

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura on Bhakti's Noninherence

Apart from his well-known statements related to *bhakti*'s apparent inherence, below I will share a list of the Ṭhākura's most significant expressions about *bhakti* not being inherent in the *jīva*. These quotes come from Śrī Bhaktivinoda's main works and they will be shared here according to their publication date.

Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta (1886) (Edition Used: Bhanu Swami)

/ I begin this book, *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, by offering my respects to **Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, the bestower of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti***. (page 1)

/ When a person cultivates *bhakti* to the Lord in the material world, ***rati*, a portion of the *saṁvit-śakti* from the spiritual world**, becomes the cause of taste for all objects related to the Lord. **At that time, also, a portion of the *hlādinī-śakti* bestows genuine bliss upon the devotee.** (page 143)

/ **As *rati* gradually develops, through cultivation over many births**, the discordant mistaken elements regarding the individual soul and the Lord disappear. At that point, **it is possible to attain *śuddha-bhakti* to Kṛṣṇa. Of course, association with devotees is the cause of this development.** (page 202)

/ ***Prema* is the goal of the soul.** (page 212)

/ **When devotees, by the mercy of *guru* and Kṛṣṇa, obtain the seed of the devotional creeper**, which is faith in the principles of *bhakti*, with great care they should see that the creeper bears fruit. Mahāprabhu used one simile to teach the process to Rūpa Gosvāmī at Prayāga. **The devotees performing *sādhana* plant the seed of *bhakti* in their own hearts.** (page 236)

Prema-pradīpa (1886) (Edition Used: Śrī Caitanya Maṭha)

/ Last night in a dream I saw you in Vaiṣṇava dress dancing in a *kīrtana* party. If that is true, then I'm not surprised because you have the holy association of Yogi Bābājī. As a result **there is no doubt that you have certainly received the seed of the devotional creeper.** (page 42)

Śrī Sanmodana-bhāṣyam (commentary to Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam) (1886) (Edition Used: Gaudiya Vedanta Publications)

/ At that time, **he attains eligibility for *bhakti*, which is predominated by the *hlādinī* or pleasure-giving aspect of the Lord's *svarūpa-śakti*.** (page 10)

/ Being eternally situated in His own *svarūpa* and **being the bestower of *prema-rasa* through the medium of *bhakti*, He [Bhagavān] causes it to be tasted by others.** (page 12)

/ Just as the nectarine light emitted from the moon causes the white lotus to bloom, ***śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* causes *bhāva* or *rati*, which is predominated by the *hlādinī* potency, to appear within the hearts of the *jīvas*.** (page 14)

/ A question may be raised here: **when will those who have already attained *śuddha-bhakti* obtain their pure spiritual forms?** (pages 14–15)

/ Thinking thus, unlimitedly merciful Śrī Kṛṣṇa manifested His holy names to the *jīvas* as **the method of obtaining *bhakti*. *Bhakti* is predominated by the *hlādinī* potency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *svarūpa-śakti*, and by the chanting of the holy name it is transmitted into the hearts of the *jīvas*.** (pages 45–46)

/ The primary characteristic of *bhāva* is that it is a phenomenon constituted entirely of *viśuddha-sattva*. **Viśuddha-sattva is the self-revealing agency of the *cit-śakti*, comprised of *hlādinī*, *sandhinī*, and *saṁvit*, through which the Lord and His paraphernalia are revealed to the devotees.** (page 96)

Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-māhātmya (1890) (Edition used: Sri Caitanya Saraswat Math)

/ In this way, **Nityānanda Prabhu begs everyone to accept divine love, but the unfortunate, as a result of their sins, do not want it.** (page 39)

/ The soul is a servant of Kṛṣṇa, and **without devotion, the soul is utterly ruined.** (page 162)

/ After a group of noble *brāhmaṇas* satisfied him, having worshipped him with bael leaves for a fortnight, **Śiva gave them the boon of devotion to Kṛṣṇa.** (page 340)

