

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam

श्री शिक्षाष्टकम् (चैतन्यमहाप्रभु)

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam (Caitanya Mahāprabhu)

- The Eight Instructions of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu -

Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1535) is the most recent incarnation of the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He appeared 500 years ago in Navadvīpa, West-Bengal and started His worldwide Saṅkīrtan mission of propagating the chanting of the holy name of the Lord (the process of self-realization for this age - to meditate upon the sound of the maha-mantra: *Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare* / *Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare*). Although Lord Caitanya was widely renowned as a scholar in His youth, He left only eight verses, called *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. These eight verses clearly reveal His mission and precepts. These supremely valuable prayers are translated herein.



O my Lord, when will my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly when I chant Your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your name? [Text 6]

From: "Teachings of Lord Caitanya"
A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda
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चेतो-दर्पण-मार्जनं भव-महा-दावाग्नि-निर्वापणं
श्रेयः-कैरव-चन्द्रिका-वितरणं विद्या-वधू-जीवनम्
आनन्दाम्बुधि-वर्धनं प्रति-पदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनं
सर्वात्म-स्नपनं परं विजयते श्री-कृष्ण-सण्कीर्तनम् ॥ १ ॥

*ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam
śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaranam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam
ānandāmbudhi-varধানam prati-padam pūrṇāmṛtāsvādanam
sarvātma-snapanam param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-ṣaṅkīrtanam ॥1॥*

Glory to the *śrī-kṛṣṇa-ṣaṅkīrtana*, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This *Ṣaṅkīrtan* movement is the prime benediction for humanity at large because it spreads the rays of the benediction moon. It is the life of all transcendental knowledge. It increases the ocean of transcendental bliss, and it enables us to fully taste the nectar for which we are always anxious. (1)

नाम्नामकारि बहुधा निज-सर्व-शक्तिस्
तत्रार्पिता नियमितः स्मरणे न कालः
एतादृशी तव कृपा भगवन्ममापि
दुर्दैवमीदृशमिहाजनि नानुरागः ॥ २ ॥

*nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smarane na kālah
etādrśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durdaivam īdrśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ ॥2॥*

O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names, like *Kṛṣṇa* and *Govinda*. In these transcendental names You have invested all Your transcendental energies. There are not even hard and fast rules for chanting these names. O my Lord, out of kindness You enable us to easily approach You by Your holy names, but I am so unfortunate that I have no attraction for them. (2)

तृणादऽपि सुनीचेन
तरोरऽपि सहिष्णुना
अमानिना मानदेन
कीर्तनीयः सदा हरिः ॥ ३ ॥

*trṇād api sunīcena
taror api sahiṣṇunā
amāninā mānadena
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ ॥3॥*

One should chant the holy name of the Lord in a humble state of mind, thinking oneself lower than the straw in the street; one should be more tolerant than a tree, devoid of all sense of false prestige, and should be ready to offer all respect to others. In such a state of mind one can chant the holy name of the Lord constantly. (3)

न धनं न जनं न सुन्दरीं
कवितां वा जगदीश कामये
मम जन्मनि जन्मनीश्वरे
भवताद् भक्तिर् अहैतुकी त्वयि ॥ ४ ॥

*na dhanam na janam na sundarim
kavitam va jagad-isa kamaye
mama janmani janmaniśvare
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi ॥4॥*

O almighty Lord, I have no desire to accumulate wealth, nor do I desire beautiful women, nor do I want any number of followers. I only want Your causeless devotional service, birth after birth. (4)

अयि नन्द-तनुज किङ्करं
पतितं मां विषमे भवाम्बुधौ
कृपया तव पाद-पङ्कज-
स्थित-धूली-सदृशं विचिन्तय ॥ ५ ॥

*ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram
patitam māṁ viṣame bhavāmbudhau
krpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūlī-sadṛśam vicintaya ॥5॥*

O son of Mahārāja Nanda [Kṛṣṇa], I am Your eternal servitor, yet somehow or other I have fallen into the ocean of birth and death. Please pick me up from this ocean of death and place me as one of the atoms at Your lotus feet. (5)

नयनं गलदश्रु-धारया
वदनं गद्गद-रुद्धया गिरा
पुलकैर्निचितं वपुः कदा
तव-नाम-ग्रहणे भविष्यति ॥ ६ ॥

*nayanam galad-aśru-dhārayā
vadanam gadgada-ruddhayā girā
pulkair nicitam vapuḥ kadā
tava-nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati ॥6॥*

O my Lord, when will my eyes be decorated with tears of love flowing constantly when I chant Your holy name? When will my voice choke up, and when will the hairs of my body stand on end at the recitation of Your name? (6)

युगायितं निमेषेण
चक्षुषा प्रावृषायितम्
शून्यायितं जगत्सर्वं
गोविन्द-विरहेण मे ॥ ७ ॥

*yugāyitam nimeṣeṇa
cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitam
śūnyāyitam jagat sarvaṁ
govinda-viraheṇa me ॥7॥*

O Govinda! Feeling Your separation, I am considering a moment to be like twelve years or more. Tears are flowing from my eyes like torrents of rain, and I am feeling all vacant in the world in Your absence. (7)

