

# *Śrī - Śrī Sanātana Sikṣā*

Pāṭha by Paṇḍita Śrī Ananta dās Bābājī Mahārāja at Śrī Rādhākunḍa, Kārtika 1993  
on Caitanya Caritāmṛta Madhya līlā Chapter 22, verse 53

## Abhidheya Tattva

*naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ spṛśatyānarthāpagamo yad arthaḥ  
mahīyaṣāṁ padarajo'bhīṣekaṁ niṣkiñcanānām na vṛñita yāvat*

By the grace of Kali-yuga Pāvanāvātāra Parama Karuṇa Śrīman Mahāprabhu we are discussing the twenty-second chapter of Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, the book composed by *pūjyapāda* Śrī Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmīcaraṇa, dealing with *abhideya tattva* (the means of attainment of the goal). Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī inquired: *ke āmi, kene āmāy jāre tāpa-traya? ihā nāhi jāni āmi kaiche hita hoy. sādhyā sādhana tattva puchite nā jāni, kṛpā kori saba tattva koho to āpani* ("Who am I, and why are the three kinds of material miseries scorching me? I do not know what is for my benefit, and I do not know how to inquire about the means and the goal, so please explain all these principles to me.") By speaking to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrīman Mahāprabhu told the whole world about the goal of the life and the means of its attainment, telling him the essence from the *śāstras* about *sambandha* (relationship), *abhidheya* (the means) and *prayojana* (the goal). And for the benefit of the world Śrīpāda Kṛṣṇa dāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, who is the object of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's mercy, has revealed these words of the Lord, that were automatically manifest within his heart in so many ways, within his scripture Caitanya Caritāmṛta. The principle of *abhidheya* or *sādhana bhakti* is certainly to be known by the whole society of *sādhakas*. By citing an example from the Bhāgavata Śrīman Mahāprabhu has explained the glories of *sat saṅga* to Śrīmat Sanātana Gosvāmī. The only cause of attaining *bhakti* is the foot-dust of the great saints. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has collected evidence from the essence of all the Vedānta, Śrīmad Bhāgavata, that it is compulsory to serve the foot-dust of the *mahātmas*. Therefore Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has written down the words of Śrī Prahlāda. Prahlāda Mahāśaya is an associate of the Lord, and *bhakti* is his intrinsic nature. When he was a small boy his father Hiraṇyakaśipu had sent him to the house of his Guru, Sandāmarka, the son of Śukrācārya, to be educated in politics and morality. He was a tender-hearted boy; his mother dressed him up nicely and sent him to his father, who affectionately took him on his lap, kissed him and said: "Dear boy, tell me what is the best of all you have learnt so far?" When the boy did not immediately answer he thought: "Perhaps I asked him a question that is too difficult for him, that's why he does not answer. Let him say whatever he wants; he is very sensitive after all." Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja then said:

*tat sādhu manye'sura-varya dehinām sadā samudvigna-dhiyām asad-grahāt  
hitvā'tma-pātaṁ grham andhakūpaṁ vanam gato yad dharim āśrayeta*

(Bhāgavata 7.5.5)

"O best of the demons! I think that this is the best for the embodied souls who are always worried about all kinds of false, bodily things - They should give up the dark well of household life, go into the forest and take shelter of Śrī Hari." People take temporary things to be eternal. The living entities are Kṛṣṇa's eternal servants, sons of *amṛta* (nectar or immortality), but they have forgotten their intrinsic positions and have been swallowed by *māyā*. They have forgotten their beloved Govinda, and have begun to consider their bodies and all that is connected with it, which is a gift of *māyā*, to be "I" and "Mine". This is called *asat graha* (in the above text). Their minds are always agitated by that and they are always burning from the threefold miseries, old age, death and fear. To them it is advised *hitvā ātma-pātaṁ grham andha-kūpaṁ vanaṁ gata yata harim āśrayeta tad sādhu manye* "O best of the demons! The home is like a blind well if there is no worship of God going on there. This is *ātma-pātaṁ*, or self-destruction. Wealth, children and wives that are bereft of Kṛṣṇa-bhakti should be abandoned. Thus one should go to the forest and take sole shelter of Śrī Hari's lotus feet. Such *bhajana* I consider the greatest education." (Hiraṇyakaśipu thought:) "Damn it! Who taught him this knowledge? Demons are naturally enemies of Viṣṇu!" But he did not get angry with his child, taking him to be just a sensitive toddler. "Some wicked follower of Viṣṇu must have spoiled his intelligence." Then he told Sandāmarka, his teacher: "Hey! What have you been telling my child! Carefully teach him politics! Guard this tender-hearted boy of mine! Viṣṇu is my enemy; some Vaiṣṇava must be spoiling his intelligence, so teach him properly!" Sandāmarka said: "My child Prahlāda, listen, I tell you something - who has come to corrupt your intelligence in this way?" Prahlāda Mahārāja said in a *śloka*: "Those who are deluded by material existence identify themselves with their bodies and consider things related to their bodies to be their property. They can never become conscious of Viṣṇu, and simply continue chewing the chewed. The Lord has given me the mentality of the magnet, that is automatically attracted to the iron."

