

ROLE OF SELF-PURIFICATION IN VAISHNAVISM

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The present study investigates the problems that adherents of Vaishnavism face, in particular, necessity of purification, as an important part of cultivation oneself. It is an explanation of the main steps of religious practice, that is called *bhakti* yoga (loving devotion). Characterization of the different levels of practitioners, that should choose different intermediate goals, before they can reach the highest aim of practice, is given. Attention is focused on the initial phase of worshiping, when the most important task for believers is a cleaning of the heart. Task to depurate oneself from the unfavorable for progress in practice, from *anarthas* (destroying tendentious in hearts, such as sins, sorrows, misconceptions, and others); and developing the right qualities (like, humility, patience, respect of others, etc.). Based on the materials of Vedic scriptures, the methods of self-purification and different processes of worshiping for beginners are introduced; and importance of purification oneself for followers are described.

Keywords: Vaishnavism, self-purification, anartha, devotional service, Bhagavat-Gita

When we speak about the way of achievement the highest aim of personal life for followers of Vaishnavism, we can notice that self-purification becomes a very important part for individual spiritual practice. What a way of self-purification is and why it is so important for practitioners of Gaudia Vaishnavism, I would like to discuss in present text.

Purification from anarthas in Vaishnavism

Vaishnavism (*Vaishnava dharma*) is one of the four major traditions within Hinduism along with Shaivism, Shaktism, and Smartism. Vaishnavism characterized by devotion to the god Vishnu and his incarnations (*avatāras*). Devotee of Vishnu is called *Vaiṣṇava*. For Vaishnavas, absolute reality (*brahman*) is manifested in Vishnu, who in turn is incarnated in Rama, Krishna, and other *avatāras*. Through his avatars, Vishnu defends traditional righteousness in keeping with the moral law (*dharma*). The various sects of worshipers of Vishnu pray to Him in different ways. One of the goal of religious devotion (*bhakti*) to Vishnu is liberation (*mokṣa*) from the cycle of birth and death (*saṃsāra*). Most Vaishnavas see the highest aim of their spiritual practice as servicing to Vishnu (Krishna) and establishing different types of loving relationship with Him in eternity.

One of the most famous teachers from Gaudia Vaishnavism (sect of Vaishnavism founded by Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486 – 1534) in India) *Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartīpāda* (1626 – 1708) in his book “*Mādhurya kādambinī*” – “The Bank of Nectar-showing Clouds” – explains aims of spiritual practice for Vaishnavas from simple to the highest one. “*Mādhurya kādambinī*” was written as a commentary for the text “*Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*” of saint, poet, philosopher of

the Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition – *Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī* (1493 – 1564). Who is known as the most senior of the six Goswamis of Vrindavan associated with Caitanya Mahaprabhu (as followers believe, a hidden avatar (incarnation) of Lord Krishna).

There is a quotation from this text in Sanskrit:

“*ādaḥ śraddhā tataḥ sādhusaṅgo 'tha bhajanakriyā tato 'narthanivṛttiḥ syāttato niṣṭhā rucistataḥ athāsaktis tato bhāvas tataḥ premābhyudañcati sādhakānām ayaṁ premnaḥ prādurbhāve bhavet kramaḥ*”.

Translation: “First one attains *śraddhā*, then one gradually passes through the stages of *sādhu-saṅga*, *bhajana-kriyā*, *anartha-nivṛtti*, *niṣṭhā*, *ruci*, *āsakti*, *bhāva*, and finally *prema*. In this way, *prema* gradually manifests in the devotee’s heart”.

In other words: “First of all there is faith, then one associates with devotees, then one begins to engage in *bhajana*, then one gets rid of bad habits, becomes fixed, gets taste, becomes attached (to *Kṛṣṇa*), then *bhāva* awakens and then *prema*. This is how the gradual growth of *prema* of the devotee takes place.”

It means that the aims of religious practice may be classified into following types (from beginner to the highest level):

1. *śraddha* – firm faith, trusting to teachings of *sādhus* (teachers of spiritual knowledge), faith to *śāstras* (spiritual texts); faith that this spiritual practice will lead the follower (devotee) to his aim.

This is a first step of spiritual practice for beginners: faith that arises after listening teachers. And it is not just information that one can

listen, but knowledge along with inspiration to practice that comes from other person, who already put this knowledge into practice, got a result and share his enthusiasm, conviction with others. (As devotees say, any knowledge, and especially knowledge about God, can be transformed only from heart to heart, as it is not just a sum of theoretical information, but sharing own inspiration to practice, inspiration to follow religious way). We can find information that *śraddha* emerges in one's heart because of *sukṛti* – auspicious activity, connected with service to God, which one conducted during his previous lives; but *Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī* explained that really only association with devotees (and their mercy) can cause the appearance of *śraddhā*, and any fruitive activity, cultivation of spiritual knowledge, or renunciation, never can help [1].

