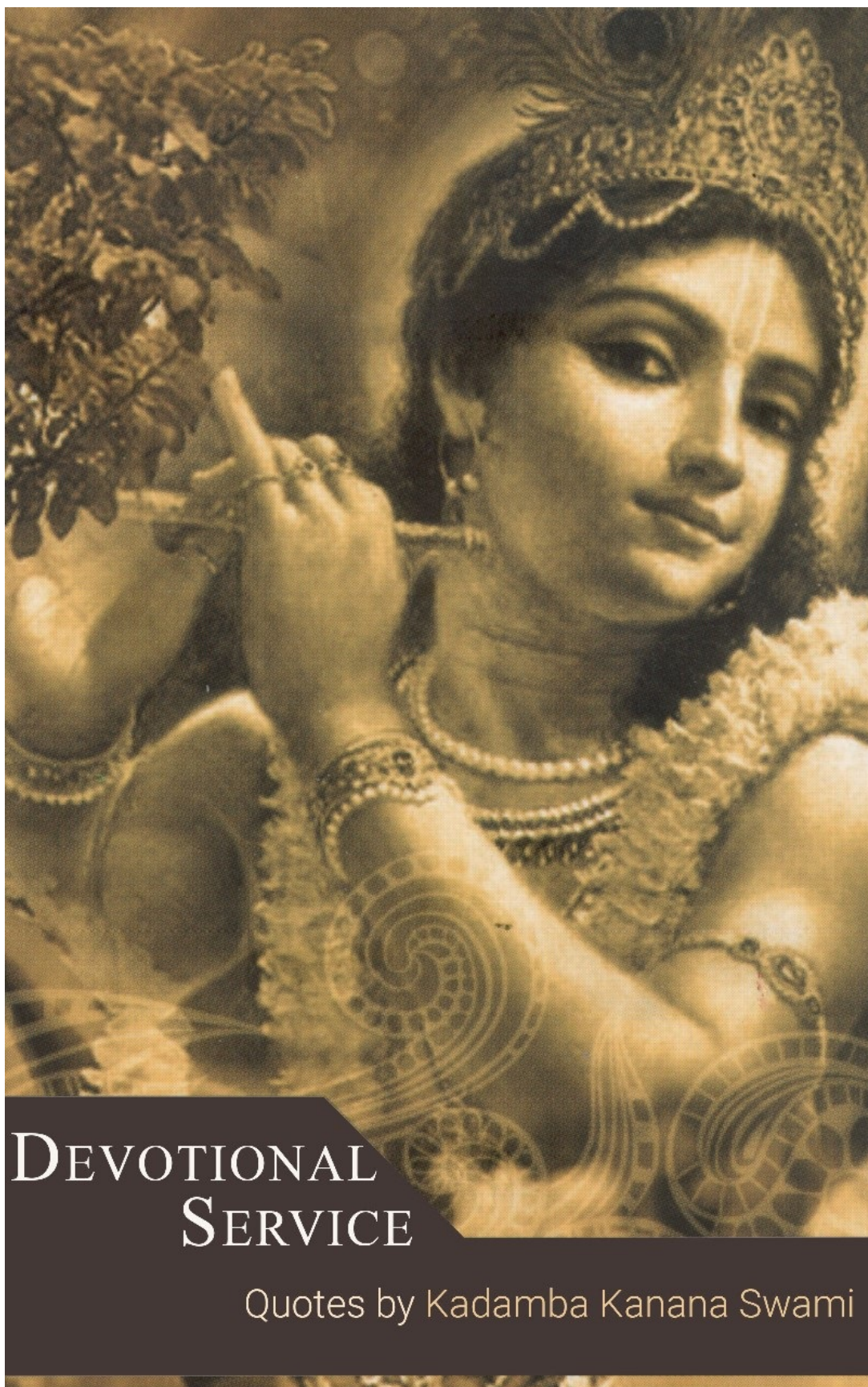




DEVOTIONAL SERVICE

Quotes by Kadamba Kanana Swami



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Compiled by the disciples of Kadamba Kanana Swami

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Dedication

For the pleasure Śrīla Prabhupāda and his followers

Introduction

This is an introduction to a little book. Little books are nice – you keep them in your pocket and just read a few pages while going from one place to another or in between doing things. Little books don't overload us with information, but give relevant points to meditate on or some inspiration. So this is a little book about devotional service.

