

# Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam



- The Eight Instructions of Lord Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu -

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Original Version, Antya-Lila Chapter 20

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TEXT 12

চেতোদর্পণমার্জনং ভবমহাদাবাগ্নিনির্বাণং  
শ্রেয়ঃকৈরবচন্দ্রিকাবিতরণং বিদ্যাবধূজীবনম্ ।  
আনন্দাম্বুধিবর্ধনং প্রতিপদং পূর্ণামৃতাস্বাদনং  
সর্বাশ্নপনং পরং বিজয়তে শ্রীকৃষ্ণসঙ্কীর্তনম্ ॥ ১২ ॥

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

## SYNONYMS

*cetaḥ*—of the heart; *darpaṇa*—the mirror; *mārjanam*—cleansing; *bhava*—of material existence; *mahā-dāvāgni*—the blazing forest fire; *nirvāṇam*—extinguishing; *śreyaḥ*—of good fortune; *kairava*—the white lotus; *candrikā*—the moonshine; *vitaraṇam*—spreading; *vidyā*—of all education; *vadhū*—wife; *jīvanam*—the life; *ānanda*—of bliss; *ambudhi*—the ocean; *vardhanam*—increasing; *prati-padam*—at every step; *pūrṇa-amṛta*—of the full nectar; *āsvādanam*—giving a taste; *sarva*—for everyone; *ātma-snapanam*—bathing of the self; *param*—transcendental; *vijayate*—let there be victory; *śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam*—for the congregational chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.

## TRANSLATION

"Let there be all victory for the chanting of the holy name of Lord Kṛṣṇa, which can cleanse the mirror of the heart and stop the miseries of the blazing fire of material existence. That chanting is the waxing moon that spreads the white lotus of good fortune for all living entities. It is the life and soul of all education. The chanting of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa expands the blissful ocean of transcendental life. It gives a cooling effect to everyone and enables one to taste full nectar at every step.

## TEXT 16

নাম্নামকারি বহুধা নিজসর্বশক্তি-  
স্তত্রার্পিতা নিয়মিতঃ স্মরণে ন কালঃ ।  
এতাদৃশী তব কৃপা ভগবন্নমাপি  
হৃদৈবমীদৃশমিহাজনি নাম্মুরাগঃ ॥ ১৬ ॥

*nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis*  
*tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ*  
*etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi*  
*durdaivam īdṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ*

## SYNONYMS

*nāmnām*—of the holy names of the Lord; *akāri*—manifested; *bahudhā*—various kinds; *nija-sarva-śaktiḥ*—all kinds of personal potency; *tatra*—in that; *arpitā*—bestowed; *niyamitaḥ*—restricted; *smaraṇe*—in remembering; *na*—not; *kālaḥ*—consideration of time; *etādṛśī*—so much; *tava*—Your; *kṛpā*—mercy; *bhagavan*—O Lord; *mama*—My; *api*—although; *durdaivam*—misfortune; *īdṛśam*—such; *iha*—in this (the holy name); *ajani*—was born; *na*—not; *anurāgaḥ*—attachment.

## TRANSLATION

"My Lord, O Supreme Personality of Godhead, in Your holy name there is all good fortune for the living entity, and therefore You have many names, such as Kṛṣṇa and Govinda, by which You expand Yourself. You have invested all Your potencies in those names, and there

are no hard and fast rules for remembering them. My dear Lord, although You bestow such mercy upon the fallen, conditioned souls by liberally teaching Your holy names, I am so unfortunate that I commit offenses while chanting the holy name, and therefore I do not achieve attachment for chanting.

TEXT 21

তৃণাদপি স্তনীচেন তরোরিব সহিষ্ণুনা ।  
অমানিনা মানদেন কীর্তনীঃ সদা হরিঃ ॥ ২১ ॥

*tṛṇād api sunīcena  
taror iva sahiṣṇunā  
amāninā mānadena  
kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ*

SYNONYMS

*tṛṇāt api*—than downtrodden grass; *sunīcena*—being lower; *taror*—than a tree; *iva*—like; *sahiṣṇunā*—with tolerance; *amāninā*—without being puffed up by false pride; *mānadena*—giving respect to all; *kīrtanīyaḥ*—to be chanted; *sadā*—always; *hariḥ*—the holy name of the Lord.

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.