2. *sādhū saṅga* – being in association with *sādhū*, with other devotees who are already following this spiritual practice; association of pure devotees.

It means that for cultivating religious faith, for support, and for inspiration to continue own practice, devotee should try to be in association with other practitioners, should study from teachers how to practice a devotional service (*bhajana kriyā*).

3. *bhajana kriyā* – serving to the Deity together with devotees; practice of *bhakti* (devotional service to a personal God). It includes different types of activities, such as listening, chanting, taking part in religious ceremonies, and others, connecting with different way of servicing to the Lord Krishna, both inside and outside of temple. More about duty of devotees is possible to find in the work “Teachings of Lord Caitanya” (chapter 12 “The Devotee”) [2].

4. *anartha nivr̥tti* – cleaning, purifying hearts from *anarthas* (destroying tendentious in hearts); cessation of unwanted elements unfavorable to the practice of *bhakti*; removal of impurities. This is a kind of inner work for practitioner. It is noticing impure things in own heart: sins (pride, greed, lust, anger, etc.), sorrows, misconceptions, and so on, and trying to eliminate them.

5. *niṣṭha* – steadiness of one faith. It is condition when material obstacles start to have less influence to the practitioner, and he becomes firmly established in his regular devotional practice (*sādhana*) without deviations.

6. *ruci* – taste (enjoyment) that comes from devotional service and makes one attached to practice it. It is condition when attachment arises.

7. *āśakti* – natural attachment to God and His service. Here attachment flourishes and becomes emotional dependence to please Krishna – to rich perfect love to God.

8. *bhāva* – excellence, superiority; liberation from worldly existence; ecstatic love to God; permanent attachment to God. It is sincere *sādhana* of devotee with idea to please Krishna that finally makes one's heart worthy, because of God's mercy, to appear rays of *prema*.

9. *prema* – divine love; the highest form of love; the highest aim of human life. This is intense *bhāva* that “melts” heart of devotee, and fills him with intense affectionate attachment. It is the “infinite bliss that arises from attaining self-realization is an infinitesimal drop in the ocean of *bhakti*'s happiness” [3].

At the beginning of *bhajana kriyā* meditation to Krishna is momentary and mixed with mundane topics. At *niṣṭhā* stage stable meditation to God very rare interrupted by other topics. When *ruci* comes meditation to Holy Name becomes unbreakable, last very long, and become free from mundane thoughts. At *āśakti* stage meditation becomes very deep. In *bhāva* stage, after starting meditation, God appears in visions in devotee's heart. In *prema* these visions become detailed and the true vision of Krishna takes place [4].

And, as was mentioned at point 5, a way to reach gradually all of these aims (and even the highest one – *prema-bhakti*) is called *sādhāna bhakti* (devotional service); a practitioner of *sādhana-bhakti* is called *sādhaka*.

In text “*Caitanya-sikṣhamṛta*” *Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura* gives explanations of two types of *sādhāna-bhakti* that are *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti* (*vaidhī-bhakti*) and *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti* (*rāgānuga-bhakti*; *rāga-bhakti*) [5].

Rāga – attachment; here it is attachment in ecstatic love of God; it is longing for a specific service to God. *Rāga-bhakti* is a devotional service in transcendental rapture; it is state of *sādhana-bhakti* when one's practice of devotional service to Krishna becomes spontaneous and he does it in the mood of one of Krishna's eternal associates in Vraja (Vraja is a name of one spiritual place, outside of this material world, where Krishna and His devotees enjoy different type of loving relationship).

This spontaneous desire to serve Krishna presupposing very deep loving attachment to Him that is very rare to meet; such devotional service does not need any rules and regulations, because everything that such *rāgātmika bhakta* do conditioned only by his pure love to God. *Rāgātmika bhakta* is a devotee of God, who is remaining in the spontaneous devotional

mood. This special mood originally is inherited to the Krishna's associates in spiritual world, and can vary according to their transcendental attachment.

That is why scriptures are concentrated on description of *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti* – devotional service that is rooted in scriptural injunctions and that can be explained.

According to *Bhagavad-gītā* (3.35) [6], to have a success or progress in practice, follower (*sādhaka*) should understand well his own qualifications (*adhikārḥ* “position, dignity, rank”), own level, and choose aims and practice according to that level.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.16) mentioned three types of right candidates for *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti*: *kaniṣṭha* (beginner level of practitioner), *madhyama* (intermediate level), and *uttama* (high level) [3].