Exactly when it all began is hard to say. Devotional service first comes in to our life in the form of *ajñāta-sukṛti*, unknown spiritual benefit. Maybe I first heard George Harrison's "My Sweet Lord" on the radio, or maybe I first saw the 'Hare Kṛṣṇas' jumping up and down in religious fervor on the streets of Amsterdam. I was convinced they were religious fanatics, but the sound of the *mahā-mantra* penetrated through my ears into my heart. I didn't know! My girlfriend had a dog named 'Kṛṣṇa'. We didn't know! We had no idea what the name Kṛṣṇa meant, or whether there was any etiquette involved, nor about the benefit of speaking out this transcendental sound. We didn't know that we were performing devotional service!

As I continued performing devotional service unknowingly, I began to like the devotees and the exotic world of the temple, and I respected them for their knowledge and their idealistic lifestyle.

Through visits to India, I came closer. I read philosophical books, I became a vegetarian, I searched for the truth. Actually, we had so much in common. Then came the point where I made a conscious choice to become a devotee and I moved into a temple and devotional service became the central theme of my life.

I learned that the devotees are the caretakers of devotional service and that one can't manufacture devotional service, but that it is given by the *vaiṣṇavas*. One must become the servant of the servant of the Lord.

I'll just give you a quick overview of what the scriptures say about devotional service. The Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam defines devotional service as

nine type of activities that must be connected with Kṛṣṇa: *śravaṇam* – hearing about Kṛṣṇa; *kīrtanam*-chanting His name; *smaraṇam* – remembering Him; *pāda-sevanam*-serving His lotus feet; *arcanam*-worshipping the Deity; *vandanam* – offering prayers; *dāsyam* – being a servant; *sakhyam* – to see the Lord as one’s friend; *ātma-nivedanam* – to surrender mind, body and words. Rupa Gosvami mentions the principle of *kṛṣṇānuśīlanam* – that one must ‘cultivate’ Kṛṣṇa consciousness by engaging the senses and mind in the service of the Lord. The essence is to act for the pleasure of the Lord.

Anyone can begin devotional service, but if one wants to perfect the art of pleasing Kṛṣṇa, one must become the student of a bona fide spiritual master. The most powerful type of devotional service is the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Great devotees are known to chant continuously, throughout the day and night. Ordinary people like ourselves obviously can’t do such a thing, so we chant sixteen rounds and give up sinful activities and then do something practical for Kṛṣṇa. For example we may clean the temple, or give a donation or in general terms, we engage our *prāṇa* – energy, *artha* – possessions, *dhiyā* – intelligence, *vācā* – words in His service.

Avyartha-kālatvam , let not a moment be wasted. With time one’s eagerness to serve Kṛṣṇa increases and one doesn’t want to waste a moment. *Sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā*, one’s devotional service becomes more and more dense. From moment to moment without interruption, one serves Kṛṣṇa twenty four hours a day. The greatest is one who serves Kṛṣṇa out of pure unalloyed love. Such a person doesn’t desire any reward – the service itself is the reward.

Anyway, that is a very advanced stage and most of us are happy to just be survivors and when we don’t fall prey to *māyā*, we consider our spiritual life a success. Even if we still have desires for material enjoyment, even if we are not perfect, devotional service purifies the heart from lust, greed, anger, madness, illusion and envy. Kṛṣṇa appreciates that we are trying and will be merciful to us.

Who can estimate the power of devotional service?. It can attract Kṛṣṇa, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-ākarṣiṇī*. Who can know the heart of Kṛṣṇa and the

depth of His mercy and love? Devotional service is not a yoga or meditation technique. When Kṛṣṇa is pleased with the service we do for Him, then miracles may happen and - one day we see Him face to face.

I hope this little book will make you see Kṛṣṇa, behind the clouds, behind the stars, or behind life on earth, and that it will bring you to a better quality of life.

Daso'smi,
Kadamba Kanana Swami
Kṛṣṇa Balarama Mandir,
Vṛndāvana

• • •

Service to the Supreme Lord is the essence of our relationship. That relationship of service is beginning here in this world and it is nourished in the temple. It is there where we come home to the lotus feet of the Lord, and it is there in the temple that the devotees assemble. It is by their mercy that we are now engaged in the eternal service of the Lord.

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Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that service is of an eternal nature because service to the Lord is never ever lost. It always continues and increases in our spiritual bank balance. The spiritual bank balance is nice because there is no economic crisis! There is absolutely no inflation! Whatever is invested in the spiritual bank balance is only increasing. It's never depleted, only increasing – more and more! So the nature of service to the Supreme Lord is that we begin in this world and we continue in the next. The meaning of liberation is service – eternal service.

• • •

When we go through difficulties in this material world, we start to realise that this is not really a nice place. Then we get the devotees' mercy and we develop a desire to go back to Godhead. But how can one sustain such a desire in the long run? Only by devotional service to Kṛṣṇa! Then we become purified and attached to serving Him and we pray that it may never end.

