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Rays of The Harmonist

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nityā-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Goswami Mahārāja

Jewels from the Ocean of Separation

*ṽugāṽitam nimeseṇa cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāṽitam
sūnyāṽitam jagat sarvaṁ govinda virahēṇa me*

Śikṣāṣṭaka (7)

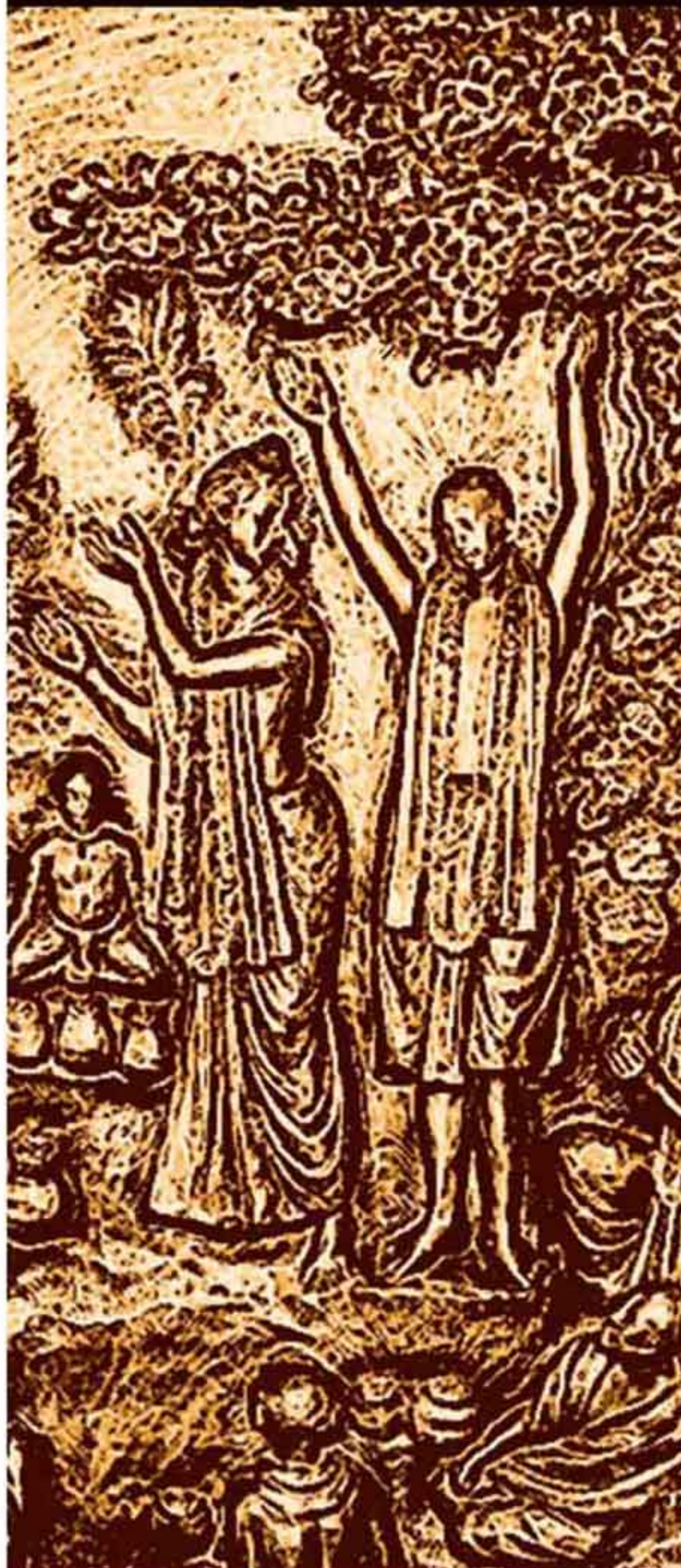


O sakhi, in separation from Govinda, even a moment seems like a millennium. Tears pour from My eyes like torrents of rain in the monsoon season and this entire world seems void.

Rays of
The Harmonist

Gaudiya Vedanta Publications

Kārttika 2005



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Dedicated to

ĀCĀRYA KEŚARĪ OM VIṢṢUPĀDA AṢṢOTTARA-ŚATA
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna
Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Founder-Ācārya
of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti

He earnestly desired to re-institute the publication of all the magazines and journals that were being published during the manifest presence of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

Rays of The Harmonist

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and founder of *Rays of the Harmonist*

Tridaṇḍi Svāmī
om viṣṢupāda aṣṢottara-śata
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



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STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

1. To protect the *vicāra-dhārā*, or current of conceptions, of the *svārūpa-rūpānugā-guru-paramparā* as presented in the modern age by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (i.e. to uproot opinions opposed to the genuine conclusions of the Śrī Gauḍīya *sampradāya*).
2. To promote a co-operative effort to preach the message of Śrī Rūpa-Raghunātha in accordance with the last instructions of Prabhupāda Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura.



Editorial

From the very first day of the month of Kārttika until its concluding day we observe several appearance and disappearance days of our *rūpānuga guru-varga*. Both of these days give us the opportunity to experience union with them and separation from them. Although the purpose of both is the same – to bestow mercy upon the *jīvas* – they each have their own *vaiśiṣṭya*, speciality. This issue of *The Rays of The Harmonist* focuses on the feelings of separation to be experienced on disappearance days.

The disappearance day of the Vaiṣṇava bestows upon us the opportunity to deeply analyse ourselves and to reflect upon and contemplate the unlimited compassion of our *guru-varga* through experiencing separation from them. With what mood and attitude should we observe these occasions? Through their writings, our *rūpānuga guru-varga* have mercifully revealed to us the true spirit of separation from Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

Just as the oceans of this world are distinct from each other and are thus divided according to their characteristic natures, similarly the nectarean ocean of the mellows of devotion (*bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*) can be divided into two categories, meeting (*sambhoga*) and separation (*vipralambha*). Those who have the extreme fortune of diving deeply into these oceans discover the invaluable jewels of unprecedented, devotional mellows.

Why is it so important for a *sādhaka* to experience separation? In order to give motion to any substance within the material world some energy is needed. For example, with the help of excessive combustion, rockets can carry a space shuttle across all the layers of the atmosphere. Similarly, in the stage of *sādhana*, the *sādhaka* will only make advancement when the fire of separation from Guru and Kṛṣṇa is present. If properly ignited and blazed in the heart, this fire of separation can even take the *jīva* beyond the many layers of this material creation to the spiritual world. When the *sādhaka* associates with a devotee who is already experiencing the intense fire of separation, that fire is ignited within his own heart.

Those with a profound and intimate love for their Gurudeva are overwhelmed by the most painful feelings of separation in his absence. Conditioned souls like us cannot possibly imitate the genuine feelings of separation experienced by Kṛṣṇa's eternal associates. If we ever feel the slightest trace of what they feel our lives will become successful.

As long as attachment for sense objects exists in the heart, how is it possible for attachment to Kṛṣṇa and His devotees to find a place there? How can a heart contaminated by sense enjoyment experience separation from them?

Our *guru-varga* have mercifully enacted their disappearance pastimes so that we can genuinely weep for them. By this weeping alone all of one's *anarthas* will be washed away, the essence of all the scriptures will be revealed within the heart, and *śuddha-bhakti*, which is extremely rare, will become easily accessible. Realising the temporary nature of this material world, we will wholly focus our hearts on their lotus feet.

May we always remain under the guidance of the true servants of our Śrī Gurudeva so that we may not, due to our independence, be allured by profit, fame and adoration; so that we may not end up supporting crookedness (hypocrisy) instead of simplicity with a display of our scholarship, intelligence and expertise; and so that we may not destroy our very self by indulging in criticism or unnecessary gossip about others.

By diving deep into the ocean of separation, we will realise the esoteric meaning of disappearance. Then we will make our lives successful by ornamenting ourselves with "jewels from the ocean of separation". ❀

The spirit of this editorial is taken from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*, Year 4, Issue 11



paśyema kiṁ taṁ prabhupāda-padmaṁ?

Will I ever again have *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

Śrī Śrī Prabhupāda Daśakam

by Śrīpāda Gaura dāsa brahmacārī,

a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda
who later became Śrīmad Bhakti Deśika Ācārya Mahārāja

(1)

**ānanda-sac-cid-baladeva-mūrttiḥ
brahmāṇḍa-sammanḍita-śuddha-kīrttiḥ
saṁsāra-sindhūttaraṇaika-potaḥ
paśyema kiṁ tam prabhupāda-padmaṁ?**

mūrttiḥ – his form; *ānanda-sat-cit* – of bliss, eternality and cognisance; *baladeva* – is Baladeva (the original *guru*); *brahmāṇḍa* – the universe; *sammanḍita* – is adorned; *śuddha-kīrttiḥ* – by his pure fame; *eka potaḥ* – [who is] the only boat; *uttaraṇa* – to deliver; *saṁsāra-sindhu* – the ocean of material existence; *kiṁ paśyema* – will I (again) be able to see?; *tam* – that person; *prabhupāda-padmaṁ* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

His blissful, eternal and cognizant form is the embodiment of Śrī Baladeva, the *akhaṇḍa-guru-tattva*. His immaculate supra-mundane fame has adorned the universe, and he is the only boat to deliver all living beings from *saṁsāra*, the ocean of material existence. Will I ever again have *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

(2)

**pratapta-cāmīkara-gaura-rūpaḥ
sad-bhakti-siddhānta-vicāra-bhūpaḥ
śrī-vaiṣṇavācārya-samāja-rājaḥ
paśyema kiṁ tam prabhupāda-padmaṁ?**

rūpaḥ – his form; *gaura* – is beautifully fair; *pratapta* – intensely molten; *cāmīkara* – gold; *bhūpaḥ* – the monarch; *vicāra* – in discrimination; *siddhānta* – of philosophical conclusions; *sad-bhakti* – of pure devotion; *rājaḥ* – the king; *samāja* – of the societies; *śrī-vaiṣṇava* – of the pure Vaiṣṇavas; *ācārya* – who teach by example; *kiṁ paśyema* – will I [again] be able to see?; *tam* – that person; *prabhupāda-padmaṁ* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

His form is beautifully fair like molten gold, he is the monarch of analysing and discerning the conclusions of pure *bhakti*, and he is the king among all pure Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*. Will I ever again have *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

(3)

**gauḍīya-goṣṭhī-gaṇa-prāṇa-bandhuḥ
prapanna-duḥkhārta-prasāda-sindhuh
vitaṇḍi-pāṣaṇḍi-pracaṇḍa-daṇḍaḥ
paśyema kiṁ tam prabhupāda-padmaṁ?**

bandhuḥ – a friend; *prāṇa* – for the life breath; *gaṇa* – of the assemblies; *gauḍīya-goṣṭhī* – of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas; *sindhuh* – an ocean; *prasāda* – of mercy; *prapanna* – for surrendered souls; *ārta* – afflicted; *duḥkha* – by miseries; *pracaṇḍa* – a terrible; *daṇḍaḥ* – rod of chastisement; *vitaṇḍi* – for the sophist; *pāṣaṇḍi* – atheists; *kiṁ paśyema* – will I [again]

be able to see?; *tam* – that person; *prabhupāda-padmam* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He is the friend who revives the lives of the Gauḍīya *bhaktas*. He is an ocean of mercy to surrendered souls who are afflicted by material miseries, and he is a terrible rod of chastisement for the sophists who indulge in unreasonable, irrational arguments – the so-called followers of religion – and for the atheistic monists. Will I ever again have *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

(4)

***śrī-rādhikā-prema-taḍāga-hamso
hamsa-dvija-prājña-kulāvataṁsaḥ
saṅkīrtana-prema-madhu-pramattaḥ
paśyema kiṁ taṁ prabhupāda-padmam?***

hamso – a swan; *taḍāga* – on the pond; *śrī-rādhikā-prema* – of the love of Śrīmatī Rādhikā; *avatamaṁsaḥ* – the crest jewel; *kula* – of the dynasty; *prājña* – of the wise; *dvija* – twiceborn; *hamsa* – swanlike persons; *pramattaḥ* – greatly intoxicated; *madhu* – by the sweetness; *prema* – of love of Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa; *saṅkīrtana* – through the congregational chanting of *nāma*; *kiṁ paśyema* – will I [again] be able to see?; *tam* – that person; *prabhupāda-padmam* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He is a swan swimming in the pond of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's *prema*, and he is the crest jewel within the dynasties of *paramahamsas*, *brāhmaṇas* and scholars. He is intoxicated by the sweetness of the *prema* of *nāma-saṅkīrtana* – the universal broadcasting of Śrī Caitanya's message of *prema*. Will I ever again have *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

(5)

***caṇḍāla-śūdrādhama-bhakti-śamdaḥ
sarvvaṁ sahāvandya-padāravindaḥ
premābdhi-candro bhajana-dru-kandaḥ
paśyema kiṁ taṁ prabhupāda-padmam?***

śamdaḥ – He gave auspicious blessings; *bhakti* – of devotional service; *sarvvaṁ* – to all; *adhama* – fallen persons; *śūdra* – such as *śūdras*; *caṇḍāla* –

dog-eaters; *pada-aravindaḥ* – his lotus feet; *āvandya* – worthy of worship; *saha* – amongst all varieties of people; *candrāḥ* – a moon; *prema-abdhi* – on the ocean of love; *bhajana-dru-kandaḥ* – the root of the tree of *bhajana*; *kiṁ paśyema* – will I [again] be able to see?; *tam* – that person; *prabhupāda-padmam* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He offered the auspicious blessing of *bhakti* to those who took lower births, such as *śūdras* and *caṇḍālas*, and his lotus feet are worshipable for the whole world. Appearing like the moon he made the ocean of *prema* swell, and indeed, he is the root of the tree of *bhajana*. Will I ever again have *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

(6)

***gaurāṅga-govinda-vareṇya-bhakto
viśuddha-sad-dharma-pracāra-raktaḥ
rādhā-yaśo-gāna-sahasra-vaktraḥ
paśyema kiṁ taṁ prabhupāda-padmam?***

vareṇya-bhaktaḥ – most exalted devotee; *gaurāṅga-govinda* – of Gaurāṅga and Govinda; *raktaḥ* – attached; *pracāra* – to the preaching; *sad-dharma* – of the pure constitution and activity of the *jīvātmā*; *viśuddha* – free from any impurity; *sahasra-vaktraḥ* – who as if with a thousand mouths; *gāna* – sang; *rādhā-yaśaḥ* – the glories of Śrī Rādhā; *kiṁ paśyema* – will I [again] be able to see?; *tam* – that person; *prabhupāda-padmam* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He is the most exalted *nitya-siddha* associate of Śrī Gaurāṅga and Śrī Govinda, and he is always deeply attached to the preaching of pure *vaiṣṇava-dharma* that is free from the coverings of *jñāna* and *karma*. As if he possessed a thousand mouths he would speak the glories of Śrī Rādhikā. Will I ever again have the *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

(7)

***vedānta-vedāṅga-purāṇa-dakṣo
vikhaṇḍita-prājña-kutarka-lakṣaḥ
śānta-prasāntoparatātma-niṣṭhaḥ
paśyema kiṁ taṁ prabhupāda-padmam***

dakṣaḥ – expert; *vedānta-vedāṅga-purāṇa* – of all *śāstras*; *prājña* – by his divine wisdom; *vikhaṇḍita* – he smashed; *lakṣaḥ* – hundreds of thousands of; *kutarka* – the bad logic; *śānta* – calm and equitable; *praśānta* – indifferent; *uparata* – detached from sense objects; *ātma-niṣṭhaḥ* – fixed in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *kiṁ paśyema* – will I [again] be able to see?; *tam* – that person; *prabhupāda-padmam* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He is fully expert in all *śāstras*, such as Vedānta, Vedāṅgas (*śikṣā, kalpa, vyākaraṇa, chanda, nirukta* and *jyotiṣa*) and Purāṇas. With his divine wisdom he would easily smash the multitude of faulty conclusions presented by deluded logicians and mundane scholars. He is calm and equitable, self-satisfied, detached from sense pleasure and fixed in his service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda. Will I ever again have *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

(8)

***hareḥ kathā-yāta-samasta-yāmo
romāñca-kampāśru mudābhirāmaḥ
śrī-dhāma-māyāpura-vāsa-yatnaḥ
paśyema kiṁ tam prabhupāda-padmam?***

samasta-yāmaḥ – all the periods of his days and nights; *yāta* – passed by; *kathā* – in topics; *hareḥ* – of Śrī Hari; *abhirāmaḥ* – feeling great pleasure; *mudā* – out of his delight; *romāñca-kampa-aśru* – his hairs stood on end, shaking and tears manifested; *yatnaḥ* – he was eager; *śrī-dhāma-māyāpura vāsa* – to always reside in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura; *kiṁ paśyema* – will I [again] be able to see?; *tam* – that person; *prabhupāda-padmam* – the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

He would spend all eight *yāmas* (divisions of the day) glorifying topics of Śrī Hari, and thus he would become overwhelmed by the manifestation of *aṣṭa-sattvika* transformations headed by hairs standing erect, trembling, and tears. He would become extremely happy when he resided in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. Will I ever again have the *darśana* of the lotus feet of that Śrīla Prabhupāda?

(9)

***hā kvāsi mat-prāṇa-prabho kva gupto
gaurākhyā-dāsas tava duḥkha-taptaḥ
prapanna-bhaktārtti-haras tvam eva
drakṣyāmi kiṁ candra-mukham sakṛt te?***

hā kvāsi – Oh, where are you? *mat-prāṇa-prabho* – master of my life; *kva guptaḥ* – where are you hidden; *tava* – your; *dāsas* – servant; *gaura ākhya* – named Gaura; *duḥkha-taptaḥ* – [is] afflicted by sorrow; *tvam* – you; *eva* – only; *ārtti-haraḥ* – remove the sufferings; *prapanna-bhakta* – of your surrendered devotees; *kiṁ* – will? *drakṣyāmi* – I see; *te* – your; *candra-mukham* – moonlike face; *sakṛt* – once [again].

O master of my life, where are you? Where have you suddenly hidden? Your fallen servant Gaura dāsa is afflicted by pangs of separation from you. Only you can remove the sufferings of your surrendered devotees. Will I ever be able to look upon your moonlike face again?

(10)

***he dīna-bandho! karuṇaika-sindho!
kuru prasādam mayi maṇḍa-mūḍhe
lakṣāparādhe bahu-pāpa-gāḍhe
tat-pāda-padme 'stu matiś ca kṛṣṇe***

he dīna-bandho – O friend of the low and destitute; *karuṇa-eka-sindho* – O only ocean of mercy; *kuru* – show; *prasādam* – mercy; *mayi* – on me; *maṇḍa-mūḍhe* – a dull fool; *lakṣa-aparādhe* – who has committed hundreds of thousands of offenses; *bahu-pāpa-gāḍhe* – who has fallen in a dense myriad of sins; *matiḥ astu* – let the mind; *tat-pāda-padme* – [be] on your lotus feet; *ca* – and; *kṛṣṇe* – on Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

O friend of the lowly, O Gurudeva, you are the only ocean of mercy. I am a dull fool and have committed hundreds of thousands of offenses. I have fallen into a dense myriad of sins, therefore grace me with your mercy so that my mind may be fixed on your lotus feet and on Śrī Kṛṣṇa. ❀

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā* Year 1, Issue 5

Q&A Guru and

by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura



Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's writings were the source of a book called *Bhaktivinoda-vāṇī-vaibhava*, which was compiled on the order of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. In this book, different *tattvas* have been explained in question and answer format according to category. The excerpts we are presenting here are from two sections entitled "Guru-tattva" and "Ācārya-tattva".

1. How should a disciple perceive his spiritual master?

A disciple should know his Gurudeva to be My *svarūpa*, an identical manifestation of My very self. He should never consider him to be an ordinary mortal entity.

Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya (Antya 1.46)

2. What is meant by accepting the shelter of a *sad-guru* (bona fide spiritual master) and what is meant by accepting the shelter of one who is not bona fide?

There are two types of *guru* – one is internal and the other manifests externally.

Only that person who is situated in *samādhi* (absorption in his eternal constitutional position) is his own internal *guru*. A person who considers his own logic to be his internal *guru*, and who accepts instructions on worship from 'him', has accepted a corrupt *guru*. When logic deceptively presents itself

Ācārya-tattva

as that which can nourish one's eternal *dharma*, it can be compared to Pūtanā deceptively presenting herself as a nurse. The followers of *rāga-mārga* must immerse [and thus surrender] all varieties of logic in transcendental subject matter and find shelter in *samādhi*, the soul's self-realised state.

The externally manifest *guru* teaches the process of worship. One who has fully understood *rāga-mārga* and who gives spiritually beneficial instructions to his disciple, according to the disciple's qualification, is a *sad-guru*.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā (8.14)

3. What mercy does the *guru-varga* (succession of bona fide spiritual masters) bestow upon the living entities from their unmanifest pastimes (their *aprakāṣa-līlā*)?

The souls of the great thinkers of the by-gone ages, who now live spiritually, often approach our inquiring spirit and assist it in its development.

The Bhāgavata: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics & its Theology

[This work was originally penned in English by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura and is presented here as he wrote it.]

4. Do the *ācāryas* ever differ in their opinions?

A self-realised soul is situated in his eternal identity. Whatever such a soul expresses in India, will be expressed by another self-realised soul in the North Pole. And a soul in Vaikuṅṭha will state the same opinion. This is

because the conceptions of pure souls are untainted by the slightest material interpretation; thus they can never differ.

Tattva-viveka, (*Amuccheda* 1.2)

5. Who can become *jagad-guru*, spiritual master of the entire world, according to the conceptions of the Vaiṣṇava scriptures?

One who is fully aware of the difference between material and transcendental truths, and who has whole-heartedly accepted the transcendental teachings on *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, is qualified to instruct all souls. In Vaiṣṇavism, this is the sole qualification of the *jagad-guru*. As such, a person is not expected to belong to a particular *varṇa* based on his birth or to a particular *āśrama* based on his *saṁskāra*.

Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya (*Antya* 5.84–85)

6. If an *ācārya* or *guru* engages in discussions about worldly matters, is he not considered a *prajalpī* (one who indulges in mundane talk)?

Even if Śrīla Śukadeva discussed materialistic people for the sake of instructing his disciples, he never became a *prajalpī*. It should be understood that his behaviour was always beneficial for others. In the same way, Śrīman Mahāprabhu spoke about pseudo-renunciates with the sole aim of instructing His followers.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 10, No. 10

7. What is the most significant task of an *ācārya's* immediate followers?

In the past four hundred years, many *anarthas* have surfaced in the Gauḍīya-sampradāya. The most prominent duty of the followers of the *ācārya* is to eradicate all such *anarthas* at the root.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 4, No. 1

8. What is the difference between a *guru* who bestows *dīkṣā mantras* and a *guru* who gives *harināma* initiation (the *mahā-mantra*)?

The *nāma-guru*, who awards *harināma* initiation, gives instruction on *nāma-tattva*, the fundamental truth about the holy name. Having established the holy name's supremacy, he initiates his disciple with the *mantra* based on the holy name.

The *dīkṣā-guru* gives the disciple the *mantras*. He is also the *nāma-guru* because the *mantras* are non-different from the holy name. If the holy name is separated from the *mantra*, the *mantra* loses its sanctity. The chanting of the holy names, on the other hand, automatically includes the recitation of one's *mantra*.

Śrī Harināma Cintāmaṇi

9. How does an *ācārya* capture the *śraddhā*, intrinsic devotional faith, of a living entity?

Those who assume the position of an *ācārya* must themselves follow the righteous path of eternal *dharma*. If they do so, other living entities will note their spotless character and their *śraddhā* will be captured. Everyone honours and respects the *sadācāra* (impeccable conduct) of an *ācārya*."

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 8, No. 9

10. What damage is incurred by behaviour that opposes the principles of *bhakti*?

Those Vaiṣṇavas whose behaviour is contrary to the conclusive truths of *bhakti* are the root cause of creating disturbances for the *sampradāya*.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 4, No. 1

11. Does an *ācārya* give *mantra-dīkṣā* (*mantra* initiation) without careful consideration?

The revered *mantra-ācārya* gives the *mantras* to a genuine candidate according to the injunctions of the scriptures, having considered the candidate's eligibility. Although *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* mentions the necessity of both the *guru* and disciple first examining each other before the initiation takes place, this is not generally practised. Consequently, there have been cases of both the spiritual master and disciple falling down. The result of this must be that deviations take place in the *sampradāya*.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 4, No. 1

12. Does a *sad-guru* award either *harināma* or *dīkṣā* to one who has no faith?

Those who award *harināma* initiation to faithless persons with the desire for *dakṣiṇa* (material payment) are simply salesmen. They discard a priceless gem (the holy name) for an insignificant reward and consequently, they are deprived of *hari-bhajana*.

Śrī Caitanya śikṣāmṛta (3.4)

13. Can a *sannyāsī* who has been rejected by his *guru* be recognised as an *ācārya*?

Although Rāmacandra Purī was a disciple of Śrī Mādhavendra Purī, he accepted the polluted conceptions of the dry, impersonalistic school and preached *adharma* (principles that are opposed to the eternal well-being of the soul). Śrī Mādhavendra Purī thus rejected him, calling him an offender. Since then, the Vaiṣṇavas have been indifferent to him because he began to find fault with and criticise others, as well as preach dry knowledge.

Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya (Antya-līlā 8)

14. Is it not appropriate to take shelter of a *guru* from an exalted family lineage? Why does it say in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* one should accept a *guru* from the *brāhmaṇa* class who is a householder (*grhastha*)?

The highest attainable spiritual welfare for all souls is knowledge of the truth about who Śrī Kṛṣṇa is

(*kṛṣṇa-tattva*). One who carefully deliberates upon this will be able to correctly discern the actual qualification of a *guru*. A person well versed in *kṛṣṇa-tattva* is eligible to become a *guru*, whether he belongs to the *brāhmaṇa* class or the *śūdra* class, or whether he is a householder or a renunciate.

Hari-bhakti-vilāsa asserts that it is not appropriate to accept the *kṛṣṇa-mantra* from a person of a lower class when a qualified person of a higher class is present. This recommendation is made for people of this world who want to practise *vaiṣṇava-dharma*, but cannot give up their attachment to the accepted norms of society. They are somewhat inclined to accruing spiritual benefit, but basically lead a regular life in society according to the injunctions of the scriptures.

For those who are aware of the concept of *vaidhī-bhakti* (devotional service based on regulative principles) and *rāgānuga-bhakti* (devotional service arising from a natural and deep love for Kṛṣṇa) and whose sole desire is to attain pure, unalloyed *bhakti* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* teaches that a qualified person who is well-versed in *kṛṣṇa-tattva* should be accepted as one's *guru*, irrespective of his *varṇa* or *āśrama*. This is the injunction of the scriptures.

Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya (Madhya 8.127)

15. Are a person's *brāhmaṇatva* (qualities that make him a *brāhmaṇa*) and *gṛhaṣṭhatva* (qualities that make him an ideal householder) not the two primary characteristics of a *guru*?

*kibā vipra kibā nyāsī śūdra kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vettā, sei 'guru' haya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 8.128)

A person may be a *brāhmaṇa*, a *sannyāsī*, a *śūdra* or whatever, but if he is well-versed in *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, he is eligible to become a *guru*."

A person who possesses this intrinsic characteristic is qualified to become a *guru*, even if he lacks a few extrinsic qualities. Being a *brāhmaṇa* or a householder

is counted among extrinsic qualities. It is better when a person endowed with the intrinsic characteristic also possess these two extrinsic characteristics. But if a person possesses the qualities of *brāhmaṇatva* and *gṛhaṣṭhatva*, yet has not properly understood *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, he is not qualified to be a *guru*.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 11, No. 6

16. What are the symptoms of a *sad-guru*, bona fide spiritual master? Is accepting a *kula-guru* (a *guru* on the basis of his parental lineage) equivalent to taking shelter of a bona fide spiritual master?

Due to the ill effects of time, people's conceptions of a true *guru* have become corrupted. They may take instructions from a *kula-guru* or just anyone, but it is not equivalent to accepting the shelter of a *sad-guru*, who is most worshipable. The scriptures state that a person who is inquisitive about the

actual intrinsic function of the soul, which is service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, should approach and surrender to a *guru* who has firm faith in *śabda-brahma* (the holy name and Vedic knowledge) and Parabrahma, the Supreme Personality, and who has taken refuge in them.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 2, No. 1

17. What instructions does a bona fide spiritual master give to his disciple?

The pure knowledge of *sambandha-jñāna*, *abhidheya-sādhana* and *prayojana* is glorified throughout Vaiṣṇava scriptures and is the principal teaching of Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Sambandha-jñāna means the correct understanding of Bhagavān (the Supreme Personality of Godhead), the *jīva* (living being) and this *brahmāṇḍa* (material cosmic manifestation). Furthermore, it means to understand their mutual relationships. A person with this understanding is a bona fide spiritual master who in turn instructs his disciple on *sambandha-jñāna* and reveals to him the means (*abhidheya*) by which he can achieve his ultimate goal (*prayojana*). Upon attaining *sambandha-jñāna*,

"The highest attainable spiritual welfare for all souls is knowledge of the truth about who Śrī Kṛṣṇa is (*kṛṣṇa-tattva*)."

what need does the *jīva* have to acquire any other knowledge? By *sambandha-jñāna* alone, every other type of knowledge and science in this material creation can be understood.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 11, No. 10

18. Who can be called an *ācārya*? What are the activities of a Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*?

Only one who teaches *dharma* by practising it himself is an *ācārya*. One who propagates misconceptions [about the Absolute Truth] to achieve worldly gain cannot actually attain the position of an *ācārya*. It is proper for those who have assumed the post of *ācārya* in the Gauḍīya-sampradāya to endeavor to remove all of the *sampradāya's anarthas*, or superfluous and unnecessary influences.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 4, No. 1

19. Can a scholar who does not know the *siddhānta* of *bhakti* be a [bona fide] *ācārya*?

Before Śrīman Mahāprabhu took birth, Devānanda Paṇḍita was highly regarded as an *ācārya*, simply because he articulately spoke on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. But Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself, being a teacher and preacher of *bhakti*, was highly displeased by Devānanda's non-devotional interpretation. Some time later, by the mercy of Śrī Vakreśvara Paṇḍita, this same Devānanda learned the principles of pure devotional service.

Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 4, No. 1

20. *Ācāryas* advent throughout each *yuga*. Does each *ācārya* serve to fulfil the mission of the previous *ācārya*?

The great reformers will always assert that they have come out not to destroy the old law, but to fulfil it. Vālmīki, Vyāsa, and Caitanya Mahāprabhu assert the fact either expressly or by their conduct.”

The Bhāgavata: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics & its Theology

[This work was originally penned in English by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura and is presented here as he wrote it.] ॐ

Śrī GURU- and

Excerpts from a lecture
delivered by

Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī
Thākura Prabhupāda

in the Sarasvata Assembly Hall,
Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Māyāpura,
Saturday, 9.00 pm,
on the 28th day
of the month of Māgha
(January) 1931

Appearing in English for the first time

tattva Sevā

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmīlitaṁ yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

A Golden Opportunity to Serve Collectively

Today I have an opportunity to worship my Śrī Gurudeva. Last year, also, I had the good fortune of worshipping him, and today that auspicious occasion has come again. By the mercy of Bhagavān, I had the fortune of being able to serve Śrīla Gurudeva for another year. If Śrīla Gurudeva had wanted to deprive me of service to him, I would not have survived this past year. Since I have been granted this one year, I must again, today, contemplate whether I have properly taken advantage of that opportunity and served him accordingly.



Śrīla Gurudeva said that we shall collectively engage in the service of Bhagavān. He used the word “we”, which means he was not referring to one person alone. Many persons egotistically profess, “I am Bhagavān’s exclusive servant” or “I have been selected to perform a particular service to Him because no one else is qualified to do it.” But Śrīla Gurudeva’s words issue from a heart melted with loving compassion: “Come! Let us forget our tendency to block each other’s spiritual progress; this is violence. Service to Bhagavān is superior to all else.”