1. *kaniṣṭha adhikārī* (someone, who did not reach yet level of *niṣṭha* (strong faith), whose faith is weak) – according to *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (*Bhāgavata Purāṇa*) (11.2.47), this is a beginner practitioner who more easily can see God in Deity in a temple and worship It. He has received the *hari-nāma* initiation (first initiation – beginning of spiritual life) from the spiritual master and tries to chant the holy name of God (see “The Nectar of Instruction”, text 5). Usually he has no belief that God has power to exist outside of temple. He is attracted by material wealth and diminishes position of God. He erroneously considers himself as more pious and religious one, and easily notices defects in other followers; and can think that others prevent him from his practice; usually doesn't associate a lot with others. His faith is rudimentary, weak, and easily can be destroyed. Knowledge about philosophy and practice is superficial. But even such beginner practitioner has a faith that he needs nothing else then Krishna (and such his faith is enough that he will be qualified for *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti*) and if he will continue to follow rules and regulations of Deity worship, he gradually can eliminate his misunderstandings, purify himself from wrong desires, and at the end have a chance to become a pure devotee.

2. *madhyama adhikārī* – it is the intermediate stage. Such practitioner sees God as the cause of all causes and offers love to Him. He got a spiritual initiation (second initiation) from spiritual master and was fully engaged by him to the devotional service to God. His realization of the all-pervading feature of the Supreme Lord is imperfect. He is a sincere friend of other devotees; he can distinguish different position of devotees and associate with them

according to their levels. He tries to dedicate everything in his practice for servicing to God; he knows that everything belongs to God, but he still can be disconcerted by association with atheistic people. His faith is strong; conviction in rightfulness of his way is deep. Knowledge about philosophy and practice is good, but sometimes is not enough to win in philosophical dispute.

3. *uttama adhikārī* – it is a highest level of devotees. Such practitioner is very advanced in his practice. He does not blaspheme others, his heart is clean from imperfections, he can see God everywhere (for example, in hearts of all living beings). He believes that if he has any respect of others for any his qualities and success, all of this he got only because of mercy of Krishna, as he sees own imperfections very clearly and observes his position as much lower than position of other practitioners. His is very humble. His faith is very deep and firm. His knowledge is enough to preach, to be a winner in philosophical dispute, to convince others of his statement. Such person can be a *guru*, a spiritual teacher, for others [7; 8].

It is possible to say that from first aim *śraddha* to third *bhajana kriyā* (or to beginning of *anartha nivṛtti*) – it is level of *kaniṣṭha adhikārī*; from *anartha nivṛtti* to *ruṇi* – it is level of *madhyama adhikārī*; and from *āśakti* to *prema* – it is level of *uttama adhikārī*. But we should understand that this subdivision is very approximately and different followers can have their own specific features. Person can be qualified enough to practice one type of *sādhana-bhakti* and reach level of *madhyama adhikārī*, and at the same time he can be a beginner (*kaniṣṭha*) in other type of practice.

So different level of devotees has different aims of practice, and to reach next aim, they should already have special qualification – they already should reach some level, should have some base for starting practicing.

1) For those whose qualification is *sādhya saṅga* (that means that he already reached this level and he permanently dwells in association with devotees), his aim is *anartha nivṛtti*, and his practice is *bhajana kriyā*. That means that with other devotees he should practice nine forms of devotional service (see *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, 7.5.23-24) [8].

2) For those who during long time practiced different type of servicing to God together with other devotees, and who purified himself enough from *anarthas* (I will show later that from some *anarthas* practitioner can be purified relatively quickly, and other form of *anarthas* will stay with him even in level of *bhāva*), and

who reached level of *anartha nivṛtti*, his aim will be *ruci*, and his practice will be *niṣṭha*. It means that such person should try to cultivate in his relationship with others humility, patience, respect and independence from other's evaluation of him (rather they respect him or not), he should try to respect everyone.

This explanation is given in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā. Antya 20: The Śikṣāṣṭaka Prayers, verses 21*):

*“trṇād api sunīcena
taror iva sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ”*

Translation: “One who thinks himself lower than the grass, who is more tolerant than a tree, and who does not expect personal honor but is always prepared to give all respect to others can very easily always chant the holy name of the Lord.” [9]

3) For that one, whose qualifications is *ruci*, aim will be *bhāva* (and later *prema*), and his practice will be *āsakti* (attachment to the Lord). To be in a level of *ruci* means that devotee never becomes tired from hearing and chanting the holy name. It is a level when one enjoys form, qualities of Lord Krishna, and discussing stories about His life. It is level when one realizes sweetness of devotional service. And at the next stage of *āsakti* practitioner's mind spontaneously become attracted to everything that connects with Krishna, and he acts spontaneously (that's why to understand this level is possible only after reaching it). Here devotee dedicates all his life time to spontaneous servicing to Krishna, and all recommendations for him can be described in next way (“The Nectar of Instruction”, text 8):

