is no corner here where one could hide and cultivate one’s selfish mystical-lyrical emotions, simmering with blessedness. It is about the life of the human “I”, rooted in enjoyment and therefore in maya, and there is no comfort, no

compensation in the form of a higher world of blessedness and pension for the so-called eternal in man – no eternal peace.

The hypocrite's eternal peace has the offensive smell of selfishness. The bhakta's only peace is his awareness that he eternally-increasingly can *serve God*, that he is no longer a slave under his selfishness, his wretched "I" or his atma, the infinitesimal spark of sat-cit-ananda.

Corrections

The Principles of Time and Space

When an emanation of the worlds takes place, it is the principle of time, *kala*, which evolves directly and causes the three gunas – which still constitute a harmonious unity – to separate and get into a rather chaotic state. According to Hindu philosophy – as it is given in the Shastrams – time is the principle that urges, pushes on, makes things move without break, just as the herdsman's crook makes the cattle proceed without any chance of rest ('*kalayati iti kala*'; from the root *kal*). It is time that brings about the individualization of the three gunas, which were in a state of equilibrium in Maya's formless, material foundation.

As time – the governing or driving force causing ceaseless restlessness – belongs to Maya's realm, it is obvious that time in the sense of *kala* has no sway over the realm of Bhagavan, the

Paramatma, Brahma and the atma. This does not mean, however, that nothing at all like time exists in that realm.

We must always remember that according to Hindu philosophy the characteristic and governing principles, which we find harmful and fatal in the realm of Maya, are present in Gods realm as well, but there in a positive sense. In our world time is the ruler. In God's realm time serves the purpose of promoting the variety and manifoldness of the Divine play.

It is the same with the category of space, which in Maya's realm is evolved immediately after the principle of time. In God's realm the category of space serves the unfolding of God's eternal lila, and does not govern and restrict – as here – the localization of matter or the volition of the intellect.

The past, the present, the future and separation in space are in no way missing in God's realm, but they don't constitute any restrictions. They contract and expand to serve the variety of the Divine play, not to govern and rule.

Corrections

The Purgatory

Abhinivesha is to be so engrossed in the thoughts of the continuance of one's existence that one clings to one's sthula- and lingadeha [gross and subtle covering] in spite of one's own former

experiences of the fact that one must die.

This is something very important. In Christianity, for example, man imagines that he, i.e., his individual “soul” [his empiric personality], will continue to exist. After death, his individual consciousness, having passed through the washing machine – starched and ironed, thoroughly dried and given an airing – attains heaven in the form of an angel.

The washing machine is the purgatory or other forms of purging; then there is the strengthening, i.e., the starch and the bleach, in the form of grace and the belief in redemption, and after this one’s individual personality, “John”, will be an angel, and continue to live there.

There is no such idea in Judaism and Islam; there we have no separation of sthula- and lingadeha at all. Only the sthula-deha is resurrected, becomes alive again.

Tape recording in the 1960s

The Railway Station

There are people who walk around on the railway station *without* a ticket and the intention to take a train – such whose only interest is to see what is there. There are many who treat religion in this way.

Others take a seat without a ticket in the next train, without knowing where the train is heading – people who walk a path with *blind* faith.

Others travel only a portion of every route, walk only a part of every path, and then they turn back again.

Others talk others into believing that only their train is the right one, and only their ticket is the true one.

Others say that it that doesn't make any difference, which train one takes – all trains have the same goal.

People don't understand that there are *many* paths and many different ways of realization of Bhagavan's nature, and that *every* path, every ticket and every train leads to a certain mode of Bhagavan's nature, His being.

There is *taratamyam*, different modes of intensity and extensiveness, and a great variety, *vaicitrita* or *vaicitryam*, in Bhagavan Himself, and accordingly in the atmas of the bhaktas, jnanis, etc., and the nature of their sadhanam, i.e., their individual way of approaching Bhagavan.

Now – it is not only so that each and everyone *considers* his own way of serving Bhagavan to be the best, but Bhagavan *loves each and everyone the most* – if he only wants seva, to serve correctly.

This is something, which no other being than Bhagavan can do – to love everyone the most, but since *everyone* only knows his own special approach, he knows that his service gives Bhagavan

joy. There is neither contest nor envy nor ogling at what others do there.

The atma is *anu*, i.e., infinitesimal. He can only know and serve Bhagavan in *one way*.

Letter 1974

The Relation between God and the World

The true reality (of God and His eternal co-players) makes our so-called reality to a distorted reflection (*viparita pratibimba*), to a ridiculous caricature (*vidambita vidambana*).

The Basics of Psychology

The Seed

The first seed of bhaktiyoga is shraddha, faith, belief, conviction. But there is a fundamental difference between shraddha in bhakti and what other theologies call “certainty of belief” and “to consider true”.

Man and human theology who are devoid of bhakti hold that one must devote oneself to religion for the sake of one’s eternal peace and eternal bliss, i.e., in order to behold and realize (experience) God. The first step in these religions is faith, to be

firmly convinced that God is, that His realm is, and that a certain inner and outer attitude towards Him and the path of redemption leads to Him.

All this is fundamentally different from the bhakti path of the *Bhagavatam* and the other Shastrams. Here, shraddha is not merely “to consider true”, and although one does not see, still courageously put one’s trust in the belief that He is present, that He did and does this and that, etc. – but “shraddha yasya sevane”, shraddha is certainty of belief or firm conviction that *seva*, to serve God, is the only meaning of life. To believe that “God is”, etc., is not sufficient. This is the mere prerequisite for everyone who practises karma, jnana, yoga, as commanded by the *Vedas*.

On the bhakti path “certainty of belief” or shraddha means: to know that *seva*, i.e., to serve Him, to consume oneself physically and mentally with increasing intensity for His sake now and later with one’s cit-body is the beginning and end, the infinite purpose of all true life. Without any trace of ogling at the deliverance from the obstacles and pains that the body, etc., is subjected to here in this world, or there in His realm, where the lila is ever-increasing and the situations change every moment.

“Dharmah projjhita kaitavah” – “without any ulterior motives, without any motive, including the ogling at moksha” (‘projjhita’, ‘free’, ‘empty’, ‘discarded’, ‘renounced’). A religion, which is completely free from all desire for personal advantage, i.e., free from impure service, this is what “free from kaitava”, “free from

deceit” means. (*Bha.* 1.1.2)

God’s Own power is the power to serve, and it can never come to me in its unalloyed form, seize me and make me aglow with it, if I don’t fully accept this “free from kaitava”. Kaitava means ogling at physical, mental and spiritual advantages; also ogling at the advantage of enjoying one’s individual atma or ogling at his entering into the attributeless Brahma.

This distinguishes true bhakti from every other religion on earth.

Shraddha in His seva; without this shraddha in seva no one is capable of practising even one limb (anga) of sadhana-bhakti, not even to clean a temple or wash a bhakta’s clothes.

Shraddha

The Seeming Divergence of the Vedic Religions

According to the nature of the sadhanam and the contact with the samvit-shakti, the individual and different groups have a special liking for a certain mode of God’s being and His shakti. And as Bhagavan and His shakti are inseparable, it happens that individuals or whole groups either are more interested in Bhagavan or in His shakti – even to the extreme, as for instance when Bhagavan Himself is fully eclipsed through the adept’s one-sided focus on His shakti (as is the case with the Shaktas).

In compliance with this special liking, the Shastrams give certain parts of the Word Revelation, which particularly aim at the pertaining aspect. For that reason, a seeming contradiction may appear in the statements, which guarantee the veracity of the different Shastric traditions and reveal the mode of being and aspect that corresponds to a certain approach to the Absolute.

Corrections

The Separation from God – Its Nature (Viraha-Tattvam)

Where is the primeval foundation wherefrom all variety in this world originates – sky, wind, mountains, forests, groves, and the relations between the living beings: tranquillity, service, friendship, the love of the parents for their child and the love of the lovers for their beloved?

Shall this variety only imply transitoriness, inferiority, and worthlessness and only be there for the sake of suffering, to result in nirvana in the end? Shall not nature inspire bright enthusiasm (uddipana) for the highest, uncreated primeval foundation and archetype of all variety? In Vaishnavas' boundless being, in their pure hearts, the variety of the universe arouses a recollection of the separation from the uncreated Root, which is without duality, the primeval foundation, which is Divine fullness, full of variety.

The world of change and its transitoriness is the murderer of trust and the master of many painful experiences and one should definitely not stick to it. But on the other hand: is it a sign of reason when one right from the beginning and once and for all rejects the variety, regards it as a mere delusion, in accordance with the image of the rope one considers to be a snake, and right from the beginning denies it and through one-sided interpretation of the Holy Scripture (Shruti) arrives at the formless, attributeless (nirvishsha) Brahma as its ultimate conclusion?

The void is certainly not the ultimate truth. In order to describe the transitoriness of the universe of matter, the doctrine of subtraction (not this ... and not this, neti neti) plays its temporary role as a hypothetical instruction and shall only make way for a time that is beyond the senses, for a realm that is beyond the senses, for beings who are beyond the senses, into God's and His Own companions' eternal fullness.

This communion full of love, this manifold richness of persons is certainly the highest, although it is not of the same nature as the variety of this world. Striding through the river of dispassion (viraja) merely washes off the dust that covers the variety of this world.

The *Bhagavadgita* 18.54 says, "The appeased atma, completely permeated with Brahma, does not grieve, does not crave ..." Who does not stay here either, will attain the realm of the primeval fullness, and the last line of this Gita verse concerns him. Krishna

says, “He attains supreme bhakti to me.”