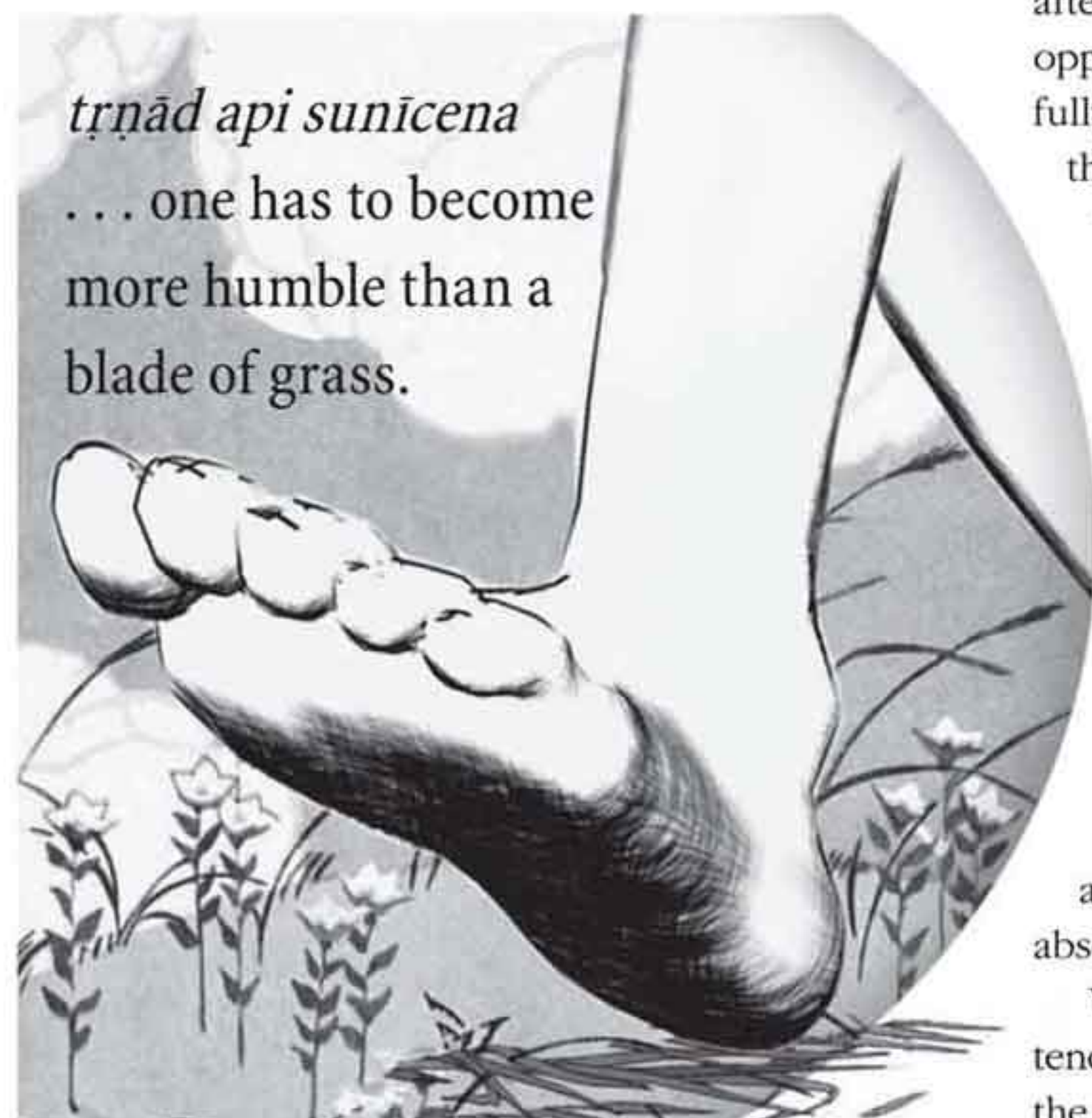
By saying “superior to all else” he is not implying, “No one can do this service but me; I will not allow anyone else to do it.” My Śrīla Gurupādapadma’s nature contains no such violence.

Humbly Praying for Help

“*Bahubhirmilitvā yat kīrtanam tadaiva saṅkīrtanam – saṅkīrtana* means congregational chanting.”

Glorification and prayers are included in *saṅkīrtana*. From an external perspective, one who offers *stuti* (Vedic prayers) holds a lower position than the object of the prayers. A third party however, can best understand the glories of a person by hearing his prayers.

Śrī Gaurasundara explained that to genuinely call out for Bhagavān, one has to become more humble than a blade of grass (*trṇād api sunīcena*). We cannot cry out for



someone until we have accepted our own insignificance in relation to that person. We beg for assistance when we are forced to acknowledge our helplessness. Whenever we find ourselves incapable of completing a task on our own, we are left with no choice but to seek another’s help. Alone, I cannot complete a task that requires five people to accomplish.

Śrī Gaurasundara has instructed us to genuinely cry out for Bhagavān, which means He has urged us to solicit Śrī Bhagavān for help. This we have heard from Śrīla Gurudeva. However if I cry out to Him with the intention of involving Him in service to me, or if I petition Him for the purpose of accomplishing any task, my cries lack the real humility of *trṇād api sunīcena*. Real humility is never found in an external show of humility, which is actually mere duplicity. Calling out to Bhagavān in the mood of being His master, expecting Him to obey like a servant, is ineffective. He does not hear such a call because He is supremely independent and fully conscious. Consequently, He is not controlled by anyone. Until a person’s egoism establishes roots in sincere, non-duplicitous humility, his prayers will not reach Bhagavān, who is fully independent.

A person who is more humble than a blade of grass may cry out to Bhagavān, but unless he is endowed with the qualities of patience and tolerance, his calling out will still not bear fruit. If we show impatience by hankering after our own interests, our behaviour is in direct opposition to the mood of *trṇād api sunīcena*. If we are fully confident that Bhagavān is the Complete Being, and that our calling out to Him will never result in scarcity, we will not experience any dearth of patience. But if I become greedy, intolerant and restless, and if I remain adamant that I will accomplish my task on the strength of my own ability and competence, I will not be able to call out to Bhagavān in the true sense.

If we are excessively vain, we cannot properly call out to Him. And also if we try to annihilate our real self-interest, then we will not be able to cry out to Bhagavān properly. Often, I think that I am obliging Him by my prayers, and therefore I engage in other activities in which I don’t need to ask for His help. This mentality also indicates the absence of tolerance.

We therefore require a guardian to save us from such tendencies until we become qualified to sincerely pray in the mood of *trṇād api sunīcena*. His shelter and support

are necessary to shield us from such unfavourable inclinations. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says: “*āśraya laiyā bhaje, tāñre kṛṣṇa nāhi tyaje, āra sabe mare akāraṇa* – one who performs *bhajana* under the shelter of personalities who are the abode of love for Kṛṣṇa, is not neglected by Kṛṣṇa; everyone else lives in vain.”

We are Incompetent to Proceed Without a Bona Fide Guru

Serving the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva is our foremost necessity. In this world, we even need a *guru* to perform *karma* (material activities), to acquire *jñāna* (knowledge) or to fulfil any *anyābhilāṣa*, (desires not connected to serving Kṛṣṇa). The guidance such worldly *gurus* offer engenders insignificant results, which are the antithesis of the results bestowed by the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*. Śrīla Gurudeva is the source of our genuine welfare. The very moment we become bereft of his mercy, diverse worldly desires manifest in our hearts. And if the *varṇa-pradarśaka guru*, who is the first to tell us about spiritual life, does not tell us how we should take shelter of the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva, we may end up losing the gem in hand.

Nāma-bhajana (chanting Kṛṣṇa’s names) is the sole method of performing *bhajana*, and it is the only method Śrīla Gurudeva confers upon us. Consequently, our responsibility is to worship his lotus feet at the beginning of each year, that is, every *guru-pūjā*. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī says:

*guru-pādāśrayas tasmāt
kṛṣṇa-dīkṣādi-śikṣaṇam
viśrambheṇa guroḥ sevā
sādhu-varṇamānuvartanam
Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu (1.2.74–5)*

[The first four limbs of *sādhana-bhakti* are:] to accept the shelter of the lotus feet of a bona fide *guru*, to take *dīkṣā* and receive instructions on service to Kṛṣṇa from him, to serve him with intimacy and affection and to follow the path of the *sādhus*, under his guidance.

In a realm that is concealed and mystifying, it is impossible to proceed by depending on one’s own multitude of competencies. Just as it is impossible to foresee the future or make plans for the future on

the strength of one’s own ability, similarly, mundane conceptions cannot help one penetrate or attain the supra-mundane realm. My senses have experienced something of the time that has already passed, and therefore I have knowledge of it, but I remain ignorant about the future. In the same way, our current senses are incapable of informing us about that realm that is complete and inconceivable. Our eyes can only see a few miles into the distance, and our ears can only hear words spoken nearby.

If we depend on our own competence to proceed in such a realm, we will never reach the far end, the Ultimate Reality. Such an attempt is likened to Rāvaṇa’s efforts to build a stairway to heaven. Construction may begin, but it will eventually crumble to the ground. It cannot exist in a void where no support is present. Similarly we desire to ascend to that unknown realm, and we try to do so on the strength of our own competence, but we always fail. Furthermore, if we consider an ordinary mortal who is *laghu* (spiritually impotent and not at all grave) to be *guru* (weighty with potency), we face failure.

We will have to recognise who is *guru* and who is *laghu*. A *guru* is engaged in service to that Complete Entity whom all real *gurus* honour as their sole object of worship. This does not refer to a *guru* (teacher) of sitar or physical exercises. Such a *guru* cannot save one from the clutches of death.

*gurur na sa syāt sva-jano na sa syāt
pitā na sa syāj janānī na sā syāt
daivam na tat syān na patīś ca sa syān
na mocayed yaḥ samupeta-mṛtyum
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (5.5.18)*

“Even a person who is more humble than a blade of grass may cry out to Bhagavān, but unless he is endowed with the qualities of patience and tolerance, his calling out will still not bear fruit...”

That *guru* is not a *guru*, that father is not a father, that mother is not a mother, that demigod is not a demigod and that relative is not a relative who cannot protect us from the clutches of death, cannot bestow eternal life upon us and cannot protect us from ignorance, because of which we are deeply engrossed in this material world.

Ignorance is the sole reason a person falls into the clutches of death; a person with knowledge does not. All the education in the world is immediately dispensable for one who becomes mad or paralysed or who meets with death. Unless we are searching for the ultimate truth, we tend to become unconscious, or devoid of real consciousness.

When we are impelled to enjoy our senses, like the tongue, hands, legs, arms and genitals, we are enchanted and then deceived. It is therefore imperative upon us to remember Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma at the beginning of each year, each month, each day and at every moment, for he can protect us from all such deception.

Remember Śrī Guru Every Day, Every Moment

Our Gurudeva's forms are manifold. If he did not manifest himself in various ways, then who else would protect us? That person whom my Gurudeva has accepted as his own is my saviour. I do not want to see the faces of vile persons who criticise my Gurudeva or who support those who criticise him. They are the cause of all inauspiciousness.

The very instant I deviate from or forget the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurudeva, who is continuously attracting me to his lotus feet, at that very moment I am unquestionably deprived of the Truth. Upon such deviation, I become engrossed in contemplating countless scarcities. I hurry to bathe in a holy place, and I become busy protecting myself from the cold. In this way I chase after activities other than service to Śrīla Gurudeva.

My Gurudeva constantly protects me from *dvitīya-abhiniveśa*, becoming absorbed in activities separate from the interest of Bhagavān. If I do not remember my Gurudeva at the beginning of each year, each month, each day, and at every moment, I will surely fall further away from the path of *bhakti*. Consequently, I myself will wish to be recognised as *guru*, and the sinister contemplation of how others will worship me will invade my mind.

This alone is *dvitīya-abhiniveśa*. We have not assembled here to perform *guru-pūjā* just for today, but to begin performance of it at every moment, forever.

Śrī Gaurasundara is Kṛṣṇa Himself who came to this Earth as *jagad-guru*, the spiritual master of the whole world, and spoke *Śikṣāṣṭaka*. May the *mahānta-gurus* (exalted, manifest *gurus*) and all

great Vaiṣṇavas who are surrendered to their lotus feet, impart all aspects of the teachings of *Śikṣāṣṭaka* to us. May they deliver us from our calamitous situation.

My Gurudeva Appears to Me Everywhere

Our spiritual masters (*āśraya-jātīya guru-varga*) are the abodes of love. They appear to us in different forms to bestow their mercy upon us. They are reflected in all objects and in every entity. Indeed, they are the special manifestations of Śrīla Gurudeva, he who imparts *divya-jñāna*, transcendental knowledge. The object of love, Kṛṣṇa (*viśaya-jātīya*), is one half of the equation, and the abode of love, Śrī Guru (*āśraya-jātīya*), is the other half. Their combination results in a complete whole through *vilāsa vaicitrya* (wonderfully variegated pastimes). Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the complete manifestation of the object of love, and Śrīla Gurudeva is the complete perception of the abode of love. When the transcendental reflection of *āśraya-jātīya tattva* falls upon any conscious being, he is to be understood as a manifestation of my Gurudeva. Gurudeva is that person whose behaviour at every moment instructs us that our entire life is meant for



“Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the complete manifestation of the object of love...”

serving Bhagavān. That very Gurudeva is reflected in the heart of every living being and is situated in every entity as *āśraya-jātīya tattva*.

cūta-priyāla-panasāsana-kovidāra
jambu-arka-bilva-bakulāmra-kadamba-nīpāḥ
ye 'nye parārtha-bhavakā yamunopakūlāḥ
śamsantu kṛṣṇa-padaṁrahita-manāḥ naḥ
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.30.9)

O *mango, priyāla*, jackfruit, *asana* and *kovidāra* trees! O trees of *jambu, arka, bilva* and *bakula*! O *āmra, kadamba* and *nīpa* trees, as well as all other plants and trees growing along Yamunā's shores whose lives are devoted to benefiting others, we have lost our minds in the agony of separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa, so please tell us where He has gone.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa disappeared from the *rāsa-sthālī*, (the place of the *rāsa-līlā*), and the *gopīs*, who are eternally liberated souls, approached each and every entity in search of

Him. Did the *gopīs* simply depend upon the knowledge acquired through their senses to find Him? We receive the opportunity to hear about these subjects from our Gurudeva.

The variegated transcendental pastimes of Nanda-Govinda, Yaśodā-Govinda, Śrīdāma-Sudāma-Govinda, Citraka-Patraka-Govinda, Vamśī-Govinda, Go-Govinda and Kadamba-Govinda are accounts of the *rāsa*-laden pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda.

If a person is blessed with the *darśāna* of Śrī Guru in his heart, or if he makes a place in his mind where Śrī Guru can wander, then such pastimes are revealed in his heart. The one and only way to attain service to the Complete Being is to worship that person who, by his every activity, encourages us to serve the Complete Being. Our Gurudeva's image, reflected in many different ways, constantly manifests newer and newer lessons for us.

“...and Śrīla Gurudeva is the complete perception of the abode of love.”



My Gurudeva manifests in various repositories and, upon seeing their attitude of service to Bhagavān, I pray that I may spend thousands and thousands of lifetimes serving Śrī Hari in their association, and that my aversion to serving Him, which has prevailed for millions of lifetimes, is finally destroyed.

Everyone is Advancing Except Me

Once I went to Maṅgala-giri in South India to establish the sacred impressions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu's footprints. A devotee amongst us raised this doubt: “When I first came to the *maṭha*, I noted the character of the *maṭha* residents and their attachment to serving Bhagavān. This impressed and inspired me and I cherished a high aspiration to be like them. But now, the standard I once envisioned attaining has lessened considerably. I am engrossed in various mundane thoughts such as thinking about the many *brahmacārīs* who have returned to their homes and entered household life.”

In reply I said, “I cannot say that they have left

hari-bhajana just because they have returned to their homes. In fact, I see each and every one of those *brahmacārīs* as amazing Vaiṣṇavas and that their

Vaiṣṇava qualities and devotion for the Lord have increased manifold. What a wicked

atheist I used to be, but my wickedness substantially

abated in their association. I see that I am averse to Bhagavān, but they

all are engaged in *hari-bhajana*. By the mercy of Śrīla Raghunātha Bhaṭṭa Gosvāmī, I have come to know this verse:

vaiṣṇavera nindyakarma nā pāde kāne
sabe kṛṣṇa bhaje tīṅha ai mātra jāne

Gossip about Vaiṣṇavas indulging in abominable activities should never enter my ears. I should only see that all persons are serving Kṛṣṇa.

From my perspective, everybody is advancing in *hari-bhajana*, and this universe, which was created by Bhagavān, is prospering in every respect. Everyone except me is receiving spiritual benefit.

“The only person who is incapable of performing *hari-bhajana* is me because I busy myself with finding fault in others.”

You have become restless without due reason, and because you are intensely eager to serve Bhagavān you want the devotees who left to also be increasingly keen to engage in *hari-bhajana*. They are, however, engaged in *hari-bhajana*. Still you are dissatisfied and want their exuberance to serve their beloved Lord to increase a million-fold. My heart, on the contrary, is meagre and unable to accommodate the magnitude of their *bhajana* of Śrī Hari. They exemplified living

according to an astonishingly high ideal. The only person who is incapable of performing *hari-bhajana* is me because I busy myself with finding fault in others. How, then, can I ever make progress?”

Enthusiastic to Find Faults

Who finds faults in the Vaiṣṇavas? Those who depend on their senses to acquire knowledge. Their senses – the eyes, ears, nose and so forth – are their sole support; hence external objects deceive them. In other words, those who are averse to *hari-bhajana* find fault with the Vaiṣṇavas. When a person tells me that someone has stopped chanting his *harināma*, I think, “He must have become highly elevated at heart as a result of so much chanting. This is why he has left the path of *bhajana*, which is the sole source of one’s welfare, and become engaged in other activities. Only a rich man is so content that he does not care to earn more.”

In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, Bhagavān says: “*na me bhaktaḥ pranaśyati* – My devotees never perish or face misfortune.”

*api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*
Bhagavad-gītā (9.30)

If even a man of abominable character worships Me with single-pointed focus, he is still to be considered a *sādhū* because he is rightly situated in *bhakti*.

*kṣipram bhavati dharmātmā
śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ pranaśyati*
Bhagavad-gītā (9.31)

He quickly becomes virtuous and attains eternal peace. O Kaunteya, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.

Can anyone who is one-pointed and unflinching in his performance of *hari-bhajana* ever become degraded? They have doubtlessly attained full auspiciousness. Our attitude, however, is defective, and this is why we do not attain our own auspiciousness.

*para-svabhāva-karmāṇi
na praśamsen na garhayet
viśvam ekāmakaṁ paśyan
prakṛtyā puruṣeṇa ca*
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.28.1)

Śrī Bhagavān said: Do not criticise or praise the conditioned nature and activities of others. View this world as a combination of material nature and souls who have an enjoying propensity, both based on the one Ultimate Reality.

If I depend on my sense-perception for information, I will remain deprived of service to the Lord, who is beyond the perception of the senses (*adhokṣaja*), and of Śrīla Gurudeva. I have not attained my own welfare, but still I meditate on the inauspicious behaviour of others, and although I myself am full of shortcomings, I am enthusiastic to find faults in others. If I ever began to really focus on my own welfare, would I have time to observe another’s imperfections?

*kṛṣṇeti yasya giri taṁ manasādriyeta
dikṣāsti cet praṇatibhiḥ ca bhajantam īsam
śuśrūṣayā bhajana-vijñam ananyam anya-
nindādi-sūnya-hṛdam īpsita-saṅga-labdhyā*
Upadeśāmṛta (5)

One who chants Kṛṣṇa's name just once is a neophyte devotee (*kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*). One should consider him to be his family member and silently respect him. One who, fully understanding the principle of *dikṣā*, has accepted initiation from a qualified *guru* and performs *bhajana* of Bhagavān in accordance with Vaiṣṇava conventions is an intermediate devotee (*madhyama-adhikārī*). One should respect such a devotee who is endowed with the correct understanding of reality and illusion by offering him *praṇāma* and so forth. One who is adept in the science of *bhajana* as described in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and other Vaiṣṇava scriptures, and who performs exclusive *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is a *mahā-bhāgavata* devotee. Due to his undeviating absorption in Kṛṣṇa, the pure heart of such a devotee is free from faults such as the tendency to criticise others. He is expert in *bhajana*, meaning that he mentally renders service (*mānasa-sevā*) to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa's pastimes which take place during the eight segments of the day (*aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*). Knowing him to be a topmost devotee whose heart is established in the particular mood of service to Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa for which one aspires, and who is affectionately disposed towards oneself, one should honour him by offering *daṇḍavat-praṇāma*, making relevant inquiry and rendering service with great love.

Our lives are short. Last year we gathered here to worship Śrīla Gurudeva. Since then, those who received the mercy of Bhagavān have departed from this world. However, for the purpose of finding faults in others and to show an example of the absence of *trṇād api sunīcena*, we are in this material world absorbed in sense gratification.

The slightest tendency to find faults in others is completely absent in Śrīla Gurudeva. At the same time, his sole function is to kindly point out our hundreds and thousands of faults, which are the causes of our misfortune. May we not lose sight of this quality of Śrīla Gurudeva.

If I live for one more year, then I will absorb myself in the service of Gurudeva at every moment from today onward and give up my tendency to criticise others. I will not say, "I am valorous, scholarly and a gifted speaker; he is foolish, ignorant and cannot express anything." On the strength of exclusive absorption in

hari-kathā, I will not foster an attitude of aversion to Bhagavān, and thus I will become truly benefited.

Sādhaka and Siddha are Not the Same

*āśā-bharair-amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathamcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmpratam hi
tamce kṛpām mayi vidhāsyāci naiva kiṃ me;
prānairvrajaena ca varoru vakāriṇāpi*

Vilāpa-kusumāñjali (102)

O Varoru (girl with beautiful thighs), I am passing my time with the sole hope of being able to serve You. If You withhold Your mercy, what value to me are this life, the land of Vraja, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Baka?

Some people ask me, "Why don't you give *siddha-praṇālī* (the identity of one's eternal relationship with Kṛṣṇa)?" However, I cannot understand how a *sādhaka* and a *siddha* can be on the same level. How can one in the stage of *sādhana* that is full of *anarthas* cultivate the activities of *sādhana* that is free from *anarthas* or that of *siddhi* (the stage of perfection)? If someone is *siddha*, self-realised, and he mercifully reveals his *svarūpa* to me, then only can I come to know his eternal constitutional form.

In *madhura-rasa* Śrīla Gurudeva is Vārṣabhānavī (Śrī Rādhā). According to a person's eternal nature, he will see that same Śrī Gurudeva as a certain absolute reality (*vastu*). One in the mood of a parent sees him as Nanda-Yaśodā; one in the mood of a friend sees him as Śrīdāma-Sudāma and one in the mood of a servitor sees him as Citraka-Patraka.

The truth of who is *viṣaya* and who is *āśraya* appears in the heart of one who remains engaged in service to Śrīla Gurudeva. This truth does not manifest in the heart by any artificial means. When the tendency to serve arises in a fortunate soul, this truth automatically appears in his heart. We are not obliged to serve anyone other than our Gurudeva. The nature of *nitya-līlā* (Kṛṣṇa's eternal pastimes with His devotees), which even Śeṣa, Śiva, Brahmā and others cannot conceive of, will never be realised by one whose consciousness is polluted with mundane conceptions.

I offer my obeisances unto the lotus feet of you all, my *guru-varga*. ❀

Translated from Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Harikathāmṛta*

What to Reflect Upon in Times of Separation

On this 23rd day of the month of Agrahāyaṇa (Friday, 9th December 1949) falls the disappearance day of Śrīla Prabhupāda. It is essential to understand what a disciple must do on the disappearance day of his beloved spiritual master. We should all certainly perform whatever ritualistic ceremonies are recommended for this occasion, and perform them, as far as possible, according to Vaiṣṇava practices. But rather than consider this any further, I request everyone to remember the *mano-bhīṣṭa*, or most cherished desire, of Śrīla Prabhupāda.

This unfortunate soul is presenting, in the form of a grief-stricken humble offering, only a few aspects of what awakens fully in his heart as he recalls the disappearance of his spiritual master.

Consolation is usually necessary at times of separation. Upon receiving it, the heart afflicted by the grief of separation finds relief. Without such solace, the affliction brings a person closer to the tenth stage of life – unconsciousness or death. One will feel separation from the lotus feet of Śrī Guru to the extent that one is attached to them.

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Act of Depriving Us

Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma has mercifully withheld *bhakti* from those of us who were proud of our learning, and to ensure our natural benefit, he did not interfere with our miserable condition [our unwillingness to follow his instructions]

Separation

and independence. Witnessing and reflecting upon this unprecedented foresightedness, I am sold forever at his lotus feet. What can Śrī Gurudeva do for those who desire to be deprived? To interfere with another's independence is to lash his very existence as a conscious being, and is fully contrary to Śrī Bhagavān's desire. Śrī Gurudeva exhibits the pinnacle of service to Śrī Bhagavān, and therefore such interference would be at odds with his nature.

That said, Śrī Guru is bestowing mercy upon his followers even in depriving them so, and he thereby lives up to the title "Ocean of Mercy". Who will understand the hidden intention behind his actions? The way to transform my heart, which is intoxicated by the desire to enjoy mundane sense objects, is *vañcayet draviṇādibhiḥ*: to deprive me by offering me mere worldly commodities. We have the propensity to fulfil our desires by enjoying the wealth and belongings of Śrīla Gurudeva, and our foremost duty on this day is to cast this habit into the fire of separation from him, thereby reducing it to ashes. During his physical presence, Śrīla Prabhupāda was merciful to me by supplying me with many comforts. Today, in his absence, I no longer receive this free supply, and therefore I feel acute pain in separation from him. If our need for Śrī Guru were based on a feeling of emptiness that came from being bereft of his tutelage, it would be a far superior feeling of separation.

Śrīla Gurudeva's Perspective, which Befits a Paramahansa

Observing my weakness of heart, Śrīla Gurudeva heaped praise and honour on me, and thus engaged me in service. Encouraging words filled with admiration

delight the human senses, and therefore, sadly, I have engaged Śrīla Gurudeva in my own sense-gratification, expecting such words from him. What is more, my foolish mind considers itself to be the sole object of Gurudeva's praise, which is in fact wholly false, and has thus reached the zenith of pride. Thus, I have buried in the ground the verse *ṛṇād api sunīcena* as taught by Śrīman Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Gurudeva's transcendental, liberated position is such that he forever exemplifies the statements "*yāñhā yāñhā netra paḍe, tāñhā kṛṣṇa sphure* – wherever he looks and whatever he sees reminds him of Kṛṣṇa", and "*yāñhā nadi dekhe, tāñhā mānaye kālindī* – whenever he sees a river, he sees it as the Kālindī". This is the nature of Śrīla Gurudeva. Therefore, I, who am like a drain brimming with the foul-smelling sewage of this mundane world, appear to the *mahā-bhāgavata* to be the most sacred Kālindī, although I am thoroughly aware of the filth in my heart and can never consider myself to be the Kālindī. Not just any mountain is Giri-Govardhana. But the *mahā-bhāgavata* sees my stony mountain-like pride as Govardhana, although that mountain is hardly Govardhana for me.

Śrīla Gurupādapadma has made a special effort to help me progress by praising me profusely. Unable to understand the deeply esoteric nature of his heart, I have become inflated with pride from receiving this praise and constantly claim it from him. Now, in his absence, my "sixth sense" (the mind) is no longer gratified by his words of admiration, and as I think about this, I long to be with him. But today, on his disappearance day, my duty is to fully obliterate my mountain-like pride by remembering his teachings, which are devastating enough to shake the earth and as grave as a clap of thunder.

Appearing in English for the first time

from Śrīla Prabhupāda

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja



“When Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed us, it was like the roar of a lion; and when he chastised us, it struck us like a thunderbolt.”

The Essence of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s Teachings

When Śrīla Prabhupāda instructed us, it was like the roar of a lion; and when he chastised us, it struck us like a thunderbolt. He used language that made the heart quiver. One principal teaching delivered in this way stirs in my heart today. After reflecting upon our bleak future, Śrīla Prabhupāda disseminated elevated teachings pertaining to the path of *sādhana*, in an attempt to save us. Foremost among them is to please Kṛṣṇa by performing *harināma-kīrtana* while remaining in the association of *sādhus* and Vaiṣṇavas. Indeed, *kīrtana* of Kṛṣṇa is the only *bhajana*. This in itself encapsulates the teaching of Śrīla Rūpa and Raghunātha Gosvāmīs.

Those who have compiled the Vedic scriptures have never explained *bhajana* to mean remaining hidden in a secluded place and gratifying one’s senses by fostering laziness. Those attached to sense gratification who desire recognition and are lazy, are unable to understand the nature of *bhajana*. On the pretext of doing *harināma*, they live in a corner of their homes, which are like dark wells. They consider the mere “pulling of rope”, as Śrīla Prabhupāda would call it, to be *harināma*; and thus they become degraded.

All those who are lazy and weak due to a lack of *kṛṣṇa-śakti* consider service to Śrī Guru, who is actively absorbed in serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa, to be *karma*, or ordinary worldly activity. Their inability to differentiate between *karma* and *bhakti* pierces the heart of Śrīla Prabhupāda on his disappearance day with a pointed javelin. If engaging all of one’s senses in the service of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *karma*, are we to consider that paralyzing them is *bhagavad-bhakti*?

Today, on Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disappearance day my heart is feeling pain as I remember the description of the *guru-drohitā*, insurrection against Śrī Guru, of those *jīvas* who are afflicted with weakness of heart and who crave fame. Śrīla Prabhupāda uses the word “seclusion” (*nirjana*) to advise us to renounce the association of wicked persons (*durjana*) and stay in the association of saintly persons (*sajjana*). All other meanings of “seclusion” are against the Vedic scriptures, against rational thought, and against the missionary spirit that is the most cherished desire of Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma. The request of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is that you do not engage in behaviour that is adverse to the internal desire of *om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa-svāmī aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura. You must all assist favourably to bring about his cherished will. For our welfare, Śrīla Prabhupāda preserved his most prized instructions in the form of a song. Today, on his disappearance day, let that song become our life and soul.

Duṣṭa Mana! Tumi Kisera Vaiṣṇava?

(1)

*duṣṭa mana tumi kisera vaiṣṇava?
pratiṣṭhāra tare, nirjanera ghare,
tava harināma kevala kaitava*

O wicked mind, what kind of Vaiṣṇava are you? Your chanting in a solitary place is simply for adoration and fame. Such chanting is nothing but hypocrisy.