TEXT 29

ন ধনং ন জনং ন সুন্দরীং কবিতাং বা জগদীশ কাময়ে ।  
মম জন্মনি জন্মনীশ্বরে ভবতান্ত্তিরহৈতুকী ত্বয়ি ॥ ২৯ ॥

*na dhanam na janam na sundarīm  
kavitām vā jagadīśa kāmaye  
mama janmani jamanīśvare  
bhavatād bhaktir ahaitukī tvayi*

SYNONYMS

*na*—not; *dhanam*—riches; *na*—not; *janam*—followers; *na*—not; *sundarīm*—a very beautiful woman; *kavitām*—fruitive activities described in flowery language; *vā*—or; *jagat-īśa*—O Lord of the universe; *kāmaye*—I desire; *mama*—My; *janmani*—in birth; *janmani*—after birth; *īśvare*—unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *bhavatāt*—let there be; *bhaktiḥ*—devotional service; *ahaitukī*—with no motives; *tvayi*—unto You.

TRANSLATION

"O Lord of the universe, I do not desire material wealth, materialistic followers, a beautiful wife or fruitive activities described in flowery language. All I want, life after life, is unmotivated devotional service to You.

TEXT 32

অয়ি নন্দতনুজ কঙ্করং পতিতং মাং বিষমে ভবাম্বুধৌ ।  
কৃপয়া তব পাদপঙ্কজস্থিতধূলীসদৃশং বিচিন্তয় ॥ ৩২ ॥

*ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaram  
patitam mām viṣame bhavāmbudhau  
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-  
sthita-dhūli-sadr̥śam vicintaya*

SYNONYMS

*ayi*—oh, My Lord; *nanda-tanuja*—the son of Nanda Mahārāja, Kṛṣṇa; *kiṅkaram*—the servant; *patitam*—fallen; *mām*—Me; *viṣame*—horrible; *bhava-ambudhau*—in the ocean of nescience; *kṛpayā*—by causeless mercy; *tava*—Your; *pāda-paṅkaja*—lotus feet; *sthita*—situated at; *dhūli-sadr̥śam*—like a particle of dust; *vicintaya*—kindly consider.

TRANSLATION

"Oh, My Lord, O Kṛṣṇa, son of Mahārāja Nanda, I am Your eternal servant, but because of My own fruitive acts, I have fallen in this horrible ocean of nescience. Now please be causelessly merciful to Me. Consider Me a particle of dust at Your lotus feet.

TEXT 36

নয়নং গলদশ্রুধারয়া, বদনং গদগদ-রুদ্ধয়া গিরা ।  
পুলকৈর্নিচিতং বপুঃ কদা, তব নাম-গ্রহণে ভবিষ্যতি ॥৩৬॥

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

SYNONYMS

*nayanam*—the eyes; *galat-aśru-dhārayā*—by streams of tears running down; *vadanam*—mouth; *gadgada*—faltering; *ruddhayā*—choked up; *girā*—with words; *pulkair*—with erection of the hairs due to transcendental happiness; *nicitam*—covered; *vapuḥ*—the body; *kadā*—when; *tava*—Your; *nāma-grahaṇe*—in chanting the name; *bhaviṣyati*—will be.

TRANSLATION

"My dear Lord, when will My eyes be beautified by filling with tears that constantly glide down as I chant Your holy name? When will My voice falter and all the hairs on My body stand erect in transcendental happiness as I chant Your holy name?"

TEXT 39

যুগায়িতং নিমেষেণ চক্ষুশা প্রাবৃষায়িতম্ ।  
শূন্যায়িতং জগৎ সৰ্বং গোবিন্দ-বিরহেণ মে ॥ ৩৯ ॥

*yugāyitaṁ nimeṣeṇa  
cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitaṁ  
śūnyāyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ  
govinda-virahaṇa me*

SYNONYMS

*yugāyitaṁ*—appearing like a great millennium; *nimeṣeṇa*—by a moment; *cakṣuṣā*—from the eyes; *prāvṛṣāyitaṁ*—tears falling like torrents of rain; *śūnyāyitaṁ*—appearing void; *jagat*—the world; *sarvam*—all; *govinda*—from Lord Govinda, Kṛṣṇa; *virahaṇa me*—by My separation.

TRANSLATION

"My Lord Govinda, because of separation from You, I consider even a moment a great millennium. Tears flow from My eyes like torrents of rain, and I see the entire world as void.