When one returns from Krishna to this world, its defectiveness and entanglement in suffering arouses a recollection of Vraja, the unbounded realm. Like the shadow of the beloved arouses a recollection of the pain of separation and intensifies it, the bhakta appreciates and loves some things or certain features of this world (beauty, for example) when they, to a special extent, remind him of Krishna and Radha and Their play and its means of expression, though he does not attach great importance to the things of this world at all – as they are in themselves. The significance of the shadow is that it arouses and intensifies the longing after the archetype. The shadow is real, as the archetype is, but only a means, not the goal.

Only he can deny the shadow, who does not know anything of the archetype. And only he can lose himself in the shadow, who has not perceived anything of the archetype. To lose oneself in the world, and to deny it – both lead astray. Before the loving knowledge of the bhakta the shadow is turned into the archetype, as sand into gold.

In this way, to the premabhakta, the play of the world becomes the play of Godhead – even if the world, as long as it is experienced as world, remains world and is not Godhead.

Notes, internment camp in India

The Shattering of One's Existential Security

[Navadvipa During the Time of Mahaprabhu:]

There was no shortage of Sanskrit teachers and people who lectured about, explained and listened to the *Gita* and the *Bhagavatam*, but no one understood the meaning of the Shastrams, and they avoided like fire explaining the passages where it is obvious that *bhakti* is the aim of all the Shastrams, because this would have shattered their own physical and mental existential security.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 1.7.27

The Simultaneous Presence of God, the World and the Jiva

Just as the sun, its radiance and its rays exist simultaneously, only are three modes of being of the sun itself, and just as Bhagavan, Paramatma-Vishnu and the formless Brahma exist simultaneously as three modes of being [of the Absolute], the shaping power or *maya* as such has three different modes of being, namely:

- 1) *Yogamaya* or *svarupa-shakti*, in her fullness she is Bhagavan's Own potency that distinguishes Him.
- 2) *Tatastha-shakti* or *jivamaya*, a potency belonging to the Paramatma.

3) *Mahamaya*, a potency belonging to the Paramatma (the Paramatma is equipped with svarupa-shakti as well, but not in its complete fullness and intensity, as is the case with Bhagavan).

The formless Brahma is of no interest in this context, as it is *the* mode of being of the Absolute which neither expresses liveliness (*lila*) nor shakti. For the sake of understanding, these three modes of being of the *one* shaping power are characterized as three shaktis, just as the power of the magnet has a positive, a negative and a neutral mode of existence with different effects.

Thus, all three: God, the world and the jiva are without beginning, coexisting since eternity. This does not mean that the world, i.e., a specific system of worlds or a universe [brahmanda] is eternal. There are countless universes, systems of worlds, existing simultaneously; countless universes appear, countless universes disappear, but *mayas-hakti*, from which they emanate, is eternal. All universes never come to an end at the same time. Our world, i.e., the universe or cosmos we are present in now, comes to an end – but this does not mean the end of the world as such.

Answers to Questions 1955

The Smallest Parts Are so Immensely Important

Radha *is*, it is Her nature to be as Radha *and* the gopis, sakhis, dasis, manjaris; yes, like a clock: the smallest parts are so

immensely important, even if they seem unimportant.

The pyramid of *seva* rests on the invisible stones that are placed *under* the ground, supporting the top. A *rasa without* the gopis, etc., is thus impossible.

Letter 1958

The Spirit and the Time-conditioned Apparel

I have often thought of how to prevent what Vamandas or I try to say from being misunderstood as something exotic and “Indian”. The great rishis and avatars have been as much “anti-Indian” as, let us say, Goethe or Hölderlin have been anti-German. Real great Revelation has nothing to do with the locality and its limitations; it is time- and spaceless, *eternal* and not the property of any culture, civilisation or nation. But it is not *easy* to perceive the spirit free from the time-conditioned apparel.

Letter 1958

The Succession in Gaudiya Vaishnavism (Gaudiya-Sampradaya-Tattva)

What Prabhupad [Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakur] pointed out, but could not change, was the fact that the official Caitanya

movement actually has nothing to do with Caitanya; that a true follower of Caitanya is something else than a sentimental, vague and immoral person; and that a true follower of Mahaprabhu should be able to profess himself as such without feeling ashamed of himself and fearing that he will be put into the same category as those who wrap the mantle of the scholar, the bhakta and the cult around their own social, intellectual, spiritual and moral inferiority, and as those who in the name of Mahaprabhu and His cult justify the behaviour of themselves and others while being involved in some more or less shady business.

Soon after Mahaprabhu everything lies in ruins.

Shankara tried to squeeze the Absolute into an intellectual narrow bed; God has to comply with the laws of human logic and like every other system this more or less violates God. Formlessness is just one of the manifold forms of the Absolute.

Mahaprabhu did not create a new system, nor did Jiva Gosvami. Acintya-bhedabheda [inconceivable, simultaneous distinction and non-distinction] is a conclusion, a *siddhanta*, the conclusion drawn when one considers the Word Revelation as a whole. When the *Upanishads* talk about unity and duality, distinction and non-distinction, and with this double statement want to make a statement about God's nature, it follows that God simultaneously is form and not form, one and manifold, etc. This may be contrary to the laws of human logic, but God and His nature are in no way confined to obey mundane, human laws of thinking.

The term acintya-bhedabheda-vada [‘vada’; ‘teaching’] appears only later. Mahaprabhu and His contemporaries had no intention whatsoever to create a new system in addition to the existing opposition between the monistic and dualistic systems, but wanted to show that one violates the Absolute when one tries to squeeze it into the systems of monism or dualism, and despite the double statements of the Revelation only lets *one* prevail.

Mahaprabhu brought the people into the stream of kirtana and chanting of the Name, where each and everyone then evolved in accordance with his own nature. He led people to Krishna-bhakti, some to Radha-Krishna, others to Rama, others to Narasinha, but added that all these (other) forms are not svayam rupa [God as He is in and to Himself, to His Own nature].

Emphatically, He drew attention to the fact that svayam rupa is Krishna or Svayam Bhagavan Vrajendra-Nandana. As a consequence, He wanted to lead the genuine bhakti of every group of jiva-atmas to the respective forms of *Himself*, and lead those who according to their atmic nature (svarup) belong to the bhakti to Vrajendra-Nandana in anugatya gopi-bhava [service under the gopis, in their spirit (bhava)] to this form of bhakti, and out of them again especially those who can appreciate it, into the greater intensity of the separation (viraha) between Radha and Krishna, and the service of Them, when it comes to overcoming Their separation.

Mahaprabhu's closest and most direct disciples are consequently those who in their service (anugatyā) of Mahaprabhu want to attain the service (anugatyā) of the nitya-gopis, overcoming Radha's and Krishna's separation.

Accordingly, we find in the historical development after Mahaprabhu's disappearance, only those of Mahaprabhu's group of disciples who lead to the seva of Vrajendra-Nandana in the seva of His parishadas.

Among those there are also those who according to their nature – in the seva of the respective parishadas [His eternal associates] – belong to Vrajendra-Nandana in the form of the Child, the Companion and Friend, or the Lord (and they have their own lila-literature and anugatyā-seva), but practically the whole sampradaya, in its esoteric form, is dedicated to Radha-Krishna-sadhana, i.e., Vrajendra-Nandana-Kishori [Krishna, the Youth], in anugatyā of Radha's parishadas, and consequently, because Radha, ontologically speaking, is closer and dearer to Him than Himself, and is the One who constitutes the complete fullness of seva to the Beloved – in intensity and extensiveness – the goal of the esoteric sadhana of practically the whole sampradaya is *dasyam of Shri Radha in anugatyā of the eternal companions (nitya-parishadas) in the form of Her female playmates and friends, companions and maidservants*, excluding not only the inner and personal interest for seva of Krishna's other forms, such as Rama, Dvaraka-Krishna, etc., but also the inner and personal interest for seva in anugatyā of

svayam rupa Vrajendra-Nandana in the form of the Child, the Companion or the Lord, and even more, excluding the direct will to serve Krishna as Kishora [the Youth] Krishna and finally even the direct will to serve Radha.

Mahaprabhu has expressed the ideal of this form of seva as: “gopi-bhartur pada-kamalayor dasa-dasanudasa” [I am a servant of the servant of the servants of the lotus feet of Krishna, Who is the most Beloved of the gopis]. (C.C. 2.13.80)

Just as Mahaprabhu’s nature as Radha and Krishna is treated as a well-preserved secret by Mahaprabhu and His followers, the inner interest of the members of the sampradaya for the inner seva – which only the self [the atma] can participate in – is a rigorously preserved secret, which only a few, who themselves take part in this seva in full awareness, can exchange closely guarded secrets about – and even that is very rare.

To reveal this secret to others, who themselves have not been awakened and to those who themselves do not belong to the same level or group of anugatya, is in itself inconceivable – and when this is spoken or written of in public, this is an indication that the person in question lacks the most elementary qualifications for Grace. Otherwise, the power (shakti) of Grace, which bestows wisdom and knowledge, would have given the knowledge that these things are secret and must remain secret, just as Mahaprabhu carefully preserved the secret of His Own being as Radha and Krishna, and of the viraha-bhava [the spirit of separation] and –

where it was revealed – quickly and carefully concealed it again.

Mayapur 1950

The Superiority of the Lila on Earth

As an answer to your question (*Bha.* 3.2.12) I will add: All modes and forms of God and Krishna are eternal. Then, how can it be that in Goloka, Krishna is only the eternal Youth?

