

Sri Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu 10 12

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One of the closest associates of Sri Caitanya Mahaprabhu, the acarya of our sampradaya, jagad guru Srila Rupa Goswamicaran, in his great book *Sri Bhakti Rasamrta Sindhu*, first part third chapter, gives a description of bhava bhakti.

When a devotee reaches deep *asakti*, his mind is uninterrupted in bhajan. This devotee has nine internal qualities. The first quality is *shanti* or peacefulness. Whatever evil happens, his consciousness is still. Second quality is *aviakta kaladva* - he is doing bhajan day and night. Not even a moment passes without Krishna's connection. The third quality is *vairagya*, renunciation - he is not connected to material objects. Then there is humbleness - he is not waiting for respect from others. He offers respect to everyone, but does not wait for any respect in return. Next one - *ashabandha*. He is sure that he will get Krishna - that Krishna definitely will shower His mercy. "*Of course I will get the mercy of the lotus feet of Mahaprabhu!*" Next - he cannot be at one place. He has very strong desire, is eager. All the time he is in separation. Next quality - he is always in nama, rupa, guna - he has great taste for all this. First there is nama ruci - taste for the holy name. And always ruci for harikatha, descriptions of Krishna. He is always eager to listen to God's lilas. Then there is love for the holy dhama - the places where vaishnavas are living. He also loves dhama vasis.

When there is ripe *asakti*, that is bhava of vaidhi bhakti - for example Narada. Then there is bhava in raganuga bhakti. We cannot achieve the goal without the process. To get result without action is not possible. There was the example of the girl Candrakanti. She was looking at the deity of Krishna as her beloved. When we serve a devotee, bhava comes. A devotee can give bhava, just by his mercy. For example Prahlada - he got it like this, by the mercy of Narada. Sometimes bhava can be attained by the mercy of Krishna. Krishna can give bhava through darshan, by blessing with words, and to somebody He can give bhava in the heart. But usually we have to do sadhana. Somebody can get bhava without sadhana, but it is very rare. For us - we should do sadhana. Not just sadhana, *sadhana avi nivesh* - fully immersed in sadhana, fully engaged in sadhana. By mercy of guru and vaishnavas that is possible. The jiva cannot by itself get into bhajan if there are no samskaras from past lives. Bhakti is like light. Those who have bhakti purify everything. Bhakti is so powerful - just like a burning candle can ignite other candles. So these are the nine symptoms.

Usually a devotee passes anartha nivrti, doing sravanam kirtanam. Then ruci and asakti will come - and after that bhava appears. In the beginning there is a small plant of bhava. The devotee has these nine amazing qualities. He is outside of the three gunas - he is in bhajan. Devotees have so many amazing qualities. First there is the quality of shanti, peacefulness. Rupa Goswami explains that this is a very important quality to have in this material world. There is so much distress in this material world. Life itself is very changeable - like a drop on a lotus leaf, almost falling down. Here is so much distress. This drop doesn't stay on the lotus leaf for a long time.

In the material world nobody loves anybody, because everywhere there is ignorance. There are many reasons for distress. Distress is the symptom of raja and tama guna. In the heart of a devotee is suddha sattva. Even though there might be so many reasons for distress, a devotee is completely peaceful. His position is special. There is the example when the son of Srivasa Pandit left his body. Srivasa did not change his mood. Also Haridas Thakur - he was being beaten in 22 market places, but he was completely peaceful. Then a kurtisan tried to seduce him, but his mind was not changed for a moment. And he was living in one cave with a snake. The material world is always trying to capture our consciousness. But a devotee is in deep bhajan and when he reaches bhava, his mind is calm in any situation. The material world is like a very big ocean. Sometimes heaven, sometimes hell - sometimes king and sometimes poor person. The jiva is controlled by maya. There is not any stability - like boiling water. But when a devotee reaches this bhava, suffering and enjoyment cannot touch him.