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If we appreciate Kṛṣṇa's glories but are inactive, then we are in *śānta-rasa*. Prabhupāda said that *śānta-rasa* is almost impersonalism. Therefore one must at least come to the stage of *dasyam* and develop an active

service attitude. Ah, to take up some service for Kṛṣṇa is mercy! It transforms us and there is nectar to be found. Whatever that service may be, let it become our life and soul! Where there is service to Kṛṣṇa, there will be victory in spiritual life. Then our attraction to Kṛṣṇa will also develop and automatically we will start to appreciate the name, fame and qualities of Kṛṣṇa.

Our principal connection is in practical service. We should not discard it and try to just meditate deeply on Kṛṣṇa. It is that service that is our saving grace. It is through that service that we can see Kṛṣṇa at any moment.

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Sometimes we are not happy in our life because our life is void, it is empty. We haven't filled our lives with blessings and service. If we fill our life with blessings and service then there is no question of emptiness, loneliness or unhappiness. All emptiness comes from a life without devotional service.

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One who begins to serve Kṛṣṇa becomes attached to that service very quickly. Devotional service has a special taste. And once you start you develop an attraction for it. That attachment will gradually destroy all other material attachments. Therefore, if you have some attraction for Kṛṣṇa, do some service for Him. Even if you have no attachment to Kṛṣṇa, do as much service out of curiosity to see what will happen if you do!

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To really get the benefit from the medicine of devotional service, we have to adjust our lifestyle and make a conscious endeavor to change. Kṛṣṇa consciousness is about changing – it's about us changing. We don't

have to change who we are, but we have to change our orientation. We have to start moving towards Kṛṣṇa.

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Prabhupāda said that the idle mind is the devil’s workshop. We will be dwelling on *kāminī kāñcanī*, sex and money. Therefore we must seriously engage in devotional service, which must be very absorbing. We must be fully engaged, so that we don’t have time or energy left. *Tivreṇa bhakti-yogena* – one must engage in pure devotional service with great force. Otherwise if we do just a little service and again embrace sense gratification, we will remain stuck in the beginner’s phase of *tyāga* and *bhoga* – in the cycle of enjoyment and renunciation of the senses.

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Where there’s love there must be service, otherwise it’s not love. Love leads to service naturally. Naturally one wants to do something for someone who is dear to us. It is completely natural. So love and service are closely linked.

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Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura said that the meaning of the name Kṛṣṇa is: ‘The One who can become attracted by devotional service’. That is interesting! Generally we take the meaning of the name Kṛṣṇa to be ‘the all-attractive’, but now it has an extended meaning. He becomes attracted by devotional service. Therefore devotional service is our saving grace because that devotional service will attract Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa will manifest both within and without.

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We should simply use the material energy for devotional service and nothing else. Then we will enjoy the most, more than in any other way.

Then we'll actually experience happiness.

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The spiritual master opens our darkened eyes with a torchlight of transcendental knowledge. In this world there is both light and darkness. But once the spiritual master has opened our eyes we can see that even in the darkness there is devotional service.

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In the beginning of Kṛṣṇa consciousness we tend to embrace so much guilt for everything that we are not doing, for all our personal failures and limitations because our meditation is predominantly on our own endeavor. We think it's about, 'what I am doing.' But with time, we actually begin to realize that, 'my own endeavor must be there but even more important than my endeavor is the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Even if I do my best, my endeavor is not impressive. But Kṛṣṇa is so merciful, reciprocating so generously that everything will become auspicious.'

• • •

Service creates generosity because a servant has to surrender to the need that arises. A servant cannot say, 'Oh, I have no time.' Simply say yes! 'How am I going to do it?' I don't know. But somehow or the other we will do it. That's the principle of *vaiṣṇava* generosity. A *vaiṣṇava* gives everything he has, a *vaiṣṇava* gives his life. He is ready to put his life on the line. A *vaiṣṇava* is ready to trust in Kṛṣṇa when it comes to this generosity. So can you give? 'Yes!' But how will you do it? 'I don't know but I hope that Kṛṣṇa will help me.' So with faith that Kṛṣṇa will help and that Kṛṣṇa will make it possible, *vaiṣṇavas* can perform miracles and in this way *vaiṣṇavas* can overcome all limitations. We see that Prabhupāda single-handedly went to the West with the idea of making the whole world Kṛṣṇa conscious, at an age suitable for retirement. Logically, it didn't add up but he went and he did it. He did so much. So

we can see the power of *vaiṣṇava* generosity, which is the result of devotional service.