In the moment when the lila has come to an end on one earth during one kalpa [one day of the shaper of the world, i.e., Brahma] it continues on another earth; it continuously shines forth on the different earths just as the sunlight successively touches different sectors of the earth.

Even though Krishna is the eternal Youth in Goloka, Nanda and Yashoda in most cases *behold* the Child in Him.

Perceived with the glasses of Maya's time and space, the lila which becomes manifest in the world belongs to the past to *us*. But as soon as someone – in certain conditions; conscious of himself as *atma* – may remove these glasses with the power of *prema-bhakti*, *cit-shakti*, the separation in time and the solid wall of space is eliminated and he lives and experiences the eternal presence of the lila, the eternal Now, and can behold His lila as a *Child*, as it *is*.

We – in Maya's world of space and time – cannot understand anything else than a biological growth from a baby to a man.

Krishna, however, is space- and timeless cit-form – He does not grow up. In the lila on earth, He manifests an infinite amount of His Own eternal modes of being, each and everyone eternal.

These forms become visible (cf. ‘*sva-yogamayabalam*’ in the *Bhagavata* verse 3.2.12) through the power of yoga-maya, which brings about what is unheard-of and impossible to us, in such a way that the sequence of manifestation of these eternal Divine forms *seems* to be a normal growth of a human being, without being so.

To the logic of the world of Maya, which we humans completely incorrectly consider as the *only* logic, it is impossible that *one* person with *one* I-consciousness can be many forms.

That which is beyond Maya, the time- and spaceless – He and His world – would not be accessible to us at all (to our understanding of time and space it would seem to be sheer madness) if not God and His realm – with the help of yogamaya – appeared as a lila within the confines of time and space.

It is only because the lila appears so human-like that it is somehow accessible to us; and to the degree we hear it from a bhakta’s mouth, [and receive it] in a heart and an understanding permeated by bhakti, its cit nature, i.e., its freedom from time and space and its transcendent logic and laws, will gradually shine forth and become clear to us, together with the understanding that “in succession” and “simultaneous” are contradictory to the logic of maya, but to the logic of cit something can happen both succes-

sively and simultaneously – at every stage.

Consequently it follows that it is a quite extraordinary joy for Krishna Himself and for His co-players when they play with Him and serve Him during this seeming adherence to the laws of Maya in the manifest lila on earth, an experience of Krishna and themselves, and prema, which they don't have even in Goloka.

This is the reason why the manifest lila, metaphysically and in every way, is infinitely higher and much more intensive than the unmanifest lila in Goloka.

By this manifestation of the lila on earth it becomes possible that the longing for Him and His seva, i.e., bhakti, can be aroused, and that is why it says, in Narayana's words, "In order to proclaim bhakti, He and His parents, etc., became avatara in the world and on earth."

Comment, Gopala-Campuh

The Three Paths of Yoga in a Nutshell

Man as such is a misunderstanding, because in himself he is nothing but filth, consisting of the gunas, which the atma identifies with. To be a human being, in the real sense, only has *one* value: *to put oneself under the command of the Shastrams*, to dissolve oneself, to sacrifice oneself (yajna), to clear the way for the atma.

Karmayoga curtails, circumscribes man, everything human,

physical, mental, “spiritual”, the seeking of gross and subtle lust.

Jnanayoga cuts off man with all idealistic, cultural nonsense from the atma. This cutting off is *an end in itself*.

Bhaktiyoga makes enjoyment *impossible*, because through bhakti everything is used in the service, and it completely burns up all that is called man – except the atma.

Only when you hide away this meaning, there will be something left that *delights, enthuses man*. If you give the Shastrams fully unveiled, people will *stone* you, not *invite* you.

From your words, etc., people there have not yet understood that they, together with their so highly valued mental-spiritual depths, simply are to be cremated, burned up. They will be really terrified when I open my mouth.

Letter to Vamandas 1958

The Trap of Emotion

I know everything of how you got the deep shock, suddenly remembering what you knew long, long before you got your physical and mental cases, which cover your atma. The deep longing for Her seva – because She serves Him – you cherish in your heart, and this you expressed very beautifully, but one thing you must carefully listen to, *promise* me to listen to – you may like it or not!

Nothing can be gained by running away from the unpleasant world in which we live, by diving and plunging into the bliss of realization. *Our* spiritual happiness is quite unimportant, rather an impediment. Her and His happiness is everything. Even with the greatest enthusiasm and in spite of all trances of bliss we must go step by step, otherwise we believe we are on a high stage but are only on an emotional, mind-made stage.

There is a simple self test; try to think like this: I, my mind, body, soul, house, husband, children are His property. I am like a trustee appointed by Him and obliged to see that His property is kept well and prospers. We must stand with both legs in *this* world of bitter realities and try to make it fragrant with Krishna's fragrance.

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's and His co-players' lives are lives of great self-restraint and they rather feel shy of ecstasies, hiding them from the sight of even their deepest friends. The pure self, the *atma*, in every being *is* His *dasa*, Her *dasi*, only their minds do not know it. As Her *dasis* and His *dasas* we must be better citizens, better husbands, better wives and better children than everybody else. We must serve first with what is known to us, our body, mind, family members, and consider them as means, ingredients of His *seva*. They cease to be opaque then, become transparent, and may turn then into His *sevakas*, too.

I heard much about you and I should be there with you all, I know. In the meantime, do all your routine work with a smile –

knowing you do it for Her sake, reserve a bit of spare time for reading, study seriously whatever Vamandas may suggest. Krishna's realm, His figure, Her figure are more subtle than a figure made of a wave of thought, and more full of life than the most energetic youth of this world.

As soon as you feel you lose yourself in some trance, quickly get up, do some routine work and sing His Name along with a smile. Do not get in the trap of emotion, which is beautiful to *us* – but His pleasure accrues from serving *Him*, which has to be learnt and which is hard and dry, like tilled, frozen earth. *He* will sprout out from the ground then, not *your* feelings.

Forgive these lines. I know how I got such ecstasies and had to learn to push them aside.

Letter 1954

The Trojan Horse

It is simply not true when you say that in order to lead the Trojan horse into the European world of thought you have to compare with other religions, because such comparisons cannot be anything but misleading.

Godforsaken creatures cannot say anything but everything being basically similar or the same. Have you and your contemporaries not understood a single line of Krishna's words, which

already in the *Bhagavadgita* condemn this attitude?

Religions that have no idea of the nature of the atma, not to mention the Paramatma, religions that do not even know God's eternal form, can they have parallels to nirguna-seva in the sense of the *Bhagavatam*?!

Corrections

The True Entrance to the Path of Bhakti

Before anyone becomes ready to tread the path of bhakti, he must hear from the Shastrams and from the mouth of the bhaktas who Bhagavan is and what bhakti is; and he must become completely clear about the fact *that the desire for mukti is like a tigress who intends to rob the bhakta of his very life.*

Only *after* he has realized that the only and final supreme goal for all eternity is to *serve* Bhagavan, only then is he allowed to cultivate the inner and outer forms of the bhakti cult.

To be eligible to walk the path of bhakti it is not sufficient to believe that *God exists* and to believe what the Shastrams say about Him. There is only *one* criterion whether a person is fit or not: it is a strong confidence, accompanied by the firm resolution to act accordingly – that to *serve* Bhagavan is the eternal purpose of life, service for the sake of His service, service as the means and the *end, irrespective of one's own happiness.*

To be turned towards God with the intention to serve – He being the centre and focus of all thoughts and action – that is real liberation from the real bondage of selfishness, of being a slave to one’s own desires.

Corrections

The Two Modes of Being of Bhagavan and His Realm

There are two prakashas or modes of expression of Bhagavan, His realm and His parishadas:

1. A-prakata-prakasha – or the mode of being or expression of His realm, Vraja, that never becomes visible (prakata) on earth, i.e., is a-prakata. When it comes to Krishna and His realm this aprakata-prakasha is Goloka. In this prakasha all know who they are. It is, so to speak, the realm where existential security prevails.

2. Prakata-prakasha – or the mode of being or expression that becomes visible (prakata) on earth by the end of the 28th dvapara-yuga of the 7th manvantara, i.e., only once during one kalpa (one day of Brahma). As the three worlds: earth, bhuvar and sva are destroyed at the coming of the night of Brahma, it follows that the prakata-prakasha only occurs once on our earth – during its history. This prakata-lila, which becomes prakata or visible on our earth, comes into being in accordance with Hari’s wish by a removal of

Mahamaya's veil, which conceals the true Vraja from the human beings, i.e., He and His realm become avatirna.

The land of Vraja, which fills time and space completely, so to speak moves into the geographical realm of Mathura, whose circumference is ca. 270 km. This is possible, because Yogamaya, Who is acintya, beyond human logic, is able to produce everything that is required for the lila. Just as She makes that which is unbounded by time and space appear as something geographical, confined by space and time, and experienced as such, She also causes that all the participants of the lila – also Krishna – who all are pure forms of cit, appear and experience themselves as ordinary human beings of flesh and blood. This is the wondrous loveliness and charm of the prakata-lila. This lila strikes everyone who perceives something of its secret with amazement – yes, it makes Krishna Himself amazed.

Comment, Bhagavata-Mahatmyam

The Two Radically Different Meanings of the Term Maya

1. *Maya* = *mahamaya* is the power that conceals Reality and displays or produces something which is not Reality. It works in relation to those who are averse to His seva. This maya produces the material of the universe, consisting of the three gunas. This

world of maya is real but not Reality. Moreover it gives the atma an unreal, false “I and mine” to help the atma to enjoy and suffer this world. The objects it produces appear attractive to the ignorant atma and consequently he becomes fascinated by these material and mental worlds. It causes moha or confusion. It hypnotizes, so to speak.