/ O Jīva, the duty of the soul is always to take shelter in Navadvīpa **to become qualified for the *rasa* of Vraja.** (page 361)

/ **If, by some fortune, souls attain the association of the *sādhus*, then their relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya develops.** (pages 367–368)

Śrī Caitanya, His Life and Precepts (1896) (Edition used: Sri Caitanya Saraswat Math)

/ **When a man comes in contact with a Vaiṣṇava whose heart has been melted by *hari-bhakti-rasa*, it is then that he may desire to imbibe the sweet principle of *bhakti* and follow in the holy footsteps of the devotee by constantly practicing *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. . . . *Satsaṅga*, or the company of spiritual people, is the only means to obtain the ultimate object of life. *Bhakti* is a principle which comes from soul to soul, and like electricity or magnetism in gross matter, it conducts itself from one congenial soul to another.** (pages 44–45)

/ Good work is of two types. One type, passing as morality, includes those works which bring virtue and aggrandizement. The other type of good work includes all activities which have a tendency to bring spiritual progress. **This latter type of good work or *sukṛti* brings one in contact with a sincere Vaiṣṇava from whom one can initially imbibe *śraddhā* or faith in spirit; and being then capable of receiving *bhakti*, one obtains the seed of devotional service from that Vaiṣṇava, who is actually the person's *guru*.** (page 46)

/ **The only way to get rid of the present difficulty is by the influence of pure *bhakti* imbibed from a true *bhakta*.** (pages 62–63)

Jaiva-dharma (1896) (Edition: Gaudiya Vedanta Publications)

/ **Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of all potency, and the *jīvas* are devoid of potency.** Therefore, the eternal *svabhāva* or *dharma* of the *jīva* is *kṛṣṇa-dāsyā*, eternal service and obedience to Kṛṣṇa. (page 11)

/ **Only in the absence of *prema* does the *jīva* undergo various sufferings in material entanglement.** (page 70)

/ When these moods become established in the heart, a disposition arises that is called *śraddhā*. **A *jīva* who has this *śraddhā* is eligible for *bhakti*.** (page 109)

/ **When the *jīva* is endowed with pure knowledge, he becomes aware of his *svarūpa*, and this awareness enables him to transcend *māyā-śakti* and attain the liberated status. He then comes under the control of *cit-śakti* and obtains spiritual happiness.** (page 208)

/ **Certainly *prema-bhakti* is *nitya-siddha* (eternally perfect), because it is a manifestation of Bhagavān's internal *śakti*, but it is not evident in the heart of the conditioned *jīva*. Spiritual practice (*sādhana*) consists of the efforts of body, mind, and speech to make it appear in the heart. As long as *bhāva* is not actually attained during the period of *sādhana*, it is considered a sentiment that is achieved by practice, but its eternal perfection becomes evident as soon as it manifests itself in the heart. (pages 427–438)**

/ One who has the great fortune to have greed to obtain the same sentiment as the Vrajavāsīs have towards Kṛṣṇa has the *adhikāra* for *rāgānugā-bhakti*. (page 489)

/ **Having been imbued with the potency of *hlādinī-śakti*, they [the general *sakhīs* of Vraja] attained *sālokya* (residence in *vraja-aprakaṭa-līlā*) with the *nitya-siddha sakhīs* of Vraja. (page 496)**

/ **When the *svarūpa-śakti* manifests herself within the heart of the *jīva* by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa or of His *bhakta*, then the cognitive faculty (*saṁvit-vṛtti*) of the *svarūpa-śakti* begins to act within the heart. When that happens, knowledge of the spiritual realm (*cid-jagat*) is revealed. (page 506)**

/ **The state of *bhāva* is self-established (*svata-siddha*) in the *nitya-siddha-bhaktas*, which means that *śuddha-sattva* is eternally present in them, so there is no question of it becoming manifest in them. (page 507)**