*“tannāmarūpacaritādisukīrtanānu
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanāmanasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tadanurāgijanānugāmī
kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśasāram”*

Translation: “The essence of all advice is that one should utilize one's full time – twenty-four hours a day – in nicely chanting and remembering the Lord's divine name, transcendental form, qualities and eternal pastimes, thereby gradually engaging one's tongue and mind. In this way one should reside in Vraja (*Goloka Vṛndāvana-dhāma*) and serve *Kṛṣṇa* under the guidance of devotees. One should follow in the footsteps of the Lord's beloved devotees, who are deeply attached to His devotional service.” [7]

Both types of devotional service (*vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti* and *rāgānuga-sādhana-bhakti*) lead practitioner to the manifesting of two symptoms:

1) *kleśaghni* – reducing or destroying of material sufferings;

2) *śubhadā* – bestowing of all auspiciousness.

Bhagavad-gītā (7.16) describes four kinds of pious men who follow *sādhana-bhakti*: “... the distressed, the desirer of wealth, the inquisitive, and he who is searching for knowledge of the Absolute”. Even though such people come to God because of different reasons, and they are not pure devotees, all of them are qualified to practice *vaidhī-sādhana-bhakti*, and slowly their faith (*śraddha*) and their practice will purify them from imperfections and will help to become a pure devotee, who's “service is without aspiration and without desire for material profit” [6]. *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.11) gives next definition of pure devotional service:

*“anyābhilāṣitāśūnyam
jñānakarmādyanāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā”*

Translation: “One should render transcendental loving service to the Supreme Lord *Kṛṣṇa* favorably and without desire for material profit or gain through fruitive activities or philosophical speculation. That is called pure devotional service” [3].

As we can see, devotional service purifies person from his negative qualities and helps to develop positive qualities; destroy ignorance and suffering. At the same time, there are some reasons that prevent one from developing his *sādhana-bhakti* and becoming a pure devotee. They are called *anarthas* (that were mentioned at point 4 “*anartha nivṛtti*”). It is that imperfections of inner self that can influence to devotional practice and prevent one from developing strong faith (*śraddha*) and at the end reaching level of the divine love (*prema*).

There are four types of *anarthas* that explained in *Mādhurya kādambinī* that are *duṣkṛtottha*, *sukṛtottha*, *bhaktiyuttha*, and *aparādhottha* (divided according the reasons of their appearance).

First two of them come from person's desire to enjoy life in his material body. Five types of *kleśas* give rise in person a desire to act, and such his acts (sinful activity and pious activity) cause attachment to enjoy results that come from such acts. *Duṣkṛtottha* – *anartha*

that arises from attachment to suffering (or enjoying from such types of suffering), that comes as a result of sinful activity; and *sukṛtottha* – *anartha* that arises from attachment to pleasure, that comes as a result of pious activity. Both of them have same root for arising – desire to enjoy.

1) *duṣkṛtottha* – *anarthas* that arose because of previous sinful activity. In *Mādhurya kādambinī* they are mentioned as five *kleśas*, namely: *āvidyā*, *asmitā*, *rāga*, *dveṣa*, and *abhiniveśa* [4] (this explanations of *kleśas* we can find in *Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*, (chapter II, sutras 3-8) [10]. The five *kleśas* are five reasons that give rise of person's afflictions:

1.1 *āvidyā* – ignorance about the true nature of things. It has four types:

a) Regarding that which is transient as eternal (for example, consider this material world as eternal).

b) Mistaking the impure for pure (for example, our body we consider as a clean, as in reality it is impure: as it comes from impure place (mother's womb); holding up by impure way (to be alive our body needs to take something from outside, life food, water or oxygen, and to excrete impure products of metabolism); and it is perishable and mortal).

c) Thinking that which brings misery can bring happiness (for example, one can notice that material things, that he desired before, can't make him eternally happy: as all material things sooner or later will be destroyed; too much enjoyment of material things will lead to satiety; when we are in process of enjoyment our mind are usually anxious; even the best material enjoyment soon makes us its slave, we become addicted, and to enjoy it in future we should again and again increase quality, or quantity, of this material things or experience, that is also brings us sufferings).

d) Taking that which is not-self to be self (according to philosophy of Gaudia Vaishnavas, person used to forget about his real nature as an eternal soul and about his eternal relationship with God. He can consider his mind, his body and wealth, other people (as spouse or children), other things, as a self, or part of self. For example, our mind gives us opportunity to enjoy such things as fame or own authority, and when it stops, one feels pain as if someone hurt him. Or when someone hurt one's things to that he was too attached, he can feel pain as he himself was hurt, not just his things was hurt).