"Oh hey! Bring the rod! Bring the rod!" Sandāmarka beat Prahlāda with the rod (Prahāda laughed within himself). "He has certainly become the handle of the axe that will destroy the dynasty of the demons. The handle of an axe is made from the wood of an Acacia-branch, but can't a branch only be cut by an axe? It takes a handle to destroy the dynasty of the demons." Prahlāda Mahārāja did not say anything, so they thought: "Now everything is all right." Then they taught him religiosity, economic development, sense gratification and liberation, after which they brought him once again to Hiraṇyakaśipu, the king of the demons. The king took the boy on his lap and asked him: "Child, tell me what you have learned? Which chapter was the best? Prahlāda Mahārāja said:

*śravaṇaṁ kīrtanaṁ viṣṇoḥ smaraṇaṁ pāda-sevanam  
arcanaṁ vandanaṁ dāsyāṁ sakhyāṁ ātma nivedanam  
iti puṁsārpitā viṣṇoḥ bhaktiś cennava lakṣaṇam  
kriyate bhagavatyaaddhā tan manye'dhītam uttamam*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 7.5.23-24)

"O father, I tell you, listen: Hearing about Viṣṇu, singing His glories, remembering Him, serving Him, serving His lotus feet, making friends with Him, self-surrender to Him, worshipping Him ritually and praising Him - these are the nine kinds of devotional service to Viṣṇu which I consider the greatest results of study." Hiraṇyakaśipu was very upset and said: "Āh rey! You're disregarding me! Who is corrupting my tender-hearted son like this? It is all your fault!" The two *brāhmaṇa*-teachers of the boy trembled: "O Mahārāja! We did not teach him this, nor did anybody else! We keep guards with him all of the time! This just springs from his own nature! He is naturally God-conscious!" Then Hiraṇyakaśipu asked him: "You did not learn this from the house of your Guru, nor from anybody else! Where did you get this Viṣṇu-consciousness from, although you are just a child, tell me?" Then Prahlāda gave an example by speaking another *śloka*:

*naiṣāṁ matis tāvad urukramāṅghriṁ sprṣatyanarthāpagamo yad arthaḥ  
mahīyasāṁ padarajo'bhīṣekaṁ niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 7.5.32)

