Freedom and Law – Sadananda as a Child

Dictated by Svami Sadananda Dasa to Vamandas
in the internment camp in India, August 1944[1]

Into English, text within square brackets, footnotes and
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The difficulty to understand Krishna's pure (kevala) lila nature, for those souls who are not free themselves, is due to their experience that *every* event – those pertaining to time and space as well as those purely spiritual – is subject to certain laws; and where such adherence to law is not obvious, they assume that it exists. This is because the unfree thinking, ruled by instinct, out of the multiplicity of what is given by our experience, either subjectively selects the facts that seem to indicate an adherence to law, or to a greater or lesser extent "adjusts" those facts to a system of adherence to law.

The instinct – however blind it seems to be – aims at one thing: *to prevent knowledge of the real structure of itself, the intellect, and the empirical world.* Within the framework of a world, violated and forced to conformity to law, the instinct remains the guarantor for the secure exercise of man's nature, well protected from substantial attacks or a substantial extermination of the rather thin layer – seen with the eye of discriminative knowledge – of ethical, biological, social, economic, aesthetical, and philosophical values.

Each breakthrough into this world regulated by law is instinctively rejected and opposed by the discursively[2] thinking man, because to the concrete man, governed by instincts, this breakthrough means a deprival of the foundation he stands upon, viz., the consolidation of the continuity of his exploitation of the surrounding world – in a limited sense as his normal field of experience and in a broader sense as the believed field of his pious speculation.

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[1] Cf. Sadananda's letters to Vamandas 1 February 1948, 14 January 1964 and the letter to Vamandas from Margareta Borngrüber, 28 December 1948.

[2] Step by step logic that leads to knowledge.

Such breakthrough is transformed, misinterpreted, thought and talked to pieces by unfree people, into a course of events within time and space, until it finally properly fits into the structure of the prevalent world view, in its totality or at least fragmentarily. In the same way, the bearers of this breakthrough are transformed into persons who are on the same historical plane.

Science of religion calls this the biologizing of religion. Philosophy speaks of futile attempts to claim a substantial spiritual world as an expression of man's unfulfilled yearning in this world. History transforms this breakthrough and its bearers into historically more or less substantiated or reliable "facts" or assigns them to the department of mythical research. – Once more, people regulated by law can continue to sleep in peace, because the danger that threatened their existential security has been vanquished.

It is a completely futile effort to try to explain the reality of the lila and its breakthrough to a man bound to his instinct, however highly developed he is, morally and spiritually. And why? Simply because by the slightest acceptance of the breakthrough of the lila, *nothing, absolutely nothing remains of man as* an instinct-oriented being and his endeavour to depreciate *everything, absolutely everything* to objects of his enjoyment.

For that reason, it is clear that the bearers of this breakthrough of the lila, Krishna and His associates, wherever and under whatever circumstances they may appear, remain concealed from the surrounding world by its ignorance. The lila does not have to be concealed from the world and its view, because concealed or not, the world cannot see it.

During the breakthrough of the lila, however, Yogamaya permanently or temporarily hides parts of the lila, all or some of the bearers of the breakthrough for the individual lila-characters, in order to intensify the lila itself, so that, to the unknowing person regulated by law, it seems as if the lila as a whole or its bearers were subjected to the same laws and complete ignorance of themselves as people regulated by law.

The world of freedom remains closed to the person who is not free, because he is devoid of the faculty to receive knowledge of it, the faculty that cannot develop as long as the true I [the atma], whose outer insignificant cover is what constitutes man, is not awoken by the electrifying contact with the vibrations that emanate from the lila and its bearers. But it would be according to the mind of the person who is regulated by law – he who relates everything to himself – to assume that this breakthrough only takes place for his sake.