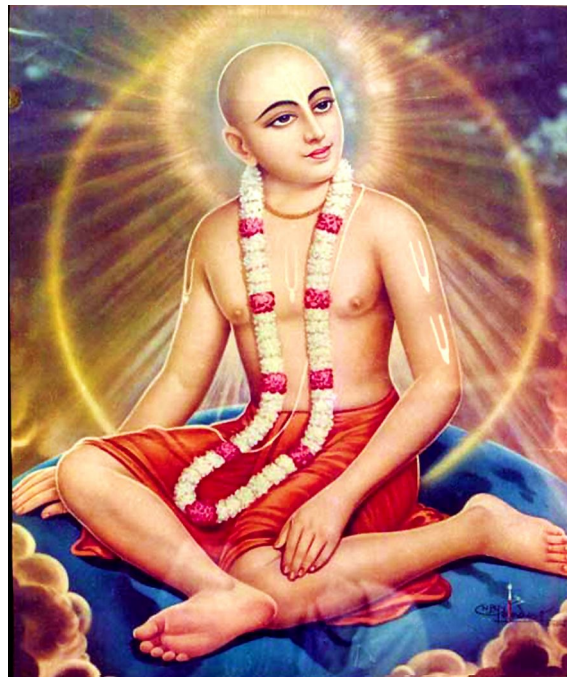
आश्लिष्य वा पाद-रतां पिनष्टु माम्
अदर्शनान्मर्म-हताम्-हतां करोतु वा
यथा तथा वा विदधातु लम्पटो
मत्प्राण-नाथस्तु स एव नापरः ॥ ८ ॥

*āśliṣya vā pāda-ratām pinaṣṭu mām
adarśanān marma-hatām-hatām karotu vā
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ ॥8॥*

I know no one but Kṛṣṇa as my Lord, and He shall remain so even if He handles me roughly by His embrace or makes me brokenhearted by not being present before me. He is completely free to do anything and everything, for He is always my worshipful Lord, unconditionally. (8)

*prabhura 'śikṣāṣṭaka'-śloka yei paḍe, śune
kṛṣṇe prema-bhakti tāra bāḍe dine-dine |*

If anyone recites or hears these eight verses of instruction by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, his ecstatic love and devotion for Kṛṣṇa increase day by day. (CC. Antya 20.65)



Original Verses: Caitanya Caritamṛta, Antya Lila
Chapter 20, Verses 12, 16, 21, 29, 32, 36, 39, 47, and 65;
Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam, Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī

Commentary by A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda:

Lord Caitanya gave us eight stanzas of His mission, what He wanted to do. They are explained in eight stanzas, and they are known as Sikṣāṣṭaka. **Sikṣā** means instruction, and **āṣṭaka** means eight. So in eight stanzas He has finished his instruction, and His next disciples, the six Gosvāmīs, have explained them in volumes of books. So Lord Caitanya says the subject is **param vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-ṣaṅkīrtanam**: all glories to the chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra or Kṛṣṇa ṣaṅkīrtan movement. All glories. All victory. How it is victory, all victory? That He explains, that *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. If you chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, then the dirty things which have accumulated in your heart due to material contamination will be cleared off.

He gives the example that the heart is just like a mirror. If on the mirror there are heaps of dust accumulated, then one cannot see the real face by the reflection of the mirror. Therefore, it should be cleansed. So in our present conditional life, our heart is overloaded with so much dust accumulated due to our material association from time immemorial. So if we chant this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, then the dust will be removed. Even not immediately, it will begin to be removed. And as soon as the mirror of the heart is cleansed of all dust, immediately one can see the face what he is. That face means real identification. By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, one will understand that he is not this body. This is our misconception. The dust means this misconception, accepting this body or the mind as self. Actually, we are not this body or the mind. We are spirit soul. So as soon as we can understand that we are not these bodies, immediately *bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam*. The blazing fire of material conditions, or the blazing fire of material miseries, immediately becomes dissipated. No more misery. Ahaṁ brahmāsmi (I am spirit soul).