1.2 *asmitā* – false ego; bodily identification and the tendency to only accept sense perception; taking the *buddhi* ("intellect", which

knows, decides, judges, and discriminates) to itself. It is a tendency to mix, who is "me", and what is "mine".

If first two *kleśas* have connection with one's intellectual level; next two are opposite to each other, and connects with emotional level: in simple words, *rāga* (that one likes; that attaches him) and *dveṣa* (that one dislikes; that causes his aversion).

1.3 *rāga* – attachment, the desire for material happiness and the means to achieve it. Desire to have more coveted substance.

1.4 *dveṣa* – hatred of unhappiness and the causes of it. And the last *kleśa* (*abhiniveśa*) has connection with one's instincts.

1.5 *abhiniveśa* – inclining to sense enjoyment, attachment to body and the means for enjoying the senses, fear of death, desire for continuity, clinging to the life [4; 10].

Four kinds of sins are also included in *kleśas*:

– *aprārabdha* – sin which fruits have not manifested yet, they are not in active state and have not attained yet the *kūṭa* form.

– *Rūdha* or *kūṭa* – internal tendency that already started to appear (it is future *bījas*), but one still is not aware about them.

– *bīja* – it is a seed of *karma* that will give its fruit in future; desire that has already appeared; one's tendency (*kūṭa*) that assume the shape of concrete sinful desire (for example, desire of social success, money, fame, and others).

– *prārabdha* or *phalonmukha* – sin whose fruit manifests as suffering; fructified sin; previous sinful action (when one already realized his sinful desire) which results are already appeared as, for example, weak body that one has; more or less sensitive feelings; level of intellect; family condition where one was born; and others things that already appeared in one's present life.

It is possible to compare this part with quotations from *Padma Purāṇa* that *Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī* gives in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.1.23):

*"aprārabdhaphalaṁ pāpaṁ
kūṭaṁ bījaṁ phalonmukham
krameṇaiva pralīyeta
viṣṇubhaktiratātmanām"*

Translation: "All stages of sin – unmanifest, internal, seed, or manifest – are destroyed in turn by Vishnu-Bhakti" [3].

2) *sukṛtottha* – *anarthas* that arises because of previous pious activity, that causes the desire for sense enjoyment (*bhukti*) or desire for

liberation (*mukti*). It is sad in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* (1.2.22):

“*bhukti-mukti-sprhā yāvat piśācī hr̥di vartate
tāvad bhakti-sukhasyātra katham abhyu-
dayo bhavet*”

Translation: “As long as the two witches *bhukti* and *mukti* exist in the heart of a person, how can one enjoy the transcendental bliss of devotional service?” [4] That proves that such desires prevent followers from reaching the highest aim of religion practice (*bhakti*).

Bhukti (enjoyment, consuming) includes any efforts to satisfy own body and mind, such as excessive care about own health, desire for delicious food, desire to be strong, to have power, fame, wealth, desire to have a large following, to have a good wife, desire to win enemies, etc.

I can give simple example here, how accessory results of practice can mislead a devotee. When one sinful person became involved to devotional service, slowly he understood that he should follow moral rules, should not lie, and respect others. And after some time he got high social position, people starts to respect and trust him, and they invest their money to his business. He became successful businessmen, and daily he was worrying about developing his business and about his money, but slowly he forgot about devotional service.

Mukti (release, liberation) is subdivided into five types, as it is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.29.13): *sālokya*, *sārṣṭi*, *sāmīpya*, *sārūpya*, and *ekatva*:

– *sālokya* – living on the same planet as the Supreme Personality.

– *sārṣṭi* – gaining the opulence that is equal to the opulence of the Supreme Lord.

– *sāmīpya* – becoming a personal associate of the Supreme Lord.

– *sārūpya* – getting bodily features that are exactly like those of the Supreme Person (four-armed form same as *Bhagavān Viṣṇu*).

– *ekatva* – oneness with the Supreme Lord. *Ekatva* is attaining *sāyujya-mukti* (merging) that is subdivided into two types: 1) *brahma-sāyujya* – cultivating of impersonal knowledge, that leads to merging into the Lord's effulgence); and 2) *īśvara-sāyujya* – merging into the Lord's form [1].

Even though devotees can accept first four types of liberation, but it is sad that pure devotee should be free from any desire of liberation (as it is also one of variant of self-enjoyment). Pure devotee feels indifference to own liberation, and has only one desire – to please, to serve the Supreme Lord.