(2)

*jaḍera pratiṣṭhā, sūkarera viṣṭhā,
jāna nā ki tāhā māyāra vaibhava
kanaka-kāminī, divasa-yāminī,
bhāviyā ki kāja, anitya se saba*

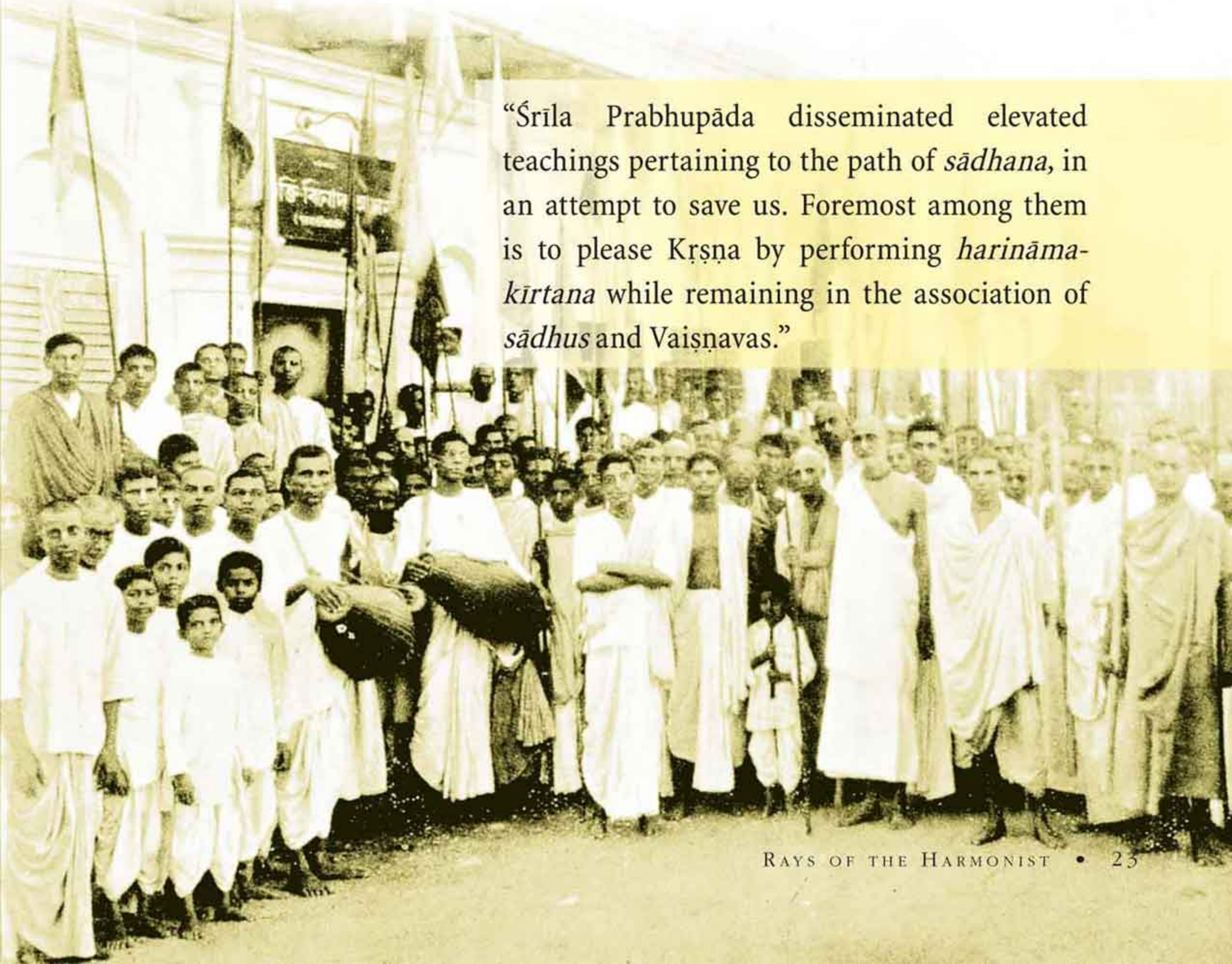
Such mundane glory is really the excrement of a hog. Don't you know that it is simply the allurements of *māyā*? Day and night you contemplate nothing but wealth and women, but what value is there in meditating on temporary things?

(3)

*tomāra kanaka, bhogera janaka,
kanakera dvāre sevaha mādhaba
kāminīra kāma, nahe tava dhāma,
tāhāra mālika kevala yādava
pratiṣṭhāśā-taru, jada-māyā-maru
nā pela rāvaṇa yūjhiya rāghava*

Your wealth is the cause of your sense enjoyment. With your riches you should serve Mādhava, the husband of Lakṣmī, the enjoyer of all wealth.

“Śrīla Prabhupāda disseminated elevated teachings pertaining to the path of *sādhana*, in an attempt to save us. Foremost among them is to please Kṛṣṇa by performing *harināma-kīrtana* while remaining in the association of *sādhus* and Vaiṣṇavas.”



“ [Desires for] money, women and fame are like tigresses. Those who have relinquished them are indeed Vaiṣṇavas. They alone are pure and detached devotees who can conquer material existence. ”

Satisfying the desires of women is never your domain; rather, it is the sole concern of Yādava, who is their proprietor. The desire tree that offers adoration and glory stands like a mirage in the desert of the illusory energy. Rāvaṇa was unable to attain this glory despite fighting with Rāghava (Śrī Rāma). In other words, he wanted to enjoy the position of Rāma by being the lord of everything.

(4)

*vaiṣṇavī pratiṣṭhā, tāte kara niṣṭhā,
tāhā nā bhajile labhibe raurava
harijana-dveṣa, pratiṣṭhāsā kleśa,
kara kena tabe tāhāra gaurava*

O mind, stand firmly as the servant of the Vaiṣṇavas, an honour they have bestowed upon you. If you do not serve in this way, you will go to the hell called Raurava. Why do you think you will triumph by envying the devotees and, as a result, take the trouble to satisfy your thirst for prestige?

(5)

*vaiṣṇavera pāche (kache), pratiṣṭhāsā ache,
tā'ta kabhu nahe anitya-vaibhava
se hari sambandha, śūnya-māyāgandha,
tāhā kabhu naya jaḍera kaitava*

The desire for the honour that comes from being the servant of the devotees of Śrī Hari is always intrinsic to the Vaiṣṇavas, and such glory is never temporary. The Vaiṣṇavas' renown is their relationship to Śrī Hari. Such fame is genuine, devoid of the stench of māyā, and never mere mundane deception.

(6)

*pratiṣṭhā-caṇḍālī, nirjanatā-jālī,
ubhaye jāniha māyika-raurava
kīrtana chāḍība, pratiṣṭhā mākhība,
ki kāja ḍhuṇḍiyā tāḍṛsā gaurava*

The prestige of the pseudo Vaiṣṇava is like that of a dog-eater, and his solitary *bhajana* is mere deceit. Both are an illusory hell. Having ceased to perform *kīrtana* you hanker for honour and acclaim. Why are you seeking such praise?

(7)

*mādhavendra pure, bhāva-ghare chūri,
nā karila kabhu sadāi jānava
tomāra pratiṣṭha, śūkarera viṣṭhā,
tāra saha sama kabhu nā mānava*

O mind, know for certain that Mādhavendra Purī never attained the stage of *bhāva* by devising a shortcut. (In other words, he did not avoid *kīrtana* and promote solitude, thereby avoiding the stages of *śraddhā*, *sādhu-saṅga* and so forth.) As a result, he received from Gopīnātha Himself the real fame of being a devotee of the Lord. Your fame, however, is the excrement of a hog. Never consider it to be equivalent to Mādhavendra Purī's.

(8)

*matsaratā-vaśe, tūmi jaḍarase,
majecha chāḍiyā kīrtana-sauṣṭhava
tāi duṣṭa mana, nirjana-bhajana,
prachārīcha chale kūyogī-vaibhava*

Out of envy, you have damned yourself to relishing mundane *rasa* (material enjoyment), and have renounced the sublime beauty of *kīrtana*. O wicked mind, on the pretense of performing solitary *bhajana* you are only engaged in nefarious deeds.

(9)

*prabhu sanātane, parama yatane,
śikṣā dila yāhā cinta sei saba
sei du'ṭi kathā, bhūla' nā sarvathā,
uccaiḥ svare kara harināma-rava
phalgu āra yukta, baddha āra mukta,
kabhu nā bhāviha 'ekākāra saba*



You should consider what Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught with great care to Sanātana Gosvāmī, which was to loudly utter the holy name of Śrī Hari and never forget the following two most valuable points: (a) the difference between imitative renunciation (*phalgu-vairāgya*) and genuine renunciation (*yukta-vairāgya*); and (b) the difference between souls entrapped in this world (*baddha-jīvas*) and liberated souls (*mukta-jīvas*). Never confuse these categories.

(10)

*kanaka-kāminī, pratiṣṭhā-bāghinī,
chādiyāche yāre sei ta' vaiṣṇava
sei anāsakta, sei śuddha bhakta,
saṁsāra tathāya pāya parābhava*

[Desires for] money, women and fame are like tigresses. Those who have relinquished them are indeed Vaiṣṇavas. They alone are pure and detached devotees who can conquer material existence (*saṁsāra*).

(11)

*yathāyogyā-bhoga, nāhi tathā roga,
anāsakta sei, ki āra kahaba*

*āsakti rahita sambandha-sahita,
viṣaya-samūha sakali mādharma*

Those who accept only those sense objects that are necessary to maintain their bodies for the service of Kṛṣṇa, can never be afflicted by any type of disease, that is, by either a physical disease or the pollution of one's consciousness. What can be said about their detachment? Being free from all types of false attachment they see everything in relation to Kṛṣṇa, and thus understand that everything is meant for the pleasure of Mādhava, the husband of all Lakṣmīs.

(12)

*se yukta-vairāgya, tāhā ta' saubhāgya,
tāhāi jaḍete harira vaibhava
kīrtane yāhāra, pratiṣṭhā-sambhāra,
tāhāra sampatti kevala kaitava*

Those who are situated in this type of true renunciation, are indeed fortunate. They exist in this mundane world as the splendour of Śrī Hari. However, the so-called treasure of those who perform *kīrtana* of Śrī Hari merely to gain respect and praise, is simply deceit.

“One’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa is the stem to transcendence, which lies outside the reach of anyone whose consciousness is tied to the mundane world.”

(13)

*viṣaya-mumukṣu, bhogera bubhukṣu,
duye tyaja mana, dui avaiṣṇava
kṛṣṇera sambandha, aprākṛta skandha,
kabhu nahe tāhā jaḍera sambhava*

O mind, reject the company of those who seek liberation or material enjoyment, as both types of persons are non-devotees. One’s relationship with Kṛṣṇa is the stem to transcendence, which lies outside the reach of anyone whose consciousness is tied to the mundane world.

(14)

*māyāvādī jana, kṛṣṇetara mana,
mukta abhimāne se ninde vaiṣṇava
vaiṣṇavera dāsa, tava bhakti-āśa,
kena vā ḍākicha nirjana-āhava*

The *māyāvādīs’* minds never contemplate Kṛṣṇa. They pride themselves on being liberated and blaspheme the Vaiṣṇavas. O mind, always pray to be the servant of the Vaiṣṇavas and desire devotion unto them. Why have you invited this struggle of solitude?

(15)

*ye phālgur-vairāgī, kahe nije tyāgī,
se nā pāre kabhu haite vaiṣṇava
hari-pada chāḍī, nirjanatā bāḍī,
labhiyā ki phala, phalgu se vaibhava*

The imitators who claim to be true renunciants, can never become Vaiṣṇavas. O mind, what result will you gain by giving up the service of the lotus feet of Śrī Hari and the Vaiṣṇavas, and solely tending to your solitary *bhajana*? Such so-called brilliance is a sham.

(16)

*rādhā-dāsye rahi, chāḍa’ bhoga-ahi
pratiṣṭhāśa nahe kirtana-gaurava
radha-nityajana, taha chadi’ mana
kena vā nirjana-bhajana-kaitava*

Become situated in *rādhā-dāsya*, the service of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and give up the serpent of material enjoyment (which will devour you). Know that the desire for respect and adoration is not the glory of *kirtana*. O mind, having given up the association of Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s eternal servants, why have you adopted the fraudulent practice of solitary *bhajana*?

(17)

*vrajavāsi-gaṇa, pracāraka-dhana,
pratiṣṭhā-bhikṣuka tā’ra nahe śava
prāṇa āche tāra’, se-hetu pracāra,
pratiṣṭhāśa-hīna kṛṣṇa-gāthā saba*

The residents of Vraja are the only true preachers in this world, as they are endowed with the wealth of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. They are not devoid of life, and therefore they do not hanker after worldly distinction. They are full of the vitality that comes from loving Kṛṣṇa, and they go out and speak about Him. Whatever they say is free from the desire for prestige.

(18)

*śrī-dayita-dāsa, kīrtanete āśa,
kara uccaiḥ-svare hari-nāma-rava
kīrtana-prabhāve, smaraṇa haibe,
se-kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava*

Śrī Dayita Dāsa (Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura), the humble servant of Śrī Rādhā and Her beloved Kṛṣṇa, always hopes for *kīrtana*, and thus loudly chants the holy name of Śrī Hari. This is because by the influence of *kīrtana*, *smaraṇam*

will take place. Only then will solitary *bhajana* be possible.

In the above song, Śrīla Prabhupāda has saved, in golden words, the essence of all teachings so that we may attain service to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in *parama unnata-ujjala rasa*, the very highest and most dazzling relationship with the Divine Couple. On his disappearance day, we should remember these instructions through the medium of *kīrtana*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda concludes his song with the following words:

*kīrtana-prabhāve, smaraṇa haibe,
se-kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava*

By the influence of *kīrtana*, *smaraṇam* will take place. Only then will solitary *bhajana* be possible.

Someone may take this to mean that solitary *bhajana* will be possible at some point in one's life. But in the statement *se-kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava*, Śrīla Prabhupāda defines the word *se-kāle* ("that time") by qualifying it with the word *kīrtana-prabhāve* ("by the influence of *kīrtana*"). In other words, by the influence of *kīrtana*, *smaraṇa* will take place, and then solitary *bhajana* will also be possible. "Solitary" has already been explained to mean "rejecting the association of wicked persons". Giving up wicked association in the true sense cannot be achieved by any method besides absorbing oneself in *hari-kīrtana*, singing the glories of Śrī Hari. The only way to give up bad company is *hari-kīrtana*, and the only way to become absorbed in remembering Śrī Bhagavān's pastimes is also *hari-kīrtana*.

Therefore in saying *se-kāle bhajana-nirjana sambhava*, Śrīla Prabhupāda is stating that solitary *bhajana* is indeed attained by performing *hari-kīrtana* in saintly association. This understanding becomes clearer by deliberating on the beginning and end of this song.

I am concluding this article by quoting the teachings of our previous *ācāryas* in this context:

Śrīla Prabhupāda

1. To lead an idle life on the pretext of performing solitary *bhajana*, to invite needless poverty on the

pretext of being free from material desires, and to create a hindrance to one's *hari-kīrtana* is ill advised.

Patrāvalī, Vol. 2, p. 100

2. Only by means of *kīrtana* does *śravaṇa* takes place and the opportunity for *smaraṇa* thus arises. Only then is realisation of one's service in *aṣṭa-kāla-līlā* possible.

Patrāvalī, Vol. 2, p. 119

Śrīla Gaura Kīśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

Sit near me and chant the names of Śrī Hari in a loud voice. By artificially engaging in the remembrance of pastimes, the ghost of *anarthas* and the evil spirit of *māyā* shall seize your neck with greater force.

Gauḍīya, Vol. 14, p. 218

Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda

By associating with saintly persons, one attains *niḥsaṅgatva*, complete freedom from worldliness.

Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 1

Śrīla Jagannātha Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja

1. Do not develop laziness on the pretext of performing solitary *bhajana*.
2. It is more beneficial to cultivate fields and water plants for the service of the Vaiṣṇavas than to inattentively pull beads hundreds of thousands of times. The result of serving the Vaiṣṇavas is genuine taste for the holy name.
3. Do not imitate the Vaiṣṇavas, or you will burn to death. Pray to serve them without duplicity.
4. An ordinary thief may some day attain auspiciousness, but a person who enjoys the wealth of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas can never attain it.
5. To serve under guidance is the highest virtuous conduct; independence is immorality.
6. Artificial remembrance is not the way of the *rūpānugas*, or followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.
7. Spontaneous remembrance by means of *śrī nāma-kīrtana* is the only aim of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Gauḍīya, Year 17, pp. 504–5

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*, Year 1, Issue 10–11

First aṣṭaka

*jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda (1)
ābadhakarūṇā-sindhu kāṭiyā mohāna
nityānanda karechilo premavanyā dāna (2)
yāder kavale chila sroṭa pravāhite
tāder bādhila māyā vrata parahite (3)
jāti-gosāi nāme tā'rā pravāha bādhila
āpani āsiyā prabhu muhānā khulila (4)
premera vanyāya ābāra dubāla sabāre
mo-hena dīna hīna patita pāmāre (5)
mahāprabhura ājñā-bale sevaka sabāre
guru rūpe pāṭhāle jīvera dvāre dvāre (6)
āsamudra himācala sarvatra pracāra
tomāra virahe āja saba andhakāra (7)
jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda (8)*

Cutting through the web of illusion, the overflowing ocean of mercy, Śrī Nityānanda Rāma, ordained that the flood of love of God bestowed by Him be distributed throughout the world.

Unfortunately, those persons who were given the noble responsibility of spreading this divine God-consciousness were tragically stricken by the disease of caste-consciousness. In their hands, which were always busy performing formal ritualistic ceremonies, the exalted title “Gosvāmī” became merely another family surname, and the channel of divine current became blocked.

Therefore you personally came, O beloved master Śrīla Prabhupāda, to demolish the dam of *māyā* and again release the eager floodtide of *prema-bhakti*.

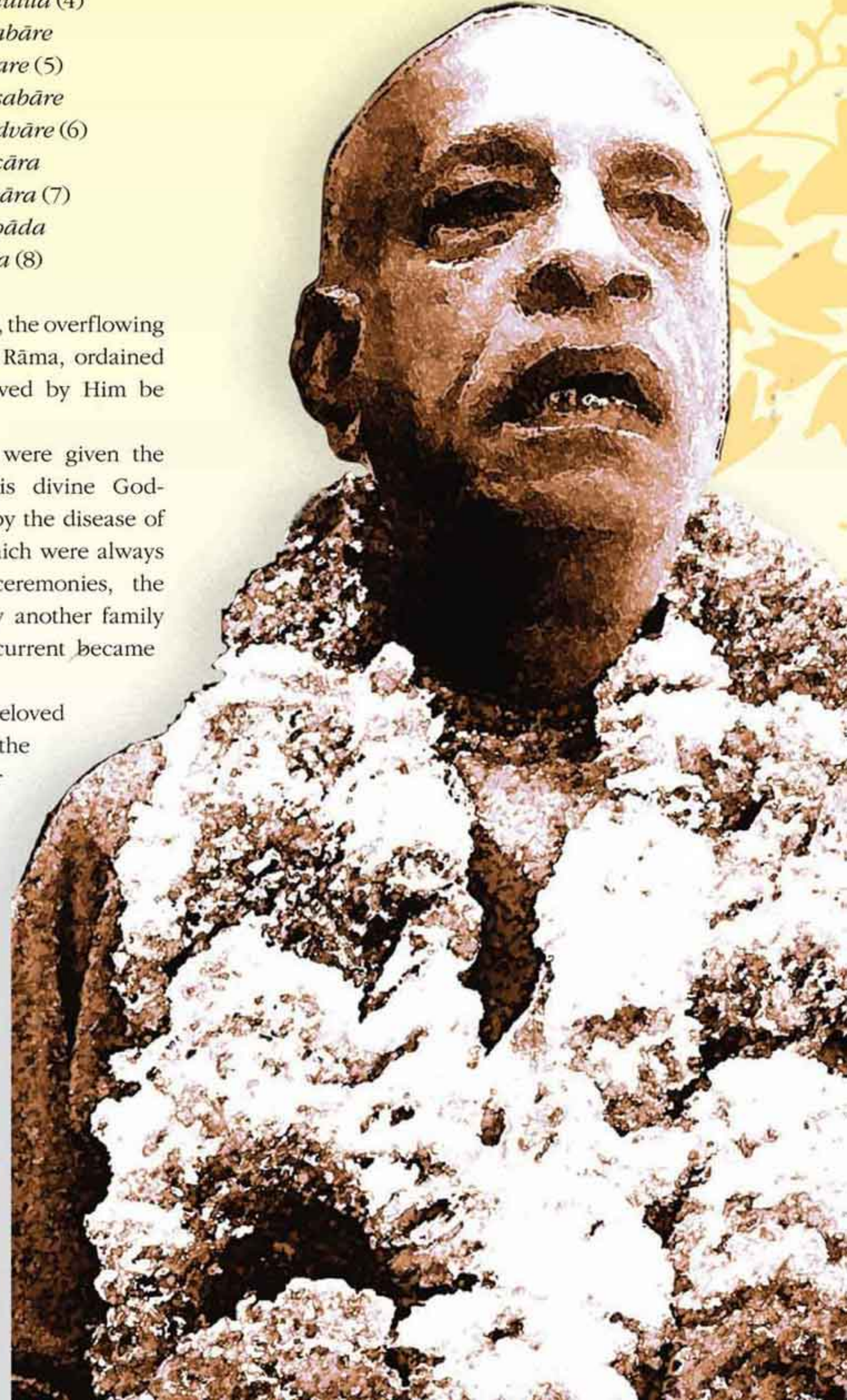
By your potency, the divine tidal wave of Mahāprabhu's all-encompassing grace once again inundated the entire world, even falling upon such wretched and fallen souls as myself.

Taking the order of Śrī Caitanyadeva as your very life's breath, you sent your dedicated servitors as *gurus*, door to door, to deliver the whole of humankind.

Under your infallible direction the message of Godhead was

Śrī Viraha

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja



Aṣṭāṣṭakam

preached from the shorefronts of the ocean to the peaks of the Himālayas.

But now you, who suffered so upon seeing the suffering of misguided humanity, are gone, and the world once again appears dark and empty.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am seeing depression of spirit everywhere, and everything has come to a stop on this day upon which you departed from this world.

Second aṣṭaka

*advaita prabhu yemana gaura anechila
bhaktivinoda prabhu tathā nivedila* (1)
*tānhārai āgrhe prabhu asechile tumi
bujhāle sakale tumi, bhārat-puṇya bhūmi* (2)
*“bhārat bhūmite janma haila yāhāra
janma sārthaka kari’ kara paropakāra”* (3)
*aei mahāmantra vāṇī sarvatra pracāra
tomāra virahe prabhu saba andhakāra* (4)
*tomāra karuṇā-sindhu punah badha hala
aiśela baḍai dukha bukete bājila* (5)
*mahāprabhura kathā binā saba kolāhala
dekhiyā vaiṣṇava-kula viraha-vihavala* (6)
*māyābadhā jīva-kula punah andhakāre
śānti khunji mare saba akula pākhāre* (7)
*jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda* (8)

The intense eagerness to benefit all humankind that was felt by Śrī Advaita Ācārya and which thus brought Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva into this world was similarly felt by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

And therefore, O beloved master Śrīla Prabhupāda, you who are the most intimate associate of that beautiful golden Lord graciously made your divine advent as well.

“A human birth in the land of India is meant for the purpose of becoming perfect in God-realisation and then compassionately sharing that realisation with others.”¹

Revealing India’s spiritual glories you preached the *mahā-mantra* for the illumination of the Earth’s ten directions.

“By your potency, the divine tidal wave of Mahāprabhu’s all-encompassing grace once again inundated the entire world, even falling upon such wretched and fallen souls as myself.”



In your absence, however, the world has once again been plunged into darkness, and the current flowing from your ocean of mercy has again stopped. Devoid of your ambrosial dispensation of Śrī Caitanya’s message, human society is thrown into confusion, and all the Vaiṣṇavas are feeling pangs of separation from your lotus feet.

The *jīvas* have re-shackled themselves with the heavy chains of ignorance and delusion, and as they swim about in the vast ocean of material existence in a frenzied attempt to reach the shore of peace...they perish.

This lance of misery pierces my heart as it similarly afflicted you, Śrīla Prabhupāda, who suffered so upon seeing the suffering of misguided humanity.

I am indeed feeling lost and alone on this day when you departed from our vision.

Third aṣṭaka

*kṛṣṇanāma upadeśi tāra sarvajana
sei mantra dile tumi karṇe anukhaṇa (1)
mantra pracārite dile sabe adhikāra
māyāra prabhāve āji saba andhakāra (2)
bhajana-prāyaṇa jīva nṛtya-gīta kare
gurupada anusari jagat nistāre (3)
anadhikārī jana kare nirjjana-bhajane
svecchācārī kare saba indrya-tarpaṇa (4)
“naitat samācarejjātu mansāpi hynīśvaraḥ”
bhakti-upadeśa saba haila naśvara (5)
āsakti-rahita yogya-viśaya-vyavāhāra
sahaja upāya-siddhi tomāra pracāra (6)
nirbandha kṛṣṇaseva ghare ghare maṭha
viparīta sajjāya āja sarvatra prakāṭa (7)
jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda (8)*

Your lotus lips continuously ushered forth the sweetest nectar in the form of your instructions regarding the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

You made the path of spiritual progress so easy and delightful, teaching that “Utility is the Principle”, that anything useful and practical could be constructively engaged in the service of the Lord without personal attachment, and that the sincere practice of such devotional service, with a genuine spirit of detachment, could transform every house into a *mandira* and every common household into a holy *saṅga*.

You lovingly cautioned that the transcendent activities of the Supreme Lord should never be imitated, even within the mind.

You “nectarised” the ears of all persons, filling their hearts with sublime attachment to singing, dancing and worshipping the Lord in accordance with the standards established by the previous *ācāryas*.

You magnanimously offered everyone the divine qualifications to distribute the pure Holy Name for the deliverance of the whole world.

But alas, in your absence, nescience has now once again stealthily crept on to the scene, creating a most disturbing complication:

Those who are conspicuously unqualified have taken to the practice of performing solitary *bhajana* in strict accordance with the dictates of their own minds and exclusive devotion to their own impassioned senses.

Garbed in fraudulent attire and lavishly adorned with feigned emotions, such persons have, by their selfish strategy, woefully left a blemish upon the body of society.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, you suffered much upon seeing the regrettable plight of misguided humanity.

I am feeling especially lost and alone in separation from your lotus feet on this day of your departure from our vision.

Fourth aṣṭaka

ṛddhi siddhi yāhā kichu tava vakya sāra
'vrjavāsira prāṇa āche sehetu pracāra (1)
'vyavasāyātmikā buddhi' cakravartīr vicāra
māyā-moha-pāśe āja hala chārakhāra (2)
bahuśākhā vistārila avyavasāyī hāte
pratiṣṭhā bāghinī āsi yoga dila tāte (3)
tomāra marama kathā nā paśila kāne
yogyatā kothāya pāba nāma-saṅkīrtane (4)
nāma-gāna sei haya śrīgurur vāṇī
bhuliyā'o ai kathā satya nāhi māni (5)
taba mukhya kīrtti—para-dharam vistāra
mahāmantra mane sei tāra adhikāra (6)
adhikāra lābhe yadi sabe śiṣye kare
tabe ta dukhita jīva saṁsāra nistāre (7)
jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda (8)

“Lord Kṛṣṇa’s associates in Vraja have real life, and therefore they are preaching.”

Persons interested in worldly prosperity and subtle perfections will doubtlessly find all such benedictions in your words.

“The chanting of the Lord’s holy name is the greatest of all religions.”

By preaching this message and thereby preserving this eternal truth, you, O beloved Gurudeva, have attained the greatest eternal fame.

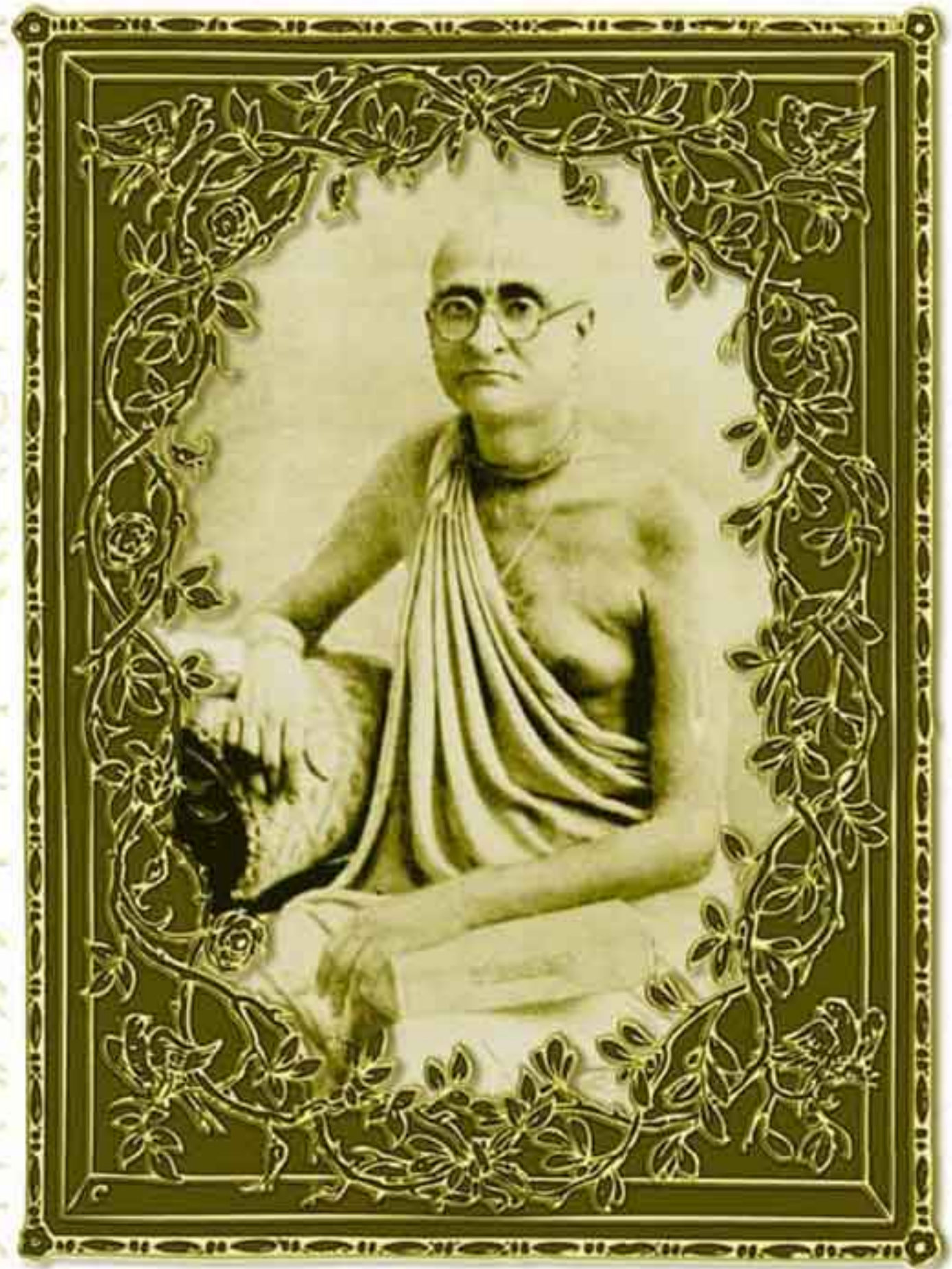
One who rejects this truth regarding *harināma-saṅkīrtana* will not find truth anywhere in the three worlds; and one who accepts the Holy Name from your divine lips becomes qualified to make disciples throughout the three worlds and rescue all such conditioned souls from their suffering.

But in your absence, Śrīla Prabhupāda, the “resolute determination”² explained by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has become broken by the forces of darkness, and those who were not fixed in devotional service have divided your holy Gauḍīya Mission into many separated branches.

It appears that the essence of your teachings did not enter very deeply into their ears, and that the tigress of desire for material prestige has regrettably claimed a great many victims.

Indeed, I am wondering where I, too, will receive the strength to remain steady in my *bhajana* in separation from your lotus feet.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, the depth of your compassion was such that the suffering of misguided humanity caused deep distress for you; and I am acutely feeling lost and alone on this day of your departure from our vision.



“In your absence, however, the world has once again been plunged into darkness, and the current flowing from your ocean of mercy has again stopped.”

² Refers to *Śrī Bhagavad-gītā* verses 2.41 and 2.44

“ Lord Kṛṣṇa’s associates
in Vraja have real life,
and therefore they are
preaching...The chanting
of the Lord’s holy name
is the greatest of all
religions.”



Fifth aṣṭaka

*'hare kṛṣṇa' mahānāma batriśa akshare
mūdatāya vaśībhūta kīrtana nā kare (1)
tomāra upadeśa tyaji śṛṅgāla-vāsudevā
ghaṭāla jañjāla āja sahajiyā-sevā (2)
koṭhāya rahila tomāra upadeśa-vāñī
'punaḥ-mūṣika' saba haila āpanī (3)
simhera śāvaka āja śṛṅgālera chale
paḍiyā kāṇḍiche sabe māyāra kavale (4)
kṛpā yadi kara prabhu ābāra modera
maraṇera tīre tabe heri heraphera (5)
tabe punaḥ sukhe morā kṛṣṇanāma smari
tomāra vaikuṅṭha-vākye dṛḍha viśvāsa kari (6)
sei suddhanāma kṛṣṇa ābāra nācābe
māyāra jañjāla saba āpāni ghucibe (7)
jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda (8)*

Persons afflicted by the jaundice of ignorance cannot taste the ambrosial sweetness of the heart-transforming names of Hare, Kṛṣṇa, and Rāma, and therefore they do not chant the holy *mahā-mantra*, whose thirty-two syllables constitute the elixir of immortality – the very medicine for curing the disease of such persons.