"O father! All calamities of material life are destroyed of a God-conscious person. But no one in the world can fix his consciousness on Viṣṇu just like that - there is a certain means to do that, and what is that? *mahīyasāṁ padarajo'bhīṣekaṁ niṣkiñcanānām na vṛṇīta yāvat* "No one can become aware of Viṣṇu as long as he is not showered with the foot-dust of the pure devotees." This is the only means." Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda writes the following commentary: *eka deva sarva bhūteṣu gūḍha sarva bhūtāśraya atmā.....* "There is one God Who lives within everyone. If that is so, then why does not everyone attain Viṣṇu-consciousness? God is secretly residing within everyone." To this he answers: "No, there is a certain method to attain this, and that is to get showered by the foot-dust of the pure devotees." Śrīdhara Svāmī explains the word *niṣkiñcana* as follows: *nirasta viṣayābhimānām*, and he explains the word *mahīyasāṁ* as follows: *mahatva mānām*. By touching his feet or getting showered by their dust Viṣṇu-consciousness will certainly be attained. Such great souls he gives the adjectives *niṣkiñcana* and *mahīyasāṁ*. Śrīdhara Svāmī has written in his commentary that those whose identification with the sense objects is destroyed are called *niṣkiñcana*. After understanding this one must become somewhat grave. The living being has forgotten Govinda's lotus feet since beginningless time, identifying himself with material bodies that were given by *māyā*, and considering everything pertaining to the body to be his. We have forgotten our *svarūpa* and our bodies and senses have become absorbed in worldly objects. Through our eyes we see the beautiful forms of the world, through our tongues we relish nice dishes that can be chewed, sucked, licked and drunk, with our ears we hear the nice words of our wives and children as well as beautiful songs, we touch pleasant and soft objects and our noses smell the most exquisite odours. In this way our minds think of all these sense objects and our intelligence accepts them as well. But unless there is an enjoying attitude while these objects are being taken, there can be no enjoyment. Forgetting God, the living entity enjoys the sense objects and wanders through different species of life, because there is this enjoying attitude. "I saw, I heard, I ate, etc." There is just this "I, I, I". This enjoying attitude remains. Śrīdhara Svāmī says that those

whose enjoying attitude has been eradicated are called *niṣkiñcana*. But although *yogīs* and *jñānīs* manage to eradicate this attitude, they are not called *niṣkiñcana*. They think "This attitude is gone", but it did not go. Why not? The seed of desire is hidden very deeply within the heart, and when a suitable sense object is found or offences are committed a good sprout comes up again. How will the crowns of the trees be uprooted then? The Mahājanas are saying: "Sensual people wish to enjoy the sense objects. So if our senses, minds and intelligence wish to enjoy mundane flavours, we should only give them the topmost savour. Only then they can give up sensual flavours." And what is this greatest taste? Ṭhākura Mahāśaya said: *govinda viṣaya rasa, saṅga koro tāra dāsa, prema bhakti satya kori jāno*. The living entity is the servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. How many lives hasn't he spent thirsting and craving for sense objects? But has his complete fulfillment ever come? Constantly he laments and blubbers, constantly dissatisfied, not having been able to relish what he was looking for. That's why he's so hungry and dissatisfied, so bereft of peace. If they could once catch this Govinda-rasa with their senses, their craving for sense gratification would be mitigated for good. In the senses of Kṛṣṇa's devotees there is no such mundane relish, but the relish of Govinda-awareness. Their eyes behold Govinda's sweet form, their eyes relish His extraordinary sweetness and beauty, their minds take it and their intelligence is fulfilled with this relish. Similarly their tongues relish the flavours of Govinda's sweet name and His *līlā-kathā*, and their hearts are fulfilled by this relish. Their ears hear the wonderful *rasa-kathā* and the holy name of Hari and their bodies experience the touch of the lotus feet of Govinda's *sādhus*. Similarly their nostrils relish the fragrance of the Tulasī-leaves and flower-garlands that were offered to Govinda's lotus feet. All their senses are absorbed in the Govinda-sense-objects, they all consider themselves to be Govinda's servants, and they consider *prema bhakti* to be the greatest thing. What is the result of this? That the enjoying attitude is destroyed. These are the *niṣkiñcana* persons from Svāmīpāda's commentary. Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda comments: "Those who have given up everything to please the Lord in His devotional service are *niṣkiñcana*. They have given up their homes, children and servants to take Govinda's lotus feet into their hearts. Those who do not consider anyone else but Govinda to be theirs are called *niṣkiñcana*, *mahiyasāmī*, *mahattvamānāmī* and *mahattama*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda has given a beautiful explanation - the greater the *prema*, the greater the *mahātma*. In Bhakti Sandarbha it is said - the greater the *prema*, the greater the *mahātma*. According to the amount and the kind of *prema* one is considered a great soul, a greater soul, or the greatest soul. There is a secret in this explanation -, you attain the kind of *bhakti adhikāra* the *mahātma* has that you associate with when your body, mind and life-air get showered by his foot-dust. Another kind of *bhakti* will not come to you. Our Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has shown a certain process in this. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmīpāda said: Who is called a *mahātma*, who is greater and who is the greatest? Where is the end? Our Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmīpāda has shown a certain course in this. Śrīman Mahādeva is a greater devotee than Lord Brahmā. Brahmā himself said: "I am engaged in universal control, while Mahādeva is constantly engaged in *bhajana*", he spoke to Nārada, "thus Mahādeva is greater than me". When Śrī Nārada went to Mahādeva he (Mahādeva) said: "Prahāda is even greater than me. I am always very proud of being the Lord who bestows liberation, while Prahāda is just doing *bhajana*. So go to him." When Nārada went to Prahāda he (Prahāda) said: "You are praising me, how embarrassing