As it is said in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Madhya-līlā*, *Madhya* 19, verses 167):

“*anyābhilāṣitāśūnyam
jñānakarmādyanāvṛtam
ānukūlyena kṛṣṇānu
śīlanam bhaktir uttamā*”

Translation: “When first-class devotional service develops, one must be devoid of all material desires, knowledge obtained by monistic philosophy, and fruitive action. The devotee must constantly serve *Kṛṣṇa* favorably, as *Kṛṣṇa* desires.”

That means that *uttama adbhikārī*, or pure devotee, is one who fully engages in devotional service. His only aim is to satisfy Krishna by servicing his spiritual master (*guru*). And his master is one who dedicated all his life only to spreading spiritual knowledge about Krishna and who (same as his student) does not interested in attaining success in mundane activities. And if devotee satisfies the guru, Krishna automatically become satisfied. And for such devotee it is success of his devotional service [11].

These two types of *anarthas* (*duṣkṛtottha* and *sukṛtottha*), this desire for self-enjoyment, that leads practitioner to committing different types of sinful activity, can be stopped approximately easy, when one involves to devotional service. At stage of *bhajana kriyā* practitioner slowly eliminates from such defects; at *niṣṭha* stage these *anarthas* are destroyed (but still can appear if there be favorable conditions; as seeds for such tendencies are still present); and starting from *āsakti* stage, desire for such sinful activity is fully destroyed, and never return.

3) *bhaktiyuttha* – *anarthas* that arises because of mistakes what one commits in process of devotional service.

It is said in *Mādhurya kādambinī*: “*atha bhaktiyutthās te ca mūla śākhāta upaśākhā iva bhaktyaiva dhanādi lābha pūjā pratiṣṭhādyaḥ sva vṛttibhiḥ sādḥa cittaṁ apyuparajya sva vṛddhyā mūla śākhām iva bhaktim api kuṇṭhayitum prabhavantīti*”

Translation: “Now *anarthas* arising out of *bhakti* are being described. They grow along with the main *bhakti* creeper as weeds. Such weeds appear as wealth, gain, fame, respect, and others received from *bhakti* and they influence the heart of a devotee. By their nature, they choke the development of the main *bhakti* creeper.” [4]

It means that along with spiritual results from devotional service, material results as *lābha* – gain; *pūjā* – respect; *pratiṣṭha* – fame;

and other comfort comes to practitioner. Other people can admire him, they want to follow him, respect his knowledge and his high level; they can bring him money and other material things. All of these can attract practitioner and his material desires will arise, that can mislead him from way of *bhakti*.

Such material wishes starts slowly decreasing while one is continuing, insisting on his practice and tries intentionally control own desires that arise along with this process.

At stage of *anartha nivr̥tti* practitioner slowly eliminates from such imperfections (it does not start at level of *bhājana kriyā* simply because at this stage practitioner has nothing to be too much proud of and attract others attention; but in process of practicing, his visible wrong behavior changes to right and respectful, that gives reasons for *bhaktiyuttha anarthas*). At *niṣṭha* stage they leave follower, but still can return in favorable conditions. And at the stage of *ruci* they are fully eliminated, as at this stage he gets a taste, sweetness, which comes from *sādhana-bhakti*, such practice does not need more his conscious effort, but he becomes spontaneously attracted to servicing to Lord, and from this time he is not interesting at such material desires as fame or wealth.

As it is said in “*Srī Bhājana Rahasya*” of *Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura*: *anarthas* give birth to six enemies: lust, anger, greed, illusion, pride, and envy; and also beget six waves: distress, illusion, hunger, thirst, old age, and death [11].

But following the process of *sādhana-bhakti* slowly purify practitioner from these three types of imperfections that were mentioned above. And don't cause too much problems for him. But the forth type of *anarthas* (*aparādhhottha*) cannot be eliminated so easily, and can be an obstacle to reach the highest aim of religious practice.

4) *aparādhhottha* – *anarthas* that arises from different types of offences.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura gives similar classification of *anarthas*, and he mentions four types of *aparādh*as:

a) *Nāma-aparādh*a: offences against the Holy Name that also includes offences of saint people, Holy Scriptures and glory of the Holy Name. Ten offences from *Padma Purāṇa* are mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (2.1.11, Purport) [8].

b) *Sevā-aparādh*a: offences made during service and worship the Deity.

List of such offences is mentioned, for example, in “The Nectar of Devotion” (Chapter 8 “Offenses to be avoided”), that itself is a summary study of *Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's Bhakti-*

rasāmṛta-sindhu [12]. In Gaudia Vaishnava's literature about instructions of worshiping to Deity (*arcana*) you can find list of 32, or 62, actions that one should avoid during this process, or more [13; 14].