One of your closest disciples whose cup you lovingly filled to the brim with the deathless nectar of your

instructions has ungratefully thrown away that chalice, and his regrettable preference for infectious poison has resulted in a epidemic of *sahajiyāism*.

It seems that the prize valiantly acquired by the triumphant lion has at present been unscrupulously stolen by a jackal. The oppressive forces of nescience have reduced everyone to tears, and it appears that each of the young lions is “again becoming a mouse”.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, where are your pure teachings to be found at this dark hour?

Standing as we are on the shore of the ocean of spiritual devastation, only your life-saving glance of causeless mercy can save us from certain death.

Only by your infallible grace can we perceive a way to somehow retrace our steps: to return to a life of divine remembrance of the Holy Name in great happiness and with implicit faith in your “Vaikuṅṭha message”.

The influence of that pure name of Kṛṣṇa will make us dance again and all the troubles of *māyā* shall automatically be dispelled.

You compassionately took the suffering of misguided humanity upon your own holy head, and I am feeling severe pangs of separation from your lotus feet on this day of your disappearance from our vision.

Sixth aṣṭaka

'nāca gāo bhakta-saṅge kara saṅkīrtana'
baḍai madhura-mahāprabhur vacana (1)
gurudeva-vākye yadi dṛḍha-śraddhā haya
tabe saṅkīrtane kṛṣṇa-prema upajaya (2)
prema binā nija buddhi saba māyājāla
lābha nā haila ithe ghatila jañjāla (3)
māyāvādī bhare gela jagat saṁsāre
vaiṣṇava chāḍila pracāra nirjjanere ghare (4)
patita-pāvane nāme paḍila kalanka
chāḍāchāḍi hala sabe vaiṣṇava asankhya (5)
ai hena durddine prabhu ki habe upāya!
tomāra sājāna bāgāna bhāṅgiyā ye yāya (6)
subuddhi jāgāo prabhu ai śudra antare
tomāra kathāya yāte dṛḍha-śraddhā bāḍe (7)
jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda (8)

"Let there be congregational singing and dancing in praise of the Supreme Lord among the association of the Lord's devotees."

Where can one find such sweetness and magnanimity to compare with Mahāprabhu's method of attaining spiritual perfection?

If we could but perform *harināma-saṅkīrtana* with complete faith in the words of the spiritual master, genuine love of Godhead would make its divine appearance.

Without true love of God, our intellects are merely intricate networks of delusion. Because no one has obtained that *prema-bhakti*, a great catastrophe has resulted:

The Vaiṣṇavas have given up preaching in favour of solitary worship, and a vast, perilous jungle of impersonalism has grown tall, spreading over the surface of the world.

Because so many devotees have given up their devotional service, the name *patita-pāvana* – savior of the fallen – has itself fallen into disrepute.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, what are we to do at this most inauspicious time?

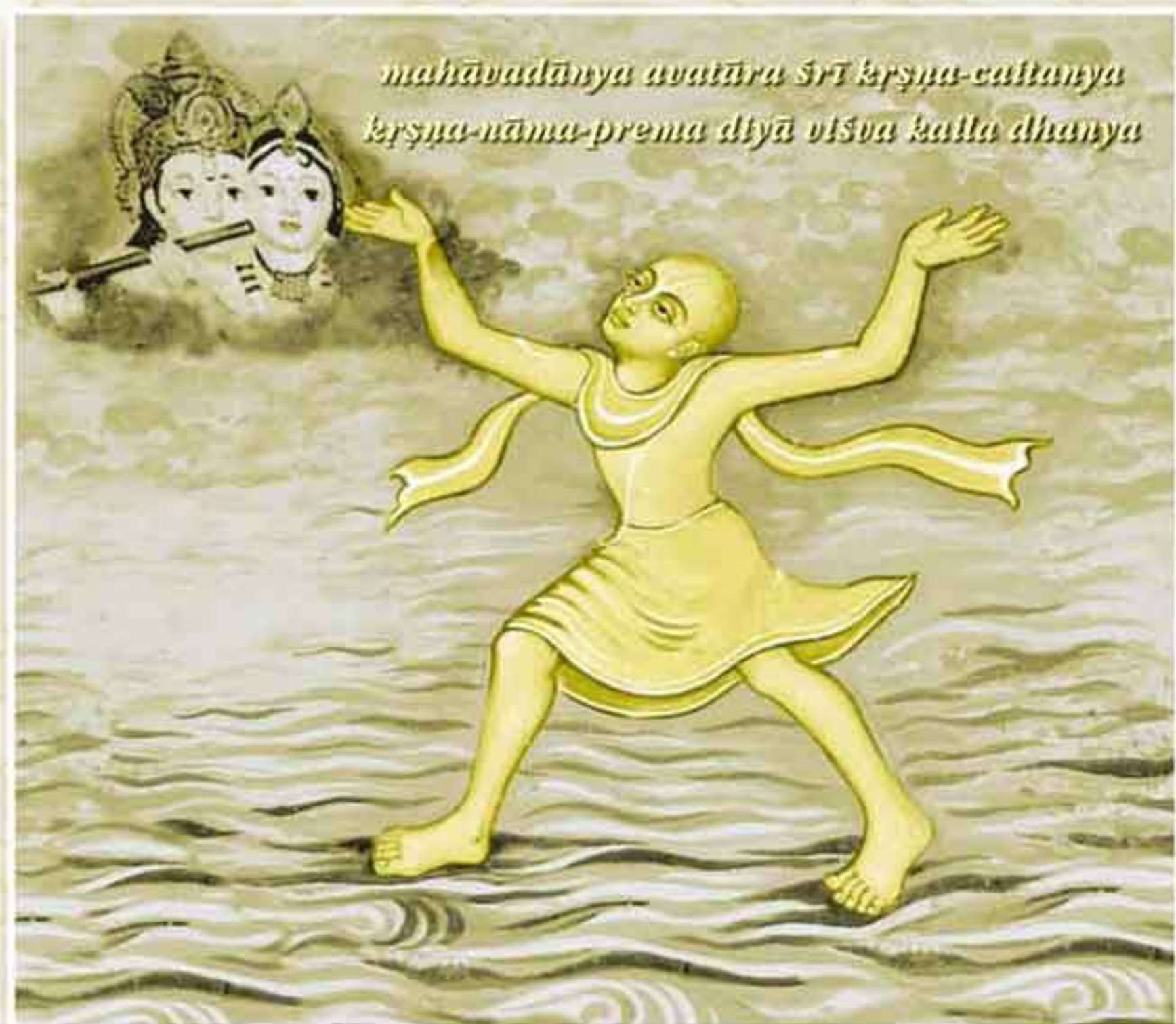
The beautiful garden of *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, that you personally planted and tended with your own lotus-like hands, has apparently been looted and destroyed.

Please awaken some good intelligence in this insignificant servant of yours, day by day increasing the fullness of his faith in your sublime teachings.

You compassionately considered the suffering of misguided humanity to be your own, and I am indeed feeling afflicted by pangs of separation from your lotus feet on this day of your disappearance from our vision.

Seventh aṣṭaka

mahāvadānya avatāra śrī kṛṣṇa-caitanya
kṛṣṇa-nāma-prema diyā viśva kaila dhanya (1)
āpani sei ta prabhu murta gauravānī
pṛthivīra sarva grāme sei nāma dāni (2)
pāthāilā nija bhakte sudūra pāścātye
bhārata bhramile nije āra dākhiṅātya (3)
śuddha gaura gāthā yate vijñajana bujhe
kata cintā kara prabhu virodhīke yujhe (4)
jīva nistarite gaura kare ye cāturī
āpani bujhile sei saba bhāri bhūri (5)
deśa-kāla-pātra jāni pracāra-prabandha
dehīyā o nāhi dekhe ulūkādī andha (6)
āuliyā-sahajiyā ki bujhibe taha
gudalikā naiyāyika bujhi pāre kānhā (7)
jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda (8)



O beloved master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya is the very personification of compassion, and you are the very personification of His message that the chanting of the holy name is the singular infallible means for crossing the turbulent ocean of material existence and entering a life of joyous self-dedication in the service of the Divine Couple.

Lord Gaurahari made the entire world the recipient of His causeless grace, and you are vigorously distributing that grace to every town and village of the world.

You personally traveled all over India, even in the south, and you sent your devotees to save the inhabitants of the Western countries from their moth-like headlong rush into the flames of self-destruction.

Mahāprabhu employed many clever tricks to engage the conditioned souls in devotional service, and you, expert at understanding all these, followed closely in His holy footsteps.

You understood exactly what was required for the preaching to perfectly accord with time, place, circumstance and audience, and although the leaders of the sheep-like masses, devout in their worship of the idol of mongrelised logic, could not understand; although the blind lawyers, though having eyes, could not see; and although the many nonsensical groups of deviators and imitators could not appreciate; the intelligent section of society could understand the impeccable purity of your teachings, clearly see the utter selflessness of your motives, and earnestly appreciate your inexhaustible efforts to defeat all elements which were opposed to the Absolute Truth.

O Śrīla Prabhupāda, You took on much suffering in order to relieve the suffering of humanity at large, and I am indeed feeling pangs of separation from your lotus feet on this day of your disappearance from our vision.

Eighth aṣṭaka

*caitanya-sevā nahe nirjjana bhajane
bujhāile bāra bāra tava nijajane (1)
jagāi mādhai uddhāri prabhu dayā kare
sei se-pracāra kārya bujhāle sabāre (2)
jagat bhariyā geche jagāi mādhai
sabāi heriche bāṭa caitanya nitāi (3)
hena kāle tumi yadi ābāra āsite
punaḥ bāra sei bhāve kīrtana gāhite (4)*

*punaḥ yadi dikadigante pracāra haita
ānande loka saba hata uchālita (5)
gambhīra humkāre tava pāṣaṇḍī palāta
caitanya-kathāya jīvera hṛdaya bharita (6)
punaḥ pṛthivīte saba paḍe yeta sādā
tomāra virahe āja saba maṇihārā (7)
tomāra virāhe prabhu vidare hṛdaye
virāha-vedanā kichu prakāṣe abhaya
jīvera darada-dukhī śrīla prabhupāda
viraha-vāsare tava heri avasāda (8)*

Adored master, you patiently reminded all of your disciples time and again that devotional service to Lord Caitanya is not performed exclusively in solitude.

You took great care to painstakingly explain to all of us that just as the Lord out of His causeless mercy preached everywhere and delivered Jagāi and Mādhai, the exact same strategy is still appropriate.

The world has now become filled with countless Jagāis and Mādhaiis, and it is clear to all that the only means for their salvation is the path shown by Caitanya-Nitāi.

If you were to come again at this time, Śrīla Prabhupāda, and personally re-establish the proper understanding of these ideas in all the ten directions, the joy of the people would know no bounds.

Hearing the deeply resonant sound of your voice loudly proclaiming the victory of Mahāprabhu's mission, the demons and atheists would flee, and the thirsty living entities would drink the divine nectar-message of Śrī Gaurāṅgadeva to their complete fulfillment.

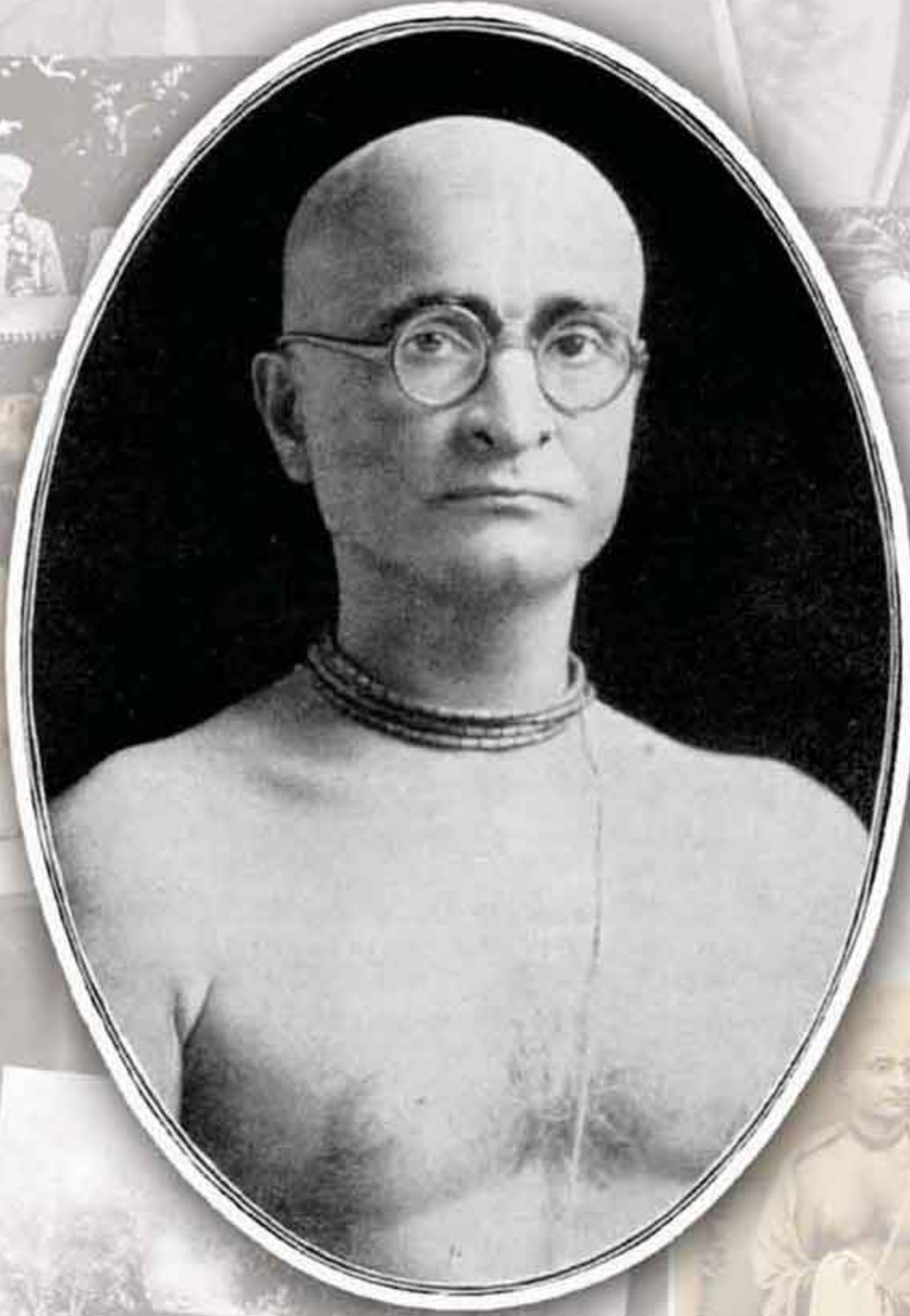
The whole world would once again be set aright, whereas in your absence, nothing of value is to be found anywhere.

O Gurudeva, brokenhearted, this Abhaya makes his cry of appeal in the bitter throes of separation from your lotus feet. You compassionately felt the suffering of the *jīvas* to be your own, and I am indeed feeling lost and alone on this day of your disappearance from our vision.

dīna hīna kāṅgāla
Śrī Abhaya Caraṇa (Bhaktivedānta Swami) ❀

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My Heartfelt Prayers



on the viraha-tithi of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda

excerpts from an offering by
Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kusuma Śramaṇa Mahārāja

Those who realise the compassion of Śrīla Prabhupāda in separation from him feel the mere blink of the eye to last for a millennium. Tears flow from their eyes like torrents of rain and the whole universe seems void to them. The beauty and fragrance of flowers, the charm of magnificent landscapes and the cooling light of the moon only serve to intensify their fire of separation from him. Even Bhagavān's pastime places, such as Navadvīpa, Nīlācala, Vṛndāvana, Govardhana, Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Śyāma-kuṇḍa agitate their intense pangs of separation from him. In separation from Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī wrote:

*sunyayate mahā-goṣṭham girindro 'jagarayate
vyāghra-tundayate kuṇḍam jīvatu-rahitasya me
Śrī Prārthana-āśrayā-catur-daśakam (verse 11)*

Now that I am without that person who sustains my life, the land of Vraja seems empty and desolate, Govardhana Hill appears like a great python, and Rādhā-kuṇḍa appears like the gaping mouth of a tigress.

Why is such *viraha* (feelings of separation) experienced? [Those who realise separation from Śrīla Prabhupāda think:] "Where is he at whose lotus feet I will offer *puṣpāñjali*? Where is he, in whose hand I will offer garlands for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda? Where is he, by whose compassion the eternal forms of *dhāmas* and *tīrthas* are realised? Where is he, by the touch of whose lotus feet, the *tīrthas*, contaminated by sin, regain their sanctity? Where is he, who has disclosed the transcendental pastimes of Bhagavān in His various *dhāmas* and *tīrthas*? Where is he, whose mouth emanates the secrets of Veda and Vedānta in the form of the nectarean Bhāgavata? Where is he who devised increasingly new ways of delivering the *jīvas* from the clutches of *māyā*? Where, today, is that embodiment of great magnanimity who did not hesitate to attract an extremely insignificant and degraded person like me to his lotus feet?"

Merely a semblance of the pure compassion of Śrī Gaurahari dispels all the miseries in the heart, and in that purified heart manifests the bliss of *prema*. That most astonishing transcendental *rasa* subdues all types of scriptural arguments, thus revealing its magnificence. Where, today, is Śrīla Prabhupāda, the unprecedented embodiment of the compassion of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda?

If we consider the *śloka*, *yugāyitam nimeṣeṇa*, the mere blinking of the eyes seems like an entire millennium for one who is experiencing true separation. Yet not just the blink of an eye, nor just one or two days, nor one or two years, but a full twenty years have passed and still the fire of separation has not ignited within my heart. Why not? The answer is easy. I was unable

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kusuma Śramaṇa Mahārāja appeared in 1900 in Dacca, Bangladesh. After completing his basic academic education he studied medicine. During his medical studies he met a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda who introduced him to the Gauḍīya Maṭha.

In 1928, he became the publication manager of the daily *Nadī Prakāśa* with Śrīpāda Praṇavānanda Brahmācārī (later Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja) as the editor. He often travelled with Śrīla Prabhupāda as his secretary.

In 1948, he accepted *tridaṇḍi samnyāsa* and became famous as Śrīla Bhakti Kusuma Śramaṇa Mahārāja. Soon after this, he became the editor of the monthly *Gauḍīya* magazine. He wrote *Prabhupāda Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura*, which contains Śrīla Prabhupāda's life history and fundamental preaching principles, and thousands of scholarly articles on Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

In 1976, he became the *ācārya* of Śrī Caitanya Maṭha and its affiliated branches. He disappeared from this world on Mokṣadā Ekādaśī, 1986. ❀

to realise the truth of his actual identity and his compassion. Therefore, instead of meditating on his lotus feet, I am engrossed in worldliness and hankering for profit, worship and fame. If the fire of separation from him had ignited within my heart, then its impurities, such as desires for anything other than the interest of Kṛṣṇa (*anyābhilāṣa*), the desire to perform gross mundane activities for my own sense pleasure, and the endeavour for [*aṣṭāṅga*] *yoga* would have been burnt to ashes. Then my purified heart would have become softened and cooled by the nectarean current of service to Śrī Śrī Guru-Gaurāṅga-Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī. The unique quality of the fire of separation is that on one hand it burns, and on the other it exudes sweetness.

My heart's tendency is to run toward external sense objects. Śrīla Prabhupāda manifested his disappearance pastimes to direct my heart inwards and thus become attracted to his lotus feet. Have I actually understood this? If I had, then, carrying his instructions on my head, I would be completely dedicated to the *vaiṣiṣṭya*, or speciality, of his preaching. Constantly bearing in mind the *śloka*, *trṇād api sunīcena*, I would remain absorbed in *kīrtana* of the *mahā-mantra* as well as in the bliss of service to Bhagavān and the *bhāgavata* (devotee). As a result, the transcendental form of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who is perpetually absorbed in *hari-kīrtana*, would remain situated on the throne of my thoughts, thus manifesting his appearance, even in his disappearance.

Today, on the *viraha-tithi* of Śrīla Prabhupāda, I am praying at his lotus feet that he bless me so that I can constantly sing the glories of the *vaiṣiṣṭya* of his preaching, so that worldly influences will not affect me and so that I can constantly endeavour to follow this instruction of Mahāprabhu:

grāmya-kathā nā śunibe, grāmya-vārtā nā kahibe
bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribe
amānī mānada hañā kṛṣṇa-nāma sadā la'be
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-sevā mānase karibe
 Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 6.236-7)

Do not listen to the mundane talk of common men or engage in discussions about such topics. Do not eat palatable foodstuffs or dress yourself nicely. Expect no honour from others and give honour to all. In this manner, always chant Kṛṣṇa's holy name and within your mind perform *sevā* to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vraja.

By always remembering the unlimited compassion of Śrīla Prabhupāda I may attain the fortune of having my body continually soaked with tears. ❀

Translated from the *Gauḍīya*,
 Year 8, Issue 11, 1956

“ If we consider the *śloka*,
yugāyitām nimeseṇa,
 the mere blinking
 of the eyes seems like
 an entire millennium for
 one who is experiencing
 true separation.
 Yet not just the blink
 of an eye, nor just
 one or two days,
 nor one or two years,
 but a full twenty years
 have passed and still
 the fire of separation
 has not ignited
 within my heart.
 Why not? ”



Self-

on the Disappearance

Never Forget Śrī Guru

Today's special festival marks the beginning of the last month of our Cāturmāsya *vrata*. This last month of Cāturmāsya is called Kārtika-*vrata*, Ūrja-*vrata* or Dāmodara-*vrata*. Since today is also *sāradīya-rāsayātrā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa's autumn *rāsa-līlā*, it evokes special remembrance of the disappearance day of our most worshipable Śrīla Gurupādapadma, *nitya-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Therefore, as I begin my talk, I first pray to the lotus feet of Śrīla Gurupādapadma for increasing enthusiasm in my *sādhana-bhajana*.

Today is the *viraha-tithi* of our Gurudeva, the day on which we observe our separation from him. Although the appearance and disappearance days of those in our Gauḍīya *guru-varga* are of equal significance, the common man often thinks that he need only faithfully devote himself to his Gurudeva as long as his Gurudeva is physically present. He tends to forget his Gurudeva when his Gurudeva disappears from this world, or in other words, conceals his manifest pastimes. This inconsistency is vanquished by constant engagement in the service of Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. If they are the constant objects of our remembrance, it will not be possible to forget them. But if we have a motive to receive some temporary gain from them, we will easily forget them.

Appearing in English for the first time

Assessment



Day of Śrīla Gurupādapaḍma

Excerpt from a lecture by
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

delivered on October 5th, 1998
Śrī Śyāmasundara Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śiliguḍi (West Bengal)

Forgetfulness of Bhagavān is the sole cause of all our miseries.

*bhayaṁ dvitīyābhīniveśataḥ syād
īśād apetasya viparyayo 'smṛtiḥ
tan-māyayāto budha ābhajet taṁ
bhaktyaikayeśaṁ guru-devatātmā
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.37)*

The *jīva* who is averse to Bhagavān forgets his own constitutional nature because of his association with *māyā*. Due to this forgetfulness, he becomes absorbed in the conception that he is the material body and thus thinks “I am a demigod”, “I am a human being”, etc. In this state of bodily identification, he fears old age, disease and so forth. Therefore those who know the truth should consider their own *guru* as *īśvara*, the Supreme. In other words they should see him as their master who is non-different from Bhagavān and who is very dear to Him. Through exclusive devotion they should perform one-pointed worship of that *īśvara*, their *guru*.

Our faults and misfortune are the results of our forgetting Bhagavān and we will never be fortunate enough to remember Him as long as we are forgetful of Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. Therefore, when we

perform *bhajana*, it is imperative that we first remember Śrī Guru and the Vaiṣṇavas. First we must pray for their mercy; only then can we pray for service to Bhagavān Śrī Hari. The scriptures describe this to be the one and only process for remembering Him.

Śrī Guru – Our Constant Guide

As long as Śrīla Gurudeva is physically present we should desire to learn the process of *sādhana-bhajana* from him. But instead, we are more eager to know answers to questions such as: “How shall I maintain my life?”, “How shall I eat?” and “How shall I clothe myself?” For those who are true *sādhakas*, however, eating, sleeping and dressing are of no real importance. Such *sādhakas* only value that which pertains to *sādhana-bhajana*.

Śrīla Gurudeva gives instructions such as, “You should chant the holy name; you should chant *mantras*, such as the *gāyatrī-mantra*; you should discuss devotional books and topics; and you should engage in the *arcana* and *pūjā* of the deity. Begin by performing *sādhana-bhakti* and try to advance gradually.”

At present we are ignorant and do not have correct conceptions of *sādhana-bhakti*, *bhāva-bhakti* and *prema-bhakti*. If we did, we would be absorbed in

“ We often see that newcomers to the path of *sādhana-bhajana* are enthusiastic, but as time goes by, they see it as ordinary and their eagerness wanes. ”



contemplating them exclusively. Since that is not the case, what should we do?

*deha-geha-kalatrādi cintā avirata
jāgiche hṛdaye mora buddhi' kari' hata
hāya hāya nāhi bhāvi anitya ai saba
jivana vigate kothā rahibe vaibhāva*

Śrī Kalyāṇa-kalpa-taru
(2nd branch, part 2, song 4)

Anxiety for my body, house, wife and so forth constantly arises in my heart, thus destroying my intelligence. Alas, Alas! I do not understand them to be temporary. Do worldly comforts and opulences remain after death?

In this way the authors of the scriptures are telling us, and also the great Vaiṣṇavas (*mahājanas*) are making it known, that this body is temporary. Still, we fail to proceed with caution.

Despite our lackings, we are to patiently keep trying. We have to continue following the instructions of Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas – this is of utmost importance. We repeatedly hear about the same subjects, but our hearts and minds cannot retain what we have heard. And even if we do retain it, mere mental retention of information is of no real value. It is necessary to practice what we hear and live by it. Only then does what we hear take on any real significance. But despite hearing, hearing and more hearing, we all too soon tend to forget what we have heard.

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka – the Complete Process

We often see that newcomers to the path of *sādhana-bhajana* are enthusiastic, but as time goes by, they see it as ordinary and their eagerness wanes.

What method, then, is appropriate for us? How should we practise *sādhana*? *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka*, the instructions of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, was previously known as *sādhana-patha*, the path of *sādhana*. We may be on the path of *sādhana*, but we are forgetting that path. Why does such forgetfulness occur when daily we are reciting that same *Śikṣāṣṭaka*? Why do our enthusiasm and patience diminish? That it does, reveals that we are not performing *sādhana* with *antara-niṣṭhā*, inner steadfastness.

Forgetfulness [of the path of *sādhana*] can also result from over-endeavour. We need to contemplate whether our forgetfulness is due to over-endeavour or lack of endeavour. Śrīman Mahāprabhu's *Śikṣāṣṭaka* begins with "*vijayate śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtanam* – may the congregational chanting of

“In the realm of *parama-ārtha*, or supreme spiritual welfare, limitations have no value.”



Kṛṣṇa's holy name be victorious!" And *Śikṣāṣṭaka* concludes with verses about weeping for Kṛṣṇa. Both the beginning and end of the process are given. But if I am a beginner to the path of *sādhana*, how can I cry? A person only cries when he is in need of something, something specific. Do we have any conception of our highest need?

Nothing Less than Absolute Happiness

I want the mercy of Śrī Guru, the Vaiṣṇavas and Bhagavān. Indeed, such contemplation nurtures the desire to attain my highest goal. How? Our *guru-varga* says that if we want to realise our highest aspiration, we should not limit our desire for it, as this will not help us attain it. *Artha-śāstra* (the Vedic scripture on material prosperity) instructs a person to place a limit on his aspirations for happiness. Why? "*nālpe sukhamasti bhūmaiva sukham* – there is no happiness in this creation." This creation is full of limitations. The only abode of complete happiness is Bhagavān. In the realm of *parama-ārtha*, or supreme spiritual welfare, limitations have no value. We don't have to be satisfied with the limited happiness of this world. If we are, we will be cheated.

If one accepts the statement, "*bhūmaiva sukham* – complete happiness is only found in Bhagavān" to be true, one must endeavor to attain it. The scriptures say, "*yatne kṛte yadi na siddhati ko'tra doṣaḥ* – if, in spite of my efforts, I am still unable to attain Him, what shall I do? Where is my fault?" Who will judge whether or not I have made my best possible effort? Who will decide the extent of my eagerness for *sādhana-bhajana*? And who will make this known to me? This needs to be contemplated. A person must know how much endeavour is required to really attain success.

Measuring Our Progress

Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said, "Every fifteen days, on each *ekādaśī*, a person should record how much progress he has made in his performance of *sādhana-bhajana*." But we do not do that. And should that record be kept on a piece of paper or within our hearts? Only by recording it in our hearts will we be able to analyse our progress. Every *ekādaśī* a person should make a point to 'record' how much *harināma* he did in the last fifteen days, how much time he spent discussing *śāstra* and how much service he engaged

in. Only then can he understand whether he is making progress or whether he is going backwards.

Sometimes, when we hear a certain *siddhānta*, we may become disheartened.

*nitya-siddha-kṛṣṇa-prema 'sādhyā' kabhu naya
śravaṇādi-śuddha-citte karaye udaya
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.107)*

Kṛṣṇa-prema, being eternally present in the heart of the *jīva*, is never acquired elsewhere. Hearing, chanting and remembering the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa purifies the heart and thus *kṛṣṇa-prema* naturally awakens.

Upon hearing what is required to attain my goal, I wonder if I will ever be successful, my enthusiasm begins to wane and I begin to doubt the strength of my determination. The Absolute Reality cannot be attained if this doubt persists. Śrīla Parikṣit Mahārāja listened to ample *hari-kathā*, and his conception of what was required of him in the line of devotion remained strong. Now, if our own conception becomes weak, we must simply move forward from whatever point we have reached in our hearing, learning and practising.

Our constant concern is whether or not we are capable of following all the instructions the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas have given us. More importantly we wonder if we have really taken these instructions to heart, or are endeavouring to understand them.

We all know that “where there is a will there is a way”. We then note that although we desire to practise properly, we are not successful. But is this really the case? If we have an ardent desire and if we are honest and non-duplicious then most definitely we will achieve success. We should question, “How much effort am I putting into my practices? And to what extent do I try before I consider my endeavour in *sādhana* to be complete? What I may perceive as the end of my efforts in the realm of *sādhana-bhajana* may actually be the very beginning.” This process is not necessarily easy.

Life's Only Treasure

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu Himself said:

*ki kāja sannyāse mora, prema prayojana
dāsa kori deha more vetana premadhana*

What value is *sannyāsa* to Me? My only goal is *prema*. Therefore, O Bhagavān, please accept Me as Your servant and award Me the salary of *prema*.

Does this ever enter our minds? The scriptures state: “*pañcāśordhvam vanam vrajet* – after the age of fifty, one should proceed to the forest for the purpose of performing *hari-bhajana*.” At that time of life, one's exclusive dedication should be the development of devotion to Śrī Hari. From the perspective of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja, however, one should not wait until one has turned fifty. If we anticipate that one's duration of life is a hundred years, simply sleeping consumes fifty of it. And if one's life lasts for fifty years, twenty-five go by in this way. Therefore, in the remaining half of our lives, we must become one-pointed in our *sādhana-bhajana*.