it is for a Guru to praise his disciple. Gurudeva, I will tell you where to go if you are looking for a greater *mahātma* than me. Please go to Hanumān. The service of the Lord is called *bhakti*. What service am I rendering? When I run into trouble I call out "Govinda, save me!", while he is simply constantly engaged in devotional service. Bhakti is found with him." Then when Nārada went to Hanumān he was engaged in Śrī Rāmacandra's service in Kimpuruṣa-varṣa. When Nārada came there through the sky, chanting the glories of Śrī Rāmacandra: "Jaya Lakṣmaṇāgraja, Jaya Raghupati, Jaya Rāmacandra!" Śrī Hanumān became so ecstatic that he jumped into the sky and embraced Nārada around the neck. Śrī Hanumān took Nārada to his *āśrama*. Nārada extensively praised Śrī Hanumān's glories, so Śrī Hanumān said: "You are calling me a *mahātma*, this is embarrassing. Today my Lord is gone. I have taken a deity of the Lord to Kimpuruṣa-varṣa, for my Lord Himself has gone to Dvārakā to enjoy. Go to the Pāṇḍavas, they are greater than me. See in what way the Lord is served by them and in how many ways He is serving them, being subdued by their love, so go to the Pāṇḍavas!" Hearing these words, Nārada proceeded to the Pāṇḍavas. When the Pāṇḍavas saw Nārada coming they approached him with different paraphernalia to worship him. Nārada also worshipped the Pāṇḍavas with these paraphernalia and praised them. "Oh no, what happened today?!" When he described the glories of Hanumān then the Pāṇḍavas understood and said: "Prabhu, you are saying this! Who can be as distressed as we? When we were in trouble we got the company of Govinda, now He keeps us in forgetfulness through all this luxury and enjoyment and he does not come to us anymore. The Yādavas are greater than us!"

Śrī Nārada entered the assembly of the Yadus. That day he had not come into the assembly although it was past 10 o'clock. Hearing the glorification of the Yādavas, the Yādavas said: "We are not always in the company of Kṛṣṇa. We don't know where He is and when, but Uddhava is always with Kṛṣṇa and only Uddhava is with Him when He discusses intimate things. Uddhava is the only counsellor He has for all problems, therefore Uddhava is the best devotee of all of us. Śrī Nārada thus glorified Uddhava, but Uddhava said: "I thought that there was no greater devotee than me, because the Lord said: "Oh Uddhava, you are dearer to Me than Śaṅkara, Lakṣmī-devī, Brahmā and even Myself!" Thus, O Nārada, I was a little proud. On the pretext of sending me to console the Vrajavāsīs Śrī Govinda sent me to Śrī Vṛndāvana and thus crushed my pride. You don't know which prayer I ended up saying there -

*āsām aho caraṇa reṇu-juṣām ahaṁ syām  
vṛndāvane kim api gulma latauṣadhīnām  
yā dustyajāṁ svajanam ārya-pathaṁ ca hitvā  
bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimṛgyām*