In the first canto of Srimad Bhagavatam, when Maharaja Pariksit listened harikatha he knew that he should just live for seven days. He renounced the kingdom immediately and enthroned one successor. Alone he went to the bank of the Ganga, completely calm - no panic or distress. If he had wanted he could have stopped this curse. He could have prayed to Krishna and Krishna may have saved him. There was a great rishi, BrighuVasisha Vedavyasa, and it was his child who condemned Maharaja Pariksit. This great muni could have saved him. If a higher person blesses somebody, then the condemnation disappears. But he said, *"I am not afraid of death. I do not want to run from my destiny. I have everything. I am king of the whole earth. What did I not see? I have everything. What can I achieve? I already have kingdom and world treasures. That's why I now want something else. Whatever ordinary people are dreaming about, I have all this. Now I want to know more about Krishna. I did not have a possibility to serve Krishna very well. I heard from my mother and father and now I want to serve Him. I want to listen about Him. This is my desire."* He went to the bank of the Ganga. All the munis and rishis came there. He paid dandavats to everyone. He asked, *"Oh great sages, who have come here to the Ganga! I want to send my mind to the lotus feet of Krishna. I want to put my mind in remembrance of Krishna. So what should I do? I completely surrender myself to you. I offer you dandavat and I am giving myself to you. I want to follow*

your instructions. The snake Taksaka is going to kill me." He is saying, *"I am giving myself to you."* He is not asking them to save him from death. He wanted something else. *"I want that you give me instructions. How can I reach Hari in seven days? I want to listen to the qualities of Hari. I want to know about Him. I want to listen to Krishna katha from your sanga."* Usually when someone is about to die he is in fear and is trembling. But maha bhagavatas are very calm, very peaceful. Somebody may ask. *"Why do you want to listen to some singing if you are dying?"* But Maharaja Pariksit is saying, *"I do not want to listen to regular songs. I want to listen to the glories of Krishna. Let the poison of this snake kill me. I am not worried about that. I am worried about other things, like how I can always remember Krishna. That's why I want to hear His glorification."* Goswamipada is saying, *"Danger came to him, but he was so peaceful and so strong. This is definitely a quality of bhakti."* Another example is Bali Maharaja. Vamanadeva took everything from him and all his associates were angry. But Bali Maharaja was calm and peaceful. This is an example of peacefulness in the stage of bhava. The mind of this devotee is very stable.

Next quality: *Aviakta kaladva* - not one moment is passed without connection with Krishna. Sadhakas may have this quality, but nitya siddhas have this quality in an absolute way. And siddha is the medium stage. Sadhaka - siddha - and nitya siddha. Not even a moment is passed without remembering Krishna. That is why sastra is saying, *"All life you may collect some wealth, but in one moment - when death comes, everything will be lost."* So there is no point to collect things and spending life for material enjoyment. This life is given for the service of Krishna. We should not waste even a moment. How do the conditioned souls spend their time? It is spent for earning money, sleeping, eating etc. But human birth is very rare. When somebody takes shelter of guru or dhama, but still waste their time, there is no guarantee that next birth will be good - that it even will be human birth. Sastra give so many instructions and Mahaprabhu gives so many different instructions. We can waste time on dharma and jnana. That's why Mahaprabhu said, *"Be careful! Do not waste time."* This time when we are living in the body we should spend for service of Krishna and vasihnavas. Who should we serve? The body or Bhagavan? Should we serve a piece of meat which will die anyway or should we serve Bhagavan? We must chose. How much time is spent for talking? Who, where, what, when... This body and everything which is connected to it is asat. Why spend so much time on this? How will that help when the body is lying down in the crematorium? People are dying every moment. One time Yamaraja asked Yudhistira Maharaja, *"What is most amazing?"* Yudhistira said, *"People see bodies dying every day, but still they think that they themselves will never die. They do not understand that they also can die at any time. Everyone knows this, but there is more taste for useless talking than for harikatha."*

Bhakti and Bhagavan are Absolute. They never disappear. Temporary things are the body and everything surrounded by it. Devotees understand that old age will come.

If I don't serve by my eyes - if I don't go to see the vaishnavas and the deities, then my eyes are like useless pieces of glass. If my ears don't hear harikatha, what is the use of them? If my tongue doesn't sing the holy name, what is the use of my tongue? If my hands don't serve guru and vaishnavas, what is the use of my hands? If my feet don't go on parikrama, what is the use of my feet? If the heart doesn't melt from hearing harikatha that means there is some aparadha there.