It is true that special powers and characters from a certain outer area of the proper lila time and again become periodically active in this world – not to give man who is regulated by law an entertaining object for his observation and categorisation, but to give joy to Jagannatha, the Lord of the world, by shaping the laukika-lila, the lila of world evolution, in a varied way and intensify it, and to stop the tendency of the world evolution towards stagnating tamasic rest or demoniacal darkening of the self by infusing new Divine impulses, or – when necessary – to fight against this tendency. These periodical emanations also give people who want to be free from themselves and who in the depths of their being are sufficiently worried to nurse the longing to stop enjoying in the world of passions and begin *serving* in the World of dedication the possibility to be *seized* by those bearers of the breakthrough.

Different from these periodical breakthroughs is the continuation of the proper lila of Krishna and other forms of His Own (svarupa), through the appearance of Krishna's associates and His closest emanations in co-operation with other associates of Krishna's entourage or the other forms of Himself (svarupa). *The appearance of a bhakta thus concerns the realm of freedom* and it is only quite externally, in the periphery, that we find the side effect that through his appearance some person or other, regulated by law, who is prepared to be shattered and arise to a being in the World of Freedom, receives the necessary final impulses.

A bhakta's life and activity in the world wholly takes place in the fulfilment of his nature to serve Krishna, and is not intended to delight or offend, to enlighten or mislead people regulated by law. The life of the bhakta has its centre in Krishna, and the fact that, here and there, there may be a person who by His grace becomes free from himself is only a side effect. The bhakta may extol Bhagavan and make His lila known so that it seems that he was

endeavouring for the sake of humanity. – How little this is the case follows from the fact that the realised bhakta may extol and make Bhagavan and His lila known even where there is not one single person ready to receive it, because the only meaningful use of his language faculty is to speak of Krishna and sing His Name.

But one thing is certain: the cit-vibrations emanating from a bhakta, whatever he does, affect the cittam of *all* beings, even if they are unaware of it. It is not mere coincidence that leads certain beings to such unconscious contact with the bhakta, but the effect of an elevating power which the atma of these beings receives due to a certain attitude in a present or a former life. This favourable attitude is called aprakrita sukriti [spiritual (cit) predisposition].

Persons who are outwardly opposed to the bhakta become more affected by this contact than those who remain fully neutral. But it would be an abuse of the nature of the bhakta to believe that the bhakta becomes visible in this world because certain persons' karmic evolution is in need of his influence. The appearance of a bhakta is completely ahaituka [causeless], i.e., an expression of the nature of his own atma to please Krishna and His companions in a special form of the Divine play. Through his appearance in the world, he becomes seemingly subjected to the laws of the world.

Special forms of the lila find their expression only by incorporating mundane forms of opposition and overcoming them. But it is not Durga who lets the bhakta experience such forms of resistance. Yogamaya, i.e., the *one* shakti, shrouds the person who is turned away from seva and creates hindrances that stand in the way of his seva, while *to the bhakta,* the same shakti presents these hindrances as means for seva. If the bhakta uninterruptedly saw and realised his nature and his relation to Krishna and Yogamaya, he could just as well have stayed in Vaikuntha, but through the manifold phases of transpiercing the veil of Yogamaya that envelops his nature, he gives Krishna and His companions a special form of rasa.

Each bhakta has his own individuality. Conformity appears only with seeming bhaktas, who psychologically aim at certain ideal forms of bhakta personalities. This means that there is no outer criterion by which one could establish if someone is a bhakta or not. The only real

criterion is this: Someone, who unconditionally wants to dedicate himself to God, is, on account of his atmic nature, eligible to receive the impulse of a certain bhakta, and through this very bhakta he will experience what dedication in freedom means. That the bhakta is continuously focused on Krishna, is only conceivable to the person who himself is prepared to focus in the same way.