We are people from Mahāprabhu's era, therefore we must know which *mahātma* to take shelter of. Uddhava prayed in the Bhāgavata (10.47.61): "Alas! When will I be so fortunate to take birth in Vraja as even a shrub or a blade of grass, so that I can receive the foot-dust of the *gopīs* on my head?" He prayed for the foot-dust of the *gopīs*. At this place we can find the zenith of greatness. Here ends Nārada's journey, here Nārada attained what he coveted, here his heart was fulfilled, here he found the greatest thing he searched

for. Uddhava prayed for the foot-dust of these topmost saints, the *gopīs*. If someone would ask Uddhava Mahāśaya: "You covet the foot-dust of the great souls - is this why you are practising *sādhanā*?" The answer is: "This foot-dust is the *sādhanā*. The goal is the foot-dust and the *sādhanā* is the foot-dust. *vande nanda-vraja-strīnām pādareṇum abhikṣṇāsam* - Great souls always pray for just one speck of this foot-dust. I will receive the mercy of that dust on the day I will take birth in Vṛndāvana as a blade of grass or a shrub and their feet will touch my head. Therefore we can understand from Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's explanation of the word *mahīyasām* that you will get a kind of devotion according to the kind of devotee's foot-dust you will be showered with. That is for sure. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has written in his commentary on the word *mahattama: sādhu - amogha-darśī*. Those who are saints never see faults in anyone, they only see qualities. According to this one quality they are defined as great, greater and greatest. A person who can see a quality in each fault is called a *mahat*, a saint. For instance, someone may use harsh words, but the saint will think: "He is rebuking me. It may sound harsh, but it is for my benefit, like medicine. Medicine sometimes tastes bitter. Perhaps he is trying to destroy my false pride, therefore he is a great soul." Who is called a greater soul? A person in whom *bhakti* has awoken can not find faults with anyone. Whoever sees qualities and no faults - he is the greater. For example, many merchants may be standing at his gate. That is their business, but the greater soul will think: "Ahā! How much trouble they have taken to come from so far to serve me with all their articles!" Actually this is not service, but he cannot see the faults, he only sees qualities. Then he says that the greatest soul is he who sees even the greatest fault as a quality. For instance, in the winter someone may steal his winter-coat, but the greatest soul thinks: "He did not have a winter-coat, therefore he has taken mine. I should have given it to him, but I didn't - this was unfair of me. He has been very merciful to me to take from me what he deserved. Even though he was armed, he did not shoot me - how merciful he was!" He who sees even a great fault as a great quality is the greatest soul. Who is even greater than that? He who thinks that there is no one wicked in the whole world - everyone is a saint. When the heart becomes so beautiful he sees no faults but considers everyone to be a devotee of Kṛṣṇa. It is such a great soul that Prahlāda Mahārāja speaks of here as *mahīyasām*, and it is such a great soul by whose foot-dust he wishes to be showered. Why did he use the word *abhiṣeka*? The best way to attain *bhakti* is through the foot-dust of the great souls. This has been said again and again in the Bhāgavata - you want *bhakti*? Then he shows you the foot-dust. Here Prahlāda Mahārāja says *abhiṣeka*. An inquisitive person asked from a *mahātma*: "Mahārāja, I have taken the foot-dust of many great souls upon my head, and I have smeared it all over my body. I have also taken the water that washed their feet, but still I did not attain *bhakti*. Why is it then repeatedly said in the Bhāgavata that *bhakti* is attained by touching the foot-dust of the saints?" The *mahātma* replied: "Look, Prahlāda Mahārāja used the word *abhiṣeka* here - so where have you applied this foot-dust? You have smeared it on your body and you have eaten it, but have you also smeared a little on your mind?" This is why the word *abhiṣeka* was used. You must serve this foot-dust with the greatest respect and devotion - that is *abhiṣeka*. The only thing that can destroy *bhakti sādhanā* is offending a great soul. In the Bhāgavata we can see that the greatest souls don't look at faults or qualities at all, so is there any fault in offending their lotus feet, since they anyway don't take offense at anyone? The Bhāgavata says that although the greatest souls don't take any

