



## Nectar of Instruction Verse 5

kṛṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta  
dīkṣāsti cet praṇatibhiś ca bhajantam īśam  
śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-  
nindādi-śūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā

### Synonyms

kṛṣṇa — the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa; iti — thus; yasya — of whom; giri — in the words or speech; taṁ — him; manasā — by the mind; ādriyeta — one must honor; dīkṣā — initiation; asti — there is; cet — if; praṇatibhiḥ — by obeisances; ca — also; bhajantam — engaged in devotional service; īśam — unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead; śuśrūṣayā — by practical service; bhajana-vijñam — one who is advanced in devotional service; ananyam — without deviation; anya-nindā-ādi — of blasphemy of others, etc; śūnya — completely devoid; hṛdam — whose heart; īpsita — desirable; saṅga — association; labdhyā — by gaining.

### Translation

One should mentally honor the devotee who chants the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, one should offer humble obeisances to the devotee who has undergone spiritual initiation [dīkṣā] and is engaged in worshiping the Deity, and one should associate with and faithfully serve that pure devotee who is advanced in undeviated devotional service and whose heart is completely devoid of the propensity to criticize others.

### Purport

In order to intelligently apply the sixfold loving reciprocations mentioned in the previous verse, one must select proper persons with careful discrimination. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī therefore advises that we should meet with the Vaiṣṇavas in an appropriate way, according to their particular status. In this verse he tells us how to deal with three types of devotees – the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, madhyama-adhikārī and uttama-adhikārī. The kaniṣṭha-adhikārī is a neophyte who has received the hari-nāma initiation from the spiritual master and is trying to chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. One should respect such a person within his mind as a kaniṣṭha Vaiṣṇava. A madhyama-adhikārī has received spiritual initiation from the spiritual master and has been fully engaged by him in the transcendental loving service of the Lord. The madhyama-adhikārī should be considered to be situated midway in devotional service. The uttama-adhikārī, or highest devotee, is one who is very advanced in devotional service. An uttama-adhikārī is not interested in blaspheming others, his heart is completely clean, and he has attained the realized state of unalloyed Kṛṣṇa consciousness. According to Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the association and service of such a mahā-bhāgavata, or perfect Vaiṣṇava, are most desirable.

One should not remain a kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, one who is situated on the lowest platform of devotional service and is interested only in worshiping the Deity in the temple. Such a devotee is described in the Eleventh Canto of Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.47):

arcāyām eva haraye  
pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate  
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu  
sa bhaktaḥ prākṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ

“A person who is very faithfully engaged in the worship of the Deity in the temple, but who does not know how to behave toward devotees or people in general is called a prākṛta-bhakta, or kaniṣṭha-adhikārī.”

One therefore has to raise himself from the position of kaniṣṭha-adhikārī to the platform of madhyama-adhikārī. The madhyama-adhikārī is described in Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.46) in this way:

īśvare tad-adhīneṣu  
bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca  
prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā  
yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ

“The madhyama-adhikārī is a devotee who worships the Supreme Personality of Godhead as the highest object of love, makes friends with the Lord’s devotees, is merciful to the ignorant and avoids those who are envious by nature.”

This is the way to cultivate devotional service properly; therefore in this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has advised us how to treat various devotees. We can see from practical experience that there are different types of Vaiṣṇavas. The prākṛta-sahajiyās generally chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, yet they are attached to women, money and intoxication. Although such persons may chant the holy name of the Lord, they are not yet properly purified. Such people should be respected within one’s mind, but their association should be avoided. Those who are innocent but simply carried away by bad association should be shown favor if they are eager to receive proper instructions from pure devotees, but those neophyte devotees who are actually initiated by the bona fide spiritual master and are seriously engaged in carrying out the orders of the spiritual master should be offered respectful obeisances.

In this Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement a chance is given to everyone without discrimination of caste, creed or color. Everyone is invited to join this movement, sit with us, take prasāda and hear about Kṛṣṇa. When we see that someone is actually interested in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and wants to be initiated, we accept him as a disciple for the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. When a neophyte devotee is actually initiated and engaged in devotional service by the orders of the spiritual master, he should be accepted immediately as a bona fide Vaiṣṇava, and obeisances should be offered unto him. Out of many such Vaiṣṇavas, one may be found to be very seriously engaged in the service of the Lord and strictly following all the regulative principles, chanting the prescribed number of rounds on

japa beads and always thinking of how to expand the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement. Such a Vaiṣṇava should be accepted as an uttama-adhikārī, a highly advanced devotee, and his association should always be sought.

The process by which a devotee becomes attached to Kṛṣṇa is described in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya 4.192):

dīkṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa  
sei-kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama

“At the time of initiation, when a devotee fully surrenders to the service of the Lord, Kṛṣṇa accepts him to be as good as He Himself.”

