

Devotee: Our Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda, used to say, *athātho* means, “now that we have come to the human form of life,” “after coming to the human form of life.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: But the human form of life alone is not sufficient. *Sat-saṅga*, *sādhu-saṅga*, is necessary, *sad-Guru caraṇāśraya*. Anyone who has received the grace of a *sādhu* can have that nectar, whereas, *ya'o paḍa bhāgavata vaiṣṇavera sthane*, even a *brāhmaṇa* may not be qualified to enter into the *Bhāgavatam*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu said, “Go to a Vaiṣṇava, from him you will get the real stand-point of *Bhāgavatam* and how to approach it.”

Devānanda Paṇḍit, a real *brāhmaṇa* of noted scholarship, was a ‘professor’ of *Bhāgavatam*. Many people used to come to hear from him. But although a scholar, his stand-point was that of the Śāṅkara school.

Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit also lived locally but he was an expert in the real explanations of *Bhāgavatam*.

Mahāprabhu suddenly one day said, “Oh, that Devānanda Paṇḍit, he teaches *Bhāgavatam* to so many students, but he himself does not know its real purport. He is spreading poison in the name of *Bhāgavatam*. I shall go and tear up his books!” Inspired one day with such a spirit Mahāprabhu suddenly ran towards that place, but Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit, and others perhaps, stopped Him, saying, “No, no, this won’t look good for you.”

Anyhow, on another day Mahāprabhu met Devānanda Paṇḍit and told him, “You are teaching *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* to the students, but do you know what is there in *Bhāgavatam*? You yourself do not know what nectar is there.”

In a very ridiculing way, Mahāprabhu told him:

**paripūrṇa kariyā ye saba jane khāya
tabe bahirddeśe giyā se santoṣa pāya**

(*Śrī Chaitanya Bhāgavat Madhya 21.73*)

“When one who has eaten and has a full belly goes to the latrine, while passing stool he feels some relief, but you do not even get *that* sort of meagre pleasure! But in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there is such high nectar, such high taste, but you, such a mean fellow with your mean mind, approach the *Bhāgavatam* and teach it in such a filthy way. What do you know about *Bhāgavatam*?”

On another occasion, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit came to hear *Bhāgavatam* from Devānanda’s *ṭol*, Sanskrit school. While Devānanda was pronouncing the *ślokas*, Śrīvāsa was understanding them in his own way thus causing many feelings to come in him: sometimes he shed tears and sometimes he shivered. Devānanda Paṇḍit told his students, “Oh, that man has come to disturb us with all these lower sentiments. Take him out!” So, his students took Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit from there and left him outside; but that enraged Mahāprabhu.

Later on Mahāprabhu’s intimate devotee, Vakreśvara Paṇḍit, came to Devānanda’s house. He came and had a private talk with Devānanda, and Devānanda was converted: “Yes, I did not know that such meanings may be found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. I was influenced by Śaṅkarācāryya’s teaching that Brahman is all-in-all, therefore I considered these topics of *Bhāgavatam* to be all *saguṇa*, all under *Māyā*.” So, when Mahāprabhu after five years of *sannyāsa* came again to visit this area, Kuliya here in Nabadwip Dhām, Devānanda fell at His feet, crying, “I have made such great offences!”

Mahāprabhu said, “Yes, but you have committed offences not so much against Me as against Śrīvāsa Paṇḍit. Go and beg forgiveness from him and you will be absolved from your offences.”

**kuliyā-grāmete āsi’ śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya
hena nāhi, yā ’re prabhu nā karilā dhanya**

(*Chaitanya Bhāgavat: Antya 3.541*)

In this way Cāpāla Gopāl and many others who had made so many bad remarks about Śrī Chaitanyadev’s conduct all came there to Him saying: “We could not understand Your outstanding personality and superiority, therefore we have unknowingly done much wrong against You. Please forgive us.”

Mahāprabhu forgave them saying, “Oh, no, no, there is no offence,

everything is alright. Go away peacefully now.”

So also, in the case of reading *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there is this question of *adhikāra* and *sat-saṅga*. Even a *brāhmaṇa* may not have the proper position to understand, what to speak of teach, the Scriptures. Only *sādhu-saṅga*—the association of a good teacher—is necessary to understand the *śāstra*.