offense, the dust of their feet cannot tolerate any offense committed to them. The saint sees everyone with equal vision, whether he is abused or praised. I commit an offense to someone who feels unhappy when I rebuke him, but when that person does not become unhappy, then what's the offence? But his foot-dust cannot tolerate any offence! This foot-dust enjoys a certain independence. Thus we certainly must serve such a great soul with devotion. In Śrī-Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta we see a beautiful example - Kālidās Rāy was a topmost Vaiṣṇava, and he once visited another Vaiṣṇava named Jhāḍu Ṭhākura, who was a *śūdra* by caste. When Jhāḍu Ṭhākura saw the honored guest appearing in his house he became very excited and said: "You are such a great devotee, and still you come to my house - I am a low-class devotee and I have nothing to offer you. I will send food to a *brāhmaṇa*'s house and there you can cook for yourself. If you can take *prasāda* there on my expense I will feel blessed!" Kālidāsa Rāy said: "Ṭhākura, please place your feet on my head! I came here to get blessed by receiving your footdust, and now you speak all these words to me!" Jhāḍu Ṭhākura said: "You are a devotee and you are from a high caste, whereas I am lowly and fallen. Now you are telling me that you have come to take the dust from my feet - don't speak such words anymore!" Then Kālidās Rāy quoted a verse from the Bhāgavata. "Listen, there is no higher aristocracy than Vyāsa Muni and Śuka Muni, and they have said:

*viprad dviṣaḍ guṇa yutād aravinda nābha pādāravinda vimukhāt śvapacaṁ variṣṭham  
manyā tad arpita mano vacanehitārtha prāṇaṁ punāti sa kulam na tu bhūri mānaḥ*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 7.9.10)

"When a *brāhmaṇa* endowed with all twelve brahminical qualities is not devoted to Govinda then a dog-eater who is devoted to Govinda is greater than him." These are the words of the scriptures.

*aho bata śvapaco'to garīyān yaj jihvāgre vartate nāma tubhyam  
tepus tapas te juhuvuḥ sasnur āryā brahmānucur nāma grhnanti ye te*

(Śrīmad Bhāgavata 3.33.7)

"Listen to what the scriptures say: "O Lord, if Your holy name is present on the tips of the tongues of a dog-eater, then he is greater and he becomes qualified to be a *guru*. Why? *tepus tapas te*: he has performed penances and sacrifices, he has studied all the scriptures and done all other meritorious acts." Jhāḍu Ṭhākura said: "What the scriptures say is all true, but this refers to devotees, whereas I am from a low caste and I am also not a devotee. Therefore I am the lowest creature of all. Why are you speaking to me about all these things?" It is the nature of a great soul to be more humble than humble. What more could Kālidās Rāy say? He said: "Please allow me to leave now, I'm off." As he went, Jhāḍu Ṭhākura followed him. Kālidās Rāy said: "Ṭhākura, please come again!" Jhāḍu Ṭhākura said: "Ācchā, *daṇḍavat*." Kālidās Rāy went, but he quietly remained around there and smeared his whole body with the dust from Jhāḍu Ṭhākura's footprints, while his body was studded with goosebumps and tears streamed from his eyes. This was an *abhiṣeka*. He floated in his

own tears and smeared his whole body with dust. How much devotion and faith he had in the foot-dust of that great devotee. And look, Kālidās Rāy had given some ripe mangoes as a present. Jhāḍu Ṭhākura mentally offered it to Govinda. Then he took *prasāda* himself and gave his remnants to his wife. Finally they sucked the mango pits and threw them out in the ditch. Kālidās Rāy, who had remained in hiding, then sucked these enjoyed mango-pits.

*sei kholā āñṭi coṣā cuṣe kāli dāsa  
cuṣite cuṣite hoy premera ullāsa (C.C. Antya 16)*

"While sucking these mangopits Kālidāsa was overwhelmed with feelings of ecstatic love." You know what was the result of this - when Śrīman Mahāprabhu took *darśana* of Jagannātha in Nīlācala He washed His feet above a drain before entering the temple. No one was allowed to take that foot-water. By chance some devotee would be fortunate enough to get some of that foot-water. That Kālidās Rāy went to this place when Śrīman Mahāprabhu was washing His feet there and he drank one handful, two hands ful and three hands ful. No one was able to drink that foot-water, but he managed to accomplish that. After that Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī has written:

*bhakta padareṇu āra bhakta padajala; bhakta bhukta avaśeṣa tin mahābol  
ghṛṇā lāja chāḍi koro ei tinera sevana; ihā hoite pābe bhāi, kṛṣṇa prema-dhana (C.C.)*