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Love of Godhead is made out to be something mystical but it is practical. It comes from a great desire to serve Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that that is real love. When all the devotees cried tears of love upon Śrīla Prabhupāda's arrival in Los Angeles, Srutakirtis' eyes were dry. Later he mentioned to Prabhupāda during the massage, that he had no love at all, but Prabhupāda replied that the service of massaging is also love.

When Nimāi came back from Gayā, he had become a devotee instead of being a proud scholar. He would serve all the *vaiṣṇavas* in every possible way. Later Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu cleansed the Guṇḍicā temple with His own hand and collected more dirt than all the other devotees together. He was always absorbed in chanting the holy name. He daily chanted a fixed number of rounds on a string with knots. *Sāṅkhyā-pūrvaka-nāma-gana-natibhiḥ*. He chanted the holy name upon the order of His spiritual master and one day said to him, 'What kind of mantra have you given Me? It has made Me mad!' 'Oh!', His spiritual master replied, 'You are very fortunate.' Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu cried tears of ecstasy and even that was in a mood of pure devotional service.

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If one wants to make that breakthrough to the point where one becomes more focused on the pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, then one has to, for a substantial time, make a substantial sacrifice in the service of Kṛṣṇa. It may start very casually but gradually it has to capture us and then we have to really put in all our energy, *prāṇa*. We have to put in what we have - our possessions, *artha*. We have to use our intelligence, *dhiyā* and start really thinking about how we are going to do it. It has to absorb us and we have to chant. We have to glorify Kṛṣṇa, *vācā*. In this way *prāṇa*, *artha*, *dhiyā*, *vācā* – by offering our energy, our possessions, our intelligence and our

words, we can get to this other level where we are drawn to Kṛṣṇa and where we always want to serve Him with great eagerness.

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Kṛṣṇa cannot resist devotional service! That is a fact! *Muktim dadāti karhicit sma na bhakti-yogam.* (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 5.6.18) Kṛṣṇa says He will give liberation but *bhakti* He hides behind His back! This is because He becomes purchased by such devotional service. Kṛṣṇa cannot resist devotional service. So it's up to us. Devotional service can bring Kṛṣṇa under control because Kṛṣṇa cannot resist. That is the amazing power of devotional service!

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Knowledge can increase our eagerness in devotional service. So the more knowledge we develop about the potency of devotional service, the more eager we will be to perform it and the more eager we will be to take advantage of it.

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Every day we remind ourselves of Kṛṣṇa's eternal activities because we know it will capture our mind. At the same time we say 'yes' to devotional service although the mind wants to say 'no.' That is the nature of the conditioned mind. It's not going to be easy. It's not just going to come automatically and certainly it will not be that one day in the midst of all our resistance and reluctance, we'll wake up in the morning full of taste, thinking,

'Oh, I want to really serve Kṛṣṇa now!'

No, it's a matter of good hearing, chanting, doing a lot of service and conquering the mind. Gradually the emphasis will shift and the priority will become Kṛṣṇa. That's the secret for becoming advanced in devotional service.

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Any service we perform, whatever service it may be - even if you say, 'Can I help in the kitchen?' Even if you say, 'Can I carry the books for you to the car?'

Any service purchases Kṛṣṇa.

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Everyone is aware of his own personal track record in Kṛṣṇa consciousness and everyone knows where he falls short. Everyone knows that the chanting is not really what it should be. Everyone knows that when it comes to surrender and service, we can do better. But in spite of that a devotee doesn't lose heart. A devotee doesn't come to the point where he feels, 'I'm never going to make it' because a devotee is aware that, 'Yes, I may be extremely poor in my performance but still, Kṛṣṇa is extremely merciful. He is causelessly merciful. He is therefore even bestowing His mercy upon those who are not deserving.' Therefore, *āsābandha* – we have hope against hope that, 'I will somehow or other get that mercy.' In that way we are very happy to know that we are connected to Kṛṣṇa.

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There are so many regulative principles and just by following them little by little we develop our service attitude. Devotional service is based on *dāsyam*, that mood of servitorship. That is the very essence of *bhakti*!

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One meditation that is mentioned in the Nectar of Devotion is *sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā*. It is the meditation where one must make his devotional service more and more dense. That means more and more devotional service. The day has 24 hours – how much devotional service have we performed? Let's do more! Let's put in more devotional service,

in between the devotional service! And then in between that devotional service and the other devotional service, you can put in some more devotional service. Then let us put in some devotional service on top of the devotional service! Let us just pack it with devotional service, more and more! We can do any service for Kṛṣṇa, but all service must be preceded and followed by chanting. Then let us make devotional service more meaningful. Let us not just do it mechanically but let us really do it with great quality. Whatever service we do, let us do it first class – really nice. That is what is meant by making it more dense.