There may be outer attitudes that indicate that someone is more than he seems to be. But man's conscious or unconscious art of dissembling fully succeeds in imitating all those attitudes, even exceeding them. However, one should not confuse this with the fact that bhaktas of different groups and at different stages, among themselves, well know how to recognise each other by outer criteria, and among each other can establish the degree of progress and conquering of the veil of Yogamaya even by outer things. But the person who is bound by Maya cannot apply these measures of cit-intensification to anyone, because cit-factors are not within his range of measuring and assessing.

There might be some bhakta here and there who like the author of these lines is in the eternally changing struggle between Knowledge and the shrouding of Yogamaya and who needs to be encouraged during the dark moments of his seva. To him and to the glorification of Gurudeva's wonderful greatness, Sadananda will now try to shed light upon some important moments of his own life.

These lines are not intended as material for psychological machines of registration. Non-bhaktas' fundamentally wrong attitude to life and their choice to be turned away from God gives enough safety against a profanation of the events described. Just as it does not mean anything to a person if his name is written on a piece of paper and then burnt, it does not mean anything to Sadananda if something that non-bhaktas collect from these lines is criticized, because Krishna and Sadananda are beyond the clutches of the exploiting intellect of the non-bhakta.

The narration of the temptation of Christ by Satan, viz., out of the certainty of being one with God throw oneself from the mountain into the depths – a narrative that people regulated by

law often present as a warning not to tempt God – evokes a gentle smile on the lips of the bhakta, because to him it is something special, an ever intensifying, overwhelming experience to throw himself voluntarily, over and over again, into seemingly perfectly insane situations of inner psychological as well as outer social nature – with the feeling of certainty, and curiosity, *how* Krishna's shakti will carry him: *that* it carries him is evident to him.

Another warning, not less strong, painted as a ghost on the wall, finds its eloquent formulation in the words: "Man should not tempt the gods, never wish to behold what they gracefully shroud in night and dread." To throw everything that the world considers to be beautiful and important like worthless sand through a sieve, undisturbed by the cries of horror of society, to see if it might contain something essential, an indication of the reality of God, truly brings one to the brink of religious madness. The non-bhakta feels this for two reasons: *Either* he believes that there is nothing essential at all, one just has to pretend that there is – somewhere, properly arranged into the system of convenience, as a beautiful idea, a consoling conception or a comforting belief. – With such rubbish one can easily continue to live without worries, because all these notions are of such nature that they in no way make the uncomfortable demand on man to break with himself entirely. *Or* one is not fully clear about if there may not be something out there after all, which, as soon as it becomes known, makes the infinite demand to fully dedicate oneself to Him. A truly serious, thorough exploration of our empirical world, a quest of this essential reality, might lead to a terrible result. To the seeker who is too serious, the wise counsellors therefore recommend not to surrender completely, rather to be content with an academic-scientific or literary-aesthetical method of investigation, which is less dangerous.

The person regulated by law may sense instinctively that if there is a Supreme Reality at all, it will probably open itself to the seeker in proportion to his readiness to dedicate himself to this reality in unreserved dedication, *without expecting any* reciprocation.

Sadananda could give no heed whatsoever to these two warnings. Why – he doesn't know himself. If someone asked him, he said that he simply found it incompatible with his human dignity to behave differently.

Like in a fugue, where the theme in a manifold way richly alternates through variations and contrasting effects, in one moment concealed, in the next breaking through, sometimes surprisingly, sometimes as expected, in the same way, during Yogamaya's play, the awareness of one's fundamental nature breaks through by manifold emanations and concealments – transfigured and concealed – which in one moment vividly emphasize one's fundamental awareness, in the next, as expected, by manifold concealments tone it down, and then surprisingly, let it be eclipsed, as it were.

In spite of all apparent involvement and connection to the cultural and social processes of the surrounding world, it seemed completely incomprehensible to Sadananda that one tried to conform him to the social and cultural structures. From childhood he had the feeling an actor must have, whose friends continually, even in his private life, expect him to fully identify himself with the role he plays. To Sadananda it seemed that the resolute determination of the people around him to take themselves and each other seriously, in some way stemmed from a misunderstanding.