As it is stated in the Bhagavad-gītā, *brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā*. Immediately one understands his real identification as spirit soul, he becomes joyful. We are not joyful. Due to our material contact, we are always full of anxieties. By chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra, we shall immediately come to the stage of joyful life. *Bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam*. And this is called liberation. When one becomes joyful, free from all anxieties, that stage is actual liberation because every living creature, the spirit soul is by nature joyful. The whole struggle for existence is that he is searching after that joyful stage of life, but he missing the point. Therefore, in every effort for joyful life we are being defeated. This constant defeat can be overcome immediately by chanting this Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra. That is the effect of this transcendental vibration. And after liberation, after being joyful, the material joys decrease. Whatever joy you want to enjoy, that decreases. Take, for example, for eating. If we want to eat some nice foodstuff, after eating a few morsels of food we do not like to take any more. That means here in the material world, whatever joy we accept, it will decrease. But spiritual joy, Lord Caitanya says *ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam*, the spiritual joy is just like ocean. But here in the material world, we have got experience that ocean does not increase. Ocean remains within its limit. But the ocean of spiritual joyfulness increases. *Anandāmbudhi-varḍhanam*. *Sreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam*. How it increases? He is giving the example like the moon, rising moon. As the waxing moon. As the moon from the day of new moon, new moon night, the first day it is just like a small curved line. But second day, third day it increases, gradually it increases. Similarly, the spiritual life, the spiritual joyful life increases like the moon rays day after day, day after day, till it reaches the full moon night, yes. So *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhava-mahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam, śreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam*. And the life then becomes full of knowledge because spiritual life means eternal life, full of bliss and full of knowledge. So we increase our volumes of joy because proportionately we increase the volume of our knowledge. *Sreyaḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam, ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam*. It is just like an ocean, but still it increases. *Anandāmbudhi-varḍhanam, sarvātma-snapanam*. It is so nice that once situated in this state of life, one thinks that "I am fully satisfied." *Sarvātma-snapanam*. Just like if one takes bath dipping into the water, he feels refreshed immediately. Similarly, this spiritual life increasing joys day after day makes one feeling that he is fully satisfied.

Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu recommended: *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam*. *Mārjanam* means "cleanse," and *darpaṇam* means "mirror." The heart is a mirror. It is like a camera. Just as a camera takes all kinds of pictures of days and nights, so also our heart takes pictures and keeps them in an unconscious state [Subconsciousness]. Psychologists know this. The heart takes so many pictures, and therefore it becomes covered. We do not know when it has begun, but it is a fact that because there is material contact, our real identity is

covered. Therefore *ceto-darpana-marjanam*: one has to cleanse his heart. (SP: Science of Selfrealization)

And when the heart is cleansed, then a person becomes eligible for being freed from the clutches of maya, or the materialistic way of life. He understands that he is not this body-that he's a spirit soul, and that his business is therefore different from merely material concerns. He thinks, "Now I am engaged only in seeking these bodily comforts of life. These are not at all essential, because my body will change. Today, since I am in an American body, I think I have so many duties as an American man. Tomorrow I may be in an American dog body, and immediately my duty would change. So I can understand that these bodily concerns are not my real business. My real business is how to elevate myself-as a spirit soul-to the spiritual world, back to home, back to Godhead."

When the mind is completely washed of all material contamination, the pure consciousness acts. The sound vibration from the spiritual sky can automatically cleanse all material contaminations, as confirmed by Caitanya Mahāprabhu: *ceto-darpana-mārjanam* [Cc. Antya 20.12]. We need only take the advice of Lord Chaitanya Mahāprabhu and chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra to cleanse the mind of all material contamination, and this may be considered the summary of this difficult verse. As soon as the whole material contamination is washed away by this process of chanting, all desires and reactions to material activities become immediately vanquished, and real life, peaceful existence, begins. In this age of Kali it is very difficult to adopt the yogic process mentioned in this verse.

Unless one is very expert in such yoga, the best course is to adopt the ways and means of Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam. Thus one can gloriously become freed from all material contamination by the simple process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare / Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare. Just as life in this material world has its beginning in material sound, similarly a spiritual life has its beginning in this spiritual sound vibration. (SB 4.23.17 pp)

In His Śikṣāṣṭaka, Lord Caitanya describes the progressive benefits of chanting Hare Krishna. First, *ceto-darpana-marjanam* [Cc. Antya 20.12]. The beginning is cleansing the heart, because we are impure on account of dirty things within our heart, accumulated lifetime after lifetime in the animalistic way of life. So everything-advancement of spiritual life, culture, tapasya-is meant to cleanse the heart. And in this process of chanting the maha-mantra, the first installment of benefit is the cleansing of the heart. *Ceto-darpana-mārjanam*.

Specifically, chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra purifies one, and this chanting is therefore recommended by Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu. *Ceto-darpana-mārjanam*: [Cc. Antya 20.12] by chanting the names of Krishna, the mirror of the heart is cleansed, and the devotee loses interest in everything external. When one is influenced by the external energy of the Lord, his heart is impure. When one's heart is not pure, he cannot see how things are related to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. *Idam hi visvam bhagavan ivetarah* (Bhag. 1.5.20). He whose heart is purified can see that the whole cosmic manifestation is but the Supreme Personality of Godhead, but he whose heart is contaminated sees things differently. Therefore by sat-sanga, or association with devotees, one becomes perfectly pure in heart. (SB 4.24.59 pp)

In this way the person who chants Hare Kṛṣṇa purifies his consciousness. Then his materialistic activity is stopped. He knows, "This is simply a waste of time. I must act spiritually." That is knowledge, which comes from cleansing the heart (*ceto-darpana-mārjanam* [Cc. Antya 20.12]). The illusion of wrongly working on the basis of the bodily concept of life is overcome simply by the chanting of the Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra. This is the first instalment of benefit from chanting. (SP: Civilization and Transcendence)



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ପୋଃ- ବୀରଚନ୍ଦ୍ରପୁର- ୧୦୧ ୨୪୫ । ବୀରଭୂମ ।

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