This type of *aparādh*as is comparatively easy to avoid. One should worship to Deity very attentively without desire initially to commit any offence; should studies carefully from own guru how to worship in right way. In this case, if devotee, who dedicated all his life to servicing Krishna, will make unintentional mistake during process of worshiping, such mistakes will be eliminated and will have no negative reactions, till one continue his devotional service in sincere mood and with desire to cultivate awareness in practice and trying to avoid mistakes.

c) *Vaiṣṇava-aparādh*a: offences against *Vaiṣṇavas*.

Vaiṣṇava means devotee of *Viṣṇu* (Krishna); that one who surrendered everything for the service of God. Offences of any *vaiṣṇava* will have a serious negative consequences; even offence of beginners who still commits sinful activity. As devotional service has power slowly purify him, such beginner in future also will be a saint, a *sadhu*. So one who commits offence even of simple *vaiṣṇava*, or beginner, and especially of spiritual master (*guru*), or *sadhu*, or *brāhmaṇa*, will get great negative results, for example, a lot of suffering in his present and next lives, and, that is the most important, it will prevents one from reaching the highest aim of religious practice. If even very much advanced devotee will commit such offence, his devotional service will be spoiled. If devotee will forgive such offender (as any devotee should cultivate humbleness and love to others), offender still will continue to suffer from results of his offence.

It explains in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā. Antya* 3, verses 213):

“*bhaktasvabhāva, – ajñadoṣa kṣamā kare kṣṇasvabhāva, – bhaktanindā sahite nā pare*”

Translation: “A characteristic of a pure devotee is that he excuses any offense by an ignorant rascal. A characteristic of *Kṣṇa*, however, is that He cannot tolerate blasphemy of His devotees” [11].

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* it is given many examples when Krishna protects His devotees. For example, even *Śrīla Haridāsa Thākura* tolerated an offence of *Gopāla Cakravartī*, Krishna immediately punished offender by making him suffer from leprosy.

So devotee should cultivate awareness to avoid such offences, as to eliminate its results will be very difficult, as it is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.26.24, Purport), such offence can be atoned only by begging the pardon of the offended *vaiṣṇava* [8]. After committing such offence, one should immediately come to *vaiṣṇava*, should bow in front of him, ask his pardon, glorify him, pray to God too for forgiveness, feel very deep repentance, and try to serve *vaiṣṇava* till he will please him.

So one should prevent himself to commit offence by actions of his body, his speech, his mind; avoid criticism of *vaiṣṇavas* in his mind; prevent himself even from listening others (or reading such texts) who commits such offence, who criticize or blaspheming *vaiṣṇavas*.

d) *Dhāma-aparādha*: offences against the Holy *Dhām* (holy place of pilgrimage).

As *Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda* explained in his lecture (on March 14, 1974), spiritual results of chanting the Holy Name in the place of pilgrimage will increase thousand times, but results of committing any offences (that were described before), any sinful activity (like illicit sex, taking intoxication, meat-eating, gambling and others) will increase also thousands times. So devotee should be very aware to avoid them [15].

e) *Jīva-aparādha*: offences against other souls.

According to Gaudia Vaishnavas philosophy, God does not stay alone, He is always in eternal relationship with His creatures – *jīvas* – individual selves (souls); eternal servitors of Krishna. And servicing to Krishna is eternal *dharma* (nature, peculiar condition or essential quality) of *jīvas*, or their *svabhāva* – their true nature; it is a reason for their creation: to be in loving relationship with God. But some of them prefer to use their freedom and leave such relationship and change it to desire to enjoy by themselves. And because of such choice, all *jīvas* are subdivided into two groups (see *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 1.10.22, Purport) [8]:

1) *nitya-mukta* – eternally liberated, those *jīvas* who chose to be in eternal relationship with God and to serve Him in spiritual world;

2) *nitya-baddha* – eternally conditioned *jīvas*, who chose to be independent from God and enjoy and suffer in different material worlds. So devotee should avoid to commit offence towards all types of *jīvas* (independent souls): to demigods, people (including all, *vaiṣṇavas* and not *vaiṣṇavas*, good or bad), animals, plants, insects, and even some stones, etc. In other words, devotee should try to avoid all types of violence without reason, commit-

ted by his body, speech or mind, toward all leaving beings and nature.

More completed classification of *jīvas* is available, for example, in work of *Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura* “Jaiva-Dharma” (chapter 15 “Prameya: *Jīva-tattva*”; Chapter 16 “Prameya: *Jīvas* Possessed by *Māyā*”; Chapter 17 “Prameya: *Jīvas* Free from *Māyā*”) [16].

Next questions can appear: What is the method to avoid negative consequences of these four types of *anarthas* (*duṣkṛtottha*, *sukṛtottha*, *bhaktyuttha*, and *aparādhottha*)? How to prevent oneself from offenses, and how one should eliminate himself in case if he already committed any type of sinful activity that were mentioned above? And for what reason one should have a desire to be purified?