"The foot-dust and foot-water of the devotees and the remnants of their food are all very powerful. Give up all disgust and shame and serve these three. O brother, from this you will gain the treasure of love of Kṛṣṇa!" From these three the mercy of Kṛṣṇa is attained, that is shown by Kālidās Rāy. This is the most devotional way of serving the devotees' foot-dust, that is why the word *abhiṣeka* is given. Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja has said: "As long as you are not showered by the foot-dust of a great devotee you cannot become conscious of Viṣṇu." He has used the word *mati*, why? He did not use the words *buddhi*, *mana* or *citta*, but *mati*. What is meant with *mati*? Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda has written: "Mati is the discriminating intelligence that can ascertain the truth." "The lotus feet of Govinda are the essence of everything and the shelter of these lotus feet are my very life". If the *mati* meets with this truth and touches the Lord's lotus feet, thus touching transcendence, then it is *mati* related to Viṣṇu. And when that does not take place and we think of these feet only sometimes throughout the whole day, while our minds wander through the sense objects the rest of the day, then this is not called *mati*. In his commentary on the Bhāgavata *śloka bhavāpavargo bhramataḥ* (10.51.54) Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda has written: "Mati in relation with Viṣṇu is the root cause of *rati*. Here it is being called *prema aṅkura* (the root cause of *prema*). This is *mati* in relation to Viṣṇu. The lotus-feet of the Lord cannot be touched as long as our bodies and minds are not showered by the foot-dust of *niṣkiñcana mahātmas*. The result of the *mati* touching Lord Urukrama's feet is the cessation of *anarthas*. Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda explains the cessation of *anarthas* as being the cessation of material life, viz. the repetition of birth and death, its destruction at the root. Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda said: "Cessation of material existence is just a by-coming factor of *mati* towards the Lord's lotus feet. The main fruit is the attainment of the Lord's service. "May my *anarthas* be destroyed,

may my material miseries be destroyed!" - the devotee is not doing *bhajana* with such desires. He does *bhajana* with the desire to attain love for the Lord's lotus feet and to attain His service. This is the main result of *mati* touching the Lord's lotus feet - destruction of *anarthas* and material existence are by-coming results. The desires of the devotee do not pertain to that. He wants love and devotional service and knows that destruction of *anarthas* and material existence will come automatically. When Dhruva Mahārāja saw the Lord face-to-face he only wanted the boon of the company of the devotee, so that he could engage in the process of hearing and chanting with them. Although Dhruva Mahārāja had actually attained the Lord he did not say: "I want You and nothing or nobody else"; instead he said: "I want the company of Your devotees so that I can relish Hari-*kathā*." The Lord replied: "Look, you have already attained the goal, why do you still ask for the means? You are just a child, you don't understand anything!" Dhruva Mahārāja replied: "Lord, You have spoken the truth. But what can I do with You? You are a *rasamaya vastu* (transcendental being of taste), like sugarcane. Rasa (juice) is within You as it is in the sugarcane, but I am just a child, I have no teeth, so I am unable to relish You. I cannot chew You, and will I be able to relish You by licking You? However, the company of Your great devotees acts like a press. When a press crushes the sugarcane and the juice is poured into a glass even a toothless child can relish the juice (*rasa*) without difficulty. You are the embodiment of *rasa* and this *rasa* is relished by discussing topics of You. The *mahātmas* are like presses that will be able to serve me the juice of Your topics (*rasa kathā*). Therefore I pray to you for the greatest means to relish You, hearing Hari-*kathā* in the company of the *sādhus*." Then the Lord said: "Look, you want to hear Hari-*kathā* in the company of the *sādhus*, but there are many obstacles to *bhajana* in this material world, so you cannot do *bhajana* nicely unless you first conquered over your *anarthas*. Therefore in the same way as you asked for *sādhu saṅga* at My lotus feet, why don't you pray to Me for freedom from *anarthas* and material entanglement?" Then Dhruva gave an example: "O Lord I do not pray for *anartha nivṛtti* or cessation of the cycle of birth and death - they will come to me automatically. For example, in the evening a drunkard may stumble down the road, dropping his garments somewhere. He won't even notice it as long as the night is not over yet. Similarly, as we go down the road of *bhajana*, hearing and chanting Hari-*kathā* in the company of the saintly devotees, we won't even notice how we will become free from material and bodily existence. Why should I therefore pray for liberation from material existence?" There is a great glory in hearing and chanting Hari-*kathā* in that we will not even notice that in the process we are becoming liberated from material existence. Hence Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda has given a nice explanation. He said: "This will all go away as a by-coming effect." And Śrīdhara Svāmīpāda has written in the end of his commentary: "If you are not showered by the footdust of the *mahātmas* you will not be convinced that you must take shelter of *bhakti* and you will not become free from *anarthas* or material existence at all."