2. *Maya* = *yogamaya* conceals a certain part of Reality and manifests another part of Reality instead. It works in relation to those who serve God. It never produces anything that obstructs His seva. *Maya* in the form of *mahamaya* does not in any way influence or affect those who serve Him.

Corrections

The Voice of the Absolute Master

Listen! Listen who has ears to listen! You want to *see* the Truth? Listen first! Your eyes, ears, noses, mouths, tongues and skins and your analysing and synthesizing mind are in an enjoying mode. You are accustomed to look on all objects as objects of your individual or collective enjoyment. You would not hesitate to make the Subject your object, if it came before your vision now.

But the Truth does not expose Himself to your challenging mode; He is beyond the grasp of your senses. You are measuring everything. You are ready to measure the Absolute like the

measurable things of this world. But I tell you that self-effulgent principles are not to be measured by human senses.

Listen with submissive ears, and your eyes will be directed by transcendental sounds to view things from the proper point of view. Transcendental sounds seem to be mundane sounds for mundane ears; but they have the power of revealing themselves to you as transcendental sounds through the medium of your spiritual ears, if you listen with self-surrendering attitude. The Transcendental Sound will teach you how to see things *sub specie aeternitate*, i.e., from the Absolute View.

There are many pseudo-teachers who incite you to strive after gross and sublime forms of enjoyment and renunciation as mask for enjoyment. But the Divine Absolute Master has come to tell you that the only relation, which can exist between your soul and the Absolute is that of spiritual service. This world is but the perverted and reverted reflection of the true world of the Absolute.

The Harmonist 1936

The What, How and Why of All Existence

[In 1961, being back in Europe after 26 years in India, Sadananda writes to his friends in Sweden from Basel:]

I am sorry for not being able to sit among you and listen when the author Walther Eidlitz, whom I know as Vamandas, tells you of

a philosophy of life and of the world that leads to a *more profound* understanding of existence – the *what*, *how* and *why* of all existence – than we generally have in the world.

You must not forget that eternal power, wherever it is at work in the world, is expressed in the thought images of the prevailing time and culture. To really be able to gain a factual and positive value from Vamandas' lectures and implement it in our own lives, we must try to see beyond the seemingly Indian attire and see the essence – for true knowledge is conveyed to *mankind* and is never Indian, Asian, European or African.

Since childhood we are all brought up within a particular world view, and this world view will determine our way of thinking, our ideas and our opinions, which we all too quickly and easily tend to consider as absolute, to be the only possible and correct ones.

If you *try* to be just like children and forget everything that you consider yourself to know, believe and have understood; if for a certain time you put your beliefs within parenthesis, are completely still and try to take in something *completely* different; then, once you are back home, you can objectively assess if you have received something new and more profound than you already had or *not*.

You should *not* be romantic or sentimental, but calm and objective, and think *actively, with an attitude of service*; and ask – always ask – *who* are we, why are we here and what is behind this edifying play of millions of universes that now perish, now appear, now move thrivingly in space.

Don't we all need an inner security that grants us the power to view the appearance and disappearance of our universe and all universes as a multi-coloured, quickly changing curtain behind which *true* reality is concealed? A security like that of a sunray that is shining into the darkness, seemingly offended by dust, mist and clouds, but still knowing that it *eternally belongs to the Sun*, to God if you wish, and is Light, of God's Own nature – and a firm knowledge that in reality we are neither men nor women, neither Indian nor European, but according to our inner nature meant to *serve* God and those who serve Him. Thus we can make the passage beautiful for ourselves and our fellow beings and create a noble, bright world where we understand each other instead of fighting each other in the battle of life, in which even the best persons degenerate into intellectual, psychologically complex animals.

Let us learn to see the worlds and God from the centre – no longer from the periphery as we are used to. If we call the centre Krishna, like the *Vedas* do, I can send you my own teacher's blessing, "Krishne matir astu", may our thoughts be directed towards Him, the Centre.

I am at the hospital at the moment and don't know when I can be with you – in your wonderful country to which I owe so very much – but if you all strive towards Krishna, towards the Centre, I am sure that the power of this very Centre will bring me to you – against all seeming obstacles. Here in Switzerland I am already

closer to you than I was in India.

I look forward to seeing you!

Your old and new friend

Sadananda

The Will to Experience, to Know – or to Serve

Bhog means experience, not enjoyment. The Word Revelation is not an object of intellectual exploitation, of our desire to know and experience, but to serve and to listen. Wanting to know or striving for knowledge/realizations is still an expression of bhoga-vritti.

Prabhupad [Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati] says, “The willingness to serve the Absolute on His terms is expression of seva-vritti.”

Notes

The Wire Brush

I haven't got the ring of Nathan the Wise [a play from 1779 by G. E. Lessing], who held the power “to be pleasant in the eyes of God and man”. I have got nothing of the sort. I have nothing but a wire brush; otherwise I would already have been in high favour with the

Times of India and *Illustrated Weekly*, like Harrer – who is praised to the skies – with his book on Tibet, or Gauri-Bala, alias W. Schönfeld, *The Really Happy Man*, etc.

Letter 1955

The Wish to Enjoy Makes Man Mean

Man wants to behold God for the sake of his own selfish joy, but firstly, he is not capable of seeing Him, secondly, God is so kind-hearted that He does not reveal Himself to him, because this would only strengthen his delusion, the “original sin” of the atma that the meaning of life is to enjoy. Thirdly, man does not know what to do with God, if He revealed Himself, because His form and lila never comes up to man’s expectations – what he imagines God to be. And fourthly, God’s appearance would only make man blaspheme Him, because here *He* stands before him, He, Who – in the Shastrams, which man did not pay any heed – crushes and crumbles man’s conceit, that he must be the centre of the Divine plan of salvation; because here He stands, Who gets to the bottom of man’s being as man, of the “I” and the enjoyment as the meaning of his life.

Corrections

The Word Dasa Is Necessary

A thought crossed my mind – If you should mention me in a book, etc., please give my name as “Svami Sadananda *Das*”. The word “das” is necessary to differentiate me from the Ramakrishna-wallas and a title of honour for us who know ourselves as *dasa* and not “Brahma” as the Maya-vadis.

Letter

The Word of the Revelation

The word of the Revelation, which man reads in the *Shruti*, is just as little a word in which the word, the thing, the idea, and God are one, as the stone of the image of God (vigraha) *is* God, and consequently the bhakta does not consider this stone to be God or the word he reads to be Revelation; but God, form, thing, idea, and word are identical *as expressions of His svarupa-shakti* [God’s Own potency of cognizant, loving service]. And the printed or written word, which is read, is no more a key to the knowledge of God than an image made of stone, wood or metal is a means to imagine God’s Own form. Nor is the essential meaning, which the words of the Scripture aim at, by the special grace of God now revealed to the pious reader. *The* words of the Scripture that we find in the printed or written Shastrams are completely ordinary

and mundane words and can in no way be means to reveal the knowledge of God unless the reader is saturated with *svarupa-shakti*. That is why the knowledgable Indian has always smiled when a European has learnt Sanskrit and tried to translate the *Upanishads* with absolute sincerity, dedication, and scientific faithfulness.

Devoid of *svarupa-shakti*, the reader or translator is in no way able to selflessly abandon his own ways of thinking (his conceptions, his prejudices, his inborn likes and dislikes, the coloured glasses, so to say, through which he reads and the colour of which he unconsciously transfers to the text) and with undivided attention listen to the wording of the often astounding text.

The *Upanishads*, which the Europeans read and translated, have very little in common with the true *Upanishads*, they are nothing but literature, no matter how much the translator may have tried to regard them in a religious, worthy manner. The true *Upanishads*, like God's Word Revelation as a whole, are *eternal living presence* and can as such neither be written, nor printed, nor read, nor pronounced. *They are expressions of svarupa-shakti, which constitutes God, His realm, the idea, the thing, and the real Word.* That is why a Name of God, for example, can never be heard, read, or pronounced by someone who does not possess *svarupa-shakti*.

It is the *svarupa-shakti* itself who listens in the *atma* of the person who is ready to listen, sitting in front of the guru, just as it is the *svarupa-shakti* that speaks in the guru's *atma*. It is true that if

anyone accidentally witnessed this conversation, he could hear the words coming from the mouth of the guru and being perceived by the ear of the disciple, and he could also notice how the disciple repeats or even writes down these words. But as long as the svarupa-shakti does not work in the atma of the listener and he merely writes down the words he hears with his physical ear, these words will have nothing to do with the Words that are full expressions of svarupa-shakti. In relation to the Word of svarupa-shakti, which is identical with the thing itself, it is like the shadow of a sweet fruit on the living, thriving tree, a shadow, which furthermore is distorted, as it falls on a slanting, uneven wall.

Just as a hearty bite into the shadow fruit on the rough wall causes the person who wants to taste the fruit nothing but trouble, as he bites directly into the rock, occupation with the mere shadow of svarupa-shakti's Word without an empowered teacher only leads astray. The difference between the shadow fruit on the wall and the shadow word one reads or hears is that the shadow fruit, for instance the shadow of an apple, does not warn when one wants to have a bite, while the shadow word of the Shruti still contains some of svarupa-shakti's compassion and over and over again gives a warning, not to erroneously consider it to be svarupa-shakti's own Word.