There is a story of one person who listened to harikatha. Everyone around him was crying, but he didn't. Day by day went by like this. Then he decided to put some oil in his eyes - and only then he understood that this was the bhava of the vaishnavas - that this was why they were crying, and that by serving and worshiping them taste would come. Every moment vaishnavas use for sravanam, kirtanam and smaranam. How do devotees use their time? All his feelings are the breath of his life. He vows, *"I will only do bhajan and nothing else! I will always chant harinama and always do smaranam."* He puts a lot of effort into this. To get bhava can take a long time. Not only ten or twenty years - it may take a whole life - or a few lives. Devotees do effort. They always chant the holy name and always pray and glorify the Lord. They always do smaranam.

When the mind is not filled with God, then something else will come inside the mind, something useless. If the house is without doors and is empty, definitively somebody will go inside the house. The mind cannot be empty. The mind always thinks about something. It is the nature of the mind. If we don't want that the mind should think about something useless, we should keep the mind in remembrance of Krishna.

In the end we will reach the stage like a certain sadhaka, who came to his guru and said, *"I could not do seva today."* His guru asked him, *"Why not?"* He hadn't done aratik or offered garland. He hadn't put alta on the lotus feet of Thakurji. Where he was? He hadn't given Them bath. Usually he was very much attached to doing these services and if he would miss some service he would suffer very much. That's why he was always doing smaranam and seva. In the early morning he would walk in Navadvipa with the sankirtana. He was doing service in dasya rasa. Devotees meditate on that seva. Devotees meditate that Mahaprabhu walks in Navadvipa with sankirtana. Then Mahaprabhu is taking bath in the Ganga and after that the devotees decorate Him. If a devotee would miss his service Mahaprabhu would think, *"What happened? Why did this devotee not come?"* Sadhakas establish a very close relation between himself and Radha-Krishna. He thinks like this, *"Radha-Krishna or Mahaprabhu may ask why I am not serving Them today."*

The nature of bhakti is that the devotee can never get enough. Like material people, they will never get enough. In the same way, the heart of a devotee can never get enough of bhakti. He is eager to serve every moment - more and more, externally and internally. Somebody who is eager for wealth will never get enough wealth. And somebody who is looking for fame will never get enough fame.

Devotees also want more and more bhajan. That's why they are always praying and offering dandavats. They are very much worried when they cannot do some service for Mahaprabhu and Radha-Krishna. They feel ananda in bhajan. They are in bhajan all life. They are praying, "*Mahaprabhu, give me Your mercy!*" They are crying and saying, "*I cannot give You my every second. I am so unfortunate! I still spend time for eating and sleeping.*" *Aviakta kaladva* - he doesn't waste even a moment.

Vairagya- renunciation. They don't have any material desires. Hiraniakasipu 's tapasya was based on intelligence. He was temporary renounced. This is not vairagya - it is the shadow of vairagya. But devotees are different. They don't have material desires. Their senses are not attracted to the objects of sense. They don't want to enjoy by taste or smell. They are very peaceful, the senses are very calm. The feelings don't pull the devotees. There is no taste for anything material. He doesn't have to control his feelings because there is no taste. Like when a person is sick - he has everything, but he cannot enjoy anything. In that position there is no sweetness in anything. Devotees may have everything. Maybe there is a tasty sweet preparation, but he doesn't have taste for that. Some beautiful object may come before his eyes, but he is not attracted. He does not have any desire to enjoy by his senses. When somebody listens to some great artistic singing, he doesn't want to listen to something lower. In the same way, when devotees get great taste, they don't want any lower taste. When the senses are in contact with Govinda, they enjoy transcendental rasa. Then everything in this world becomes tasteless. Such devotees want to listen to the voice of Govinda, they want to smell His body, they want to touch His feet etc. In this way Rupa Goswami describes vairagya, renunciation. There is the story of Bharata Maharaja. He was very great, but he renounced everything. He had everything - kingdom, relatives, wealth. Even though he was a renounced person, he was the king of the whole planet. He had internal renunciation - so he decided to do bhajan to Govinda. He was ruling the kingdom only from the feeling of duty because he had desire to listen to the lilas of God. He left everything when he was still young. When he turned away from his kingdom, he did not have any wealth even in his mind or any desires to have anything.