

Movement of Unalloyed Devotion

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura

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The Sajjanatoshani was founded by Bhaktivinoda Thakura as the journal of the present movement of pure devotion initiated by himself as a follower of Sri Rupa Gosvami, the associate of Lord Caitanya, who was made by Him as the original acharya of the principle of loving devotion. The movement has spread widely since the foundation of Sajjanatoshani. A very large number of sincere souls of this country have attained the life of loving service to the Lord. The assumption of the English garb by the journal is the result of the extension of the movement, and is prophetic of the tendency of further and world-wide expansion. The name Harmonist, which has been adopted by the English Sajjanatoshani may appear at first sight to be also more cosmopolitan than the older Sanskrit title which literally means "a female who pleases the Lord's own." The Harmonist aims at promoting concord. But the English title is not really different in its significance from the original title of the periodical. Harmony is to be found in spiritual service to the Lord alone. The Harmonist has dedicated herself to the service of those, who are themselves loyal servants of the original Source of all harmony. In contradiction to the service of the servants of the Lord the vox populi and prospects of worldly enjoyment, the Harmonist pins her faith in the Vox Dei and prospects of spiritual living based thereon. She strives to please not everybody indiscriminately, but only the servants of the Lord. Unless the general populace prefer to obey the servants of the Lord rather than following their own erring inclination for worldly aggrandizement, there can be no real harmony in this world. To try to please the servants of the Lord is the same as, nay, even higher than trying to please the Lord. The Harmonist is prepared to serve the demon only if the demon himself obeys the Lord and not otherwise. By trying to please those who do not serve the Lord, the prevailing confusion will be further confounded.

The method adopted by the Harmonist for the promotion of concord has nothing in common with the methods adopted by the humanists who rely only on themselves and their fellow-beings for attainment of their purpose. The miseries experienced as a result of the discords of this world are generally supposed to be due to ignorance of the laws of nature and the significance of the moral order. By providing ethical instruction and opportunities for the practice of social and humanitarian virtues, and by the diffusion of knowledge of the laws of nature, for the efficient performance of virtuous work, the humanist hopes to make all persons attain the peace of the conscience. The plan and object of the Harmonist does not believe that instincts of fallen souls can supply the real basis for rearing the structure of universal peace and happiness. The fallen souls naturally covet the things of this world for their own selfish enjoyment. As the attempt to derive fulfillment from such things is, however, doomed to perpetual failure, peace of conscience must necessarily be sought elsewhere. Man must discard the guidance

of his limited and misleading understanding and seek for enlightenment from above in a spirit of real humility. The practical way to attain spiritual enlightenment is to serve the servants of the Lord. The fallen soul must submit to receiving knowledge of his real self and of his relation to the Supreme Soul from those who are themselves enlightened. The limited understanding must not be allowed to shut out the unlimited. When once the higher knowledge really makes His appearance, the limited understanding will automatically realize the nature and method of spiritual activities in the light that comes from the Source of all light. By trying to adjust our duties in the light of the will-o-the-wisp of our distorted conscience, we are only guided by foolishness which we are pleased to call by the name of free individual judgement. The real freedom is an eternal quality of the spotless soul, who has no affinity with or hankering for his own selfish enjoyment. Neither is the soul in his natural condition of enlightened freedom disposed to the self-destructive vanity of stoic passivity. The free soul's unremitting and sole concern is to serve the Transcendental Truth which is obscured in his fallen state by the fog created by the vanity of the stoic manner to which the soul subjects himself by his own free choice.

The right to self-elected bondage to the hankerings of the flesh has been adopted from time immemorial as the basic principle of the political, social, and individual life of incarcerated humanity in his temporary sojourn throughout this earthly prisonhouse of correction. The Harmonist pleads for a revision of this basic principle of life in the light of higher considerations. The light from the Source can alone guide us on the eternal path. Our tiny individual lights are not independent sources of illumination, but have to be continuously nourished, to be preserved by contact with the Source of light. The connection between the Source and the dependent light is severed by the vanity of having independent existence in the fallen state. It is therefore necessary to reestablish this interrupted connection, not by the knowledge accumulated by the inductive sciences which are themselves the product of the deceptive light of the soul in the state of rebellion against the fundamentals of his own constituent principles but by the knowledge that comes from the Fountainhead of all light who has His transcendental abode in the shining realms of the Spirit. The method of submissive listening to the tidings of the spiritual world, which transcend without ignoring this phenomenal universe, from the lips of emancipated souls who serve eternally and exclusively the real Truth is the only way of obtaining the grace of divine enlightenment. The Harmonist stands for this principle in theory and practice. She is in principle and practice the eternal and exclusive servant of the servants of the Lord, and her sole duty is to try to please only them and thereby continue the method and purpose of Thakura Bhaktivinoda, who is embodied in the Sajjanatoshani, the humble maid-in-waiting of the servants of the Lord.