First of all, if devotee wants to reach the highest aim of religious practice, all *anarthas*, results of all sinful activity and desire to produce initially new sinful activity should be eliminated. As for being in relationships with pure God, one should be fully clean. And first step for realizing it is to accept a spiritual master (*guru*) and start this process of purification under his guidance. Second, is to be associated with other devotees and do *bhajana kriyā* together. Worshiping to Deity, chanting the Holy name, listening lectures, preaching and so on, together with other devotees. At the same time, continue individual practice of chanting the Holy Name. Slowly process of devotional service will purify such devotee, and results of unintentional sinful activity (except *aparādhas*) will be eliminated. As it is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.5.42): “Indeed, if such a surrendered soul accidentally commits some sinful activity, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, who is seated within everyone’s heart, immediately takes away the reaction to such sin.”

Negative results of unintentional *sevā-aparādha* also can be illuminated by chanting the Holy Name, reciting prayers, and permanent engagement in devotional service. But if one will commit *sevā-aparādha* hoping that the power of Holy Name will purify him, such *sevā-aparādha* will become the 7th *nāma-aparādha*.

For other *aparādhas*, one should be very attentive all the time, and should try to avoid producing offences by his any act of body, speech and even committing *aparādhas* in his mind.

If one unintentional committed something wrong, he should immediately repent his sinful activity and pray for forgiveness of the Holy Name. If one committed offence to *vaiṣṇava*,

he should come to him, pray for his forgiveness, to serve him, as it was mentioned before, till one will get his pardon.

Work with own *aparādhās* means that one tries to cultivate in himself qualities from the *Śikṣāṣṭaka* Prayers that was mentioned before: humility, patience, respect to others, and not expecting personal honor, whether others respect him or not.

Qualities of such purified devotee (*sādhū*) are explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.25.21):

*“titikṣavaḥ kāruṇikāḥ
suhṛdaḥ sarva-dehinām
ajāta-śatravaḥ śāntāḥ
sādhavaḥ sādhu-bhūṣaṇāḥ”*

Translation: “The symptoms of a *sādhū* are that he is tolerant, merciful and friendly to all living entities. He has no enemies, he is peaceful, he abides by the scriptures, and all his characteristics are sublime.”

Such enlighten person knows that without servicing to God, life will be spoiled. And as he is a friend to all living entities, and he is full of compassion and very merciful to all, he goes to preach with idea to help all fallen soul to get the transcendental knowledge of devotional service, and to become servants of Krishna. And if during such preaching he meets people who humiliate him or commit any other violence toward him, he stays humble and patience, and continue his work (as, for example, *Haridāsa Ṭhākura*, who was caned in twenty-two marketplaces), because it is mission that his *guru* gave him: to deliver this knowledge to all fallen souls [8].

And aim of the level of *anartha nivṛtti* (purification from any results of sinful activity and from desire to commit new one) is to reach state of such *sādhū*, who is free from most types of impurity.

But even *sādhū* may not be free from all *anarthas*. As some of them needs more time to be eliminated. And, for example, *pratiṣṭhāśā* (desire for fame) will be the last *anartha* that will leave a devotee (even high level of devotee still can want to enjoy that respect that others express to him because of his high position, his deep knowledge, his high level of austerity, etc.), but he should not concentrate too much to such desires of mundane enjoyment and should continue his devotional service, even some of *anarthas* will return to him from time to time. He should continue to cultivate humility and patience; think about himself less, and think more about realizing the mission that spiritual master gave to him.

After passing level of *anartha nivṛtti*, when devotee's chanting of the Holy Name was not pure because of *anarthas*; one will continue his devotional practice and will reach next level of chanting that is called *nāma-ābhāsa*, and then *śuddha-nāma*, that will lead a devotee to stage of *bhāva* or *prema*, the highest aim of devotional practice.

Conclusion

Person's egoistic desire to be independent from God and from other His creatures (that is envy to God's high position, and disagreement with own position of servant), and person's desire to enjoy by himself, is a reason of permanent dissatisfaction of one's life. It is a main reason of suffering in material world, of falling from spiritual world and separation from God.

Self-purification and avoiding sinful activity is a very important initial step of spiritual practice; practice that has meaning to change the inner nature of practitioner: from someone who attached to self-enjoyment and has egoistic and pride nature, to someone who considers himself as a servant of others and develops his humbleness and compassion, desire to give rather than take; who feels himself as a part of a whole, and who understands that his happiness, divided from happiness of others, can not exist. And without such understanding further progress in religious practice will be impossible.

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