When the First World War broke out in 1914, when he was six years old, he found the participation of the family, the school, and the whole city in this war completely unfounded. His conflict with people began already then, because he expected that at least adults *must know* that which to him was natural and effortless. Gradually he realised that people desperately identified themselves with their outer being and believed their experienced reality, which in spite of all seriousness and all tragic should have been a mere play, to be the only reality, and that they were completely unable to conceive that the world they experienced was a misunderstanding.

With a certain amount of curiosity and initiative he sometimes stood up for his Pan-Germanic[3] father and sometimes for his mother who was an extreme pacifist. During their daily disputes

[3] Pan-Germanism (German: *Pangermanismus* or *Alldeutsche Bewegung*) was a political movement in the 19th century aiming for unity of the German-speaking populations of Europe, identified as *Volksdeutsche*. (Wikipedia)

Sadananda sometimes tried to give his angry father, sometimes his angry mother joy and disappointment by pretending to truly participate and take sides. He believed that both, as representatives of extreme ethical, political and religious views, were wrong, believed that between and beyond those extremes there were also many other pairs of opposites whose petty wars one could find pleasure in.

The hypocrisy of society, based on courtesy, anxiety or selfishness or a mixture of all three, that he found in his surroundings, gave him the inner right not to take honesty and sincerity too seriously himself, and he found it utterly unfair that those who were full of social falsity without any due cause expected him to always tell the truth – be it useful or harmful. The only difference between him and the others was that they were false in a stubborn way, because they desperately clung to the objects and themselves, while he pushed away these ugly phenomena of human life with a contemptuous gesture and pure playfulness, taking neither the truth nor the untruth seriously, and usually most successfully knew how to slip away from those people in society who were regulated by law.

The senselessness of this kind of life became particularly disgusting when, during his first year at school, together with his class and his teachers, he had to proceed to the market before the church where, after the tolling of the church bells, and standing between the red faces of the citizens, he had to look at the priest. During the Sunday services Sadananda always thought the priest looked like an oily, meek and well-nourished lady who had dressed like a priest by mistake, a spineless being who out of meekness and mildness gave the impression that he could dissolve at any moment. During the Children's services, under threatening references to God's punishment, he gave moral instructions from the gospel texts or some other religious tracts, which were adapted to ill-bred kids full of initiative, and whose realisation in life, according to Sadananda, would be the same as death, as it would give a free hand to the bigger boys and girls to torment Sadananda, and on the other hand would have forced him to desist from tormenting those who were younger and weaker.

This priest now appeared on the platform before the church, at the market, he waved his arms and legs, and with a voice that broke he twaddled about victory and victory and victory again,

about God and righteousness, both of which were on his side and the side of the audience. Then he let everyone sing patriotic songs. Sadananda got many thumps in his back when he only occasionally opened and shut his mouth, because, with the exception of two or three words, he only knew the melody of the national anthem and instead of being attentive to what the others sang and learn the songs, either pinched the sponges or slate pencils from the knapsacks of those who stood in front of him or emptied the pencil-box of the enthusiastic comrade beside him.

But his joy of victory could not last. The breaths of his singing schoolmates and their contorted eyes were too close to him, and when everything that could move and had time stood rooted to the spot at the market, during a moment of exceptional enthusiasm, he proceeded close to the women nearby, who shivering and with goose pimples, and with full shopping bags in their hands stared at the enraptured priest. He used to attend these celebrations until a stout bourgeois woman caught him after having pinched a bag of cookies from her shopping bag. This lack of patriotic attitude provoked a storm of despair in his father at his unsuccessful son, while his mother seemed to fully sympathise with him, even if it was not absolutely clear to him if it was because of his antipathy towards his father or the expectation that her boy also would develop into a citizen of the world.