/ **When the *jīva* obtains the mercy of the *hlādinī-śakti*, then the activity of realizing his *svarūpa* begins, and *śuddha-nāma* arises at that time. (page 533)**

/ **When you become a *parama-bhāgavata*, then you will also be able to transmit *śakti*. Such a great Vaiṣṇava can first create faith in *śrī nāma* by bestowing spiritual *śakti* on the *jīvas*, and after that instruct them about *hari-nāma*. (page 549)**

/ **Bring those inconceivable *bhāvas* into the heart and go on cultivating them with undivided attention. (page 605)**

/ **He cannot be inclined for *madhura-rasa* until he becomes eligible for *cid-rasa*. Such people have no qualification for this *rasa*. The very nature of *madhura-rasa* makes it difficult to understand, and candidates for *madhura-rasa* are rarely found. (page 625)**

/ ***Śuddha-sattva* can only appear through *bhakti*, which arises by the mercy of Kṛṣṇa and the Vaiṣṇavas. (page 645)**

Śrī Brahma-saṁhitā's commentary (1897) (Edition used: Gaudiya Vedanta Publications)

/ **The one supreme transcendental potency or internal potency of Gokuleśvara Śrī Kṛṣṇa has manifested the pastimes of Goloka, or Gokula. By the mercy of this divine potency, the living entities who are manifestations of the marginal potency can also enter into those pastimes. (page 84)**

/ **Only when the Vedas are infused with the transcendental knowledge potency (*saṁvit-śakti*) can they say something about transcendental affairs. However, when that knowledge potency, combined with the essence of the transcendental pleasure potency (*hlādinī-śakti*), is manifest in the living entities in the form of *bhakti*, then realization of the essential reality of Goloka becomes possible. The bliss function of *bhakti* is endless and unlimited, and is by nature full of pure transcendental knowledge. When knowledge attains oneness with the function of *bhakti*—that is to say, when it does not express an identity separate from *bhakti*—at that time it bestows perception of the essential reality of Goloka. (page 192)**

/ **The devotee who adheres firmly to any one of these [five] *bhāvas*, and meditates continually on the service of the appropriate form of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, eventually attains a position befitting his eligibility. (page 204)**

/ **Those whose hearts were devoid of *bhakti* could not realize His [Kṛṣṇa's] sweetness, even when they saw Him directly. (page 227)**

/ By *śānta-bhāva* one attains a body suitable for remaining absorbed in Brahman and Paramātmā, like the four Kumāras, headed by Sanaka and Sanātana, or like Śukadeva Gosvāmī. **By *dāsyā* and *sakhyā-bhāva* one attains an appropriate male or female form in accordance with one's eligibility. By *vātsalya-bhāva* one acquires a fatherly or motherly form corresponding to one's mode of service. A pure, transcendental body of a *gopī* is attained by those in *śṛṅgāra-bhāva*.** (pages 297–298)

/ **By the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the faculty of their [the *jīvas*'] insignificant consciousness attains an unlimited nature of enjoyment on the same level as Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His abode;** that is, they relish the happiness of loving service. (page 304)

Śrī Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga (1899) (Edition used: Sri Caitanya Saraswat Math)

/ There also is Bharadvāja Tīlā, beautiful to see, where the great Bharadvāja Muni worshipped Gaura, **attained divine love for the Lord, wrote *sūtras*, and distributed devotion to thousands of adverse souls.** (page 393)

/ Southeast of there is Nṛsimha Pallī. When will I see its beauty? When will I roll about with divine love, pray sincerely, and **attain divine love for Kṛṣṇa?** (page 398)

/ **By the will of the Lord, you will receive a spiritual body** and be free here. The covering of the net of material illusion will disappear, and you will feel unlimited joy in this eternal abode. (page 425)

/ **A soul who receives the grace of *mahā-prasāda* will certainly attain pure devotion to Kṛṣṇa. May I eternally receive such grace** so that I may easily leave behind the unending illusion. (page 435)