Those who have had some realisation will never reveal it to anyone. Why not? Such realisation is *paramārtha*, the topmost treasure, and therefore should not be exposed. And those who tell others about the treasure they have gained are like poverty stricken people who boast the amount of rupees in their possession, when actually, their wealth is insignificant. Those who are intelligent never wander here and there telling others about their topmost wealth. You can be led into trouble simply by speaking.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam says, “It is difficult to earn money, it is difficult to save money and it is painful to spend money.” But the outcry of so many of us is solely for the possession and control of money. And when asked, “For what?” we answer, “For the service of Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. After all, we are their servants; this is stated in the scriptures.” But what understanding do we actually have of this?

One should first learn and understand Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings, which is the *tattva* and *siddhānta* of *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta*. Without such understanding, we will not be able to perform *sādhana-bhajana*, in which our first, essential step is to understand what is beneficial to our *bhajana* and what is not. However, simply attaining this knowledge is insufficient. One must, in this very life, practise what one has learned. ❀

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*,
Year 56, Issue 11

Who Can Be a Real Guru?

Excerpts from a lecture by

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Navadvīpa
March 8, 1998

A Conditioned Soul is Never Equivalent to Guru

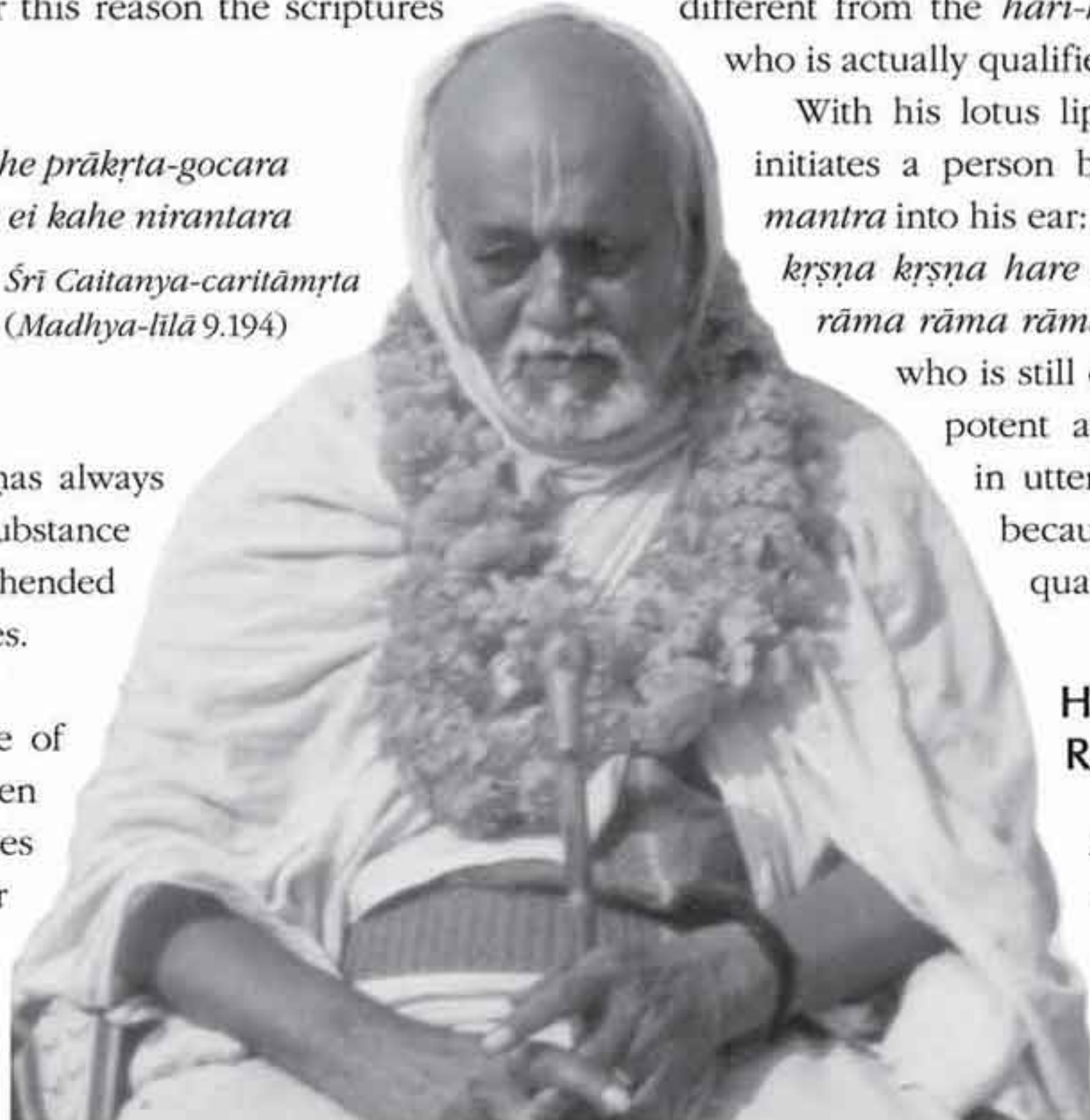
The significance (*gurutva*) of a substance varies depending on the qualification of the perceiver. Our endeavour to acquire objects with our senses often meets with failure and we give up trying. Our senses are especially incapable of attaining that which is beyond this material nature. For this reason the scriptures state:

*aprākṛta vastu nahe prākṛta-gocara
veda-purāṇete ei kahe nirantara*

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(Madhya-līlā 9.194)*

The Vedas and Purāṇas always assert that spiritual substance can never be comprehended by the mundane senses.

There is a difference of hell and heaven between my narration of the glories of the spiritual master and the narration given by one who is really *tattvajña*, well-versed in the



conclusions of the scriptures. A soul who is conditioned carries egotistical pride in being a disciple; therefore, his descriptions of his Gurudeva's glories lack the potency of one who is a true disciple. My chanting of the holy names of the Lord does not have the same quality as the chanting of a truly qualified person, and the *hari-kathā* spoken by an unqualified person, such as me, is vastly different from the *hari-kathā* narrated by one who is actually qualified.

With his lotus lips the spiritual master initiates a person by uttering the *mahā-mantra* into his ear: *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*. A disciple who is still conditioned is never as potent as the spiritual master in uttering the *mahā-mantra* because he lacks the same qualification.

How Many Of Us Are Real Disciples?

All of us have accepted a spiritual master, but in doing so, have we acquired his qualities? Among a *guru's* thousands of

“The disciple receives the *dīkṣā mantras* from Śrī Guru, and when he becomes qualified, he too can become a spiritual master. There is no fault in him doing so. But if a person accepts disciples before this, he is not acting in accordance with his level of realisation.”



disciples, how many actually realise his significance? This calls for serious contemplation. Not all the disciples of a spiritual master have the same qualification. It differs greatly.

Formally accepting initiation from the spiritual master and taking initiation from him in the true sense are quite different. The disciple receives the *dīkṣā mantras* from Śrī Guru, and when he becomes qualified, he too can become a spiritual master. There is no fault in him doing so. But if a person accepts disciples before this, he is not acting in accordance with his level of realisation. This is the verdict of the scriptures. A person's qualification is always to be considered.

Śāstra tells us that ordinary sound vibration (*śabda-samānya*) and transcendental sound vibration (*śabda-brahmā*) are completely different. “I am just giving the same *dīkṣā mantras* that my Gurudeva gave me and therefore, the effect will be the same.” This is not so at all. If one accepts formal *dīkṣā* and does not endeavour to advance, he cannot become a real disciple. Only that disciple who possesses the qualities of a *guru* described in *śāstra* can become a *guru*.

*vāco vegam manasaḥ krodha-vegam
jihvā-vegam udaropastha-vegam
etān vegān yo viśaheta dhīraḥ
sarvām apīmām pṛthivīm sa śiṣyāt*
Śrī Upadesāmṛta 1

A wise and self-composed person who can subdue the impetus to speak, the agitation of the mind, the onset of anger, the vehemence of the tongue, the urge of the belly and the agitation of the genitals can instruct the entire world. In other words, all may become disciples of such a self-controlled person.

Such a genuine *guru* can make the whole world his disciple. He is a *gosvāmī*, his senses are under his control. One who is *godāsa* is subordinate to his senses. *Godāsa*

means “slave to one's senses” and *gosvāmī* means “master of one's senses”. Their meanings are opposite. Now, when I sincerely analyse my own qualities, the daring concept of becoming a *guru* is eliminated. If I contemplate becoming a *guru* because I am tempted by the fame and worship this position easily awards, I will never be able to perform the true function of a *guru*.

A Guru Practises What He Preaches

Who is a Vaiṣṇava?

*kanaka kāmīnī pratiṣṭhā bāghinī
chādiyāche yāre sei ta' vaiṣṇava*

Duṣṭa Mana! Tumi Kisera Vaiṣṇava? (10)

[Desires for] money, women and fame are like tigresses. Those who have relinquished them are indeed Vaiṣṇavas. Vaiṣṇavas alone are pure and detached devotees who can conquer material existence.

With such *adhikāra* a genuine *guru* can make disciples throughout the world. Simply chanting the *mahā-mantra* – *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare* – does not indicate a person's *gurutva*, qualification to be *guru*.

*āpani ācari dharma jīvere sikhāya
āpani nā kaile dharma sikhāno na jāya*

One must teach *dharma* to the *jīvas* by personally practising it. If one himself does not practise, he should not teach others.

*ācinoti yaḥ śāstrārtham ācāre sthāpayaty api
svayam ācarate yasmād ācāryas tena kīrtitaḥ*

Vāyu Purāṇa

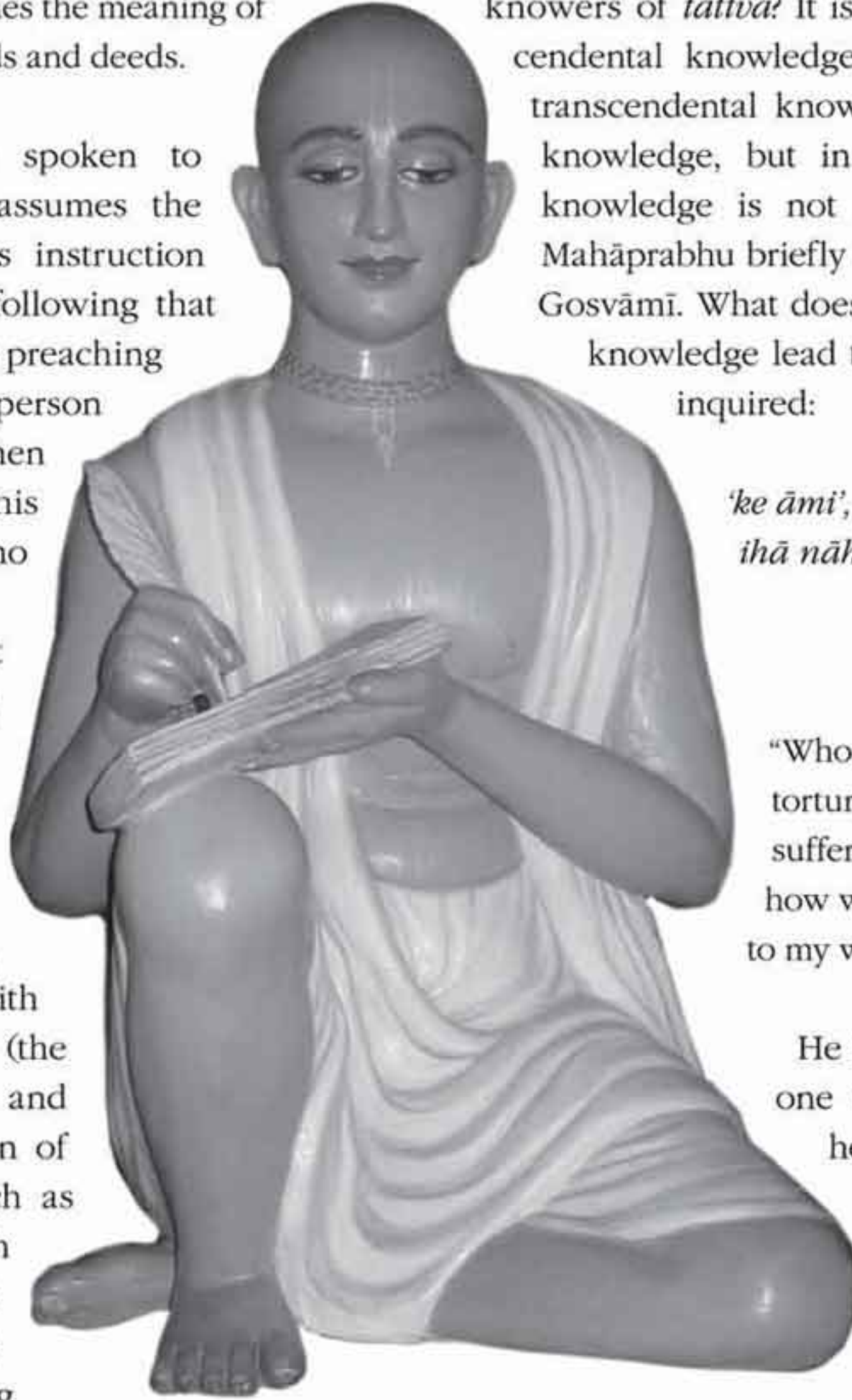
An *ācārya* is one who fully understands the conclusions of the revealed scriptures and whose behaviour reflects his deep realisation. He is a living example, for he teaches the meaning of the scriptures by both words and deeds.

The above *śloka* was spoken to emphasise that one who assumes the position of *guru* and gives instruction to others must himself be following that instruction. If he doesn't, his preaching will never be effective. If a person takes intoxication, and then tells others not to do so, his instruction will carry no potency.

The scriptures do not sanction a person becoming *guru* if his behaviour is improper. They explain that he must have realisation of *śabda-brahma* (transcendental sound vibration), he must be endowed with realisation of *para-brahma* (the Lord's transcendental form) and he must have full realisation of transcendental subjects, such as *kṛṣṇa-tattva*. If he has no such realisation, he cannot impart transcendental knowledge to his disciple by speaking mere words. To give *dīkṣā* means to bestow transcendental knowledge.

*divyaṁ jñānaṁ yato dadyāt
kuryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmād dīkṣeti sā proktā
deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ
Hari-bhakti-vilāsa (2.3-4)*

One who is fully conversant with *tattva*, philosophical truth, knows that the process of *dīkṣā* can awaken a person's transcendental knowledge and annihilate the reactions of his sins.



A wise and self-composed person who can subdue the impetus to speak, the agitation of the mind, the onset of anger, the vehemence of the tongue, the urge of the belly and the agitation of the genitals can instruct the entire world.

- Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī

question. "O Lord, please tell me who I am." Does an intelligent person ever ask a question like this?

Do we not know who we are? Why did Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī ask this? 'Ke āmi', 'kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya'.

Who does "I" Refer to?

How is *dīkṣā* defined by those who are *tattvajñā*, knowers of *tattva*? It is that process by which transcendental knowledge is imparted. Now, what is transcendental knowledge? Granted, we all have knowledge, but in this conditioned state that knowledge is not transcendental. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu briefly described this to Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī. What does realisation of transcendental knowledge lead to? Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī had inquired:

*'ke āmi', 'kene āmāya jāre tāpa-traya'
ihā nāhi jāni—'kemanē hita haya'
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(Madhya-līlā 20.102)*

"Who am I? Why am I always tortured by the three kinds of suffering?" Without knowing this, how will I ever know how to tend to my welfare?

He inquired, "Who am I?" When one initially approaches a *guru*, he should try to learn the truth about his own identity. "What entity (*vastu*) am I?" *Ātmānām vijānata*. Śrī Gurudeva will kindly explain the truth, or *tattva*, of your real identity. Before this, if anyone asks you who you are any answer you give will be false because you do not know. Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī was an extremely intelligent person and a minister of King Hussain Shah, so one may wonder why he asked Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu a seemingly unintelligent

He knew that we carry a false sense of identity and cannot even introduce ourselves correctly. That person I proudly declare to be me is not really me at all, so it is essential for someone to hear about who he really is from one who has seen and realised the truth about this. “Who am I?” is the scholarly community’s subject of discussion. Only *śāstra* provides us with this information, but we cannot comprehend it.

We are Possessed

The plight of the living entity has been explained nicely in *Śrī Prema-vivarta*:

*piśācī pāile yena mati-cchanna haya
māyā-grasta jīvera haya se bhāva udaya*

The *dharma* of the *jīva* who has turned away from Kṛṣṇa becomes covered, just as a person’s intelligence becomes covered when he is haunted by a witch.

We have been rendered ignorant. Once, a boy named Khaidā was possessed by a ghost. When the exorcist asked him, “Who are you?” he replied, “I am the daughter of Mr. Rajnī Bābu.”

“What nonsense!” the exorcist exclaimed. “How could you be Rajnī Bābu’s daughter?”

“But, I am!”

“Where do you live?”

“I reside near a tree.”

“What do you do there?”

“I just stay there.”

“I understand! Khaidā was passing stool under that tree and that is how you possessed him!”

Khaidā could not say who he actually was, and in answer to the question, “Who are you?” he would simply say, “I am Mr. Rajnī Bābu’s daughter.” All were astounded. We are like Khaidā in that we have forgotten our real identity and introduce ourselves as this body, in which we are extremely absorbed. *Māyā* has deluded our intelligence and bound us. Like an exorcist, Śrī Guru helps us to become free from the clutches of the witch, *māyā*.

The Identity of the Soul

Śrī Sanātana Goswāmī asked Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to answer this question so He could simplify this concept for us. Sanātana Goswāmī told Mahāprabhu that since He was *śāstra* personified, an explanation coming from His lotus mouth would benefit the entire world. “Other than You, no one is qualified to convey the meaning of such a complex concept. A living entity completely identifies with the body he was born into, be it that of a man, woman, cow or donkey.”

Mahāprabhu did not ridicule Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī by calling him a fool when he asked, “Who am I?” He didn’t say, “Why are you, a respectable minister, asking such a silly question?” Instead, Mahāprabhu glorified him. “You have asked a very-high class question for the benefit of everyone.” Then He gave His response:

*jīvera ‘svarūpa’ haya—kṛṣṇera ‘nitya-dāsa’
kṛṣṇera ‘taṭasthā-śakti’ ‘bheda-bheda-prakāśa’
sūryāṁśa-kīraṇa, yaiche agni-jvālā-caya
svābhāvika kṛṣṇera tina-prakāra ‘śakti’ haya
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 20.108-109)*

The intrinsic, constitutional nature of the living entity is that he is Kṛṣṇa’s eternal servant. This is because the living entity is the marginal potency of Kṛṣṇa and is both one with and different from Him. This can be compared to a particle of a ray of sunlight, which is both one with and different from the sun, or a spark of fire, which is both one with and different from the fire itself. Kṛṣṇa’s potencies are of three types.

Thus He revealed our true identity by speaking the essence and conclusion of all scriptures, namely the Vedas, Vedānta and Upaniṣads. This verse gives the highest essence of all philosophical knowledge, and by it we can understand the actual intention of statements like *tat tvam asi* – you are that. This verse concisely explains everything about our identity. It leaves no scope for any addition, subtraction or alteration. “I am the servant of Kṛṣṇa.” But who is this “I”? Everyone says he is “I”, so does it refer to my real identity? Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has also said:

*nāham vipro na ca nara-patir nāpi vaiśyo na śūdro
nāham varṇī na ca grha-patir no vana-stho yatir vā
kintu prodyan nikhila-paramānanda-pūrṇāmṛtābdher
gopī-bhartuḥ pada-kamalayor dāsa-dāsānudāsaḥ
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 13.80)*

I am not a *brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*, nor am I a *brahmacārī*, *grhasṭha*, *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsī*. My sole nature is that of a servant of the servants of the servants of the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the maintainer of the *gopīs*. He is naturally effulgent and the complete ocean of nectar which bestows supreme bliss.

I take pride in my position in one of the four *varṇas* (*brāhmaṇa*, *kṣatriya*, *vaiśya* or *śūdra*), and I introduce myself as belonging to one of the four *āśramas* (*brahmacārī*, *grhasṭha*, *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsa*), but Mahāprabhu said that we are not any of these designations. What, then, can be said of the accuracy of the Vedas and other scriptures that explain our identity? Who can settle this issue? Śrī Guru. He is *tattvajña*, which means these *tattvas* are revealed in his heart.

Qualification is Crucial

One cannot become a *guru* just by memorising the verses of scriptures, such as the Vedas, and then concocting an explanation for them.

*nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahudhā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām
Kāṭha Upaniṣad 1.2.23*

Eloquent discourses, outstanding intelligence or extensive and astute hearing will not enable one to attain the Supreme Personality. He selects who He wants to attain Him. Those persons alone are successful and receive His *darśana*.

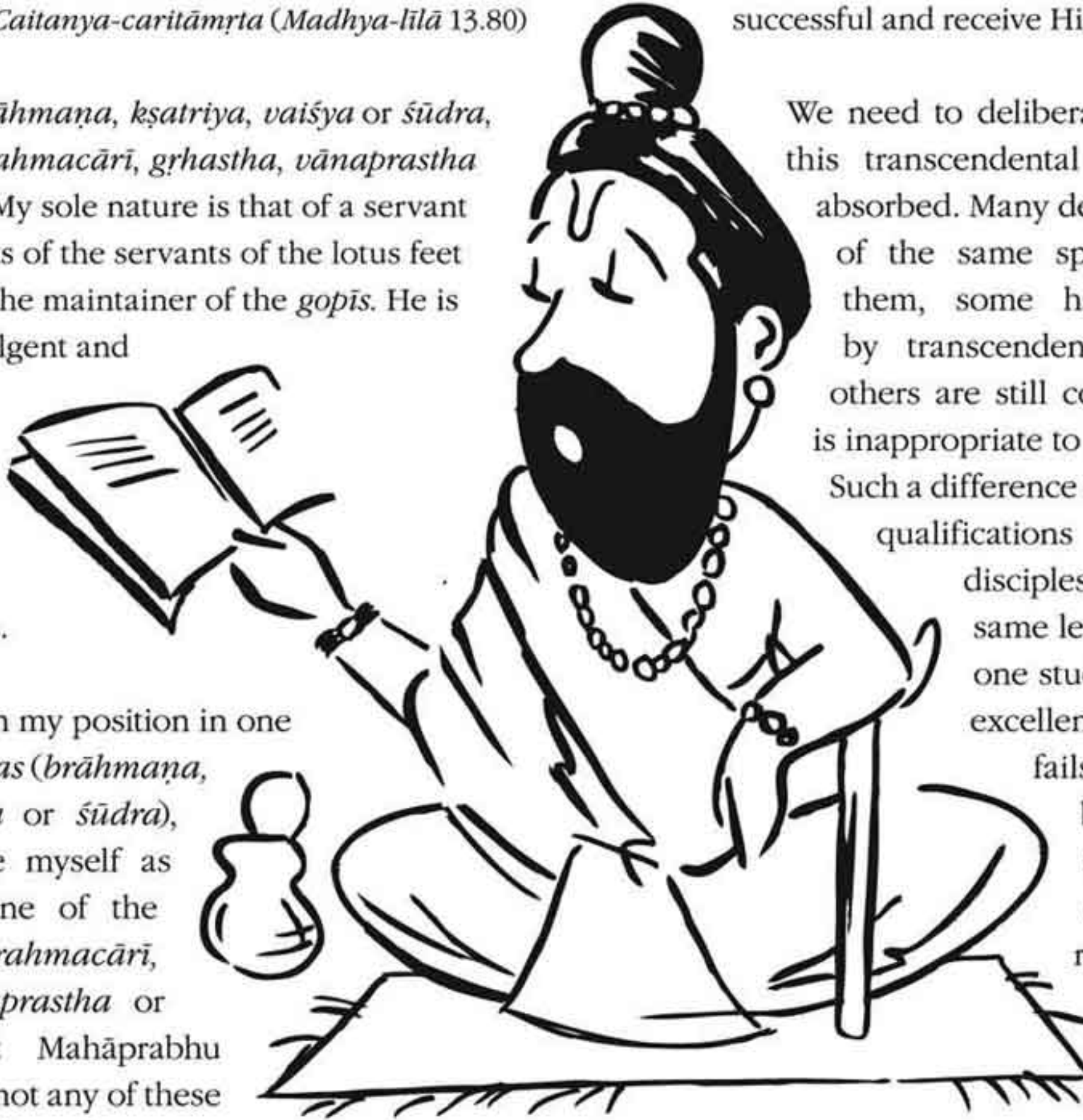
We need to deliberate upon how much of this transcendental knowledge we have absorbed. Many devotees may take shelter of the same spiritual master. Among them, some have been illuminated by transcendental knowledge, while others are still covered by ignorance. It is inappropriate to blame Śrī Guru for this. Such a difference is based on the different qualifications and endeavours of his disciples. A teacher may give the same lesson to all students, but one student tops the class with excellent marks, while another fails miserably and another barely passes. The teacher has taught them equally well, but their results vary according to their ability. In the same way, one cannot become a spiritual master simply by being a disciple, unless one has the necessary qualification.

Śrī Guru is Endowed with Realisations

The Upaniṣads say “*apāṇi apādaḥ* – the supreme entity

(*brahma*) has no hands or legs” This simply tells us that He does not possess material hands or legs, the type we know about.

In fact, the verse *apāṇi apādaḥ* has been spoken to establish His transcendental nature and make sure we abandon our material conception of Him. It does not mean He actually possesses no hands or legs. He is described as having a form of eternality, cognizance and bliss (*saccidānanda*).



One cannot become a *guru* just by memorising the verses of scriptures, such as the Vedas, and then concocting an explanation for them.

What is the meaning of a form composed of *saccidānanda*? We have heard this from the lips of the previous Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas*, and we are repeating that, but in actuality we have no realisation of whether that form is soft, or hard, like wood or iron. Only those who have experienced His form can become a *guru*. One who claims to be *guru* without such realisation is a false *guru* and his attempts at being a *guru* will fail.

“Come! Come! Embrace Lord Jagannātha!” Saying this, the priests may forcibly make a person embrace the Lord.

“Oh!” the person cries, “I am embracing Lord Jagannātha!”

But what was it like? Did you feel Him burning like fire? No, because you do not have experience of Him.

Or someone may say, “I touched the deity of Kṛṣṇa. How cold it was. Since the deity is made of stone, touching Him is like touching ice!”

When someone is devoid of transcendental realisation, how can he give transcendental realisation to others? I myself don't have that transcendental knowledge, but still I proclaim, “Come! Come! I shall bestow transcendental knowledge upon you!” How is this possible?

Measuring Our Progress

*bhaktiḥ pareśānubhavo viraktir
anyatra caiṣa trika eka-kālah
prapadyamānasya yathāśnataḥ syus
tuṣṭiḥ puṣṭiḥ kṣud-apāyo 'nu-ghāsam
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.42)*

With each morsel of food that a hungry person eats, he simultaneously experiences satisfaction, nourishment and relief from hunger. Similarly, a surrendered devotee, who is engaged in the performance of *bhakti*, simultaneously realises his worshipful deity, strengthens his relationship with that deity and becomes detached from this temporary world of material relationships.

This is the barometer of progress for a person claiming to be performing *bhakti*. Has he left material enjoyment? Has he become naturally renounced? Is he still fascinated by material objects pertaining to taste, smell, touch and hearing, or to money, women and so

forth, and thus desires to enjoy them? Do we perceive these objects in the same way as one who is *tattvajña* and use them accordingly?

The following example will clarify this. I may address a lady as “Kṛṣṇa-dāsī”, but merely calling her Kṛṣṇa-dāsī does not mean I actually perceive her as such. Am I instead nurturing the desire to make her my own servant (*dāsī*)? How can anyone with such desires in the heart become a *guru*? When transcendental *bhakti* arises in the heart one will have realisation of the Lord.

When a person performs *bhakti* and develops a relationship with the Lord, he feels attachment to Him and considers Him to be his dearly beloved. He feels related to the Lord in the mood of servitude, friendship, parenthood or conjugal affection. It is then that he realises the *tattva* about the Lord.

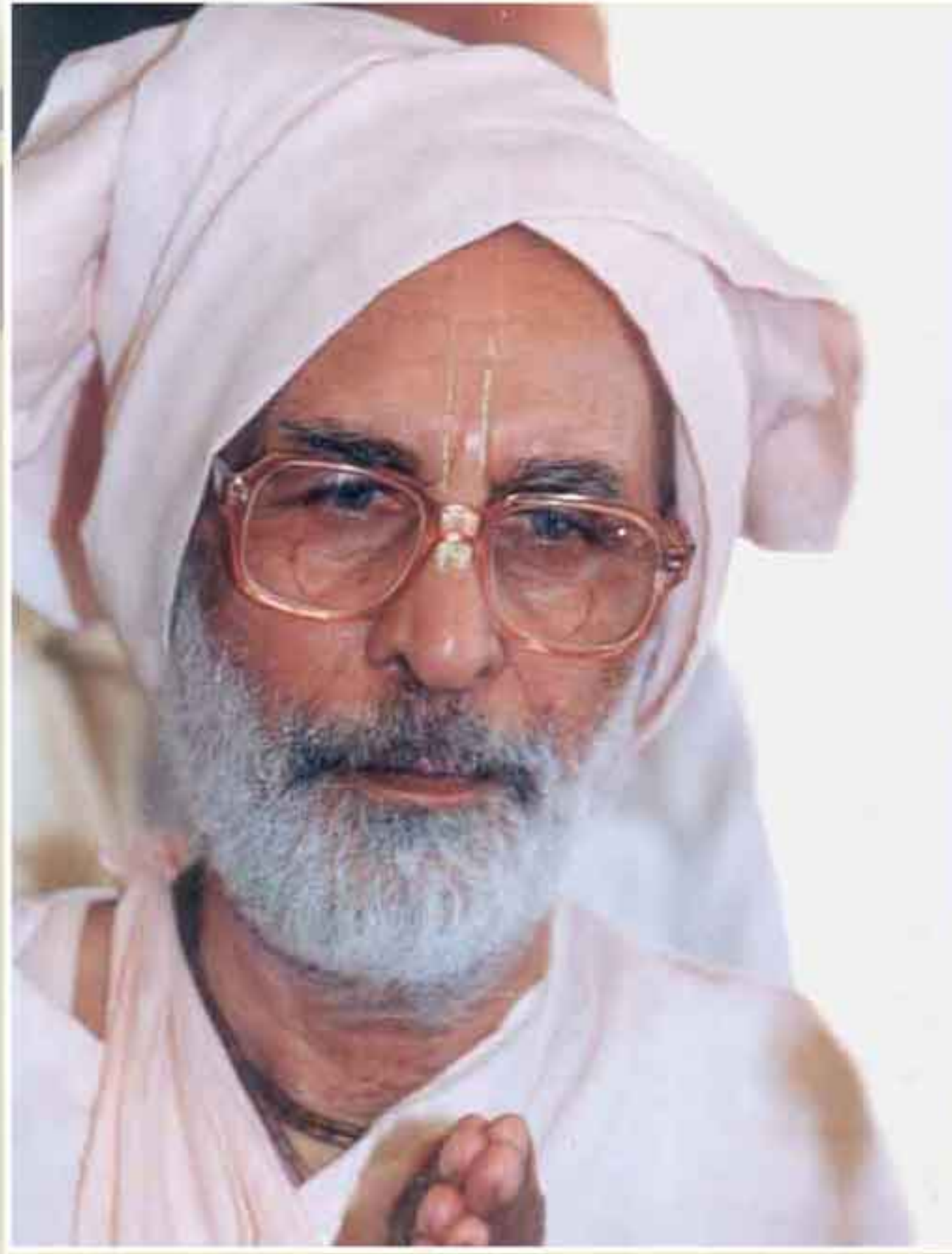
If someone were to tell me that they had seen Lord Kṛṣṇa lying lifeless on the ground, I would not cry or feel upset, nor would I undergo any internal transformation. But if someone were to tell me that my wife had been hit by a bus and he had seen her lying dead, I would immediately begin to lament and weep. We would not be so affected if Kṛṣṇa left us, and yet we claim to be devotees. When the *gopīs* heard from Nārada Muni that Kṛṣṇa's severe pain could only be relieved by a devotee's foot-dust, they immediately gathered up a full bag of foot-dust and said, “Take it right now! Even if we have to go to hell forever, we don't mind.”