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When we feel that life is long, do more service! The more we get absorbed in devotional service, the faster time goes by! One week will last only 3 days. You know how it feels when: ‘God, another week has gone and still I didn’t do anything.’ When we get absorbed in devotional service, life goes by very quickly and it gets auspicious!

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In the *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it is said that a devotee is selfless. He can simply serve life after life in the material world. But Kṛṣṇa still takes him back to Godhead because Kṛṣṇa knows that in his heart of hearts, the devotee has a desire to go back to the spiritual world and to see a spark of pleasure in the eyes of Kṛṣṇa in response to his service rendered. Some recognition – that is the greatest ecstasy. If we make offerings to Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa appreciates or relishes that service, what greater ecstasy could there be?

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How do we keep a mood of always increasing devotional service? We have to make it a duty. We need to say, ‘I have to increase my service, I have to somehow or other do it.’ And then, by doing it, you get more results and then it becomes inspiring! So from increasing your service,

comes a desire to increase it. But as long as you don't have much desire then you should do it as a matter of duty. It's not only what you did that counts but it's a matter of regular activity in devotional service. So you have to keep up the activity and that's the difficulty. We must increase our service both in quality and in quantity. Are you chanting 10 000 rounds a day or only 16? If it's 16, then let it be real quality! That's also making it more dense...everything we do we must do with quality and make it more dense!

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The aim of spiritual life is to please the senses of Kṛṣṇa and not our own senses. We should be fully absorbed in satisfying Kṛṣṇa's senses. Then we can become a servant.

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It is easy when one is getting all the benefits. 'I'm serving Kṛṣṇa and as a result, I'm enjoying so much. He's so kind. He's showering us with blessings.' But when we engage in devotional service hardships also come.

At that time, Kṛṣṇa is testing us. How serious are we really? Are we really selfless in serving Him without asking anything in return? *Bhāgavatam* offers us a description of various devotees who experienced hardships but they always saw Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, behind it. They had the vision that Kṛṣṇa is behind everything and Kṛṣṇa is all-good. There is no evil in Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has no negative intentions at all. So even if Kṛṣṇa sends us difficulties we know that it's all good. We must have faith, accepting everything as Kṛṣṇa's mercy.

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The *ācāryas* again expressed their amazement for the reward that Pūtanā got. Pūtanā was delivered because she had offered her breasts and it was taken as devotional service. Kṛṣṇa disregarded the poison and therefore

Pūtanā attained the spiritual world. Pūtanā went back to Godhead to Goloka Vṛndāvana where she got the position of a nurse of Kṛṣṇa. So it is most amazing that a demon was getting such an inconceivable reward. Pūtanā was mixed – she had some demoniac qualities and she did devotional service.

It sounds familiar – doesn't it?

Mixed just like us – she was a bit of a demon and she was a bit of a devotee at the same time and that's interesting because we have this problem also. But Kṛṣṇa only saw the service. So this is very reassuring because so many times we doubt. 'Am I ever going to make it? I am not so pure, I'm so fallen.

Am I a devotee or a demon? Kṛṣṇa protects the devotee but am I a devotee?' But we see that Kṛṣṇa simply sees the devotional service and disregards the poison. What reassurance!

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Prabhupāda said that everyone who is connected to this movement somehow or the other makes spiritual advancement and no one is losing out. It's not that there are some who are making it and some who are no. No, everyone is making spiritual advancement.

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We are feeling blocked in our spiritual lives. We are feeling that to some extent there is a barrier between us and Kṛṣṇa. That's a fact. That barrier is due to lust and envy. Envy manifests itself in so many ways. We want to manifest our prominence before others. That is of course something that comes up in so many ways. Who doesn't want to be special? Who's ready to just be ordinary? The tendency for personal recognition is very, very great. Therefore to counteract that tendency, instead of looking for our personal glories, we must constantly glorify Kṛṣṇa. That's the only way. When we engage all our energy in the glorification of Kṛṣṇa or in

glorifying or supporting the service, then automatically there will be no space for self-glorification.

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One's devotional service will not be lost. It may be covered for some time but it will then again reawaken.

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It is often said that the devotee is not desiring any reward from his service. It's not that we are serving so that we can eternally enjoy in the spiritual world, or as an austerity which will eventually be rewarded. We chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and then we will be showered with mercy? No, the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa is the mercy. Devotional service itself is the mercy.

'What can I do? I am in my Rāhu period! There's nothing I can do about it and it is going to last for another nineteen years – and for nineteen years my spiritual life is going to be a total mess. Three astrologers have confirmed it. Even the Bṛghu reader in India has said it, you know. I am doomed and that's the way it is. For 19 years I'll be doomed and there is nothing I can do, and I just have to ride it out. After that I go into the Jupiter period when it will be very nice, and then everything will go smoothly in my spiritual life.'

