

शिक्षाष्टकं: Lord Chaitanya's Mission
Some words are changed for correct pronunciation.

Translation by
His Divine Grace

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Lord Chaitanya Mahaprabhu instructed his disciples to write books on the science of Krishna, a task which his followers have continued to carry out down to the present day. The elaborations and expositions on the philosophy taught by Lord Chaitanya are in fact most voluminous, exacting and consistent due to the system of disciplic succession. Although Lord Chaitanya was widely renowned as a scholar in his youth, he left only eight verses, called shikshashh-Taka. These eight verses clearly reveal his mission and precepts. These supremely valuable prayers are translated herein.

शिक्षाष्टकं

चेतो-दर्पण-मार्जनं भव-महा-दावाग्नि-निर्वापणं
श्रेयः-कैरव-चन्द्रिका-वितरणं विद्या-वधू-जीवनम् ।
आनन्द-अम्बुधि-वर्धनं प्रति-पदं पूर्णामृतास्वादनं
सर्वात्मस्नपनं परं विजयते श्रीकृष्ण संकीर्तनम् ॥ १ ॥

Glory to the Sri Krishna sankirtana, which cleanses the heart of all the dust accumulated for years and extinguishes the fire of conditional life, of repeated birth and death. This sankirtana 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.

नाम्नां अकारि बहुधा निज-सर्व-शक्तिः
तत्रार्पिता नियमितः स्मरणे न कालः ।
एतादृशी तव कृपा भगवन्-ममापि
दुर्दैवम्-ईदृशम्-इहजानि न-अनुरागः ॥ २ ॥

O my Lord, Your holy name alone can render all benediction to living beings, and thus You have hundreds and millions of names like Krishna 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

तृणादपि सुनीचेन तरोरपि सहिष्णुना ।
अमानिना मानदेन कीर्तनीयः सदा हरिः ॥ ३ ॥

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.

न-धनं न-जनं न-सुन्दरीम्
कवितां वा जगदीश कामये ।
मम जन्मनि जन्मनि ईश्वरे
भवताद् भक्तिः अहैतुकी त्वयि ॥ ४ ॥

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.

अयि नन्द-तनूज किंकरम्
पतितं मां विषमे-भव-अम्बुधौ ।
कृपया तव पाद-पंकज-
स्थित धूलि-सदृशं विचिंतय ॥ ५ ॥

O son of Maharaja Nanda [Krishna], 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.

नयनं गलद्-अश्रु-धारया
वदनं गद्गद-रुद्धया गिरा ।
पुलकैर् निचितं वपुः कदा
तव नाम-ग्रहणे भविष्यति ॥ ६ ॥

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?

युगायितं निमेषेण चक्षुषा प्रावृषायितम् ।
शून्यायितं जगत् सर्वं गोविन्द-विरहेण मे ॥ ७ ॥

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.

आश्लिष्य वा पाद-रतां पिनष्टु
माम्-अदर्शनान् मर्म-हतां करोतु वा ।
यथा तथा वा विदधातु लंपटः
मत्-प्राण-नाथस् तु स एव न-अपरः ॥ ८ ॥

I know no one but Krishna 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.

Please send corrections to Ram Gopaldaswamy (tg@etsd.ml.com)

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