

# Change of Environment

Svami Sadananda Dasa

Letter written in English to M.

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Dear M.,

I had a piece of good news – you said a few words on occasion of the meeting in Goeteborg. They *were* much appreciated. I am so very glad your words were much appreciated. For many reasons I am not writing much to anybody these days, please do not mind it. As you see from my address – I am still living in the slums of Howrah. It is my experience that change of environment and place has *no* bearing on our (if we have it) real Love for Krishna in the service of the Gopis. We often think change of place or living at a so-called “holy” place can help us in some way – but that is quite wrong. The Realm of God is not limited to a certain place, it is everywhere – only we do not see it.

We also forget the great lesson of the 1<sup>st</sup> part of the Bhagavatam – the story of Narada’s own life. A vision of the Divine, when it chooses to reveal its presence to us, may, in the life of an adept of highest order and highly blessed, happen *once* only in the present life and body. Afterwards we must loyally continue to live our normal lives in this present body. Then, when this life in its natural course gets to its end, the form of our soul or atma as a handmaid-girl attending a Gopi may flash forth and in that we can do *direct* service of the Gopi in the *spiritual* body. Our *present* body and mind have to remain what they are and the secret of our love for Divinity has to remain concealed carefully from everyone, even from the Guru!! As soon as it gets betrayed by our carelessness, it loses its value, efficiency, and beauty for Him and in Her eyes.

The Bhagavatam has been often misunderstood and Caitanya Mahaprabhu therefore enjoined on His followers to remain as they are as family-men, only a

few, for a special work, which at home could not be fulfilled, were asked to leave their houses. We must make serious the pledge to look on all persons and things we have and to whom we are bound by the laws of the mundane world as persons and things given to us by *Her* as *His trustees*, to look after their needs and welfare. Only *then*, gradually, the veil of ignorance or *Maya* becomes thinner and thinner. I may like my surroundings or *not*, that does not matter. To do what He likes, we must do. And what He likes, He has made clear and distinctive in His scriptures and His instructions to His followers.

You have made much progress, but if you make a mistake now, you will get the displeasure of our Lady Radha, and ruin yourself. You must not believe that *present* India can give you a surrounding suiting better, rather the opposite. Radha's Realm is *not* on the geographical earth or in the mind; it is the Realm of the *free* souls. Neither body nor mind can ever have access to Her or Her Realm. We may *think* in a devotion-saturated mind of Her etc., but in reality, She and Her Realm is categorically different from what we experience or what we imagine now. Please do not make the mistake I made when I started to neglect the needs of the body and the duties to our dear and near ones. My own guru warned me much. We are *not* eternal associates of Radha who "came down" on this earth and had a special play with special roles – we can and should *not* think ever of imitating them.

You may hear from Walther, how much I scolded him here when I found he got sentimental. *Mental* joy and mental dejection have *nothing* to do with our spiritual life. Whenever our *thinking* gets confused, we are sure to be on the road to ruin. We must remember, *bhakti* IS the energy power, which makes known what He is, what the world is, how we have to conduct us. Mysticism has NO place in the Bhagavatam and in bhakti.

Why I write this – because you have started to tell people of bhakti. Please tell them what I write today in this letter. If bhakti makes us unfit for this life and this world, then it cannot be bhakti, but is only sentimentality. Please forgive; I hope you have already told it to the audience.

Jay Radhe! Love and respects to you and all members of your family.

Always *Sada*