What nonsense! Material considerations have nothing to do with *bhakti*. It is explained that the *bhakti* creeper is not dependent on anything. Generally when a creeper is growing, it needs support, it grows on a tree, it grows on a wall. But this *bhakti-latā* does not need any support – no support at all.

Bhakti therefore is not dependent on favorable material conditions or anything like that, not at all. Whether performed in heaven or hell, *bhakti* will always bring auspiciousness.

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The devotees are not asking for a Mercedes Benz or bread or cheese or money or health or wealth or power. The devotees ask for service. They ask Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Lord, for service and that they will be allowed to serve Him. When we serve the Supreme Lord then a change of heart takes place and then our whole life will become auspicious.

• • •

One must take advantage of the opportunity to engage in devotional service, as much as possible. Spiritual life is not a matter of forcing the mind to dwell on Kṛṣṇa.

smartavyaḥ satataṁ viṣṇur vismartavyo na jātucit

(Padma Purāṇa)

All the rules and regulations of the Vedas are meant for one purpose: to always remember the Supreme Lord and never forget Him. If we take every opportunity to serve the Supreme Lord, then through that service, remembrance automatically develops and our faith will grow.

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Sthita-dhīr – with fixed intelligence one can place himself in service to Kṛṣṇa according to the directions of Kṛṣṇa. Then the internal purification will also thoroughly take place. At first, purification is external. Externally we are placing ourselves properly in the process of devotional service. In the *Bhagavatam* it says,

*akāmaḥ sarva-kāmo vā
mokṣa-kāma udāra-dhīḥ
tivreṇa bhakti-yogena
yajeta puruṣaṁ param*

(Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 2.3.10)

This means that whether you have material desires or you don't have material desires, you should engage yourself in undiluted pure devotional service with great force.

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We cannot manufacture our own devotional service. Devotional service comes to us through the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees.

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Unless we try to develop this mood of giving Kṛṣṇa consciousness to others, we will remain self-centered, even in spiritual life. So that generosity must really be developed in us: this mood of service and this mood of giving mercy as much as possible. Then we will become spiritually advanced and spiritually strong.

• • •

If we have bad qualities, what can we do? We can work on it, but they don't go away automatically. We will try and develop better personal qualities. But whatever we are, however fallen we are, at least do devotional service. That's the key! Never stop doing devotional service. As much as possible, engage in devotional service because that service will purify us.

It is said that by the process of *bhakti*, all the *anarthas* will be erased from the heart. There are two ways to rectify our bad qualities. One is by making a conscious endeavor to rectify ourselves, and the other is simply by engaging in devotional service and that devotional service will purify us.

And of the two, engaging in devotional service is the most potent. That's the powerful way of transformation, of rising above fallen qualities.

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The power of service is the secret of the spiritual world. It's through that power of service that one can capture everything. Through service one can get anything he wants. All desires are fulfilled – all of them, up until the last one.

• • •

A devotee will come closer and closer to Kṛṣṇa, and once we have made steps in Kṛṣṇa's direction, Kṛṣṇa will surely protect our devotional service. Therefore, there is no fear. We just take shelter of devotional service. And other things come and go. Some hardships may come, but it will not really faze us and our devotional service will continue.

• • •

Devotional service will purify us and the devotee in us will be uncovered. Our spiritual identity begins to emerge more and more.

We develop our identity as a *vaiṣṇava* with time.

'From now on I will only be attached to Kṛṣṇa. From now on I will give myself cent per cent.'

• • •

Love of Godhead is a gift from Kṛṣṇa. You can't squeeze it out. Kṛṣṇa will capture us and not only will He capture His devotee but the devotee will also capture Kṛṣṇa.

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One has to build up attachment. One has to begin with some sacrifice for Kṛṣṇa – first a small one, then we get purified, then we can make a bigger sacrifice for Kṛṣṇa, and then bigger and bigger! So it is a matter of changing everything in our life – the way we eat, the way we sit, the way we talk, the way we sleep, the way we walk, the way we deal with

people, all these things have to change, little by little. We have to step by step increase the sacrifice and maintain each step towards Kṛṣṇa.

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It is a fact that if one keeps on dedicating oneself to devotional service in this movement, then one will become spiritually advanced. There is a need for devotees to come forward to take some service!

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We are taking many vows. The vows of initiation are following the 4 regulative principles and chanting 16 rounds of the Hare Kṛṣṇa mahamantra. But the real vow that we are taking is that we will dedicate our lives trying to cultivate pure devotional service and nothing else.