Have we developed such a relationship with Kṛṣṇa, or such a service attitude to Him? We keep an account of the money we give to Gurudeva and consider ourselves great servants! Does a person keep any account of the money he gives to his wife? Can you show us that account? “Oh, so am I not a *guru-sevaka*? Don't you know how much I have served him?”

We have a barometer for gauging *bhakti*. A *sad-guru* is completely detached from anything material and he is fully acquainted with the *tattva-vastu*. We are so ignorant of the Absolute Truth. *Māyā*, the Lord's illusory material energy, is compared to a witch. She has captured us and transformed our intelligence. Until we become free from *māyā*, our conception of the Absolute Truth will remain incomplete. Therefore, it is necessary for us to take full shelter of the lotus feet of a genuine spiritual master, for he alone can relieve us of the ignorance called *māyā*. ❀

Viraha Bhajana

Compiled from the lectures of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Narāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja



Separation Arouses Astonishing Emotions

Śrī Bhagavān is the possessor of all potencies, and therefore His relationship with His internal potency is indestructible (*śakti-śaktimatayor abheda*); they are always inseparable. Still, His pastime potency, which makes the impossible possible, manifests *viraha* (separation) even in eternal meeting. Its purpose is to arouse astonishing varieties of *rasa* (*rasa-vaicitrya*). This is one of the unprecedented stages of *prema*.

The first sprout of the wish-fulfilling tree of *prema* in this world was Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda. He sang an unparalleled verse in his state of perfection.

*ayi dīna-dayārdra nātha he
mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam tvad-aloka-kātaram
dayita bhrāmyati kiṁ karomy aham*

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
(Madhya-līlā 4.201)*



O Master, whose heart melts in compassion for the destitute! O Lord of Mathurā! When will I see You again? O beloved Lord of My life, I fervently hanker to see You, so much so that My heart has become intensely restless. What shall I do now?

This verse was originally manifested by Śrīmatī Rādhikā in the agony of Her separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa when He went to Mathurā. Thus Mādhavendra Purīpāda planted in this world the seed of devotion in the conjugal sentiment. This *śloka* is the outpouring of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's *mahā prema* (*mahābhāva*) after Kṛṣṇa left for Mathurā. *Bhajana* performed following Śrīmatī Rādhikā's mood in this condition constitutes the topmost *bhajana*.

Feeling Separation is Essential for the Sādhaka

For the practitioner of *bhakti*, it is natural to perform *bhajana* in a mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa. The devotees of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, feeling themselves to be the most destitute, call out fervently to *dīna-dayārdranātha* Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the destitute.

The first sprout of the wish-fulfilling tree of *prema* in this world was Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda



Only three persons could taste the essence of this verse: Śrīmatī Rādhikā Herself, Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī and Śrīman Mahāprabhu (who is Kṛṣṇa covered by the complexion and sentiments of Śrīmatī Rādhikā). To manifest this *śloka*, Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī, an eternal follower of Śrī Rādhā, has imbibed the emotions of *mathurā-virahiṇī* Śrī Rādhā.

Śrī Gauracandra says,

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

Śikṣāṣṭaka (7)

O *sakhī*, in separation from Govinda, even a moment seems like a millennium. Tears pour from My eyes like torrents of rain in the monsoon season and this entire world seems void.

In *Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* (102), Śrīla Ragunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has said,

*āsā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayāti-gamitaḥ kila sāmpratam hi
tvaṁ cet kṛpām mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kim me
prāṇair vrajena ca varoru bakāriṇāpi*

O Varoru (girl with beautiful thighs), I am passing my time with the sole hope of being able to serve You. If You withhold Your mercy, what value to me are this life, the land of Vraja, and Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Baka?

Without receiving the mercy of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, it is impossible to attain the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. But when one's heart becomes extremely restless for Her mercy, then the mercy of Rādhānātha Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes easily accessible.

Śrī Gurudeva is the identical manifestation of Śrīmatī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, the crest jewel of *āśraya-tattva*

(those who are the abode of love for Kṛṣṇa). Śrī Gurudeva expertly adopts the means devised by the *sakhīs* for serving the Divine Couple in Their transcendental love-laden pastimes. For this reason he is extremely dear to Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. How will one receive the mercy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa if he is not receiving the mercy of a *guru* on this level? Therefore, those who remain under the shelter of Śrī Guru will experience intense waves of separation from him when he is no longer manifest, and those waves will surely increase to their utmost magnitude.

Attachment Intensifies Through Separation

Out of compassion, Śrī Bhagavān, in the form of Śrī Guru, expands His manifest pastimes. In the same way, Śrī Guru enacts the pastime of disappearing from this world to enter his eternal pastimes. His sole purpose in doing so is to stimulate the full service and full possessiveness of his dependents. Those fortunate enough to have taken shelter of a *rūpānuga-guru* during his manifest presence, experience a constant increase in their attachment to serving him. And after his disappearance, their attachment to him continues to increase many times over. Consequently, the fire of separation from him intensifies day by day; by this alone one's *bhajana* remains ever-fresh.

There are two kinds of *bhajana*. The first is performed by chanting and remembering pastimes of separation (*vipralambha-līlā*) and the second is performed by remembering pastimes of meeting (*sambhoga-līlā*). Although the *gopīs* and *Vrajavāsīs* always prefer meeting with Kṛṣṇa over separation from Him, He plays with them by making them enjoy *vipralambha-rasa*.

The *sādhaka* should cultivate the mood of separation from Kṛṣṇa by thinking, "I am not seeing Kṛṣṇa, nor am I seeing Śrīmatī Rādhikā nor Vraja. I am not realising anything and I am unable to serve my Gurudeva."

The Height of Intense Separation

Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī showed us how to feel separation from Kṛṣṇa, and especially from Śrīmatī Rādhikā. A *sādhaka* should be immersed in such feelings. Śrīla Raghunātha Gosvāmī also lamented in separation from his *śikṣā-gurus*, "I'm so unfortunate! First Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu departed from this world, leaving me behind. I then lived in the constant association of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, but he also

left this world. Next I caught hold of Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita's lotus feet, but he also departed. From then on I experienced that every place and every dust particle of Jagannātha Purī reminded me of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Svarūpa Dāmodara, Gadādhara Paṇḍita and their associates; and therefore I left Purī to come to Vṛndāvana."

In Vraja, Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī performed *bhajana* at Rādhā-kuṇḍa under the guidance of Śrīla Rūpa and Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmīs. When Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī entered his unmanifest pastimes, Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī lamented as follows in separation from him:

*sūnyāyate mahā-goṣṭham girīndro jagarāyate
vyāghra-tundāyate kuṇḍam jīvātu-rahitasya me
Śrī Prārthana-āśrayā-catur-daśakam (11)*

Now that I am without that person who sustains my life, the land of Vraja seems empty and desolate, Govardhana Hill appears like a great python, and Rādhā-kuṇḍa appears like the gaping mouth of a tigress.

Who Can Realise Separation from Guru?

Although our Gurudeva has also entered his unmanifest, eternal pastimes, we happily remain in this world. On the occasion of special days, like his appearance or disappearance day, we might remember him, but often we are involved in arranging the festival in his honour, and there is very little chance to contemplate our separation from him. A tear may come to our eye as we speak something about him; but it may not come. If the festival is very elaborate, there is much to manage, such as the *abhiṣeka*, *guru-pūjā*, and distribution of *mahā-prasādam* to the *Vaiṣṇavas*. Consequently, there is less chance of us finding time to think about him and weep. For the most part, we arrange these festivals for the benefit of the general people who have no intimate connection with him, but on that day we should ensure that a feeling of separation from him enters our own hearts. This is called *bhajana*.

Special persons, who have realised their immense obligation and indebtedness to Gurudeva for all they have received from him, and who have rendered profuse service to him with *viśrambha-bhāva* (spontaneous intimacy) will feel separation from him, and weep. Such devotees will not think, "I am so lowly and my Gurudeva

is so elevated.” One with such awe and reverence cannot weep.

Śāstra states: “*viśrambheṇa guror sevā* – the *sevaka* performs such intimate service to Gurudeva that Gurudeva is always pleased with him.” The *guru* will not see him as his servant or disciple for a single moment, but instead he will see him as his own heart. Śrī Īśvara Purīpāda (a disciple of Śrīla Mādhavendra Purī) and Govinda (a disciple of Śrī Īśvara Purī) were servants of this calibre. Although such a relationship with Śrī Guru is rare, it is absolutely necessary for *rāgānuga-bhakti*. In its absence, we are unable to weep like Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

Gradations of Separation

A devotee will experience different degrees of separation from Gurudeva, according to his level of *bhakti*. When we contemplate the mercy he showed us, and his superiority to us, we feel a certain type of sentiment. But when we recall our intimate relationship with him and his immense love for us, we will weep for him incessantly.

Nanda Bābā weeps in separation from Kṛṣṇa but Yaśodā Mā can weep more than Nanda Bābā can. The *gopīs*, however, can even weep considerably more than Yaśodā. This is because they have a more intimate relationship with Kṛṣṇa. We should have such an intimate relationship with our Gurudeva, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, and all such personalities. It is then that we will be able to weep for their mercy. Without that intimate service relationship with our Gurudeva, there is no possibility of us imagining our relationship with Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī or Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa.

Our advancement is solely dependent on the intensity of our service to our Gurudeva. It is the platform on which all other relationships and experiences develop. If we can weep for Gurudeva, we will be able to weep for Śrīmatī Rādhikā, and if we cannot weep for him, we will not be able to weep for Her. Whatever we have learned we have learned from our Gurudeva, and we should weep for him from the core of our hearts.

How to Lament

How shall we weep? Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has given instructions in the sixth verse of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam*:

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

O Lord, when will tears flow from my eyes, my voice falter and all the hairs on my body stand erect as I chant Your holy names?

“When will I feel so much lamentation that I weep while chanting the names Hare Kṛṣṇa, Rādhā-Govinda, or Vṛndāvaneśvari?” Weeping like this is our *dharma*, the essence of our religious principles. One day, by the mercy of those who sincerely feel this mood of separation, and by the grace of our Gurudeva and our *guru-paramparā*, we will have realisation of this fact. This is our real prayer, and while praying, our mood should be “*tava nāma-grahaṇe bhaviṣyati* – when will I weep while chanting *harināma* and remembering and hearing Your pastimes?” Those who are most fortunate can lament and weep for these moods and thereby experience them.

While softly uttering, chanting or praying to *harināma*, or simply while remembering *harināma*, we should experience a mood of separation. If we are not yet doing this, we will have to gradually develop such a mood in our practice of *sādhana-bhakti*. By reading about the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates, their moods of separation will enter our hearts and someday we will also experience them. Realisation is the result of remembering Śrī Gurudeva; therefore we should always remember him. If we do not understand the mercy of Gurudeva, we will not understand anything.

Our Ultimate Goal


Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda writes that meeting and separation eternally stand side by side. Only that person who has some realisation of *vipralambha* (separation) can relish and serve *sambhoga-līlā* (the meeting of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa). One who has not tasted *vipralamba* cannot relish *sambhoga-līlā*. The main objective, or the ultimate goal, of our *sādhana-bhajana* is to attain realisation of the mood of separation. Once achieved, all else can be realised. ❀

The Transcendental Life and Character of
nitya-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata



Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta
Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Appearance – Magha Māsa, Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa Navamī tithi (December 23, 1921)
Disappearance – Kārttika Māsa, Śukla Pakṣa Trītya tithi (November 15, 2004)



*namaḥ om viṣṇupādāya keśava-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrīmate bhaktivedānta-vāmana-iti-nāmine (1)*

I pay my humble obeisances unto the lotus feet of *om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Being very near and dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa who is known as Keśava (Keśava can also mean Śrī Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja), he has kindly descended to this Earth planet.

*śrī ṭhākurānī-priya dayitāya kṛpa-abdhaye
tattva-traya pradānāya śrī guru dīna-tāriṇe (2)*

He is extremely dear to the most beloved associates of Śrī Rādhā Ṭhākurānī, and he is an ocean of mercy. As Śrī Guru he thoroughly bestows the knowledge of the three *tattvas* (*sambandha*, *abhidheya* and *prayojana*) and delivers the low and destitute souls.

*śrī nityānanda-abhinnāya gaura-kāmaika-cariṇe
rūpānuga-pravarāya 'śrī rāga' iti svarūpiṇe (3)*

He is the non-different manifestation of *akhandā-guru-tattva* (the principle of Śrī Guru as one undivided whole), Śrīman Nityānanda Prabhu. He fulfilled the inner desire of Śrī Gaurasundara by preaching *rāga-mārga bhakti* to the whole world. I offer *praṇāma* to the most worshipable lotus feet of my Śrī Gurudeva, who is the best among the *rūpānugas* and who, in his eternal, transcendental form (*siddha svarūpa*), is Śrīmatī Rādhā Ṭhākurānī's Rāga Mañjarī.

Tridaṇḍisvāmī Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sambandha Turyāśramī Mahārāja's Blessings

in reply to a letter from Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sambandha Turyāśramī Mahārāja is a disciple of Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda and the childhood friend of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kuśala Nārasimha Mahārāja, the uncle of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja.

Śrīpāda vāmana mahārāja samīpeṣu

sneha, dainya bhaktipurna prīti-patra tava
paḍiyā pāśāṇa-prāṇa haila kichu drava
sahaja sarala mṛdu mañjuvaṇī saba
vaiṣṇave vasati kare mānada svabhāva
tomāra hṛdaya khāni jāni patra-dvāre
patrakhāni sei hetu paḍi bāre bāre

Unto Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārāja:

I have read your loving letter, so full of affection, humility and devotion that my stone-like heart has somewhat melted. Your language is natural, simple, soft and sweet. It is natural for a Vaiṣṇava to offer respect to others. Because your letter testifies to your propensity to honour others, I am able to understand the purity of your heart. Thus I have read it over and over again.

mita-vākye sāra-kathā varṇite samartha
siddhānta-sammata saba, nāhi kichu vyartha
vāgmītā bali tāre bale budhagaṇa
tomāra vāṇīte āche se saba lakshaṇa
vayase navīna tumi budhite pravīna
sevāte sautsāhī sada abhimāna-hīna

You are able to express the essence of the philosophy concisely, according to proper *siddhānta*; not a word is without value. Learned persons describe such language as eloquence, and your words exhibit this quality. Although you are young, your understanding reveals great wisdom. You are untouched by pride and always enthusiastic to serve.

dāruṇa deha-pīḍā tomāya nā kaila kliṣṭa
amlāna-vadane sahi sevile ye iṣṭa
sevakera sevā-vrata deha-manodharma
talāite nāhi pare śikhāle se marma
kṛṣṇera yateka guṇa vaiṣṇave sañcāre
lekhaka-lekhanī tāhā varṇite nā pāre

You remained free from distress even in severe illness and simply tolerated your condition. Without showing any perturbation on your face, you served your master.¹ By such behaviour you have taught us the fundamental truth that the dictates of the body and mind can never distract a dedicated servant from his vow to serve. All the qualities of Kṛṣṇa that are infused in a Vaiṣṇava cannot be described by the writer's pen.

gaura-vāṇī pracārite mṛdaṅga mukhyāṅga
viṣṇu-vārttāvaha press bṛhat-mṛdaṅga
jīvanta mṛdaṅga svarupa tridaṇḍi-yati
aie kathā śikhāila prabhu sarasvatī
(sei) jīvanta mṛdaṅgera murti tridaṇḍīr veṣe
bṛhad-mṛdaṅga mudrā yantra anāyāse

The *mṛdaṅga* is a prominent assistant in the propagation of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message. The printing press that transmits narrations of Viṣṇu is the far-reaching *mṛdaṅga*, and the *tridaṇḍi sannyāsī* is the living *mṛdaṅga*. However, that living *mṛdaṅga* in the dress of a *tridaṇḍi sannyāsī* is automatically a *bṛhad mṛdaṅga*, an instrument who broadcasts the message far and wide.

¹ This refers to his service performed by cooking for the Vaiṣṇavas despite having a 103 degree fever.

These principles were taught by Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

*śabde-brahme rekhā bandhe (āra) kīrtana prabandhe
dui rupe kṛṣṇa-kathā jīvera karṇa-randhare
pradānite patrikā pāthāo dvāre dvāre
sarva śreṣṭha sevā kārya jīvera uddhāre
paropkārera aei mahāna vāratā
mahāprabhu vānī yāhā bhoga-moksha-trātā*

Śabdha brahma enters the ears of a *jīva* in two forms, namely *kṛṣṇa-kathā* (transcendental sound vibration in the form of prose) and *kīrtana* (in the form of poetry). To bestow *kṛṣṇa-kathā* in these two ways you distribute magazines from door to door. This is the greatest service to deliver the fallen souls. Disseminating this *kathā* is the highest act of benevolence because Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's message rescues one from the ditch of sense enjoyment and impersonal liberation.

*nārasīṅga mahārāja saṅgāmṛta haite
tomādera prati sneha chila parokṣete
(ebe) tomādera bhakti dekhi tahā puṣṭa haila
nikhunṭa ādarṣe tāhā thāke yena aṭala
sevi'o sei mahārāje satat santōṣe
tānhāra santōṣe siddhi labhibe viśeṣe
caitanya-mather vārttā śuninu tānra mukhe
daṇḍavata-nati āmāra jānāi'o tānke*

Śrīpāda Nārasīṅha Mahārāja imperceptibly bestowed affection upon your whole family because you had intimate and familial association with him. And now, upon seeing your devotion, his affection for you is increasing. The spotless ideals of Nārasīṅha Mahārāja should remain fixed in your heart. You must always serve him with great satisfaction, for by doing so you will attain discernable perfection. I have heard the news of Caitanya Maṭha from his mouth. Convey my *daṇḍavat praṇāmas* to him.

*samītir sarvamaya sevādhyaksa yini
mādrśa varāke tānra kṛpā-drṣṭi āni
praṇati jñāpana kari jānāi'o tānahāya
keśave acalā bhakti yena mora haya
sevāvīra yudhiṣṭhira śrī mathurā dhāme
sthapilena 'kesavajī matha' keśava-janmasthanē*

*tānra kṛpādeśa tumi pālicha yatane
dekhiyā śuniyā sukha pāinu baḍa mane*



Please carry, in every respect, the merciful glance of he who is the chief performer of all the services of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samitī (Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja) to a destitute person like me. Please offer my *daṇḍavat praṇāma* to him so that I may attain unflinching devotion unto Lord Keśava. Being valorous in service and endowed with attributes like Yudhiṣṭhira Mahārāja, he established Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha in Mathurā, the birth place of Śrī Keśava. With great care and effort you are abiding by his merciful orders. I am pleased to see and hear of this.

*nīrava sevā tomāra pratiṣṭhaśā-hina
prajñāvāna sannyāsī tumi vayase navīna
vedāntera pratipādyā viṣṇu bhagavāna
bali're chalite prabhu haila vāmana
tānra pade pratipade, bāḍe yadi rati
tabe ta sakala sevāra haila sadgati*

Free from the desire for prestige, you perform your service silently. You are a young but learned *sannyāsī*. Lord Viṣṇu, the Absolute Reality established by Vedānta, became Vāmana in order to deceive Bali Mahārāja. If at every step attachment increases for the lotus feet of Śrī Viṣṇu then all of one's services will be successful.

*vaiṣṇavera guṇa gāne ghuce sarvapāpa
sei āse muī kichu karinu pralāpa
patrakhāni mudrit hale habe mane sukha
sampādaka sampādane nā hana vimukha*

By glorifying the Vaiṣṇavas all sins are eradicated. With this hope, I have inarticulately spoken. I will be happy for this letter to be published, but the editor should not avoid his responsibility of editing as he sees fit.

Tridaṇḍī Svāmī Bhakti Sambandha Turyāśramī ❀

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*,
Year 7, Issue 8 (1955)



Remembering the Transcendental Nature of *prapūjya-carāṇa aṣṭotara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

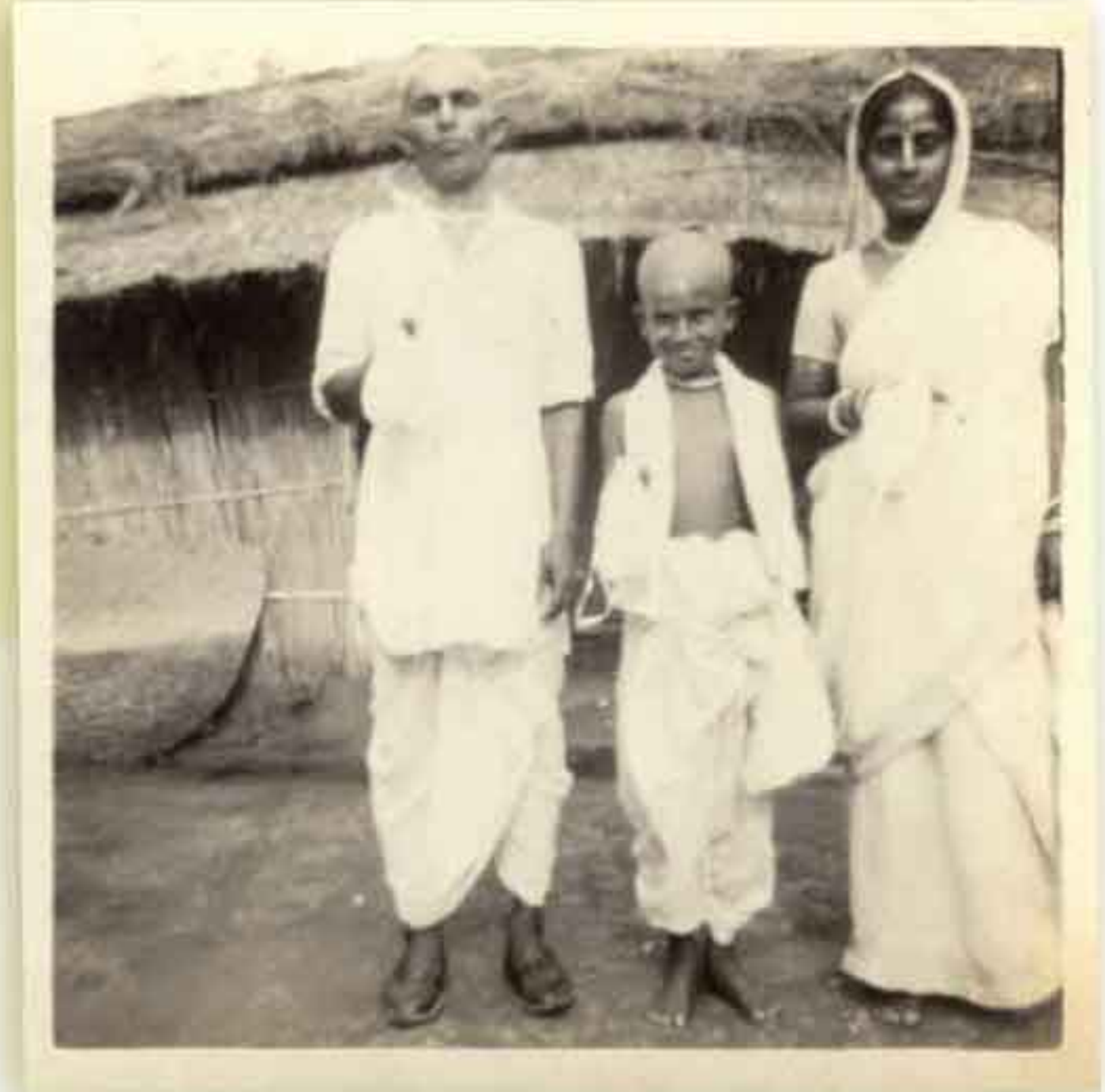
His Birth and His Early Life in the Maṭha

I heard from the mouth of Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja's virtuous and learned mother, Śrīmatī Bhagavatī devī, that *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja was born on the *kṛṣṇa-pakṣa navamī* in the month of Pauṣa (December 23), 1921 in the village of Pilajaṅga in the Khulnā district of East Bengal (Bangladesh). His childhood name was Santoṣa. His father, Śrī Satiśacandra, took *dīkṣā* from my most worshipable spiritual master, *om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. After *dīkṣā* his name became Śrī Sarveśvara dāsa Ādhikārī. His mother was the disciple of the world famous *jagad-guru, nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda.

In 1930, during Śrīla Prabhupāda's manifest pastime, Santoṣa, who was about nine years old, accompanied His mother to Māyāpura to attend the Śrī Gaura Pūrṇimā festival at Śrī Caitanya Maṭha. On that occasion, his mother offered him to the lotus feet of Śrīla Prabhupāda, who entrusted him to the care of my Gurupādapadma (*nitya-līlā praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī), his dear-most associate. My Gurupādapadma's name then was Śrī Vinoda-bihārī Brahmācārī Kṛtiratna. He enrolled Santoṣa in the Śrī Bhaktivinoda Institute in Māyāpura. Śrī Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda gave him *harināma* initiation and later our Gurudeva named him Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī.

His Sharp Intelligence from Boyhood and his Inclination to Serve Vaiṣṇavas

Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī's intelligence was extremely sharp, his speech was soft and sweet, and his memory was perfect. He could commit to memory and permanently retain whatever he read or heard, be it a *śloka* or a lecture. Śrīla Gurudeva instructed him to learn *ślokas* and told him



Santoṣa with his father, Śrī Satiśacandra and mother, Śrīmatī Bhagavatī devī.

that for every *śloka* he memorised, he would give him a candy. In this way Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī would learn ten to twenty *ślokas* daily.

Although he was top of his class, he never neglected his services in the *maṭha*. He would collect banana leaves to be used as plates, wash them, and lay them out for the Vaiṣṇavas' *prasāda*. During *prasāda*, he distributed lemons, water, salt and cups for water. When the Vaiṣṇavas had finished, he would throw away their leaf plates and clean their eating places.

He strictly adhered to his vow of completing his chanting of *harināma* daily, but always completed his studies. He was like the shadow of my Śrī Gurupādapadma, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, serving him in every possible way.

Accepting Dīkṣā

After Prabhupāda entered his unmanifest pastimes, conflicts took place amongst the devotees in the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Without sound reason, the opposing party jailed our most worshipable Śrīla Gurudeva and forty of Śrīla Prabhupāda's senior, respectable disciples. Among them were Śrīla Narahari-sevā Vighraha prabhu, Śrī Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, *pūjyapāda* Bhakti Kuśala Nārasimha Mahārāja, *pūjyapāda* Paramahaṁsa Mahārāja, and *pūjyapāda* Ṛṣikeśa Mahārāja. It was Śrī Sajjana Sevaka alone who would bring the files regarding the case to the lawyer and go to court, as well as cook *prasāda* and bring it to the jail for all forty devotees.

At that time Śrīla Gurudeva gave him the *dīkṣā mantras*, but could not perform his *upanāyana saṁskāra*, or sacred thread ceremony. Some people say that Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī (Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārāja) accepted *harināma* and *dīkṣā* from *pūjyapāda* Bhakti Vicāra Yāyāvara Mahārāja. But the truth is that he received *harināma* from *jagadguru nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī, and *dīkṣā* from my Gurupādapadma, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

At that time Śrīla Gurudeva had not yet received *sannyāsa*, nor was he accepting disciples; therefore *pūjyapāda* Yāyāvara Mahārāja performed Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī's *upanāyana saṁskāra*. But factually, Sajjana Sevaka was the *dīkṣā* disciple of our Gurudeva.

Establishing Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti and Preaching with Śrī Gurupādapadma

In 1942, after the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda, my Gurupādapadma established Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta



Śrī Sajjana Sevaka
Brahmacārī

Samiti in Bosapāḍā Lane, Kolkata. Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī was there at that time, as was Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja. And in 1943, when Śrīla Gurudeva established Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī was with him there also.

He performed all types of service for Śrīla Gurudeva, including cooking for him. And when Śrī Gurudeva would leave to preach in the cities and towns on either side of the Gaṅgā, Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī would accompany him as his prominent assistant and servant.

Exemplary Vaiṣṇava-sevā

Once, a large number of devotees attended some special occasion at Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti's centre at Bosapāḍā Lane, but somehow no one was available to cook for them. Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī was ill with a 103 degree fever at that time. Still, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja came to him and instructed him to rise from bed and cook. He immediately did so and afterwards served the visiting Vaiṣṇavas *prasāda*. By this he demonstrated that in the service of his Gurudeva, he did not even care for his life. Shortly after this incident, his good health returned.

His Affection for Me

In about 1945, under the guidance of Śrīla Guru Mahārāja, a disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda went to preach in Sahabaganja in the state of Bihar. That devotee, Śrīla Narottamānanda Brahmācārī (later *pūjyapāda* Bhakti Kamala Madhusūdana Mahārāja), was renown for his wonderful explanations of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He was travelling with Śrī Bhakti Kuśala Nārasimha Mahārāja, *pūjyapāda* Rādhānātha Brahmācārī (later *pūjyapāda* Trivikrama Mahārāja), Prema-prayojana Brahmācārī and Govardhana Brahmācārī. It was then that I met the devotees and gradually began to perform *bhajana* according to the conception of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

From that time on I would write letters to Śrīla Gurudeva, and Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī sent me replies on Gurudeva's behalf. In those letters he addressed me as "Tiwariji", as I hailed from a Tiwariji family. Then, in 1946, I left my family responsibilities, wife, job and all else and journeyed to Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa without notifying anyone about my coming. I arrived in the middle of the night so the train station was in darkness. Then, on the

platform, I noticed someone with a lantern calling out, “Tiwariji, Tiwariji!” It was Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī looking for me! When I heard my name being called I immediately knew it was him.

I went with him to the *maṭha*, and on the way I asked him how he knew of my arrival on that particular train. He said, “Śrīla Guru Mahārāja told me, ‘Śrīmān Nārāyaṇa Tivārī is arriving on this train tonight, so you should go there to greet him and bring him to the *maṭha*.’”

From that time on, Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī cared for me in every respect, supplying me with cloth and whatever else I needed. He always showed me much affection and I came to regard him as my *śikṣā-guru*.

Śrī Bṛhad Mṛdaṅga Sevā

Śrīla Guru Mahārāja established a printing press in the Chuñchurā Maṭha near Kolkata to publish *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā* and other Gauḍīya scriptures. At that time Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī was the commander of that *maṭha*. He took full charge of the *Patrikā*, selecting all its contents, proofreading and bringing it to press.

Once, while working with the printing press, his finger was seriously cut and blood gushed forth. He simply wrapped a cloth around it and continued with his service. At that time Śrīla Guru Mahārāja was staying there. As soon as he heard what had happened, he ran there, weeping. Immediately Śrīla Gurudeva brought Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī by car to the Medical Collage in Kolkata where his finger was treated. This incident illustrates his dedication to serving Śrīla Gurudeva and Śrīla Gurudeva’s parental affection for him.

His Transcriptions were Faultless

Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī would always be on hand to take dictation for Śrīla Gurudeva’s editorial, even when thousands of people who had come for *parikramā* would come to meet with Gurudeva. Even at such a busy time, Śrīla Gurudeva would dictate the editorial for the *Patrikā*, and Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī would write it down. Without any proofreading, his work, always faultless, was sent directly to press. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja perfectly expressed his thoughts in words, and Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī perfectly transcribed them, just like Gaṇeśa, whose transcription contained no error.

Referencing Ślokas in Service to the Sampradāya

Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī lived for some time in Śrī Śyāmānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Medinīpura. Śrī Anantarāma Brahmācārī (later *pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhakti Jīvana Janārdana Mahārāja) was also there at that time.

In order to compose an important essay, the references for two *ślokas* were needed. The *ślokas* were:

*sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ
ataḥ kalau bhavilsyanti catvāraḥ sampradāyīṇaḥ
Prameya ratnavali (1.5)
(quoted from Padma Purāṇa)*

Unless one has been initiated into the *sampradāya* by a bona fide spiritual master, the *mantra* received will be without effect. In the age of Kali there will only be four bona fide *sampradāyas*.

*janmanā jāyate sūdraḥ
saṁskārād dhi bhaved dvijaḥ
veda-pāṭhād bhaved vipraḥ
brahma jānātīti brāhmaṇa
Smṛti Vākya*

By birth, everyone is a *sūdra*. One becomes *dvija* (twice born) upon receiving spiritual purification (*saṁskāra*) from a spiritual master. By studying the Vedas one becomes a *vipra*. The real *brāhmaṇa*, however, is one who knows *brahma*.

