

Dainyam or Self-depreciation

Extract from a letter by
Svami Sadananda Dasa
November 11, 1960

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Dear Mrs. D.,

From your letters I can see that you secretly rejoice at Svami Bon's¹ arrival. I really hope he will answer your expectations. But over and over again, I must tell you that it is not wise to commit oneself to a *person* – be it Vamandas, Svami Bon or Sadananda – but rather to the content of the *message* Krishna and Gurudev send you all there.

It is decidedly much better, if all of you vie with each other for understanding the content of this message in the best, most profound and most clear way – and not in envy and jealousy vie with each other for whose seva is appreciated and praised most by Vamandas, Svami Bon or Sadananda.

In my opinion, you give yourself unnecessary anxiety, wondering if you or anyone else “belong to” Radha or not. As you can see from Caitanya Bhagavatam and Murari Gupta's biography of Caitanya, each and everyone – the eternal coplayers as well – has his own individuality, and it is *not* so that everyone inwardly participates in the seva of madhurya- or yugala-rasa; no, just a few do.

The root of all bhakti is dasyam, to subordinate oneself to Him in knowing, serving Love. In compliance with our knowing, serving, loving *listening* (*reading*) an individual liking for a special sort of seva for an eternal Form of Bhagavan develops; it might be Krishna in Dvaraka or Goloka, or Rama, or Narayana or Narasingha etc.; a seva, which is always in one of the 5 great bhavas or rasas – without *any* depreciation of other bhavas or other Forms of God, which you are not especially attached to yourself.

Imagine a flower bud, containing so many things. Can the subtle elements, drawn by the roots, which give nourishment and growth and are conducive to forming the whole bud, can they contend with each other who will contribute to the formation of the stalk, the filaments, the calyx, the petals or the sepals?

Your problem and others could be solved, if you all as an experiment imagined yourself to be completely alone, without Vamandas, Hella, Sadananda, Svami Bon etc., alone with God, so to say, as it is the case when one is put into narcosis, and friends, relations etc., yes, one's own self, so to say, vanishes – and in a surrounding, where there is nobody to talk to about Krishna and seva.

¹ Godbrother of Sadananda, who in 1960 gave a series of lectures in Europe.

Now and then, one must try to imagine oneself in such an exceptional situation, in order to see where one stands inwardly, how deeply one really is rooted in bhakti and how deeply one only imagined oneself to be rooted. Then one becomes meek, and dainyam or depreciation of oneself – especially when it is *not* legitimate – is like the mother of true premabhakti. And *how* modest will one become, when one deserves to *depreciate* oneself, and then such dainyam or depreciation might be the foundation for a commencement of honest, true bhakti.

I beg you sincerely to discuss this letter among yourselves and let everyone copy it, as these instructions are very much needed, for myself, as well as for all of you over there – and not only once, but over and over again.

Always Your Sadananda

Radhe! Radhe!