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Sometimes there are tests and we do not pass them. Yes, this means that we did not do our homework! We have the means, and if we carefully take shelter of the process of Kṛṣṇa consciousness, then we will not fail the tests. But if we are not careful to take shelter properly of the process of devotional service, then we might fail the test and we might feel that so many tests are too much for us!

But, even if you fail in devotional service, even if you fall down from the process or deviate from the process, there is no need for any atonement. All you have to do is immediately take up the process again and you are situated again properly on the path and there is no loss!

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It's not enough to know that we are eternal and that we have an eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa. We must do something and act upon it.

That is where bhakti begins – to do something to please Kṛṣṇa.

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We are in the material world, in a material body and we have a spiritual process. So, just make the best use of a bad bargain and serve Kṛṣṇa. We must do as much as we can to spread the mercy of Kṛṣṇa because one only gets devotional service from the devotees. Therefore we have to give out the mercy. If people in this world are going to get devotional service, it has to come from us.

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The determination of the *brāhmaṇa* differs from the determination of the *kṣatriya*. The *kṣatriya* fixes his mind, 'I shall do it! I must do it! I will do it!' But a *brāhmaṇa* is doing his service because he understands and he functions on knowledge. 'I will do it because there is no better alternative.

This is the only real thing to do because everything else will be foolish. So what else can I do? 'even if it's difficult, it's still the best thing.' The *brahmanical* approach is stronger and better than the 'grit-your-teeth' approach.

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The secret is to engage all the senses in Kṛṣṇa's service. That is the simple secret of Kṛṣṇa consciousness.

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One should understand that devotional service gives eternal benefit. How can we stop it? It's not possible! One has to strive for mercy and go after it, go find it. There must be this eagerness and desire to get the mercy. We are not great devotees, we don't have much love for Kṛṣṇa, but we do have attraction. Some love is there: we love *prasādam*, and the Deities and *kīrtan* and just being with devotees. So some love is there. It's not that there is no love, there is love. *Prema-maitrī-kṛpopekṣā yaḥ*

karoti sa madhyamaḥ – even a devotee in the intermediate stage has love for Kṛṣṇa. It may not be pure and unalloyed but there is some love. Some love and attraction is there. So we must make it deeper by doing more service, by hearing more, by reading more and by digging deep in the mines of the scriptures and finding jewels there.

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The nine-fold process of devotional service will certainly protect us in two ways: we will become purified, our material desires will diminish and sense objects will not affect us in the same way.

Devotional service attracts the mercy of Kṛṣṇa in the form of His direct, personal intervention in our little lives.

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We are allowed to do some service for Kṛṣṇa and we realize that it is a great blessing. We realize that, ‘This service that I’m doing for Kṛṣṇa is changing my life.’

So much time is spent on doing business or working on making material arrangements. But serving Kṛṣṇa is voluntary. We are not asking for anything in return. We just want to please Kṛṣṇa and His devotees. We become a little pure and we become attached to that service and we want to do more of it. And after some time we become really attached to it.

Attachment to service is glorious. When we become attached to serving Kṛṣṇa it is glorious.

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When Kṛṣṇa comes through His pure devotee, then Kṛṣṇa comes with full force. Not in a minimized way, not just a little bit, but with full force. So when Prabhupāda brought Kṛṣṇa then he brought Kṛṣṇa with full force and devotional service with full force. When we are connected with a devotee of such caliber, then all we have to do is give up our

independence and engage in devotional service. Whether we have material desires or are afflicted by lust and envy or not, we should engage in devotional service. We just faithfully follow the pure devotee and so many blessings will come on the way.

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Kṛṣṇa cannot be perceived by the blunt material senses. One must have patience in spiritual life and patience for Kṛṣṇa to act. Patience means that we accept wherever Kṛṣṇa places us. It means that we don't try to be more than we are. That is a very difficult thing because the very reason we came into the material world is because we want to be more than we are. Everyone is trying to be more than they really are. Kuntīdevī is also addressing this point: as long as one is trying to enjoy by showing off about the position of one's birth or the position of one's learning or about one's wealth or about one's beauty, then one cannot approach Kṛṣṇa with sincere feeling because then we are in competition with Kṛṣṇa. It's very simple. Just as in the material world there are those who want to be more than they are, there are also those on the spiritual plane who want to be more than they are and who imagine their spiritual identity. But this is not actually the same as revelation. Revelation means that our spiritual identity automatically is manifest to us. So patience is required. The focus must be on service.

One cannot know the truth other than through the mercy of Kṛṣṇa. Therefore we are serving Kṛṣṇa and always thinking of how Kṛṣṇa wants to be served and this art is what we are learning through *guru*, *sādhū* and *śāstra*.