Verse 54:

*sādhu saṅge sādhu saṅga sarva śāstre koy;  
lava-mātra sādhu saṅga sarva siddhi hoy*

**"Keep company with the saints, keep company with the saints - this is what all the scriptures say. Even a moment's association with a saint can bring all perfection!"**

In his Śrī-Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta, Madhya *līlā* chapter 22, while discussing the teachings to Sanātana Gosvāmī, Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavācārya Parama Pūjyapāda Śrī Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dās Kavirāja Gosvāmīcaraṇa now sings the glories of association with the saintly devotees in the context of the *abhidheya tattva*. We living entities have been forgetful of Kṛṣṇa since beginning-less time, and because we have forgotten the lotus feet of the Lord *māyā* has cast us in the stream of dreadful material existence, where we are constantly floating amidst the miseries of birth, death, old age and disease since beginningless time. The only cause for terminating this distress and becoming favorable to the Lord's lotus feet is keeping the company of the saintly devotees. The *sādhus* are the Lord's merciful messengers. These Mahāpuruṣas have carried topics about the Lord's endless sweetness and about devotion to Him from the spiritual world to the doors of the conditioned souls. Hearing these purifying topics the conditioned souls manage to sever the bonds of *māyā*. It is as if the saints pull them out of the blind well of material existence with the ropes of devotion and bring them to the lotus feet of the Lord. The company and the grace of such Mahāpuruṣa-saints is like a touchstone for the conditioned souls. Just as dirty iron at once turns into gold when it is touched by a touch-stone, similarly the hearts of the conditioned souls, that are defiled by lust, are at once illuminated by the bright gold of desires for devotional service as soon as they contact genuinely saintly Mahāpuruṣas and hear Hari-kathā from their mouths. The grace of the Lord descends into the material world in two classes. The first one is *māyāmayī kṛpā*, which comes to the illusory material world through the deluding potency, and the other one is *svarūpa-śakti-mayī kṛpā*, that comes to the material world through the Lord's intrinsic potency. The mercy that comes through the illusory potency gives us a material body with which we can do *bhajana*, it gives us the love of our mother and father, the affection of our friends and relatives and so many eatables and other enjoyable matters. We also get breath to keep our life-air going, and we get water, wind etc. When we do not worship the Lord, but envy Him instead and rebuke Him, then still that door of material mercy will not close. He is so great and so generous that we still get His mercy. But this kind of material mercy will not destroy our beginningless illusory bondage, therefore another kind of mercy is sent through the Lord's innate potency in the form of the great saintly devotees. The grace of the Lord that comes through the Lord's innate potency comes in the form of a great saintly devotee. Why? What would have happened if He had come Himself? The Upaniṣads say: *āditya varṇam tamaso parastā* - the Lord is *tamaso parastā*. He dwells in the kingdom of light and bliss, far away from the darkness of *māyā*. "Waves of bliss roll by there, there are no tears there, there is no pain, no bondage to Fate, nor the tight bondage of any shackles." The Lord dwells in such a kingdom of bliss, thinking: "Such suffering is going on in the world of *māyā*. They cannot pierce that circle of *māyā* to reach Me. Therefore they can turn towards Me through the merciful intervention of My innate potency. The only means through which the conditioned souls can turn towards Me is through associating with saintly devotees. These great souls are also *āditya varṇam tamaso parastā*, they also have no relationship with *māyā*, but still they are here,

showing the conditioned souls that they are in illusion. It is like seeing yourself being swallowed by a tiger while you are dreaming, but when you wake up you discover that it was all false, you were just dreaming...