Dīkṣā, or spiritual initiation, is explained in the Bhakti-sandarbha (283) by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī:

divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt  
kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam  
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā  
deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ

“By dīkṣā one gradually becomes disinterested in material enjoyment and gradually becomes interested in spiritual life.”

We have seen many practical examples of this, especially in Europe and America. Many students who come to us from rich and respectable families quickly lose all interest in material enjoyment and become very eager to enter into spiritual life. Although they come from very wealthy families, many of them accept living conditions that are not very comfortable. Indeed, for Kṛṣṇa’s sake they are prepared to accept any living condition as long as they can live in the temple and associate with the Vaiṣṇavas. When one becomes so disinterested in material enjoyment, he becomes fit for initiation by the spiritual master. For the advancement of spiritual life Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.1.13) prescribes: tapasā brahmacharyaṇa śamena ca damena ca. When a person is serious about accepting dīkṣā, he must be prepared to practice austerity, celibacy and control of the mind and body. If one is so prepared and is desirous of receiving spiritual enlightenment (divyaṁ jñānam), he is fit for being initiated. Divyaṁ jñānam is technically called tad-vijñāna, or knowledge about the Supreme. Tad-vijñānārthaṁ sa gurum evābhigacchet: when one is interested in the transcendental subject matter of the Absolute Truth, he should be initiated. Such a person should approach a spiritual master in order to take dīkṣā. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.3.21) also prescribes: tasmād gurum prapadyeta jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam. “When one is actually interested in the transcendental science of the Absolute Truth, he should approach a spiritual master.”

One should not accept a spiritual master without following his instructions. Nor should one accept a spiritual master just to make a fashionable show of spiritual life. One must be jijñāsu, very much inquisitive to learn from the bona fide spiritual master. The inquiries one makes

should strictly pertain to transcendental science (jijñāsuḥ śreya uttamam). The word uttamam refers to that which is above material knowledge. Tama means “the darkness of this material world,” and ut means “transcendental.” Generally people are very interested in inquiring about mundane subject matters, but when one has lost such interest and is simply interested in transcendental subject matters, he is quite fit for being initiated. When one is actually initiated by the bona fide spiritual master and when he seriously engages in the service of the Lord, he should be accepted as a madhyama-adhikārī.

The chanting of the holy names of Kṛṣṇa is so sublime that if one chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra offenselessly, carefully avoiding the ten offenses, he can certainly be gradually elevated to the point of understanding that there is no difference between the holy name of the Lord and the Lord Himself. One who has reached such an understanding should be very much respected by neophyte devotees. One should know for certain that without chanting the holy name of the Lord offenselessly, one cannot be a proper candidate for advancement in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.69) it is said:

yāhāra komala śraddhā, se ‘kaniṣṭha’ jana  
krame krame teñho bhakta ha-ibe ‘uttama’

“One whose faith is soft and pliable is called a neophyte, but by gradually following the process, he will rise to the platform of a first-class devotee.” Everyone begins his devotional life from the neophyte stage, but if one properly finishes chanting the prescribed number of rounds of hari-nāma, he is elevated step by step to the highest platform, uttama-adhikārī. The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement prescribes sixteen rounds daily because people in the Western countries cannot concentrate for long periods while chanting on beads. Therefore the minimum number of rounds is prescribed. However, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to say that unless one chants at least sixty-four rounds of japa (one hundred thousand names), he is considered fallen (patita). According to his calculation, practically every one of us is fallen, but because we are trying to serve the Supreme Lord with all seriousness and without duplicity, we can expect the mercy of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is famous as patita-pāvana, the deliverer of the fallen.

When Śrīla Satyarāja Khān, a great devotee of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, asked the Lord how a Vaiṣṇava could be recognized, the Lord replied:

prabhu kahe, – “yāñra mukhe śuni eka-bāra  
kṛṣṇa-nāma, sei pūjya, – śreṣṭha sabākāra”

“If one hears a person say even once the word ‘Kṛṣṇa,’ that person should be accepted as the best man out of the common group.” (Cc. Madhya 15.106) Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu continued:

“ataeva yāñra mukhe eka kṛṣṇa-nāma  
sei ta ‘vaiṣṇava, kariha tāñhāra sammāna”

“One who is interested in chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa or who by practice likes to chant Kṛṣṇa’s names should be accepted as a Vaiṣṇava and offered respects as such, at least within one’s mind.” (Cc. Madhya 15.111) One of our friends, a famous English musician, has become attracted to chanting the holy names of Kṛṣṇa, and even in his records he has several times mentioned the holy name of Kṛṣṇa. At his home he offers respect to pictures of Kṛṣṇa and also to the preachers of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. In all regards, he has a very high estimation for Kṛṣṇa’s name and Kṛṣṇa’s activities; therefore we offer respects to him without reservation, for we are actually seeing that this gentleman is advancing gradually in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Such a person should always be shown respect. The conclusion is that anyone who is trying to advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness by regularly chanting the holy name should always be respected by Vaiṣṇavas. On the other hand, we have witnessed that some of our contemporaries who are supposed to be great preachers have gradually fallen into the material conception of life because they have failed to chant the holy name of the Lord.