We are being trained by the pure devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda, to gradually come to the point of selfless worship, which can only be dedicated to Kṛṣṇa. Do I want any benediction? Yes, only one – that I may never give up devotional service. The service is the best, better than anything else.

The service is what we want. We don't worship because we want something else. No. The best thing in my life is this service to Kṛṣṇa!

This is what Śrīla Prabhupāda is teaching us.

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When we dedicate our lives in service to Kṛṣṇa we become purified. And that is our movement – it is the movement of devotional service. It is devotional service to Kṛṣṇa that is our saving grace. Through that devotional service we will become transformed. Therefore we must become very active in devotional service.

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Devotional service is so powerful. It will always act and gradually that devotional service will take over. There is no doubt about it.

Unlike medication, which works for some and not for others, devotional service works for everyone. It always works and it never fails to act. As soon as one somehow or other connects to devotional service, one will be purified. Śrīla Prabhupāda had this great conviction and on the strength of that, he was ready to approach anyone and everyone. He wasn't considering who was qualified and who was not qualified because he had this strong faith that this would act. But we don't have this faith and particularly in relation to ourselves, we often think that this is not going to work. That is the illusory energy where we think that our *māyā* is so strong that it cannot be overcome, where we think the Rāhu in our astrological chart is stronger than anything else.

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To be a well wisher of all also includes being a well-wisher of ourselves. Our needs are also considered but not to the exclusion of the welfare of others. It's a balance – taking care of our own needs and taking care of the needs of others. Balance is also the key to compassion. We must carefully balance our spiritual lives. And when there is pure surrender in devotional service on one side of the scale, then there can also be more compassion on the other side.

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Devotional service is touching the soul – it is in devotional service that the soul actually becomes enlivened and therefore devotional service goes very deep.

Time is running out and life is very short. So we must take advantage because through devotional service, if we are sincere, we can go back to Godhead in this lifetime. Even if we made some mistakes in the past, if we correct ourselves and again take up devotional service, we are immediately properly situated. Immediately, we are again eligible to return back to Godhead. So we must be very optimistic and very convinced that success will be there. All we have to do is chant Hare Kṛṣṇa and serve the *sankīrtan* movement.

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Kṛṣṇa reciprocates with the service and ultimately one will become purified from all other desires. So, after a while, even in the person who serves Kṛṣṇa with mixed motivation, self-interest will gradually disappear and one will just become attached to Kṛṣṇa.

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Spiritual strength is a gift from Kṛṣṇa. One cannot take it for granted. We have to earn it again and again. When we are spiritually strong, by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa, then anything is possible. Nobody is born spiritually strong. It's not that there are some who are spiritually strong and some who are spiritually weak and one can say, 'I happen to be one of the weak ones. We are all spiritually weak, we took birth in the age of Kali'. So don't say, 'Maybe it's my karma.' Karma is insignificant. Karma is not really a major factor in spiritual life. Good karma or bad karma is not very important. It's a little helpful or a little detrimental but devotional service is so much more powerful. When we take shelter of Kṛṣṇa, He will help and we will get purified easily.

Hare Kṛṣṇa
Hare Kṛṣṇa
Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa
Hare Hare
Hare Rama
Hare Rama
Rama Rama
Hare Hare

About Kadamba Kanana Swami

As a youthful seeker, Kadamba Kanana Swami journeyed high in the Himalayan mountains in search of India's deep spiritual wealth. There he was inspired by Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Bhagavad-gītā* and became convinced by his words. Thus he began the path of Kṛṣṇa Consciousness in the mystical holy land of Vṛndāvana. Often known as the lap of Kṛṣṇa, Vṛndāvana was where he felt at home.

Kadamba Kanana Swami had never personally met Śrīla Prabhupāda having joined in 1978. Yet he strongly desired to be a dedicated servant in his mission. He spent many years serving in the holy *dham* in positions both menial and managerial. In Śrīdham māyāpur, he saw to the completion of the *pushpa samadhi* of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Later he served as the temple president of the Kṛṣṇa Balaram temple in Vṛndāvana for five years.

On the order of his spiritual master, Śrīpad Jayādvaita Swami, he received *sannyāsa* in 1997. He now serves as an initiating spiritual master and travels and preaches widely.

Once Kadamba Kanana Swami was asked about his credentials as a writer. He replied, "Whatever I am today, I have no qualification. I am not a devotee of Kṛṣṇa but I can't forget Him because I am simply made of His mercy."

Within this book are the words that describe that mercy.

For many years Kadamba Kanana Swami has been inspiring devotees from around the world with his deep understanding and practical application of the teachings of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

The KKS Blog features many of Maharaja's quotes and travel experiences around the world.

Visit these websites for your daily dose of nectar.



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