Another misconception is that a person who is filled with God's presence, so to say, could see through the written words, could see the import, what is behind the words. Where svarupa-shakti is and

works, it becomes perfectly clear to the reader or listener that the *real Word* is absolutely distinct from the grammatically, acoustically, and optically expressible word, something like wine being distinct from the blood of Christ. Unlike the Catholic belief, that wine can be transformed into the blood of Christ, the grammatical word can never be transformed into the real Word. The real Word is always *this* Word and the svarupa-shakti reveals it as identical with itself.

The great question: Why are Shastrams then printed, written and expressed? – To a person who does not know the sweet fruit on the tree, a shadow on the slanted, rough wall can become a hint to search after the real fruit. And to the person who *wants to serve* the real Word, the shadow word can approximately point to where the true Word is to be looked for, namely where svarupa-shakti speaks through the mouth of a true bhakta, a true servant of God. In bhaktiyoga, the sincere *wish to serve* is regarded as the first indication that svarupa-shakti has already touched the atma of the disciple.

To the cognizant bhakta, as long as he is not in the state of samadhi, it is the svarupa-shakti – identical with the real Word – that reveals the true Word in its identity with the thing itself. And the svarupa-shakti, which reads and speaks in him, does not read and speak out the shadow word, but the real Word.

At this point, the image of the shadow and the fruit does not fit any more, because the knowing bhakta does not see the shadow at

all, he does not see anything but the fruit. And he does not read the shadow word, he reads the true Word. When the shadow word of the *Upanishads*, etc., is maltreated by distorting translations and purports, when the shadow of the Revelation, which the book contains, is distorted and changed, it does not harm the real Word, just as little as a crack in the wall, where the shadow lies, does any harm to the fruit on the tree.

Who knows svarupa-shakti knows the real Word and the real Revelation and he immediately recognizes when the non-knowing person asks him where the shadow revelation has been distorted and changed.

Just as Krishna's form (consisting of cit), out of compassion is described by analogy with the figure of man, in order to show what God is *not* (namely: not formless), the cognizant bhakta helps – by *seemingly* intellectual work [by transmitting samvit-shakti] – the person who is still stuck in the mere intellectual ways of thinking to be clear about what is shadow and what is distortion of the shadow in the shadow revelation.

But this is indirect Grace for the ignorant. It is like helping someone who cannot see the tree itself by drawing the shadow of the tree, distorted by cracks on the slanted, uneven wall, in order to convey the idea of what the undistorted shadow looks like. And if the disciple receives the grace of svarupa-shakti, in a mysterious way, this outline of the shadow can request the aspirant to follow the guru, the *cognizant* bhakta, and to begin his search – under the

guidance of the svarupa-shakti, which works in the cognizant bhakta – for the Tree, where the living archetype of the shadow fruit eternally and playfully moves in a light breeze in the light of the sun.

The Word, which is one with the thing itself and the idea (as expression of svarupa-shakti), is *eternally present*, and consequently the historical situation (time, space) is of no importance at all. It is, so to say, merely the wall onto which the shadow falls. The Word of the svarupa-shakti, which the guru expresses, is identical with the Archetypal Word of the Revelation and it is not God's special act of grace that grants a chosen exceptional personality the power to infallibly solve a certain theological or spiritual problem from God's point of view, but where the svarupa-shakti speaks, it is just as such infallible and identical with God Himself.

In this sense, the faithful interpretation of the Scripture is neither dependent on the mental or religious structure of man nor his time, it depends on the special nature of the *atma*, whom the svarupa-shakti connects to exactly that particular aspect of God and His realm and that particular form of service that this *atma* in essentiality eternally belongs to.

Notes to Vamandas in Mayapur, 1950

The Workings of Yoga-maya and Maha-maya

Krishna's lila on earth has a particular charm in relation to the lila in the realm which never becomes manifest on earth. Its charm consists in the fact that the power of the lila makes the eternal co-players unaware of the fact that they are eternal co-players. It is only on rare occasions and during short periods of time they are aware of being so.

This does not mean that they are humans or animals; they just behave as and believe themselves to be so. There is a clear difference between the working of the power called yogamaya and the power, which makes the atma who is turned away from God ignorant of himself, i.e., mahamaya.

The eternal co-player serves directly through God's Own potency of serving love, and in order to intensify the lila on earth God's Own potency of knowledge makes the co-player believe that he is nothing but a human being.

Here lies the fundamental difference, consisting in the fact that the co-player serves directly – without always being clearly aware of it – even during the time when he believes himself to be a human. Arjuna for instance, believes himself to be uncertain of his own duties and asks Krishna just as we humans would ask a master. In spite of being His eternal co-player, he often asks and behaves as if he did not know the most fundamental facts of the Shastrams. But now and then it becomes clear to him that it is *God*

Himself Who stands before him and drives his chariot. But this awareness becomes concealed anew through God's Own power of serving love, so the play can continue.

Man, i.e., the atma who is averse to serving God, ignorant of being under the sway of Maya, not only falsely identifies with the human body, soul and mind, but actually has a body of flesh and blood and a mind consisting of subtle matter; he is as he is and knows himself to be. He does not express God's serving-knowing love but complete aversion to God and utter selfishness.

Man has to be born as man, as a result of deeds in former lives. The co-players, however, come to the world – just as Bhagavan – to a lila, a play. The co-players believe themselves to be born, and in Krishna's lila of Divine fullness on earth [Gokula], they even believe, as the "parents" of Krishna: "Krishna truly is our Child."

In Goloka, the mode of Krishna's abode which never becomes manifest in the world, the co-players know that they are His co-players in eternity, there they only have the "feeling" of being the parents of God, Who for His part has a corresponding "feeling" towards them: "I am your Son."

Corrections

There Are Two Groups of People

Those who belong to the first group are those who are of the opinion that their own good, i.e., what they believe to be their own good, is the meaning of life. They think of the world, their own nature and God according to what pleases them, what they like. They try to experience a world that is in accordance with what they desire for their physical and mental good. Consequently, they reject everything – here, and later there, if the idea of an afterlife appeals to them – that stands in the way for or is opposed to their own good; they try to exclude this, and if it does not allow itself to be properly excluded they even hate it.

The old thought that man is the measure of everything inspires their world view, and their view of God – if they have any. To them *man is at the centre* and everything revolves around him and his own good, *all according to his taste*: a world without God or a world with God. What they themselves or other humans experience – here or in the hereafter – with their senses, intellect, mind, heart and soul/personality: *this* is real. To consider the possible existence of something that man as such is not able to experience is meaningless; it is opium that prevents us from enjoying life and sometimes makes us forget that enjoyment of life is the means and the end. “Good or happiness” either comes from within oneself – i.e., one’s own deeds, thoughts and feelings – from other people or other living beings or from nature, i.e., the landscape, climate, etc.

In accordance with this man tries to create an inner world, a society and a surrounding world that satisfy him, i.e., give or seem to be capable of giving him maximum joy.

Since it is an incontrovertible fact that man during these attempts to shape life for the sake of his own happiness does not obtain what he desires, but over and over again obtains what he does not desire and what is different from what he expected, he tries, in accordance with his taste, to reconcile with this fact. Either he heroically accepts the fact that the world simply is like this and that one has to be content with the maximum of happiness possible to obtain, or else he consoles himself by the thought that the world becomes somewhat better through man's endeavour, with more and more happiness and less and less suffering – or, if the idea of an afterlife appeals to him, *he strives to ensure greater happiness in his next life already in this life* – through good deeds, physical, mental and verbal.

This type of human being therefore instinctively rejects and hates the mere *thought*, the mere doubt that man's own happiness is not his true happiness and the meaning and aim of life. And even stronger he has to reject the thought that the meaning and aim of life is, not only once, but from eternity to eternity to spend oneself in ever increasing devotion in order to give joy to a God *who does not in the least appeal to him*. According to taste – depending on whether he prefers the thought of *one* or many lives – there is a rich selection of world views, philosophies and religions at his

disposal. – Yes, and if none of those already known appeals to him, he is free to create a new one; and if he is not capable of doing this himself, he does not have to worry, because luckily there are shrewd people who understand the spirit of the times; yes, there are even those who have the gift of good instinct and can foresee what may appeal to people in the near future, who can supply them with an enchanting world view, philosophy and religion entirely in accordance with their desire and inner satisfaction. The shrewdest among them are so clever that they, for the sake of their own satisfaction, or power, honour or money, can prepare such a wonderful and enchanting world view, philosophy and religion that even people who did not ask for it accept it enthusiastically.

It is about the creators of the great fashion religions and world views of our time and of all times. Unfortunately for all people in this group it is a human weakness that the founder of such a fashion religion, for the sake of his own satisfaction, wants to convince others that *his* method of producing happiness for the people of this world or in a life after death is the best, yes actually the only one that is true, right and infallible. For this purpose he sticks at nothing. He, i.e., the founder of the religion and the world view and his already convinced followers, exploit the weaknesses of their fellow beings and the human weaknesses of all times. If people still have traditional forms of belief or believe in Holy Scriptures or great philosophers, the founders cleverly use these and try to sail under their flags. If this does not work, these forms

of belief are denounced as pagan and antiquated. Each fashion world view and religion founded on the principle of striving for the happiness of man has denounced other world-views as false doctrines and paganism. The Christians have denounced the heathens, the Jews the gojims, the Muslims the kafirs, The Hindus the mlecchas, the materialists the idealists, the Nazis the non-Nazis, the followers of Gandhi those who did not believe in ahimsa, the faithful the heretics, the one so-called God against the other so-called God – and vice versa. In order to implement their method of making others happy they have always tried (and generally succeeded) in getting the government of their own country or some other country on their side – and with their help they have more or less violently implemented their own method of striving for the happiness of man, with or against his will. This is the method: “If you don’t want to be my brother, I dash out your brains.”