TEXT 47

আশ্লিষ্য বা পাদরতাং পিনষ্টু মা-  
মদর্শনান্নর্মহতাং করোতু বা ।  
যথা তথা বা বিদধাতু লম্পটো  
মংপ্রাণনাথস্ত্ব স এব নাপরঃ ॥ ৪৭ ॥

*āśliṣya vā pāda-ratāṁ pinaṣṭu mām  
adarśanān marma-hatāṁ karotu vā  
yathā tathā vā vidadhātu lampaṭo  
mat-prāṇa-nāthas tu sa eva nāparaḥ*

SYNONYMS

*āśliṣya*—embracing with great pleasure; *vā*—or; *pāda-ratām*—who is fallen at the lotus feet; *pinaṣṭu*—let Him trample; *mām*—Me; *adarśanāt*—by not being visible; *marma-hatām*—brokenhearted; *karotu*—let Him make; *vā*—or; *yathā*—as (He likes); *tathā*—so; *vā*—or;

*vidadhātu*—let Him do; *lampāṭaḥ*—a debauchee, who mixes with other women; *mat-prāṇa-nāthaḥ*—the Lord of My life; *tu*—but; *saḥ*—He; *eva*—only; *na aparāḥ*—not anyone else.

#### TRANSLATION

"Let Kṛṣṇa tightly embrace this maidservant, who has fallen at His lotus feet. Let Him trample Me or break My heart by never being visible to Me. He is a debauchee, after all, and can do whatever He likes, but He is still no one other than the worshipable Lord of My heart.

#### TEXT 65

প্রভুর 'শিক্ষাষ্টক'-শ্লোক যেই পড়ে, শুনে ।  
কৃষ্ণে প্রেমভক্তি তার বাড়ে দিনে-দিনে ॥ ৬৫ ॥

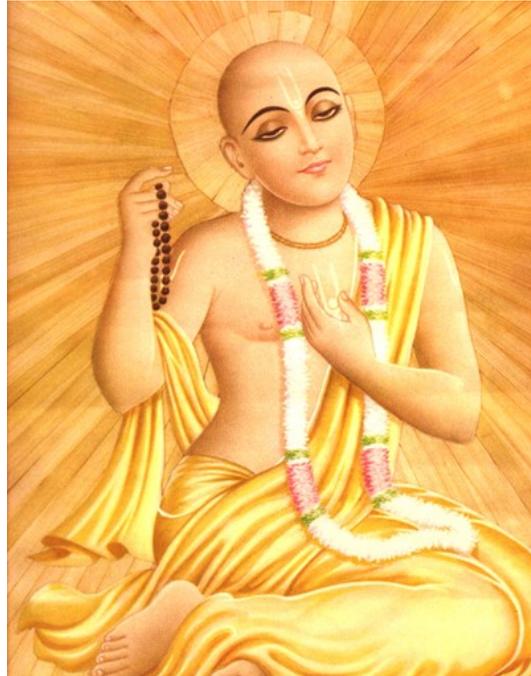
*prabhura 'śikṣāṣṭaka'-śloka yei paḍe, śune*  
*kṛṣṇe prema-bhakti tāra bāḍe dine-dine*

#### SYNONYMS

*prabhura*—of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *śikṣā-aṣṭaka*—of the eight instructions; *śloka*—the verses; *yei*—anyone who; *paḍe*—recites; *śune*—or hears; *kṛṣṇe*—unto Lord Kṛṣṇa; *prema-bhakti*—ecstatic love and devotion; *tāra*—his; *bāḍe*—increases; *dine-dine*—day after day.

#### TRANSLATION

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.



Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu (1486-1535)

## 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 **param̐ 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*. *Sreyāḥ-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, śreyāḥ-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. *Sreyāḥ-kairava-candrikā-vitaraṇam vidyā-vadhū-jīvanam, ānandāmbudhi-varḍhanam*. It is just

like a ocean, but still it increases. *Anandāmbudhi-varadhanam, 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-darpaṇa-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-darpaṇa-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-śaṅkīrtanam*. Thus one can gloriously become freed from all material contamination by the simple process of chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare 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-darpaṇa-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-darpaṇa-mārjanam*.

Specifically, chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa mantra purifies one, and this chanting is therefore recommended by Sri Caitanya Mahāprabhu. *Ceto-darpaṇa-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-darpaṇa-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 installment of benefit from chanting. (SP: *Civilization and Transcendence*)