In Vṛndāvana, some Gosvāmīs and *bābājīs* had been saying that these two *ślokas* are not found anywhere in the *śāstras*. They were also saying that there were more than four *sampradāyas*, and that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is not in the line of Madhvācārya. They said that He established the Gauḍīya-sampradāya Himself, and that this *sampradāya* is not within the Śrī Madhva-sampradāya.

The two *brahmācārīs* went to the king’s impressive library in Mahiṣādala near the town of Medinīpura. They stayed there for several days combing through many books until they found the required references. While there, they took the opportunity to read most of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava scriptures, as well as the Upaniṣads and Purāṇas that were available in that library.

Accepting Sannyāsa

For the first time in our society Śrīla Gurudeva awarded *sannyāsa* to three people during the 1952 Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*. They were Śrī Sajjana Sevaka Brahmācārī, Śrī Rādhānātha dāsa Adhikārī (Vrajavāsī) and me (Śrī Gaura-nārāyaṇa dāsa Adhikārī). Our respective *sannyāsa* names were Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa.

The relationship we shared was intimate, as if we were one soul in three bodies. Since I was last to join the *maṭha* among the three of us, both *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja and *pūjyapāda* Trivikrama Mahārāja showered me with much affection. All three of us shared the responsibility of determining what services needed to be done, but *pūjyapāda* Trivikrama Mahārāja and I respected *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja as our *śikṣā-guru*.

A Living Gauḍīya Dictionary

Śrīla Guru Mahārāja once took five *sannyāsīs* and ten to twelve *brahmācārīs* preaching in Āssām. We came to the village of Bārīpaḍā, which was largely populated by the disciples of Haṅkaradeva, who had written the so-called ‘Thirteenth Canto’ of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. His followers worshipped Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, but they also ate meat, fish and other abominable foodstuffs. In a large gathering, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja declared that the mouths of those who perform Śrī Kṛṣṇa *bhajana* while eating meat and fish and drinking alcohol are like sewers full of stool and urine.

Upon hearing this, Haṅkaradeva’s numerous disciples began to attack the devotees on stage with sticks and stones. Tumult erupted and people scattered. Nonetheless, Śrīla Guru Mahārāja remained still and calm. “If you want to fight, we can also take up sticks and stones. You should calm down and listen. Those with questions or doubts are welcome to present them.”

The followers of Haṅkaradeva declared Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to be an ordinary person, not an incarnation of God, and requested evidence of His supreme position. Śrīla Guru Mahārāja motioned to *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja, indicating he should speak. *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja stood up and quoted thirty-five or so *śloka*s,



(from left to right): Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja

starting with *kṛṣṇa varṇam tviṣāṅkṛṣṇam* and *channa-avatāra*, to prove that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is indeed God. The audience was astonished and silenced. In this way the preaching programme concluded without further impediment.

Preaching in the Villages of Bengal

Upon the completion of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha’s *śrī mandira* and temple hall in Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa, Śrīla Gurudeva sent *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja out to preach with some *brahmācārīs*. They went to towns and villages in Twenty-four Paraganās, in the south of West Bengal. *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja endured many hardships in reaching out to the people and distributing the message of Mahāprabhu in remote areas, particularly in Kakadvīpa and the Sundarbans. When he preached, he demonstrated an extraordinary capacity to tolerate severe difficulties. He would always offer respect to others in full humility. And he could expertly refute any misconceptions about the Absolute Truth.

His Expertise in the Art of Speaking Sweetly while Refuting Bogus Philosophies

pūjyapāda Vāmana Mahārāja could speak *hari-kathā* for three or four hours. When it was necessary for him to refute the misconceptions of the *sahajiyās*, the impersonalists or those who conceive that every philosophy is valid (*yata mata tata patha*), he would speak so sweetly that no one,

not even the members of that sect, would become hurt or offended. Furthermore, they were able to appreciate the depth of the philosophy he was presenting.

His Compilation of the Transcendental Life of Śrīla Gurudeva

On the order of Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja printed many books, such as *Jaiva-Dharma*, *Navadvīpa bhāva-taraṅga*, *Gauḍīya-Gīti-Guccha*, *Navadvīpa Śatakam*, *Navadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā* and *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*. He also wrote wonderful articles for the *Gauḍīya Patrikā*.

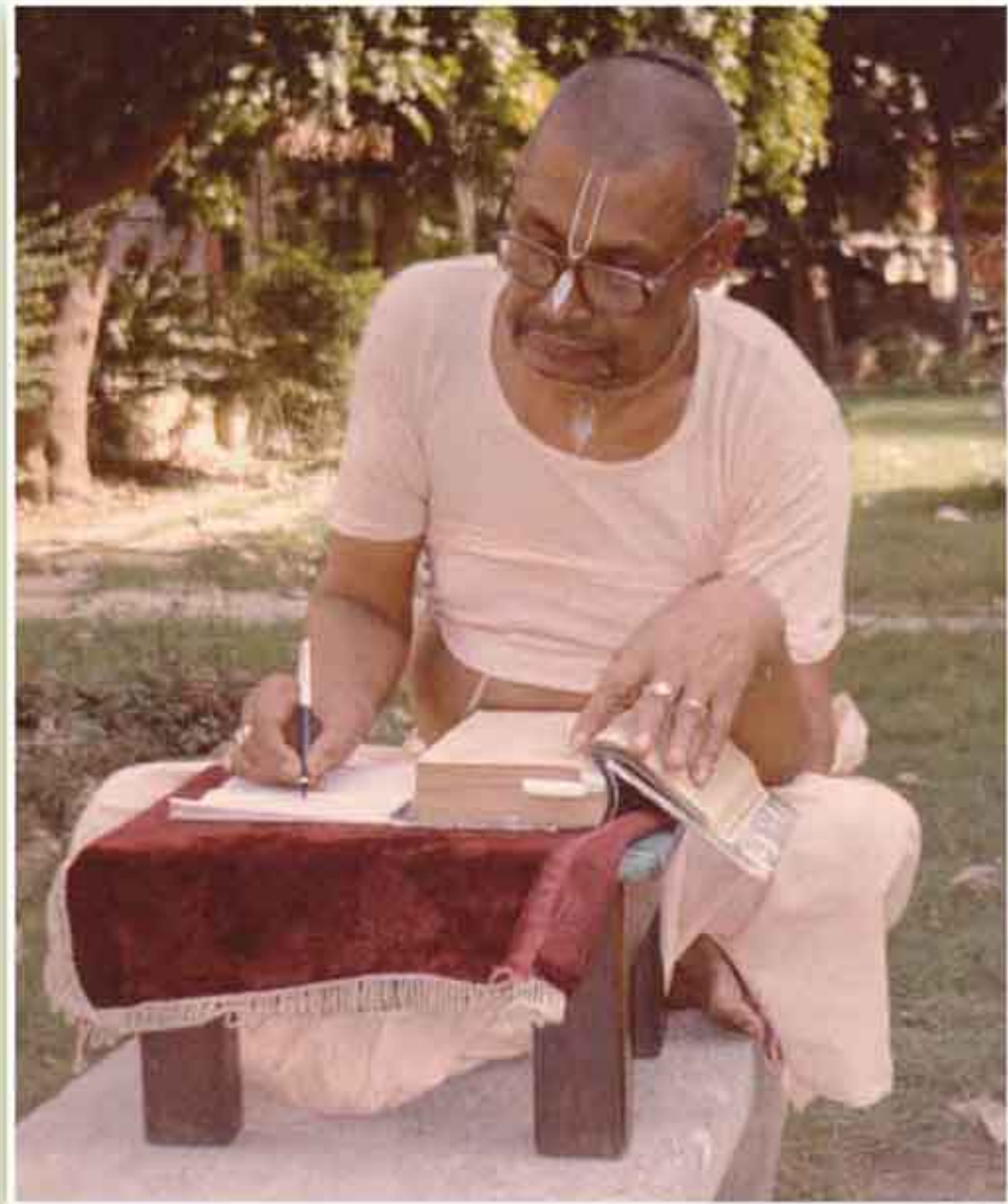
After the disappearance of *om viṣṇupāda* 108 Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja compiled Śrīla Guru Mahārāja's transcendental life history. He had regularly noted down his activities and pastimes and used this information in this book that comprised Śrīla Gurudeva's entire life, from his appearance to his disappearance.

It included accounts of his accepting the shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda, serving the Gauḍīya Maṭha, his *niṣṭhā* in Prabhupāda, his developing Māyāpura, his establishing Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti after the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda and then preaching all over India, his *parikramās* of various *dhāmas* and *tīrthas*, and his giving *sannyāsa*. In particular, it presented Śrīla Gurudeva's line of thought in a marvelous way.

This book also described the pilgrimages we went on with Śrīla Gurudeva to such places as Śrī Jagannātha Purī (including *parikramā* of the entire Kṣetra-maṇḍala), Kāśī-dhāma, Ayodhyā-dhāma, Vāsukinātha, Naimiṣāraṇya, Vaidyanātha-dhāma, Bhadracalam, Prayāga, Mathurā-maṇḍala, 84 *kośa* Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā*, Dvārakā, Bhent-Dvārakā, Gomatī-Dvārakā, Rana-chodajī, Kūrmācala, Panna Narasimha, Jeo-Narasimha, Pakṣi-tīrtha, Madras, Tāñjor, Rāmeśvaram, Kanyā-kumārī, Ahovala, Trivandrum, Uḍupī, Veṅkaṭeśvaram, Śrī Raṅgam, Kedāra, Bādri, Mumbādevī, Kāmākhyā-devī, Mahābalipuram, Padmanābha Tīrtha, Viṣṇu-kāñcī, Śiva-kāñcī, Daṇḍakāraṇya and Citrakūṭa.

A Strong Decision

Once, one of Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja's disciples, who was somewhat uncontrolled, started to regularly quarrel with the people living near the *maṭha*, and also with the *maṭha* devotees. He did not even offer respect



to the *sannyāsīs*. His behaviour became a topic for the annual meeting. Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja said that unless chastised, people like this never change and they ruin the atmosphere in the *maṭha*. He said that if necessary, this person should be expelled from the *maṭha*. Finally, those in the meeting agreed. Therefore at times, he would demonstrate impartiality even to his own disciples.

An Ācārya In the Anugatya of His Godbrothers

Although *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja was the *ācārya*, he was completely devoid of the pride of being an *ācārya* and it was observed in his life that he would always willingly remain under the guidance of his god-brothers. During Navadvīpa *parikramā*, before he would give initiations, he would come to Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja and to me and say, "O Mahārāja, please order me to give initiations."

Once, while in Nīlācala Gauḍīya Maṭha in Purī-dhāma, *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja became ill. He tried homeopathic and Ayurvedic medicine, but his condition remained the same. People begged him to go to a doctor in Kolkata, but he would not heed their requests because he did not want to independently take *maṭha* funds for his own health.

When news of his condition reached me, I immediately went to Purī along with Navīna-kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī [now Śrī Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja] and told him that he could not stay there – we would not allow it. I requested him to kindly come with us to Kolkata where we would arrange for his medical care. He immediately began to make plans to leave and told his servants, “Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has come, so I must go to Kolkata.”

Śrī Bhaktivedānta Harijana Mahārāja was also in Purī then. We reserved a sleeping berth for Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārāja on the train and brought him to Kolkata where he recovered within a few days.

On another occasion when he became ill, he went to our *maṭha* in Sidhabarī, near Asansol in Bengal. The atmosphere there is pleasant and healthy, and the drinking water is good. A famous homeopathic doctor from that place treated him, but instead of Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja recovering his health, he became more ill.

I went there with Navīna-kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī and when he saw me he said, “Now Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja won’t let me stay here. Navīna, come and pack my bags. I am about to be given a military order to leave.” That evening we left for Kolkata and after a few days of treatment he recovered his health.

Faith in his Godbrother

I once sent *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja a letter requesting him to come to Mathurā because many people there wanted to take *harināma* and *dīkṣā* initiation. Furthermore, if he came, the people of Mathurā could take his *darśana*.

He wrote back, “I told you long ago, and I am telling you again, that you yourself should, without hesitation, give *harināma* and *dīkṣā* initiation. My health is not good. If you do this it will save me from having to travel and the preaching there will not be hindered.”

How rare it is to find a Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* like him who, with trust and magnanimity, instructs his godbrother to give *harināma* and *dīkṣā*. These days, differences and quarrels take place in *maṭhas* about this subject matter alone.

Advocating Bhajana in the Mood of Rādhā-dāsyam

Sometimes, especially during Navadvīpa *parīkramā*, *pūjyapāda* Trivikrama Mahārāja and I would have loving

quarrels (*prema-kalaha*). They would even take place on the stage, in public. He would cut my arguments and I would cut his. Once, in the course of one such quarrel, I presented *mādhurya-rasa* according to the conception of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. My point was that on the strength of their service to Śrī Rādhā, Her maidservants (*dāsīs*) do not even care to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa. I quoted the *śloka* “*na pārāye haṁ niravadya-saṁyujām*” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.32.22). Śrī Kṛṣṇa is saying, “O *gopīs*, even if I lived as long as Lord Brahmā or any other demigod, I would not be able to repay My debt to you.”

In *Gīta-govinda* (3.7.9) we see that when Śrīmatī Rādhikā is in *māna*, Kṛṣṇa says, “O dearest Rādhikā, I will never offend You like that again. Please forgive Me.” And also in *Gīta-govinda* (10.19.8): “*smara-garala-khaṇḍanam mama śirasi maṇḍanam dehi pada-pallavam udāram* – My beloved! Offer the fresh buds of Your enchanting feet as an ornament upon My head.”

Therefore, in the eyes of *tattva*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *svayam-bhagavān*, but due to the excellence, or superiority of *āśraya-jātīya-prema* (the *prema* experienced by devotees) He becomes indebted to Śrīmatī Rādhikā and begs from Her alms of forgiveness.

Pūjyapāda Trivikrama Mahārāja refuted my statements and established the *bhagavattā*, or Godliness, and importance of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this way there ensued sweet debates between us. *Pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja, the chair-person of the assembly, witnessed our loving quarrels and spoke his conclusion. “*Rādhā pakṣa chāḍi ye jana se jana, ye bhāve se bhāve thāke, āmī to rādhikā pakṣa pātī sadā* – I am exclusively in the group of Śrī Rādhājī. I become happy when She is happy, and when She is sad I become sad.’ This is the *vicāra*, or conception, of the *rūpānugas* (followers of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī).

“Performing *bhajana* with the inclination to serve Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the best type of *bhajana*. It cannot be said that no one is qualified to perform this kind of *bhajana*. In this world there is always a *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava who is capable of doing such *bhajana*. Past, present and future – there will always be someone with this qualification. To say otherwise is incorrect because the world would face destruction if it lacked the presence of such a qualified person.”

His philosophical perspective made a substantial impression on the audience.

Absorption in Vipralambha-bhajana

From the beginning of his devotional life, *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja was absorbed in *vipralambha-bhajana*. When a disciple came to him to discuss any issue, especially in relation to management, he would say, “Go to Śrīpāda Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and he will address your problem.”

For two or three years before his disappearance he completely withdrew from the external world, absorbing himself internally in *nāma-bhajana*. Sometimes, he was overwhelmed with ecstasy, and day or night he would call out, “O Ṭhākuraṇī, *dayā karo!* (Give me Your mercy), Ṭhākuraṇī! *Dayā karo! Kṛpā karo!*” He would even cry this out as he slept.

His Disappearance and Samādhi

In 2004, some days before his disappearance from this world, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja was staying on the bank of the River Gaṅgā at a place called Vaidyavātī, a short distance from Kolkata. Even though his health was poor, he journeyed to Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha in Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma to observe Kartika Vrata. And in that month of Kartika, on the day of Gaura-tṛtīyā, he entered into Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa’s *nitya-līlā*.

On this day I was at Śrī Govardhana performing our annual Śrī Vraja-maṇḍala *parikramā* with approximately 1000 participants. Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Ācārya Mahārāja and others from Śrīdhāma Navadvīpa informed me that Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja’s *samādhi* ceremony would not be performed until I arrived. I had already sent Śrī Bhaktivedānta Tīrtha Mahārāja and Śrī Bhaktivedānta Vana Mahārāja to Navadvīpa from Govardhana, but upon hearing the words of Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Ācārya Mahārāja, I immediately left my responsibilities and went to Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma with Śrī Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja.

Upon my arrival in Kolkata, however, I learnt that Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Ācārya Mahārāja and some new *maṭha* devotees had ignored the requests of other *sannyāsīs* and senior residents of the *maṭha* and had placed Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja in *samādhi* in the middle of the night. They had previously informed me of a scheduled time for the ceremony, but went ahead and performed it early, without waiting for us to arrive. This was quite disconcerting for some of my god-brothers

and for me. Nonetheless, I went to Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma and, accompanied by *kīrtana*, performed *pūja-arcana* and *parikramā* of his *samādhi*. A day later, I returned to Govardhana.



The Ideal Vaiṣṇava

In this way I lived with *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja for almost sixty years and had the opportunity to closely observe and understand him. He possessed all the qualities that are inherent in a Vaiṣṇava. By nature he was simple, grave, humble, tolerant, overflowing with *guru-niṣṭhā* and inclined to serve the Vaiṣṇavas. This situated him on a high level of *bhakti*.

His *guru-niṣṭhā* was astounding. With his life in his hands, he would step forward and offer himself in the service of Śrīla Gurudeva. *Guru-niṣṭhā* is the backbone of *bhakti*. I have seen many *guru-sevakas*, but *pūjyapāda* Vāmana Mahārāja’s service to Śrīla Gurudeva with his body, mind, words and sentiments – as a *brahmacārī* and as a *sannyāsī* – was extraordinary. In this world, such a *guru-sevaka* is rare.

We pray to him that while engaged in the eternal service of Śrīla Gurudeva and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, he be merciful upon us all so that we can also perform *guru-sevā* with *niṣṭhā* like him and thus dedicate our lives to Śrī Guru and his mission. ☪



Memories in Separation

Glorification by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Vijñāna Bhāratī Mahārāja
from Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha

A Sincere and Humble Vaiṣṇava

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja came to reside in Śrīla Prabhupāda's *maṭha* when he was quite young. Although he was still at school he cleaned Thākuraḥ's pots and performed several other services. Śrīla Prabhupāda noted his service attitude and mercifully gave him *harināma* initiation.

By nature Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja was extremely soft-hearted; he never quarrelled with anyone. During his life in the *maṭha* he had the fortune of serving Śrīla Prabhupāda and all his associates. He would especially take responsibility for *maṭha* residents who became ill. When he went preaching with my Guru Mahārāja (Śrīla Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja) he cooked and performed a variety of services.

Attached to Transcendental Knowledge

He clearly understood the deep *siddhānta* (philosophical conclusions) of several scriptures, and his heart held a special honour for the instructions of Guru, Vaiṣṇavas, and *śāstra*. He was well established in knowledge of the *śloka*s of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Yet, although his knowledge was so vast, I noticed that he was never inclined to push himself forward to speak *kathā* or give lectures in order to gain prestige. This was extraordinary. And I never heard him speak his own glories when he had finished his discourse.

Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja was *parā-vidyānurāgi*, attached to transcendental knowledge. He was proficient in his knowledge of the philosophical truths of the *bhakti śāstras*. He had astonishing tolerance, he was devoted to *bhajana* and he was free from pride. He relished reading and if he did not have a certain book, he would borrow it.

His Indestructable and Unshakable Faith

Following the disappearance of Śrīla Prabhupāda a formidably thick, dark cloud covered the Gauḍīya Maṭha. Many so-called stalwart disciples of Śrīla Prabhupāda became entangled in sense-enjoyment, many returned to their previous *āśramas*, and many gave up their saffron cloth, put on white and married. Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja was very young at that time, yet as a surrendered devotee he demonstrated undeviating *niṣṭhā* and patience that was high, like the peak of a mountain.

*na tathā hy aghavān rājan
pūyeta tapa-ādibhiḥ
yathā kṛṣṇārpita-prāṇas
tat-puruṣa-niṣevayā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (6.1.16)

O King, a person steeped in sinful activity can become purified if he engages in serving Kṛṣṇa's pure representative, the bone fide *guru*, and in this way learns to dedicate himself to Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet. Such purification is not possible by performing austerities and penances, by practising celibacy or by other processes of purification.

Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja had tremendous dedication to Bhagavān, as described in this *śloka*. He endlessly served Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and the devotees with him, such as Śrī Narahari Sevā-vigraha prabhu, when they were in jail. He did not lose his faith, become restless, leave the *maṭha* and become a *grhastha*.

Several people, however, tried to convince him to stop serving them. "O brother, you came here to perform *hari-bhajana*. How will you benefit by serving people in jail?"

But he had an amazing realisation. He replied:

asat-saṅga-tyāga, ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
'strī-saṅgi' eka asādhu, 'kṛṣṇābhakta' āra
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.87)

The Vaiṣṇava behaves in such a way as to completely renounce *asat-saṅga*. This refers to the association of those who are materially attached, such as those who associate with women for sense enjoyment, and those who are not devotees of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Neither is saintly.

“This I have learnt from the exemplary life of Śrīla Prabhupāda; therefore I will exclusively take *vaiṣṇava-saṅga*. I will serve Vaiṣṇavas only, even if they are in jail.”

Another person contested, “But if they are Vaiṣṇavas, why are they in jail?” To this Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja replied, “If a piece of gold is found in a golden husk of grain, does its value decrease?”

In this way they continued with their attempts to shake his faith, until finally he said:

dekhiyā nā dekhe jata abhaktera gaṇa
ulluke nā dekhe jena suryera kirāṇa
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 3.86)

Non-devotees cannot perceive the Vaiṣṇava's transcendental qualities, just as an owl cannot see the rays of the sun, even though it has eyes.

Seeing his firm faith, all were silenced.

His Attachment to Glorifying Vaiṣṇavas

When Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja disappeared from this world, we attended his *viraha-mahotsava*, the assembly held in separation from him. My Gurupādapadma, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Dayita Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, was the chair-person (*śabhāpati*) of that assembly. At that time he acknowledged Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja as an exemplary *guru-sevaka*, who was always engaged in preaching *śuddha-bhakti*. On occasion we would witness his intense attachment to glorifying Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.



In 1994 the *viraha-mahotsava* of Śrīla Bhakti Jivana Janārdana Mahārāja was observed in Khaḍḍagapura. At that time Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja was in Madras receiving medical treatment. He had been invited to preside over the assembly as the *śabhāpati*, and therefore had to journey from Madras to Khaḍḍagapura. But unfortunately the train was late. When he did not arrive in time, I was chosen to be the *śabhāpati*. By the time he arrived, five or six Vaiṣṇavas had already spoken.

I requested him to speak and he asked me to give him a time limit. I replied, “Mahārāja, you are the actual *śabhāpati* of this assembly, so for you a time limit does not apply.” He was ill, but he spoke on and on. His servants held up the clock to indicate he should stop, but he did not even look in their direction. He spoke *hari-kathā* without slightly considering the needs of his body, thus demonstrating his attachment to glorifying Śrī Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas.

A Perfect Candidate for Mercy

Mercy does not come to one who begs for it simply as lip-service, but it comes automatically for one who does *sevā*. You will hear people saying, “Mahārāja, please give me your mercy”, “bestow your mercy upon me Mahārāja”. But they don’t know that you don’t get mercy just by asking for it. Furthermore, you will not be able to retain the mercy unless you have the necessary foundation, even if the person giving mercy wants to give it to you.

Once a man came to Gaura Kiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and repeatedly begged him for mercy. Bābājī Mahārāja took off his *kaupīnas*¹ and offered them to him. The man fled. On the other hand, mercy will automatically come to the person dedicated to *sevā*, not to one who makes a show of begging for it. The story of Bhilani Śabarī from *rāma-līlā* illustrates this point. From a very young age, she used to go to the jungle to fetch wood, and upon her return home, she would give a little wood to an old, helpless Bābājī. She did this for many years. One day, the Bābājī stopped her and said, “I am poor, and there is nothing of this world I can give you in exchange for your service to me, but if you take bath and come back here, I can give you a *mantra* that will give you the *darśana* of Śrī Rāmacandra.”

This story shows that mercy of *śuddha-bhaktas* automatically falls upon a person who is *sevonmukha* (imbued with a service attitude). We can see this in the life of Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja.

His Full Command Over the Urge to Speak

His speech was full of gravity; we never heard frivolous words come from his mouth. Several times I heard him say, “*Dekhibe, śunibe, bolibe nā* – watch, listen, but don’t comment.” In his life he practised this ideal perfectly and completely. He would never transgress *maryādā*, proper Vaiṣṇava conduct.

In the mood of Śrīla Prabhupāda, he never ordered anyone around. This applied to all Vaiṣṇavas, even his own disciples and servants. In order to instruct them he would never say, “You do this,” and “you do that.” Instead he used language that was sweet and soft. “Mahāprabhu

has given these instructions for all of us to follow,” he would say. “We will benefit by following them. This is the advice of Hari, Guru, Vaiṣṇavas.” I never heard him say, “I want it like this. Everyone must do as I say.”

Association through Separation

Sādhu-saṅga, taken in a mood of complete surrender (*śaraṇāgati*), removes our previous conditioned nature. Actual *sādhu-saṅga* takes place in separation.

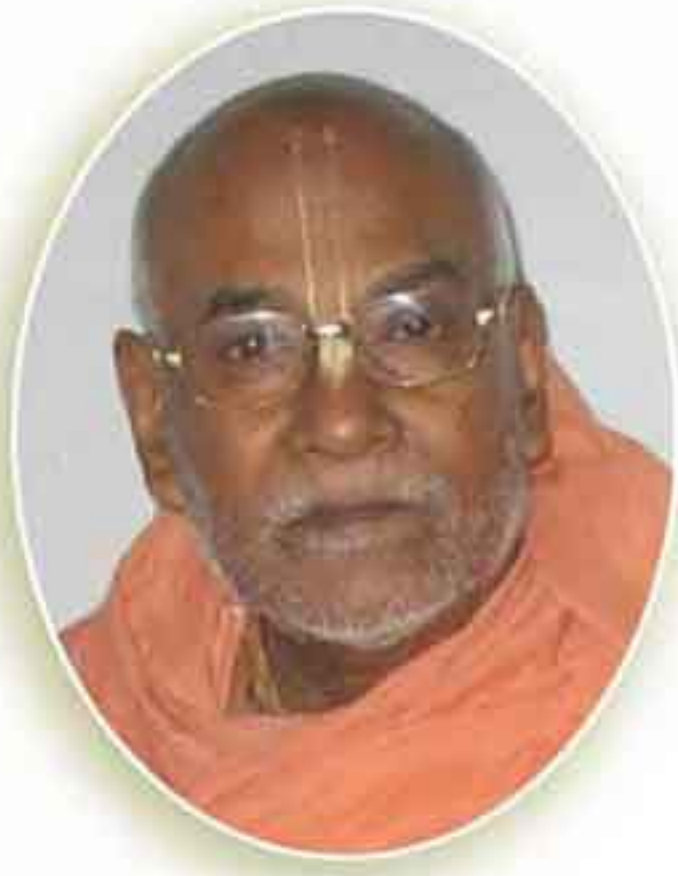
Once, devotees came to our Purī *maṭha* to perform *parikramā* of Purī-dhāma. One mother left her child in the *maṭha* and went on *parikramā*. Śrīpāda Madanaseṭha Prabhu, who at that time was looking after the *maṭha* there, began to feed the child *malpuā*, *sandeśa* and other sweets. The boy enthusiastically accepted the sweets that were affectionately offered to him, and even began to snatch them off Madanaseṭha.

The *parikramā* party finally returned to the *maṭha*, but his mother had gone to purchase something from the market and did not return with the party. The boy noticed his mother’s absence and began to wale loudly. He became so worked up that no one could pacify him. The devotees lovingly offered him sweets, but he hurled to the ground those same foodstuffs that he was previously snatching and eating.

This is *viraha*. That boy became dissatisfied with the best of things. In his intense feelings of *viraha*, he wanted only his mother – nothing and no one else. This is really how to take association. And the manner in which he cried, “Mother, mother!” is real *nāma*. A person can experience separation from Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas to the degree he puts his energy into pleasing and serving them.

Deity worship, *pūja*, *harināma* and so forth are never successfully performed unless accompanied by a feeling of separation. We will be elevated by feelings of separation from Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, and if we lament for anything in this world we will be degraded. Our sole assets are remembrances of the Vaiṣṇavas. Remembrances of this world will be calamitous for us. Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja’s ideal example of how to serve pure devotees is certainly worthy of my prayers and glorification. ❀

¹ *Kaupīnas* are worn by one who has accepted the renounced order. In other words, Śrīla Bābājī Mahārāja was giving him the mercy to become a renunciate.



An Extraordinary Vaiṣṇava

Glorification by Puṅgavāda Bhakti Jīvana Ācārya Mahārāja,
the present ācārya of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, Varddhamana,
founded by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Kamala Madhūsudana Mahārāja

Our First Meeting

I first met Śrīlā Vāmana Mahārāja in Chitranjan while I was there to perform the inauguration ceremony of my godbrother's new house. They had arranged a fire *yajña* for this purpose. Since Śrīlā Vāmana Mahārāja was preaching there at the time, they invited him for the occasion, and he came.

In my conversation with Śrīlā Vāmana Mahārāja, I asked him the following question: "We see that when newcomers join the *maṭha*, they listen to *hari-kathā* attentively, practise *hari-bhajana*, and also perform *sevā*, but after some time, they experience disturbances and cannot maintain their practices. Why is this?"

Śrīlā Vāmana Mahārāja replied that the faith of the *jīvas* when they first join the movement is mundane (*laukika śraddhā*). That mundane faith diminishes when they have resided in the *maṭha* for some time. This is a common occurrence. To perform *bhakti*, one's faith must be based on scripture (*śāstrīya śraddhā*). Mundane faith does not actually assist one's *bhakti*, nor does it last. If that *jīva* recommences his practices by faithfully hearing *hari-kathā* from the lips of *guru* and *sādhu*, his mundane faith gradually transforms into spiritual faith, *śāstrīya śraddhā*, which is steady and everlasting. In the absence of spiritual faith, neophytes remain indifferent to *śuddha-bhakti*, and as their mundane faith gradually wanes, they again turn to sense enjoyment and stray from the path.

His Tact

Once, Śrīpada Viṣṇu Mahārāja from Māyāpura told us that he asked Śrīlā Vāmana Mahārāja, "How can we help the *jīvas* who are wandering throughout so many species of life in the cycle of material existence by keeping them

in the *maṭha* and simultaneously perform our own *bhajana*?"

Śrīlā Vāmana Mahārāja replied, "Mahārāja, what can I say! I even blow on cool *pānta*¹ before taking it [what to speak of blowing on hot, freshly cooked rice!]. Even if a servant or devotee is calm by nature, I still have to speak with him very carefully and politely so he does not become hot-tempered. What, then, can be said about our dealings with those who are not cool-headed! This is how I am running this large institution – eating *pānta* by blowing on it. You cannot give orders or chastisements, as adverse consequences result and it is difficult to again find the person you have chastised in the *maṭha*.

The Aim of the Institution

He further said that someone once asked Prabhupāda, "Why are you giving saffron cloth to these young boys and making them *brahmacārīs*? Will they really stay in the *maṭha* forever? What if they again return to worldly life, *samsāra*? If so, why establish this kind of institution? Is it not in vain?"

Prabhupāda replied, "Listen. What is the harm if they live in the *maṭha* for only one or two years, or even one or two months? They are taking *mahāprasāda*, associating with *sādhus* and listening to *hari-kathā*. They are not committing sinful activity, theft or any other mischief. They have not had any evil thoughts, or associated with sinful persons.

"Usually, the entire sixteen *ānā* (one hundred percent of a rupee) of a person's life are wasted. But if we can

¹ *Pānta* is left-over rice from the previous night kept steeped in water.