The people of the second group know that man is *not* the measure of everything, that man is *not* at the centre, that the meaning of man’s life here in this world or in the hereafter is *not* to strive for and try to experience greatest possible happiness – a happiness that is experienced by man or his soul/personality either directly or experienced by simply eliminating man or his soul/personality. The people in the second group know who, what and how God is, and what His grace is and consists in, what the world is, what the

delusive I is, which man either experiences in the form of a unity of body and mind and soul/personality, or as a unity of mind and soul/personality.

They also know why the people of the first group suffer – in spite of their efforts to ignore the fact of suffering through all kinds of physical, psychic or mental-religious intoxicants, or to rise above this fact or to hide it behind the belief in a better world in the hereafter.

*The Three Paths And the Philosophies
And Religions of the World*

There Is no Liberation of Mankind

There is no liberation of mankind, only the repeated, unadulterated explanation and demonstration of the paths given in the Shastrams, through which the atma in man can be freed from his slavery, the state of being turned away from God.

The four-armed Paramatma, who follows every atma wherever he is, sees to it that the atma is liberated according to the degree of man's obedience to the directions given by the authoritative Word Revelation.

Corrections

Thirty Different Gurus

Once when Prabhupad [Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati] was still present here, I came from Mayapur on the bank of the Ganga to Navadvipa, where I met a man on the riverbank. He told me that he had already had more than thirty different gurus. And he had always been disappointed. And he was sad because of this. When I heard this I also became sad. When I returned to Mayapur again in the evening, I told Prabhupad, “I met a man who told me he had had thirty gurus.” When he heard this Prabhupad said, “Then he probably will have more!” Because there was always a lack of sincerity within that man which made him a victim of bhrama, delusion.

Tape recording in the 1960s

Time and the Timeless

Kala is “time”, from $\sqrt{\text{kal}}$ = to urge on; *kala* is what spurs the drift of sensual flight to changeable objects, from birth to death, like the herdsman’s crook that makes the cattle proceed to the slaughterhouse without any possibility to rest.

This is an important concept of “time”. Compare this with the concept of the “time-less”, where one is not driven like cattle, but where one out of inner freedom and in joy consumes oneself, in

complete love submits oneself to God, from eternity to eternity.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 1.16.60 and the Corrections

To Deserve to Depreciate Oneself

Your problem and others' could be solved if you all as an experiment imagined yourself to be completely alone, without Vamandas, Hella, Sadananda, Svami Bon, etc., alone with God, so to say, as is the case when one is under an anaesthetic, and friends, relations, etc., yes, one's own self, so to say, vanishes – and in a surrounding where there is no one to talk to about Krishna and seva.

Now and then, one must try to imagine oneself in such an exceptional situation, in order to see where one stands inwardly, how deeply one is really rooted in bhakti and how deeply one only imagined oneself to be so.

Then one becomes humble, and dainyam or depreciation of oneself – especially when it is not legitimate – is like the mother of true premabhakti.

And when one really deserves to depreciate oneself – what degree of modesty will manifest then? Such dainyam or depreciation may be the foundation for the commencement of honest, true bhakti.

Letter 1960

To Search for God Is Still Maya

To search for God is still maya, selfishness. One must search for Him, because one wants to *serve* Him, not enjoy and rejoice, as all of you want. It is impossible to find Him in this way, because He is never an object of knowledge.

Corrections

Transcendental and Earthly Ignorance

Not even the eternal co-players are always aware of who they themselves and the other co-players actually are to their svarupam, their true nature – by no means. If everyone, including Krishna and Radha, etc., always knew who they actually are, there would be no lila, no Divine play, at all.

The ignorance of man on earth, etc., is negative, it stems from Maha-maya, because of man's aversion to God. The ignorance of God's co-players stems from Yoga-maya, it makes the lila possible, it is positive.

Letter

Transcendental Sounds

Listen! *Listen* who has ears to *listen*! You want to *see* the Truth? *Listen* first! Your eyes, ears, noses, mouths, tongues and skins and your analyzing and synthesizing mind are in an enjoying mode. You are accustomed to look on all objects as objects of your individual or collective enjoyment. You would not hesitate to make the Subject your object, if it came before your vision now. But the Truth does not expose Himself to your challenging mode; He is beyond the grasp of your senses. You are measuring everything. You are ready to measure the Absolute like the measurable things of this world. But I tell you that self-effulgent principles are not to be measured by human senses.

Listen with submissive ears, and your eyes will be directed by transcendental sounds to view things from the proper point of view. Transcendental sounds seem to be mundane sounds for mundane ears; but they have the power of revealing themselves to you as transcendental sounds through the medium of your spiritual ears, if you listen with self-surrendering attitude. The Transcendental Sound will teach you how to see things *sub specie aeternitate*, i.e., from the Absolute View.

There are many pseudo-teachers who incite you to strive after gross and sublime forms of enjoyment and renunciation as mask for enjoyment. But the Divine Absolute Master has come to tell you that the only relation, which can exist between your soul

[atma] and the Absolute is that of spiritual service. This world is but the perverted and reverted reflection of the true world of the Absolute.

The Harmonist

Under Narasinha's Protection

It is a part of the great inner contradiction in the life of bhakti that a person ceases to be a bhakta the moment he thinks that he, as a Narasinha-bhakta, has the guarantee that Narasinha will protect him.

Narasinha protects the bhakta, i.e., his atma, so that he does not fall back into Maya, but by no means protects him from physical and mental catastrophes. Prahlada was not spared these, either.

There is no rescue from the suffering, but from the lack of attitude towards the suffering.

Narasinha gives atma- and Narasinha-awareness.

The Narasinha-mantra removes the fear we have for the sake of our empiric I, grants us the awareness that we as atmas belong to *Him*.

Letter 1959

Vamandas at Loggerheads with Walther

I am deeply worried about you all; I am in great, repressed anxiety. If only Prabhupad [Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati] gave you the power to be one, i.e., Walther and Vamandas, one whole bhakta – no longer Vamandas at loggerheads with Walther – it would be so wonderful!

Letter to Vamandas 1957

Varieties of Self-expression within the Absolute

Bhagavan's different modes of being and His avatars – with their different levels – only signify that Bhagavan's qualities and shaktis are manifested in different degrees of intensity. There is no variety of *separate* modes of being, but a variety of Self-expression within the Absolute.

The nature of the sadhanam or method of connection with God and the corresponding degree of contact with God's samvit-shakti determines which of the different spheres of intensity of the Absolute an atma is placed in when he has discarded the mental and physical coverings.

It is the same with the relation between Brahma (the Absolute's formless mode of being) and Bhagavan (the mode of being which has form). In the formless mode the shakti qualifying the Absolute

is not expressed; in Bhagavan and His avatars it is expressed in different degrees of intensity.

God's different cit-forms correspond with His predominating bhava or samkalpa [wish or volition]. When Krishna wants to express majesty, for instance, His usual two-armed form becomes four-armed.

The modes of being of higher intensity can also incorporate modes of lower intensity and release them again.

All modes of His being are unrestricted by space and time, they are eternally present everywhere, and it is the same with His corresponding abodes (dhama) and eternal companions (parishada). Each of Bhagavan's modes of being also has a corresponding shakti. This shakti is both impersonal potency or power *and* personal form, for example:

Narayana – cit-shakti – Lakshmi

Krishna – hladini-shakti – Radha

Maha-Deva – maya-shakti – Durga

Rupa Goswami's Laghu-Bhagavatamritam

Waves in the Current of Bhakti – or of Selfishness?

The premabhakta is transported with joy, because:

1. Bhagavan, Whom he wants to serve, gives him the opportunity to do so; or

2. Bhagavan Himself or one of His companions have let him know that God has accepted his service, that it has pleased Him; or
3. He, Whom he serves, rejoices in a certain lila-situation.

This joy is *a wave in the current of loving service*, and transported with joy the bhakta loses consciousness of the outer world, the hairs of his body stand on end, he sheds tears, etc.

A person *devoid* of bhakti is seized with joy when he attains something that satisfies his physical, mental or spiritual needs. Then he laughs and cries with joy, faints away, etc. Consequently this joy is *a wave in the current of his selfishness*. It is that which consists of Maya's gunas that laughs, makes him laugh, rejoice, and is the object of his joy.

If you raise the objection that he rejoices because he listens to the accounts of Krishna and it is then only natural that he cries, laughs, etc., this is not true. You have already heard from Krishna's mouth and know from the *Gita* that man's mind and soul only experiences and imagines that which consists of sensuous-mental stuff – not cit.

A person who does not have bhakti, i.e., no wish to serve for Krishna's sake, cannot listen and experience anything at all when a bhakta speaks of Krishna. He only meditates upon, imagines, listens to and experiences a "Krishna" created out of mental stuff, a maya-"Krishna", not the actual Krishna; and he experiences a "lila" he has created in his maya-mind, not the actual lila.

Krishna is always Adhokshaja, only possible to hear of, to see,

etc., through bhakti – in the degree of the development of bhakti to premabhakti.

You must be careful *not to mix the idea of piety with the concept of bhakti*, which unfortunately is the case now in kaliyuga when almost everyone thinks, talks and writes of bhakti in this way, quite contrary to what Krishna says in the *Gita*, etc.