Harināma-cintāmaṇi (1900) (edition used: Bhanu Swami)

/ O Lord, You are Kṛṣṇa Himself, who has this time descended in Navadvīpa *dhāma* to deliver the *jīvas* of Kali *yuga*. There You mercifully display Your pastimes. **If You kindly put those pastimes within my heart, I will be happy.** (page 5)

/ The servant *jīvas*, desiring the trifling fruits in the hell of the material world, reject their master, but Kṛṣṇa, knowing what is best for their welfare, forces them to give up the enjoyment (*bhukti*) resulting from fruitive activities (*karma*) and the liberation (*mukti*) resulting from speculative endeavors (*jñāna*), and at last **bestows the sweet fruit of devotion to Kṛṣṇa.** (page 9)

/ When the clouds and mist [of *anarthas*] go away, the brilliant sun of the name becomes visible and **bestows upon the devotee the treasure of love of God.** (page 20)

/ The *māyāvādīs* consider Kṛṣṇa, His name, form, *līlā* and qualities to be false and perishable. On this ground **they will never receive love of God,** for such a path leads in the opposite direction from the path of devotional service or *bhakti*. (page 24)

/ Whoever criticizes such a Vaiṣṇava goes to hell birth after birth; for there is no path for real liberation other than *bhakti*, and ***bhakti* is obtained only by the mercy of the Vaiṣṇavas.** (page 31)

/ **In the pure Vaiṣṇava resides Kṛṣṇa's energies of *bhakti*, *hlādinī* and *saṁvit*. Thus by contacting a Vaiṣṇava one can also receive Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. For this reason also, the food remnants, the foot water and the foot dust from the pure Vaiṣṇavas are three powerful articles for creating *bhakti*. If one stays near a pure Vaiṣṇava for some time, one can receive the *bhakti* energy flowing from his body. If one can bind that energy within one's heart, after having developed strong faith, *bhakti* will develop.** (page 32)

/ Even if one successfully overcomes all the other offenses in chanting, and one is chanting continuously, **love of God may not come.** (page 69)

/ As liberation and material enjoyment are both unsatisfying, and as *bhakti* is the only solution, the real form of liberation and the glory of the soul, **the *jīva* must obtain *bhakti*.** (page 75)

/ If the disciple does not have a natural taste in one *bhāva*, he can request another from the *guru*. When finally **one's spiritual identity fits**, he vows to the *guru* never to give it up. The disciple will then practice remembering **his given identity** in his heart. (page 86)

/ Appearing in their heart, Kṛṣṇa erases all stain from their mind. Having thus cleansed their heart graciously, **He blesses them with His own *prema*.** (page 96)

Bhajana-rahasya (1902) (Edition Used: Gaudiya Vedanta Publications)

/ Together with His associates, **He distributed the treasure of *kṛṣṇa-prema*** through *śrī kṛṣṇa-nāma-saṅkīrtana*. (page 2)

/ Remember this pastime and sing Kṛṣṇa's names, then **you will get the treasure of *kṛṣṇa-prema*** and Kṛṣṇa's *dhāma*. (page 59)

/ After hearing *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, **a faithful person automatically acquires *bhakti*** endowed with knowledge and renunciation. (page 79)

/ When exchanged between devotees, these six kinds of association [the ones described in *Upadeśāmṛta* 4] **increase one's devotion.** But, if this association is shared with nondevotees, **one's devotion diminishes.** (page 86)

/ By performing *kīrtana* with firm faith, one soon attains the stage of *ruci*, and then gradually **attains the treasure of *prema*.** (page 145)

/ **One should endeavour to attain pure unalloyed devotion.** (page 165)

/ All the demigods and their exalted qualities, such as religiosity and knowledge, always dwell **in the heart of a person who possesses selfless devotion to Śrī Bhagavān.** (page 174)

Bhakti-tattva-viveka (1958-9) (*Bhakti-tattva-viveka* is not an original work by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, but a well-known collection of four essays he composed originally in Bengali and whose first Hindi edition of this material was serialized in issues in 1958–9) (Edition used: Gaudiya Vedanta Publications)