While giving instructions to Sanātana Gosvāmī, Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu divided devotional service into three categories.

śāstra-yukti nāhi jāne dṛḍha, śraddhāvān  
'madhyama-adhikārī' sei mahā-bhāgyavān

“A person whose conclusive knowledge of the śāstras is not very strong but who has developed firm faith in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra and who is also undeterred in the execution of his prescribed devotional service should be considered a madhyama-adhikārī. Such a person is very fortunate.” (Cc. Madhya 22.67) A madhyama-adhikārī is a śraddhāvān, a staunchly faithful person, and he is actually a candidate for further advancement in devotional service. Therefore in the Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.64) it is said:

śraddhāvān jana haya bhakti-adhikārī  
'uttama', 'madhyama', 'kaniṣṭha' – śraddhā-anusārī

“One becomes qualified as a devotee on the elementary platform, the intermediate platform and the highest platform of devotional service according to the development of his śraddhā [faith].” Again in Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya 22.62) it is said:

'śraddhā'-śabde – viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya  
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya

“By rendering transcendental service to Kṛṣṇa, one automatically performs all subsidiary activities.’ This confident, firm faith, favorable to the discharge of devotional service, is called śraddhā.” Śraddhā, faith in Kṛṣṇa, is the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Faith means strong faith. The words of Bhagavad-gītā are authoritative instructions for faithful men, and whatever Kṛṣṇa says in Bhagavad-gītā is to be accepted as it is, without interpretation. This was the way Arjuna accepted Bhagavad-gītā. After hearing Bhagavad-gītā, Arjuna told Kṛṣṇa: sarvam etad ṛtaṁ manye yan mām vadasī keśava. “O Kṛṣṇa, I totally accept as truth all that You have told me.” (Bg. 10.14)

This is the correct way of understanding Bhagavad-gītā, and this is called śraddhā. It is not that one accepts a portion of Bhagavad-gītā according to his own whimsical interpretations and then rejects another portion. This is not śraddhā. Śraddhā means accepting the instructions of Bhagavad-gītā in their totality, especially the last instruction: sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śaraṇaṁ vraja. “Abandon all varieties of religion and just surrender unto Me.” (Bg. 18.66) When one becomes completely faithful in regard to this instruction, one’s strong faith becomes the basis for advancing in spiritual life.

When one fully engages in chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra, he gradually realizes his own spiritual identity. Unless one faithfully chants the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, Kṛṣṇa does not reveal Himself: sevonmukhe hi jihvādau svayam eva sphuraty adaḥ. (BRS. 1.2.234) We cannot realize the Supreme Personality of Godhead by any artificial means. We must engage faithfully in the service of the Lord. Such service begins with the tongue (sevonmukhe hi jihvādau), which means that we should always chant the holy names of the Lord and accept kṛṣṇa-prasāda. We should not chant or accept anything else. When this process is faithfully followed, the Supreme Lord reveals Himself to the devotee.

When a person realizes himself to be an eternal servitor of Kṛṣṇa, he loses interest in everything but Kṛṣṇa’s service. Always thinking of Kṛṣṇa, devising means by which to spread the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, he understands that his only business is in spreading the Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement all over the world. Such a person is to be recognized as an uttama-adhikārī, and his association should be immediately accepted according to the six processes (dadāti pratigrhṇāti, etc.). Indeed, the advanced uttama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava devotee should be accepted as a spiritual master. Everything one possesses should be offered to him, for it is enjoined that one should deliver whatever he has to the spiritual master. The brahmacārī in particular is supposed to beg alms from others and offer them to the spiritual master. However, one should not imitate the behavior of an advanced devotee or mahā-bhāgavata without being self-realized, for by such imitation one will eventually become degraded.

In this verse Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī advises the devotee to be intelligent enough to distinguish between the kaniṣṭha-adhikārī, madhyama-adhikārī and uttama-adhikārī. The devotee should also know his own position and should not try to imitate a devotee situated on a higher platform. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given some practical hints to the effect that an uttama-adhikārī Vaiṣṇava can be recognized by his ability to convert many fallen souls to Vaiṣṇavism. One should not become a spiritual master unless he has attained the platform of uttama-adhikārī. A neophyte Vaiṣṇava or a Vaiṣṇava situated on the intermediate platform can also accept disciples, but such disciples must be on the same platform, and it should be understood that they cannot advance very well toward the ultimate goal of life under his insufficient guidance. Therefore a disciple should be careful to accept an uttama-adhikārī as a spiritual master.



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