Bhakti is *servicing, seva*.

Prema comes from the root *pri*. In *Priti-Sandarbha* (§ 61), Jiva Gosvami gives the following three definitions of *priti* or *priyata*:

1. Love is to its nature conducive to the *object* of love.
2. Love is desire for what is conducive (favourable, dear) to the object of love (what the object of love itself considers to be conducive).
3. Love is a special kind of awareness full of enthusiasm (in the realization that the loving endeavours have truly been a joy for the object of love).

Corrections

We Are Never Alone

We are *never* alone, never abandoned by God; He is always and everywhere.

We have abandoned *Him*; we are turned away from Him, shut out through our will to *have* something from Him for our own sake.

If the mysterious will of serving Love dawns within us, then He *is* quite, quite close and *is* experienced as such, more near to us than our own heart.

Letter 1953

What Does it Mean to Be Rich?

Krishna to Uddhava: “What does it mean to be rich? – To be content with that which one deserves as a result of one’s own actions in this life or in earlier lives.”

The Basics of Psychology

What Does Krishna Care for?

Krishna is interested or touched only by currents, which are *not* of our human mind, soul or body – currents, which are as much beyond Maya as He Himself. These currents are the various forms of bhakti. Bhakti is His Own Energy of Knowledge and Realization which – when it touches the atma – is called bhakti.

Then only Krishna comes in and the bhakta becomes dear to Him. So long as this shakti is not in the heart and not at work, Krishna cares for nothing of what we do. Neither moral perfection nor degradation has anything to do with Him. We have to reap the

fruits.

But if one has got this bhakti-shakti, He looks at that heart and the intention of the person who really wants to love Him and He does not care at all for the imperfections of the mind, as they will disappear by themselves in the degree the person is cooperating with the force of bhakti.

Krishna cares for the sincere intention of the bhakta, not for the failures or defects, which are the result of the mundane nature of man.

Letter 1955

What Does Liberation Mean?

Liberation (mukti) means the ability to endeavour to solve all problems being turned towards God, as seva, not a life without tensions and problems.

Liberation from the malady of the world of change [samsara] means liberation from being turned away from God.

Letter 1960

What Does the Term Shastram Mean?

One term for the entirety of the Word Revelation, a term which

cannot be misunderstood, is Shastram. Shastram means: “That which instructs, regulates and keeps on the right path.” When a guru writes a summary of words from the Shastrams, giving their true import, or gives a true explanation of such words, it is also called Shastram. But they are only meant to instruct and regulate those who have surrendered to the true master, i.e., the shishyas, the disciples, who are to be instructed and kept on the right path.

From what has been said before it is clear that the Shastrams in their entirety is absolute authority. For [the adepts on each] particular path, who are practising this particular form of religion, however, the particular parts of the Shastrams related to that path serve as authority. The individual person is eligible for a particular path in accordance with his character. All individuals are not the same and are not eligible for the same path – by no means.

The assumption that every path perchance would lead to the same goal, which is asserted in modern times – even in India – is also wrong. From the point of view of the *Bhagavatam* and other bhakti-Shastrams – as Narada’s *Pancaratra*m for example – all paths other than the path of pure bhakti are paths which at best, only after following them for a long time and often through many births, lead to the bhakti path, which can lead to God’s realm and the service of Bhagavan and His Own, to cognizant love – provided that Bhagavan’s and His bhakta-s’ grace is present.

Corrections

What Is Bhakti?

Bhakti in general is “samvit-samaveta-hladini-shakti”, hladini-shakti combined with samvit, i.e., the same power through which Bhagavan knows (samvit) and experiences Himself as ananda (hladini) is made available for a particular person. It affects his nature and his atma and returns to Bhagavan in the form of bhakti. One makes a distinction between:

1. Sadhana-bhakti or a method, where a person’s mind and body is in every way applied to the service of Bhagavan. This method is given in the Shastrams and explained to the bhakta as a duty or vidhi. The bhakta follows this method based on a sense of fulfilment of his duty. At the next stage, this sadhana-bhakti can lead to raganuga-bhakti. Then it is not a sense of duty that spurs the bhakta, but raga, passionate enthusiasm to follow, to serve in subordination (anuga) those who already serve Bhagavan since eternity. The bhakta has heard of the different co-players in the lila and the wish arises within him to serve a certain co-player, whom he considers to be his ideal. This latter form of sadhana-bhakti leads faster than vidhi-bhakti to the next stage.

2. Bhava-bhakti. At this stage the bhakta continues with the method of the first stage. He has, however, already overcome the gunas and clearly realizes the nature of the world, Bhagavan and His lila. Bhava is the first indication of the combined workings of samvit- and hladini-shakti, while only samvit was working before.

At the conclusion of this stage, bhava-bhakti is almost identical with sthayi-bhava or the permanent, personal relation between one's atma and Bhagavan.

3. Prema-bhakti is characterized by an "I am Yours" or "You are mine" relationship with Bhagavan. Through prema-bhakti follows here, in addition to the clear knowledge of Bhagavan, the direct experience of Him, His lila and one's own participation in the lila. Thus, together with samvit, the hladini-shakti works here. It is not possible to attain the stage of prema-bhakti in one lifetime. Strong bhakti-vasanas from an earlier life or several lives are required. The bhakta on this stage can still have his coverings; they are, however, no hindrance to him anymore. This prema is also called priti.

Notes

What Is the *Bhagavatam*?

Every letter of the *Bhagavatam* is just as prema-maya, consisting of prema, as Krishna Himself! The *Bhagavatam* has only one single purpose: to show that bhakti is *the* meaning of life and its highest aim (purusha-artha). Thus nothing is more wrong than to think that *Bhagavatam* also teaches jnana-moksha and karma, and sva-dharma, the duties of the different castes and the different stages of life.

No – other things than bhakti are only dealt with and their best and noblest aspects only described to show that they are nothing compared with the very first seed of bhakti in a human being who lives in this world and who *is* already mukta, i.e., turned towards God and His seva through the very first contact with bhakti.

Shrivasa did not only know what the best scholar void of bhakti does not know, but he experienced the identity between the Word of the *Bhagavatam* and the thing that it expresses (sphota-vada). To us, a word at best means something that is still beyond our direct experience, but Shrivasa directly experienced the Word, and with the Word – in the Word – the thing that is identical with the Word.

Just as Gauranga seems to be a human being to those who are void of bhakti, and by no means is recognizable as God, the *Bhagavatam* seems to be a book of letters of the Sanskrit language to those who are void of bhakti, a book they can understand through learning and intellectual endeavours. To others, who are sentimental by nature, it is an object of selfish edification and joy; but neither the most brilliant exposition of the Sanskrit text of the former, nor the tears of the latter have anything to do with the *Bhagavatam*. To the former a deep theological-philosophical work, to the other a source of inner excitement, like being moved to excitement by a good novel, drama, poem, etc. But where we only find magnificent philosophy and exciting poetry, there the bhakta, especially the premabhakta, directly experiences Bhagavan, His realm, His lila, because the prema in him “attracts” the “object”,

Bhagavan, etc., so that He no longer remains hidden or intimated behind a word; the *Word* now stands directly before the listener, directly experienced as He *Himself*, His realm, His lila, His shakti.

When the premabhakta, who is still a human being, or a parishada, who in the prakata (manifest) lila often believes himself to be a mere human being, listens to the *Bhagavatam*, then sphurana, i.e., shining forth of the lila often occurs, i.e., then the bhakta is no longer aware of the outer world, no longer in time and space. Time and space disappears, the whole curtain of Maya is suddenly swept away, and a *lila* which is described in the *Bhagavatam* and to *our* understanding took place so and so many years or thousands of years ago – but in reality takes place eternally, from eternity to eternity – is *now* present there as it was present before, and is suddenly experienced as it was before.

This is not intuition or imagination, “to see something with the ‘spiritual’ I, something that is not there”; it is direct experience of what is directly present, existing.

A pandit and a sentimentalist do not understand this at all. What do we know of the nature of the tears of a true bhakta, which are the reaction on the direct factual experience of God and a certain lila? We cannot even understand that this direct experience is not the result of the wish to experience, but the wish to serve, to be a dasa!

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavata 2.21.76

What Is the Highest Goal?

The highest goal is not to be liberated from the hardships and agonies of the world of change, to behold God or to experience selfish bliss. According to Krishna Himself, there is nothing higher than to *serve*; serving is means and serving is goal; the indirect service only becomes *direct, loving* service.

The goal of true religion is not to taste *rasa*, to experience bliss or participate in God's eternal play. – Serving in itself is the goal. Everything else is non-bhakti, non-serving, and the bhakta is only willing to come to God's realm for the sake of serving.

Corrections

What Is True Kindness?

There is a fair number of Shastrams which serve the only purpose of helping the adept to change from the geocentric to the heliocentric point of view, i.e., to what God is *to Himself* and *in Himself*, irrespective of the rather external display of endless universes, and to help him get rid of the foolish notion that God as He is *in Himself* should find one of His occupations in looking after the supply of the mental, physical and spiritual needs of those who have chosen to turn away from Him and prefer to be tossed in the currents of endless births.

All possible kindness has been shown to man in God's Revelation of the paths of karma, jnana, yoga and bhakti, and the paths that are combinations of any of these four. Moreover, whenever in the course of His play, alone or with His companions, He reveals Himself as He is during a short stay on this earth, He gives instructions about the true meaning of the Shastrams. It is clear already from the very conception of the atma, who is nothing but a tiny ray emanating from the eternal Sun of Consciousness, that nothing whatsoever which belongs to the category of Knowledge (cit) and consists of it, has anything to do with the world of Maya.