Sadananda did not find these patriotic effusions to be worthy of too many observations and admonitions, so he utilised the next opportunity during such a feast to slip away, unnoticed. He ran miles and miles away through a huge dark forest, to stay a couple of days with some gypsies that attracted him strongly. But even there it came to a conflict with the bourgeois laws of the gypsies, because they expected of him that apart from fights and mischief with the children of the families, he should also take part in the children's tasks and like them do some simple operations during the basketry, and when an adolescent gipsy woman, who appeared to him as the personification of all beauty and charm, a combination of Maria, a schoolmate and a squaw, gave him a hard box on the ear due to his unwillingness to help, his hopes of a playful life shattered anew, and he ran away, but not without revenge, because when he came to the end of the gipsy camp he pinched a rosy baby's cheek rather hard, so that the child screamed loudly. Sadananda ran back through the forest at full speed, slept in a cave, emptied

some field workers' breakfast basket, which had been left unwatched, and then returned home beaming, just as his parents sat at the dinner table with grieved faces, because all search for him by the police and even a detective from a city nearby had not led to any traces of their offspring.

His mother's sympathy had certainly cooled down now, yet she managed to enforce her will against his father, which meant that they must give their child a bit more freedom and pocket money in the future. In some way she understood that the only possibility to tie her boy to her was to let him have his way, as it seemed like a special providence protected him from all great dangers during all perils and complications.

Later, when his father gave him a toy uniform with all gadgets and told him he must be a soldier, he found this extremely funny. In some way his instinct helped him, because within a week and till his father's death the latter never made such a demand on him again. The boy now thought that he must take this soldier's life seriously and instead of going to school he went to a big bridge in front of the school, took the uniform out of his knapsack and began to patrol back and forth over the bridge, saluting the astonished teachers and mistresses, now and then even giving orders to invisible troops the way he had heard from the nearby parade ground.

From the school building, his mistress saw him on the bridge, came down to him and asked him to come to his class immediately. He rejected this on the grounds that his father had told him to be a soldier and that the bridge had to be guarded at all events, against every enemy, especially mistresses. When she now took his hand and wanted to drag him to school by force, he, to save his honour as a soldier, at lightning speed seized the little knight sabre he kept under his waist-belt and stuck the stout mistress in her back with great force, whereupon she, frightened and with her hand on her behind, ran away. This resulted in an early morning call at his home by the headmaster of the school. Sadananda does not know what was discussed. He can only recollect that his father asserted that the small knight sabre could not possibly have hurt the mistress. Sadananda was sent for but refused to hand out the sabre to be examined. Anyhow, the angry dispute between his father and his mother ended in a

complete victory for his mother. It was completely wrong to try to inoculate militarism in an innocent child's heart. But she was not absolutely certain if it was merely by accident or if Sadananda in this way deliberately had managed to push the principle of soldiering to the point of absurdity. At any rate, sometime later she told him that she was convinced that it was not very likely that he had really believed in this fixed idea to defend the bridge.

After this total defeat, his father abstained from spending time on his son's upbringing. *But since that time Sadananda felt a strong repugnance against the mixture of the Sermon on the Mount and bourgeois weaknesses, against duties and compulsion and compulsory worldviews on the whole*. He thought that all these principles for the world order could suit others very well, because none of his mates was able to follow him on the winding paths beyond rules. It was not out of malice and cruelty, but for joy at the unaffected, the natural, the lively, when he managed, with greater or less scandals as a result, to spur himself and others to break the barriers of law and order. He did not expect the others to understand what he meant. But in his little head there was simply no place for rules and laws. He thought it was quite enough if all the others bravely stuck to the conventions as long as he was allowed to do what he wanted to do.

[Note on the back of the notebook:]

According to the two points on the
bhakti path [sadhana]: gradual progress; more and more love,

greater and greater risks,
reckless initiatives, "challenging" God
[to attract Him out of the hidden],
[to see] if [how] the shakti carries him
(stone)

+ Yogamaya!