/ Seeing the *jīva* in this condition, **the most compassionate Śrī Kṛṣṇa then mercifully implants the seed of the creeper of devotion (*bhakti-latā-bīja*) within his heart. This seed is known as *śraddhā*, faith, and it contains within it the undeveloped manifestation of *bhāva*, the first sprout of divine love for Bhagavān. Nourished by the water of the cultivation of devotional activities headed by hearing and chanting, that seedling first sprouts, then grows leaves, and then finally flowers as it assumes the full form of a creeper. When in the end good fortune dawns upon the living entity, the creeper of devotion bears the fruit of *prema*, divine love. Now I will explain the gradual development of *bhakti*, starting from its seed-form of *śraddhā*. It is to be understood clearly that as soon as the seed of faith is sown in the heart, immediately *Bhakti-devī* appears there.** (page 22)

/ There are two reasons for *hari-bhakti* being so rare. First, it cannot be achieved in spite of engaging in many varieties of *sādhana* for a long period of time as long as one is bereft of firm faith and unwavering

persistence. Secondly, Śrī Hari does not easily grant *bhakti* unto Him even though one may be engaged in *āsaṅga-yukta-sādhana*, spiritual practice endowed with unflinching attachment. (page 62)

/ **When unalloyed devotion does appear in the heart**—even in the stage of *sādhana*—a little of the splendour of the limbs of *bhajana* begins to blossom. (page 66)

/ [In the context of speaking about how *bhakti* is acquired] **No one acquires anything without possessing the eligibility for it. This eligibility or qualification is the very foundation of success.** (pages 69–70)

/ **If by some good fortune at such a time they acquire the association of Bhagavān’s devotees**, they enquire from them and come to understand that there is no higher destination than the attainment of Bhagavān. Gradually they develop firm faith in this and engage in *bhajana*. **At that time it can be said that they have developed faith in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. This very faith is the root cause of the eligibility for pure devotion**, as confirmed by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī’s explanation (found in *Bhakti-sandarbha, Anuccheda* 172). (page 74)

/ **Faith is the sole cause of the qualification to perform exclusive devotion.** (page 75)

/ **Only the association of devotees can cause the appearance of *śraddhā***. In this regard Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has composed lines such as *yaḥ kenāpy ati-bhāgyena jāta-śraddho ’sya sevane*. **Thus only persons endowed with *śraddhā* are the rightful candidates for unalloyed devotion.** (page 79)

/ **In the absence of faith, no variety of *śuddha-bhakti* can ever appear. The conclusion is that *sāstra-viśvāsamayī-śraddhā*, or *śraddhā* derived from faith in the injunctions of the scriptures, is the only cause of the qualification for *vaidhī-bhakti*, and *bhāva-mādhurya-lobhamayī-śraddhā*, or faith derived from intense greed to experience the sweet sentiments of the Vrajavāsīs, is the only cause of the qualification for *rāgānuga-bhakti*.** (page 82)

/ *Brāhmaṇas, kṣatriyas, vaiśyas, śūdras* and *antyajas* (untouchables), *gṛhasthas, brahmacārīs, vānaprasthas* and *sannyāsīs*—**all of them can be qualified for *bhakti* if they have faith in the injunctions of the scriptures and the instructions of *sādhu* and *guru***. . . . Alternatively, if one develops *lobhamayī-śraddhā* by continually hearing the narrations of Bhagavān’s pastimes in the association of devotees while desiring to follow in the footsteps of the *ragātmikā* devotees of Vraja, then it can be said that **he has acquired the qualification to perform *śuddha-bhakti***. (page 84)

/ **When *śraddhā* that is based either on faith in the injunctions of the scriptures or on greed to follow in the footsteps of a *ragātmikā-bhakta* appears in the heart, a person attains the qualification for pure devotion.** (page 73)