Hindu Shastrams mainly teach the responsibility of the individual atma for his own fate and abhor the idea of a God who gets sentimental in view of the sufferings of mankind or the creatures in general. His kindness does not consist in confirming man in his wrong notion that he is meant to be or should be happy or unhappy, but in bringing home to him through the Shastrams that man, woman, animal, plant, etc., are all misunderstanding and ignorance. Man is at the utmost a transition.

To be eligible for the path of bhakti it is not sufficient to believe *that* God exists and to believe what is said of Him in the Shastrams. There is only one criterion of a person's eligibility: a strong confidence accompanied by the firm resolution to act accordingly, a strong confidence in the *service* of Bhagavan, that this service is the eternal purpose of life; service as the means *and*

the end, irrespective of one's own happiness.

To be turned towards God with the intention to serve – He being the centre and focus of all thoughts and action – that is real liberation from the real bondage of selfishness, of being a slave under one's own desires.

It does not matter in what corner of the universes and under what conditions he may have to serve God; the bhakta is happy whenever he gets the greatest Grace and Mercy, which consists in the capacity to think, feel, breathe, work, live and die for His sake.

Corrections

What Kind of Prayer Reaches Krishna's Heart?

The mere suffering of the world does not reach Krishna's heart at all, as nothing that stems from Maya's gunas. The power of bhakti, however, in the form of the bhaktas' prayers reaches Him immediately. When the *bhakta* has compassion for the misery of the world and suffers because the world is in want of bhakti, then the suffering of the bhakta for Krishna's sake reaches His heart.

Neither material want nor the needs of the mind and the empiric soul makes Him descend, only *the bhakti in the bhaktas*. He comes to the world *to remove the suffering of the bhaktas* who cannot bear that no one in the world has bhakti to Him.

Commentary, Caitanya-Bhagavatam, 1.2.144–145

What Must Be Absolutely Clear

I have begun to compile everything that should be clear to *everyone* before he tries to tread the path that the Shastrams describe. The *radical, the quite different* that the Shastrams speak of, *must be clear* to the person who is *searching*, otherwise it will all end up in disappointment and a cheap, vague mysticism, for which there is *no* room in the Shastrams.

Letter 1955

What We Can Learn from the Transcendental Rasa

It seems that you are not able to understand that all co-players in every lila consist of cit-knowledge-consciousness – are eternal forms. They do not consist of material formed from Maya’s gunas – bundles of flesh and blood like yours and mine, which we have received by being averse to God and by misusing our original freedom as atmas. All human beings, even the most “noble” ones, live in this prison of flesh and blood, in this covering of dirt, onto which only ignorant romantic dreamers project the illusory qualities of significance and beauty.

What you find in the realm of Maya, even the noblest, is nothing but a complete distortion, the complete opposite of all

eternal qualities in His realm. The only thing we can learn from the description of “eroticism” in His realm is that the service, friendship, love for the child, love for the beloved that we find there are so totally different and noble that once heard of they can awaken nothing but disgust and aversion to everything we find of such relationships on earth and awaken the longing, caused by bhakti, once to be allowed to serve the eternal co-players in loving subordination as the smallest and finest servants/maidservants – after we have discarded the physical and mental human existence, our individuality and personality.

Letter 1961

When an Eternal Bhakta Descends on Earth

When an eternal bhakta descends on earth, he serves directly, but not uninterruptedly directly, because his stay on earth can only be useful when for shorter or longer periods he experiences himself to be in the world, i.e., only then can those who are worthy of receiving Grace (bhakti) receive instructions from him.

He always thinks of God and his service for Him even then, but during often long periods during his stay on earth he cannot experience or serve God’s realm directly, in spite of knowing that God’s realm is present everywhere, even if it is not visible but concealed to the atma through the world of time and space. In itself

it is never concealed.

If he always could experience this directly he could not perceive those worthy people at all, who for the sake of seva, from his lips want to hear about God and through this serving listening receive the power to serve.

Corrections

Who Are to Be Delivered?

Then the question arises in the human heart: Does not God do anything for my sake, nothing at all?! Even if many holy and learned Hindus claim to have found the answer to this question, and speak of their experience of a divinity who through his extraordinary grace delivers the living beings as such, or at least humanity, from its physical and mental suffering, such a thought is unknown to the Hindu Shastrams – quite opposite to them.

The different paths of salvation, intended for persons on different levels of evolution, aim at the well-being of the atma, by no means at the happiness and well-being of man as such or of other living beings. What man and other living beings are as such, is created by Maya, and has never had and will never have admission to God or the eternal realm of cit. It is not man who can be liberated, but the atma, who has just as little to do with man as anything else created by Maya.

Who Can Be Liberated and Who Suffers?

- Who can be liberated?
- Only the *atma* can be liberated, by no means the human being, the beast or the plant.
- Who suffers?
- The *atma* who believes himself to be a human being.

Thus Grace means to smash the empiric “I”, this delusion. – Keep a firm hold of the armrest of the chair! What you consider to be your one and all, the “I” you are so proud of and for whose happiness you want to regard and experience everything that comes in your way as *yours* – this “I” is a delusion. And the whole world and all the universes revolve round this delusion.

What is delusion is not the world, but the “I”.

*The Three Paths And the Philosophies
And Religions of the World*

Who Can Tread the Path of Bhakti?

Who by some extraordinary good fortune has received shraddha in the *sevanam* of Krishna and is neither too attached to the sense

objects nor absolutely disinterested in them (who has consciously or unconsciously received a seed of bhakti to Bhagavan), he is truly qualified and entitled to tread the path of bhakti-yoga.

This includes:

1. A yes to what is said about Bhagavan, what and how He is.
2. A yes to sevanam, the methodology to perform seva (the act of doing something) so that it pleases Bhagavan. First, to fulfil one's daily duties and to follow the Shastrams. The more the vasanas drive us away from Him, the less we understand what the Shastrams actually say.

(Bhagavan's sevanam = to do what pleases Bhagavan; to do what He has said; not to do what is forbidden; to understand the Shastrams.)

Notes

Who Is a Bhakta?

A bhakta is not someone who sings Bhagavan's Name, does puja, etc., but someone who *knows* who *God* is. He hears this from the Shastrams in sadhusanga and *then* he sings the Name with shraddha.

Letter 1955

Who Is a Millionaire?

Only one part of a million of what is gained through hard labour one can pass on to others – with His Grace. But one can only give this one part of a million when one has the full million in one's heart.

Letter 1962

Who Is the Guru?

The disciple experiences and considers the guru as completely equal to God Himself and follows him accordingly. The Guru is, however (apart from Caitanyadeva Himself), almost always a dasa or a manjari (Radha's dasi) and consequently ontologically (regarded objectively) *Hari's* most beloved. As the manjari performs *Her*, Radha's seva, she is so extraordinarily dear to *Him*. It is the Guru who belongs to Radha's seva-group, who from *Her* (and the sakhi) is commissioned to descend on earth to give certain mature souls the shakti, mantras and instructions and in this way the possibility to serve God in the form of seva for the Guru in his seemingly human form (as Krishna or Radha and the eternal parishadas still are the great Unknowns).

Letter 1954

Who Performs Sadhana?

No, it is out of the question. I *cannot* accept any lectureship. Sometimes I am so sorry that you know so *little* of me and my life and what I want. In that case it would be much easier to accept a professorship in Benares – which I have refused several times.

It is not *the human being* who performs sadhana; no one can do this. *He* does this and this is what my Existence and existence are based on. The hours and days of my life concern *Him* and not “vidya”, which is a function of nimitta-mahamaya, just as avidya. [Vidya (liberation) and avidya (binding) are both functions of Maha-maya, in her aspect as causal cause (nimitta-karana). Bhakti is paravidya = samvid-shakti, a function of Yoga-maya.]

Letter 1954

Who Received Mahaprabhu’s Extraordinary Grace?

Mahaprabhu: “My avatara takes place when samkirtana commences, and I disseminate kirtana from house to house! I bestow premayoga on everyone, except those who are intoxicated with knowledge, wealth, jnana, tapasya and commit aparadhas [transgressions] against my bhaktas; I don’t give these wretched creatures anything.”

Comment Sadananda: When Mahaprabhu wants to, He gives

premayoga to sinners, even murderers, but aparadhis don't get anything!

Comment, Caitanya-Bhagavatam 2.5.55

Why Can't We See Bhagavan?

There are two reasons why the living beings in the world do not experience Bhagavan, the avataras, His parts, the parts of His parts, and His companions – not even when the lila appears on earth:

1. As the atma is reluctant to serve God, Maya clouds his vision and makes him unable to see Him – in spite of His omnipresence.
2. When He leaves His universal concealment and becomes avatirna, on the other hand, Bhagavan Himself uses His Own power of yogamaya and shapes the lila in such a way that it seems to be an ordinary event of this world, and consequently the living beings don't see God or His eternal bhakta, they only see ordinary beings of this world.

Nothing but His Own power of bhakti can make the living beings see them and feel joy when they see them. Those who are in want of bhakti will probably hate Him, because His words and actions shatter their hopes and free scope for selfish craving for pleasure. And they don't feel happiness, but disgust or hatred. They become His enemies, more or less. Only a few are fortunate enough to come to the conclusion that Bhagavan, the avatara or the

bhakta is “the foremost or noblest among men”.

Corrections