“The handful of people who have decided to stay in the association of *sādhus* possess the highest qualification. Let them have thousands of faults. Their thousands of shortcomings are surpassed by this one virtue. This virtue alone will be the cause of their supreme benefit in the future.”

somehow save four *ānā*, (twenty-five percent) or even one *paisa* (one percent), it is a substantial gain. Otherwise, the entire sixteen *ānā* are wasted. If he is unable to remain in the *maṭha* after this time, let him return to worldly life. At least I helped him accumulate some *sukṛti*, and he can later restart from that point. He will eternally benefit from staying even for a few days.

“Therefore the aim of my institution is not without value. This big institution consists of many people, so naturally it will also encompass a wide variety of mentalities. If we merely note everyone’s many faults, we will not be able to keep anyone in the *maṭha*. It is true that the inhabitants of the *maṭha* are full of faults, but somehow they are inclined to stay in the association of *sādhus*. This is their virtue.

There are hundreds of millions of people in Bhāratavarṣa, what to speak of in this world, but they never come to the path of *bhakti*. The handful of people who have decided to stay in the association of *sādhus* possess the highest qualification. Let them have thousands of faults. Their thousands of shortcomings are surpassed by this one virtue. This virtue alone will be the cause of their supreme benefit in the future. That is why we are to keep them as long as they can stay. And we are to try to cooperate with them so that they can stay. We are not supposed to drive them away. If they become utterly incapable of remaining with us, they will leave of their own accord. They have been undergoing severe pain and suffering since time without beginning. As long as they stay in the association of *sādhus*, the damage sustained in hundreds of millions of lifetimes will be repaired. Now let us provide them with an opportunity to make a contribution toward their eternal gain. To deprive them of their eternal benefit is not justifiable.”

His Remarkable Qualities and All-Attractive Hari-kathā

Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja possessed remarkable qualities. His knowledge of the Gauḍīya *siddhānta*, particularly those in the line of Śrīla Prabhupāda, was immeasurable. His memory was so sharp that he could remember countless *ślokas* from innumerable *śāstras*. The depth of his *hari-kathā* enabled him to explain a subject analytically and vividly so that the common person could easily grasp its meaning. With great expertise he would cite appropriate examples from various scriptures to explain a point. This ability is uncommon. His memory could store an astonishing amount of information. In his *hari-kathā* he would present deep *siddhāntas* that were subtle and extremely esoteric. Such *hari-kathā* is rarely delivered by anyone. Many

speakers deliver lectures, but often their presentation is ordinary, or shallow. But his *hari-kathā* was not like that; it was based on deep analysis and serious deliberation.

At the time of the deity installation in Śrī Kṛtiratna Gauḍīya Maṭha, he came to Durgapura and delivered a speech on *vigraha-tattva*. He always discussed highly esoteric points, but his explanation was so lucid that everyone could understand. This was the special quality of his speech. Generally people deliver speeches with an ostentatious display of wisdom. They quote difficult Sanskrit verses and expound complicated *siddhānta*, but such speeches are not easily understood by ordinary people. However, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja always explained deep and complex theologies, such as *brahma-*, *paramātmā-* and *kṛṣṇa-tattva*, so vividly and comprehensively that even a child could understand.

People became attracted to him because of this uncommon ability, and thus he made thousands and thousands of disciples. He made hundreds of *brahmacārī*, what to speak of *grhastha* disciples. Whenever I have gone to West Bengal to preach, be it in the west, east, north, or south, in each corner and in every extremity of Bengal, I have found disciples of Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja. Whenever I've inquired, "Are there any disciples from the Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti here?" the answer always comes, "Yes, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja's disciples are here." I've not yet found a place in Bengal that Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja's disciples do not inhabit. And this was because of the special mercy upon Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja and his great fortune. Many have become a *mahārāja*, and many have attained the post of *ācārya*, but few are endowed with the remarkable quality of presenting the Gauḍīya conception in a very simple way.

Śrī Caitanya Maṭha, Śrī Caitanya Gauḍīya Maṭha, Śrī Śarasvat Gauḍīya Maṭha and many other *maṭhas* all organise *parikramā*, and numerous people participate, but no *parikramā* compares to the *parikramā* in Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja's *maṭha*. Our Gauḍīya society has seen many eloquent speakers and world-conquering *ācāryas*, but they have not been able to make so many disciples. This was his unique characteristic. I was not able to get his association very often, but I was with him enough to confidently say he was extraordinary.

An Uncompensated Loss

His disappearance is definitely a substantial loss to us. He was not only a great personality, unmatched in his knowledge of *siddhānta*, but he was also an unparalleled preacher. His *brahmacārī* name, Sajjana Sevaka Brahmacārī, reflected his qualities. He was *sajjana*, honest, because he was highly sincere in the execution of his *sevā*. Hence nothing can compensate for the loss caused by his disappearance. Before his disappearance, Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja left this world. Their disappearance from this world is a great loss for the entire Vaiṣṇava society. The *ācārya* nourishes and propagates the *sampradāya*'s line of thought; therefore it is inevitable that his departure precipitates a great lacking and we are left helpless. Now, most of the great luminaries in our *guru-varga* have disappeared or are disappearing from this world. The loss of one *ācārya* from one *sampradāya* cannot be compensated.

Our Hope

There are ways out of this dilemma though. Time is like God, in that it is a representative of Īśvara. No one has the strength to oppose time. We are compelled to accept all that happens.

I pray that we relinquish our personal differences and cooperatively practise and preach the message of Śrīman Mahāprabhu that we have received in the line of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī said to Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura:

āpane ācare keha, nā kare pracāra
pracāra karena keha, nā karena ācāra
'ācāra', 'pracāra'—nāmera karaha 'dui' kārya
tumī--sarva-guru, tumi jagatera ārya
Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.102)

A person may observe proper conduct but not preach, and another person may preach but not practise. Observe proper conduct as well as preach. In that way you can be *guru* and *ācārya* of the world.

With these words I offer my *puṣpāñjali* at the lotus feet of Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja. ❀

The Vaiṣṇava Qualities of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Glorification by Pujyapāda Bhakti Raṅjana Sāgara Mahārāja,
the present *ācārya* of Śrī Sarasvat Gauḍīya Mission,
founded by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Siddhāntī Mahārāja.



The Embodiment of Humility

For thirty-five years, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja presided as the *ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti, founded by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He was very affectionate to me. He used to say that to perform *hari-bhajana* one must follow this teaching of Mahāprabhu:

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

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam (3)

Thinking oneself to be even lower and more worthless than insignificant grass that has been trampled beneath everyone's feet, being more tolerant than a tree, being prideless and offering respect to everyone according to their respective positions, one should continuously chant the holy name of Śrī Hari.

Our *guru-varga* has reiterated this particular instruction, and Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja specifically emphasised its importance for all, whether one lives in the *maṭha* or not. He said that since we have eyes and ears we will inevitably perceive objectionable sights and sounds; nonetheless we should not comment on what we have seen or heard. If we do not pass comment, we may attract the mercy of Mahāprabhu. If, however, we discuss what we have perceived, we may experience many disturbances.

A Crest Jewel Lost

“Vaiṣṇava caritra sarvadā pavitra – The character of the Vaiṣṇava is always pure.” As a great Vaiṣṇava who embodied all divine qualities, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja's character was spotless. All aspects of humility and a deep honour for others were evident in his life and dealings. I was in Navadvīpa at the time of his disappearance and went with a few devotees to offer my homage and *puṣpāñjali* to him. It was astonishing to behold the gathering of what appeared to be countless people coming to take his *darśana* as he was being placed in *samādhi*. It truly seemed that a *mahāpuruṣa* had disappeared.

He has undoubtedly rendered a tremendous contribution to the *rūpānuga gauḍīya paramparā* by attracting innumerable souls to this path and giving them *harināma* and *dikṣā*. This is no ordinary contribution. His disappearance is truly a great loss for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society.

When Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura disappeared from this world, Mahāprabhu turned to the devotees and said, *“Haridāsa āchīla pṛthivīra 'śiromaṇi' tāhā vinā ratna-sūnyā haila medinī – Haridāsa was the crest jewel of this earth. Now the earth has become bereft of that jewel.”* Similarly, Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja was like the Earth's crest jewel. Worldly people are unable to realise the significance of this loss. We had some experience of it, however, when our Gurudeva (Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Śrīrūpa Siddhāntī Mahārāja) disappeared from this world and, bereft of the shelter of his lotus feet, we realised, to a small degree, what we had lost.

Our Extraordinary Fortune

We are so fortunate to have attained the shelter of the lotus feet of a *sad-guru* (bona fide *guru*). There are so many *gurus* in the world who are not in any of the four bona fide *sampradāyas*. Their ample fame and popularity is of no value. “*sampradāya-vihīnā ye mantrās te niṣphalā matāḥ* – without being initiated by a bona fide *guru* who comes in a bona fide *sampradāya*, the *mantra* you receive is ineffective.” *Mantras* accepted from *sampradāyas* other than the Śrī-, Brahmā-, Rudra- and Sanaka-*sampradāyas* have no worth. These are the only bona fide *sampradāyas* in Kali-yuga. One who accepts shelter from these *sampradāyas*, in other words, who accepts *mantras* from them and subsequently performs *bhajana*, is never neglected by Kṛṣṇa.

We are fortunate to have taken the shelter of the Madhva-*sampradāya*, which is prominent among them. Mahāprabhu Himself was initiated by Śrī Īśvara Purī into this *sampradāya*, which comes from Lord Brahmā. This *sampradāya* offers unlimited benefits, but the result we attain will be in accordance with the *sādhana-bhajana* we perform.

This does not indicate that Kṛṣṇa possesses the slightest tinge of partiality. He Himself has declared in the *Gītā*: “*ye yathā mām prapadyante tāms tathaiiva bhajāmy aham* – in whichever way a person renders service to Me, I reciprocate accordingly.” This should be understood.

Therefore, we should perform our *bhajana* with firm faith in the lotus feet of our Gurudeva, whom we have attained by great fortune.

Taking Refuge in Vāṇī

guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete koriyā aikya,
āra nā koriho mane āśā
śrī-guru-carāṇe rati, ei se uttama gati,
je prasāde pure sarva āśā

We have attained a *rūpānuga-guru* in a bona fide *sampradāya*, so we must be diligent in taking shelter of his instructions. By serving such an exalted *guru* we can overcome *māyā* and reach Vṛndāvana, after crossing beyond this universe, the Virajā, Vaikuṅṭha, Ayodhyā, Dvārakā and Mathurā. Is such fortune ordinary? But just see the power of *māyā*! By her influence we lose sight of the fact that we have attained such fortune and become hostile over the differences that take place in *maṭhas*. This is the *māyā* of Bhagavān and the only remedy for it that my insignificant mind can see is to embrace tightly

the lotus feet of Nītāi (*dṛḍha kori' dharo nitāiyer pāya*).

Now the Gauḍīya Ācāryas, who are like the suns of the Gauḍīya sky, are setting, thus leaving the sky dark. They themselves have said that if, in their physical absence, we want to survive on this path, we should take shelter of their *vāṇī* (instructions). If we do so, we will not experience any problems, nor will we have any reason to fear, even though Kali-yuga is full of faults. Therefore, emphasis is placed on taking refuge. Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has written “*āśrayā loiya bhaje tare kṛṣṇa nāhi tyaje āra saba mare akāraṇa* – one who performs *bhajana* under shelter is not neglected by Kṛṣṇa; everyone

else lives in vain.” Hence we have to perform *bhajana* under guidance.

It is therefore essential to take shelter of the instructions of a *sad-guru*. If we are bewildered by *māyā*'s many temptations, such as wealth, women, fame, adoration, lust and anger, we will be deprived of our great fortune. My Guru Mahārāja and Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja gave the same instruction – “See with your eyes and listen with your ears, but don't engage your mouth in speaking about what you have seen or heard. Rather, simply march forth and perform your duties. Our goal is Vṛndāvana, Goloka Vṛndāvana, Gaura-dhāma, Kṛṣṇa-dhāma.” Thus Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja's glories are unlimited.

Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja showed me much affection, yet I was not fortunate enough to be in his constant association. Therefore with these words I am offering my *puṣpāñjali* at his lotus feet. ❀

My Guru Mahārāja and
Śrīla Vāmana Mahārāja gave the
same instruction –

“See with your eyes and listen
with your ears, but don't engage
your mouth in speaking about
what you have seen or heard.

Rather, simply march forth
and perform your duties.

Our goal is Vṛndāvana, Goloka
Vṛndāvana, Gaura-dhāma,
Kṛṣṇa-dhāma.”

The following speech was given by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja on the occasion of his appointment as the succeeding president and *ācārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti. It was delivered upon the departure of the founder and governing *ācārya*, *jagad guru* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, into his eternal pastimes.

Venue: Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Math, Navadvīpa, Nadiyā
October 19, 1968

Appearing in English for the first time

*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya
jñānāñjana-śalākayā
cakṣur unmlitam yena
tasmai śrī-gurave namaḥ*

*mūkaṁ karoti vācālaṁ
paṅguṁ laṅghayate girim
yat-krpā tam ahaṁ vande
śrī-guruṁ dīna-tāraṇam*

*namo mahā-vadānyāya
kṛṣṇa-prema-pradāya te
kṛṣṇāya kṛṣṇa-caitanya-
nāmne gaura-tviṣe namaḥ*

*he kṛṣṇa karuṇā-sindho
dīna-bandho jagat-pate
gopeśa gopikā-kānta
rādhā-kānta namo 'stu te*

*tapta-kāñcana-gaurāṅgi
rādhe vṛndāvaneśvari
vṛṣabhānu-sute devi
praṇamāmi hari-priye*

*vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca
krpā-sinḍhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*



I offer my most humble obeisances to the most venerable chairman of this assembly, Śrīmad Bhakti Dayīta Mādhava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, my most revered Śrīmad Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja, the most honourable Śrīmad Bhakti Vikāśa Hṛṣīkeṣa Mahārāja, Śrīmad Bhakti Prāpanna Dāmodara Mahārāja, other Tridaṇḍipāda *sannyāsīs*, assembled Vaiṣṇavas and my venerable godbrothers.

Today, on the disappearance day of Śrī Śrīla Gurupādapadma, we have been hearing from the lotus mouths of my *guru-varga* present here, as they profusely sing his glories. I cannot think of anything to say that they have not already said. My sole duty is to chew what they have chewed, just like a servant who survives on his master's remnants. I have neither the capability nor the words to narrate the glories of Śrī Gurupādapadma, but I will endeavour to describe his glories in brief so as to execute the order of the Vaiṣṇavas.

Specifically, we can contemplate a few aspects of his glories that we have been hearing from the lotus mouths of the Vaiṣṇavas. If we reflect upon

the significance of his life, we find that his behaviour could be divided into two distinctly notable classifications. He exhibited them while he preached the innermost desire of his supremely adorable master, Śrīla Prabhupāda. We can observe both types of behaviour in all *mahājānas*.

vajrād api kaṭhorāṇi
mṛdūni kusumād api
lokottarāṇām cetāṁsi
ko nu vijñātum īśvaraḥ
 Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta
 (Madhya-līlā 7.73)

Who can comprehend the heart of exalted, supra-mundane personalities, whose natures are stronger than thunderbolts and more tender than lotus flowers?

“*Vajrād api kaṭhorāṇi* – stronger than a thunderbolt.” This virtue was prominently illuminated in his character. “*Mṛdūni kusumād api* – more tender than a lotus flower.” Yet this virtue was also consistently observed in him. Today we have heard examples from the lips of our *guru-varga* that clearly reveal him as a fearless preacher of the Truth. You yourselves have sufficient evidence of his kindness and soft-heartedness. In this sphere, I want to convey that Gurupādapadma is our eternal friend and well-wisher. Those who have given up all sorts of material comfort, mundane attachments and affections, and have taken shelter at his lotus feet by acquiring spiritual knowledge (*śikṣā*) and by taking initiation (*dīkṣā*), are trying wholeheartedly to advance on the path of *bhajana* – for them the only destination is Śrī Gurupādapadma.

Therefore, let Gurupādapadma’s ideals, directions and instructions be our exclusive life and soul. Today, on the occasion of his disappearance, our earnest prayer to his lotus feet is that, although we can no longer behold his form, he may bestow his unlimited blessings upon us. In this way we can abide by his words, orders and instructions in every respect and establish his glories meticulously throughout

the world. May we also propagate the glories of his worshipable Lords, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Vinoda Bihārīju, throughout the world.

Respectable speakers have yet to deliver their addresses, so I will keep my talk brief. I have already confessed my inability to contribute more than the previous speakers.

Finally, my humble entreaty to the venerable Vaiṣṇavas and affectionate *guru-varga* here today is that I am completely unqualified for the heavy responsibility that has now been conferred upon me. In fact I cannot comprehend its weight. But since taking this responsibility is the order of my Śrī Gurudeva, I must submissively comply. May he and other venerable Vaiṣṇavas consider my worthiness.

Nonetheless, I can assure them that I will not waver in abiding by the orders of Śrī Gurupādapadma. This I solemnly vow. Therefore I pray for their kind cooperation, sympathy, benedictions and all else. With their mercy and blessings I may be able to acquire the strength and ability to carry out these responsibilities competently. Finally, I convey my humble submission unto the lotus feet of my godbrothers and pray for their sincere, whole-hearted cooperation. Without their cooperation, sympathy and help, I am unable to move forward a single step.

My earnest appeal unto the lotus feet of Gurupādapadma is that he shower his profuse blessings upon me, even though he is no longer visible to us. In this way I will be able to follow his order and execute his final instructions, thus making my life successful. My humble prayer to the Vaiṣṇavas is that they bestow profuse benedictions upon me so that I can act in accordance with my *gurudayitvā* (grave responsibility given to me by my Gurudeva.) I would like to conclude my talk here for today.

vāñchā-kalpatarubhyaś ca
krpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo
vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ ❀

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*,
 Year 56, Issue 12

Drops of Nectarean Instructions from the letters of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The following excerpts are from letters to Śrīmatī Umā dīdī.

Translated into English for the first time



1. The words “rest from service” do not exist for a *sevaka* (dedicated servant). In the realm of service there is no place for concession or commission. The fruit of service is simply more service. Liberated personalities also perform worship of Śrī Bhagavān; in other words, they are absorbed in service. There is no scope for a servant to take leave or retire from his *sevā*. One Vaiṣṇava *mahājana* has prayed:

*aśoka-abhaya, amṛta-ādhāra,
tomāra caraṇa-dvaya
tāhāte ekhana, viśrāma labhiyā,
chāḍīnu bhavera bhaya*

My sole place of rest is in accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, which are the reservoirs of immortal nectar where one may live free from lamentation and fear.

(Letter dated August 12, 1971)

2. In the absolute sense, *darśana* of *śrī vighraha* takes place through the ears. Similarly, the service and worship of Śrī Hari and Guru occur more perfectly in an indirect manner, that is, in their absence. When the wives of the *yajñika brāhmaṇas* expressed their desire to remain with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He said, “Living some distance from Me You should deliberate upon My name, form, qualities and pastimes. In this way you will attain auspiciousness.” Śrī Bhagavān is conveying to the wives of *brāhmaṇas* that *viraha*, or separation, is higher than *milana*, or union. For those who attain face-to-face *darśana*, there is a possibility of mistake and misapprehension. As the saying goes, “familiarity breeds contempt”. Still, it is not prohibited to be in the close proximity of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas. Specifically, we must deliberate upon the

statement “*vandon mui sāvadhana-mate* – we must worship and serve the lotus feet of Śrī Guru with utmost care.” Therefore, we must contemplate which is more beneficial: direct (face-to-face) *darśana*, or indirect *darśana*.

(Letter dated August 12, 1971)

3. As long as one falsely identifies with one’s material form as a male or female, the direct service of *apṛākṛta navīna madana* Kṛṣṇa is not possible. Only when the *jīva* relinquishes *yoṣita-bhāva*, the mutual attraction that takes place between male and female, does Śrī Bhagavān give him the qualification to perform *sevā* to Him. Worldly moods of male and female do not predominate when one is qualified to perform such *sevā*. When the *sādhaka* understands his disqualification, he has some chance of attaining auspiciousness. Material ego and duplicity are obstacles to the *jīva’s sādhanā-bhajana*. They completely blind him and cast him from the path of *bhakti*.

(Letter dated April 7, 1972)

4. The genuine *guru* never makes anyone his disciple. He perceives each person as the *vaibhāva* (manifestation) of his supremely worshipable Bhagavān. Śrī Gurupādapadma, who is *kṛṣṇa-preṣṭha* (most dear to Kṛṣṇa), reveals his eternally perfect identity as Śrīmatī Rādhikā’s *ayogyā kiṅkari* (unqualified maidservant) to the disciple. To follow the order of Śrī Guru without hesitation attests to the validity of a disciple. Complete surrender is the barometer of his acceptance of discipline. Śrī Guru’s affectionate discipline purifies the heart. To lead one’s life according to the orders, instructions and directions of Śrī Gurupādapadma is crucial for the sincere *sādhaka* who is practising true *dharma*.

(Letter dated April 7, 1972)

5. What chance is there of attaining a genuine result if one does not become one-pointed in *bhajana*? “*Uttama hañā āpanāke māne tṛṇādhamā* – one who is highly exalted considers himself to be more lowly than a blade of grass.” This attitude gives one the eligibility to attain the mercy of Śrī Guru and Bhagavān. How can one possibly receive causeless mercy if the inclination to perform *bhakti* has not

awakened in the heart? Although causeless mercy is not subordinate to any condition, it is not attained without endeavour at any stage. “*Yogyatā-vicāre kichu nāhi pāi tomāra karuṇā sāra* – if I examine myself I find no good qualities; your mercy is the essence of my existence.” In this prayer the *sādhaka* expresses his humility. The *bhaktas* cultivate their natural humility in order to attain the qualification necessary to receive the mercy of Śrī Guru and Bhagavān. This alone is the divine quality, or asset, of their *sādhanā*, and this alone is their valor. As long as one possesses mundane pride and ego, it is impossible to realise causeless mercy. Overwhelmed by material ego, the *jīva* becomes bound by the “frog in the well” mentality¹ and thus considers the very earth that supports him to be insignificant. On the strength of *bhakti*, however, those who live under proper shelter cross beyond all obstacles and float in the transcendental and unprecedented compassion of Śrī Guru and Bhagavān.

(Letter dated June 6, 1972)

6. Pride and ego cannot exist in a person who, without a trace of duplicity, remains absorbed in hearing, chanting and remembering the glories of Śrī Guru and Bhagavān. This is because he has given up such unfavorable elements for *bhajana* even before his initiation into *amāni-mānada dharma*². This is *siddhānta*. It is understood that a person who has accepted the shelter of the lotus feet of *sad-guru* has already given up *asat-saṅga* and is fully established in proper conduct.

(Letter dated June 6, 1972)

7. To proceed on the path of *bhajana* one must be very careful not to commit offenses. However, this does not mean that a person should revert back to his previous life style for fear of committing offenses. “*Aparādha-śunya ha’ye laha kṛṣṇa-nāma* – be free from offenses and chant the holy name of Kṛṣṇa.”

1 The frog had a proud mentality and therefore he considered nothing to be bigger than himself. He tried to understand the breadth of the ocean by expanding his belly until it finally exploded.

2 The humble conduct of accepting no honour, but honouring all others according to their respective positions, which is the proper process for chanting the holy name.

This is indeed the instruction of Śrīman Mahāprabhu: “*niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana* – if a person chants without committing any offenses to *nāma*, he will easily attain the wealth of *prema*.”

It is thus enjoined that we should remain free from criticising *sādhu*, *śāstra* and *guru*. The exclusive goal of every *sādhaka* is complete self-surrender. Until we attain perfection in *sādhana*, Śrī Bhagavān remains far away. Evidence of this is Draupadī and the *vraja-kumārīs* [who performed Kātyāyanī *vrata*].

(Letter dated June 6, 1972)

8. Śrī Gurudeva is *āśraya-vidyā*, the dear-most maidservant of Bhagavān. The *tattva* of Śrī Guru is that he is the *śakti*, or *prakṛti*, of Śrī Bhagavān, and his constitutional function is to give instructions on how to perform service to Bhagavān. Śrī Gurudeva has the *adhikāra* to render service under the guidance of a *gopī-sakhī*. He is expert in rendering service in the loving pastimes of *viśaya-vidyā-bhokta* Bhagavān, and therefore he is very dear to Him. “*Chodaṭa puruṣa abhimāna, kiṅkarī hailu āji kāna*”, “*vraja vipine sakhī-sātha, sevāna karabo rādhānātha*” – “Today, I have relinquished the ego of being the enjoyer (*puruṣa*), and have become the *kiṅkarī* (maidservant) of Kṛṣṇa. “In the forest of Vraja, I will serve Rādhānātha under the guidance of a *sakhī*.” This alone is the *svarūpa* of those who have attained perfection. Although externally they have a male form, they are actually a *sakhī*, or *dāsī*, with the *bhāva* of a *gopī*. Their exclusive service is to assist in the intimate loving pastimes (*līlā-vilāsa*) of the transcendental *navīna-madana* Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

(Letter dated June 6, 1972)

9. The speciality of the *bhajana* of the *śrī rūpanuga gauḍīyas* is that while residing in Vraja they constantly contemplate Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma, and while staying in Navavāna (Navadvīpa) they remain absorbed in remembrance of Vraja. Constant meditation on service constitutes *bhajana*. The place where one receives the opportunity for such *bhajana* is Vṛndāvana, or Navadvīpa-dhāma.

(Letter dated January 4, 1974)

10. We have nothing to pray for except the sincere desire to serve Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas. By the influence of their mercy all the unwanted desires and offenses in our hearts are destroyed. To beg for the mercy of the *bhakta* and Bhagavān is our sole support, and to cry in a destitute mood is the means to attain their causeless mercy. “O Bhagavān! You may punish me or be compassionate to me. In this world I have no destination other than You. You may strike me with hundreds and thousands of thunderbolts, or shower me with pure water, yet as *bhakta-cāṭakaḥ*, I will anxiously await Your mercy with great eagerness.” This is the mood and expression of one who is sincerely praying for mercy. Causeless mercy and unconditional surrender are interconnected, just as the body is interconnected with its limbs. Both practice (*sādhana*) and mercy (*kṛpa*) are simultaneously necessary. It is impossible to attain perfection in the absence of either of them.

(Letter dated January 4, 1974)

11. When a *sādhaka* is serving and worshipping Śrī Guru and Bhagavān [in His deity form], he performs service according to his *bhāva*. A natural, innocent and sincere attitude illuminates his heart as he offers suitable foods and dresses according to winter and summer seasons. This indeed nourishes the moods of *sneha*, *mamatā* and *vātsalya*.

(Letter dated January 4, 1974)

12. The mercy and punishment of Śrī Guru and Vaiṣṇavas are synonymous, and for this reason, the terms “affectionate discipline” and “merciful punishment” have been used in the scriptures. The Vaiṣṇavas’ lives are dedicated to the welfare of the *jīvas*, and it is their perpetual nature to become distressed at the *jīvas*’ sufferings. Therefore, their affection and curse have the same purpose. The Absolute Reality is revealed in the heart of the *sādhaka* according to his level of service and qualification.

(Letter dated January 4, 1974)

13. The difference between a *tīrtha* (sacred place) and the *dhāma* (the personal abode of Bhagavān), and the speciality of each, can only be known through saintly association. Sense enjoyers roam the world with the desire to gratify their senses, whereas

the devotees become blessed by accepting the environment that is favourable to their *bhajana*.

*gaura āmāra, je-saba sthāne,
karala bhramaṇa raṅge
se-saba sthāna, heriba āmi,
praṇayi-bhakata-saṅge*

In the company of intimate, beloved devotees,
I will go to all the places where Mahāprabhu
joyfully wandered.

For those engaged in *bhajana*, this alone is the performance of the limb of *bhakti* called *pāda-sevānam*. By performing *parikramā* of *śrī dhāma*, the *jīvas* become free from the entanglement of *māyā*, and transcendental attachment to Bhagavān arises in their hearts.

*viṣaye je prīti ebe āchaye āmār
sei-mata prīti hauk caraṇe tomār*

As much as I currently love this material world,
I pray to develop that same intensity of affection
for Your lotus feet.

This indeed is the prayer of devotees who
perform *parikramā*.

(Letter dated January 4, 1974)

14. A person can never repay his debt to his *guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas for their unlimited compassion and transcendental affection. He can, however, realise the substance of that debt by performing *hari-bhajana*; in this way his life is blessed. The ability to perform *hari-bhajana* verifies the *jīva*'s qualification. When the *jīva* loves Śrī Bhagavān, who is the supremely loveable object, his life becomes successful. Upon attaining an inclination for *sādhana-bhajana*, one develops a deep faith in the value of *amānī-mānada dharma*.

When one realises oneself to be unqualified and degraded, the stage of *dainya*, or humility, appears. This leads to the qualification of attaining a trace of the mercy of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas. When a devotee observes the service attitude of others and their lamentation for *bhakti*, his enthusiasm and hankering naturally and progressively increase. In

the realm of service both patience and *uddīpana* (stimulation) exist, but there is no place for envy or violence. Envy has absolutely no value on the path of *sādhana-bhajana*; therefore it must be given up completely.

(Letter dated August 23, 1974)

15. *Abhyāsa-yoga* (the process of practising *yoga*) is not perfected quickly; it takes time. Therefore, one has to become resolute, fixed and tolerant like the Himālayas. The defining characteristic of *śaraṇāgati* is the quality of dependence upon the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān. Only by *abhyāsa-yoga* does one attain stability of mind while remembering one's *sandhyā-gāyatrī* and while chanting *hari-nāma*, and thus one realises the meaning of *gāyatrī*, *mantra* and so forth. A person who can understand his faults quickly tries to rectify them. By repeatedly deliberating upon the *vāṇī*, words emanating from the lotus lips of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, one attains auspiciousness. Indeed, this is specifically mentioned in the *Vedānta-sūtra āvṛtti rasakṛta upadeśata. Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.33.39), which is the actual commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, reiterates this same idea:

*vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvito 'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktiṁ parāṁ bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

One who is endowed with transcendental faith, who hears or describes Kṛṣṇa's loving, playful pastimes with the young wives of Vraja, will attain the highest *bhakti* for Him. Within no time, he will become sober and overcome lust, the disease of the heart.

By living in the shelter, or guidance, of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas one feels no fear at all, and thus he does not become an atheist who concludes "I know everything".

(Letter dated August 23, 1974)

16. The intolerant *jīvas*, who are bereft of the teachings of Śrī Caitanya, endeavour for peace through their propensities for enjoyment and renunciation. In the absence of tolerance, our auspiciousness can never awaken. One symptom of a *sādhu* is that he always

desires the welfare of himself and others. The *jīva*'s intolerance is born of selfishness. All that has been created by Śrī Bhagavān is an instrument to be used in His service. Prior to this understanding, auspiciousness remains unattainable. *Jīvas* with an enjoying spirit see this world as designed for their own pleasure. Consequently they are deprived of auspiciousness and are destroyed. Until one becomes tolerant like a tree, *hari-bhajana* is impossible. For this reason Śrīman Mahāprabhu has instructed us with the verse *trṇād api sunīcena*.

(Letter dated August 23, 1974)

17. Those who have the opportunity to constantly hear, chant and remember the transcendental name, form, qualities and pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān are certainly fortunate. "Pursuance of the instructions of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas enables one to attain one's real welfare." With this in mind, one has to take command of the wicked, uncontrolled mind. "I cannot do *hari-bhajana*. When will I attain the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān? Śrī Bhagavān will definitely bestow His mercy upon me." This type of lamentation and hope helps the *sādhaka* to advance in *bhajana*.

tava nija-jana parama-bāndhava saṁsāra kārāgāre

Your beloved devotees are my greatest friends in the prison-house of this material existence .

*vaiṣṇava dekhiyā, paḍiba caraṇe,
hṛdayera bandhu jāni'*

Upon seeing a Vaiṣṇava, I will fall at his lotus feet, knowing him to be the only true friend of my heart.

These are the subjects to be realised. Only those whose hearts have become inundated with bliss resulting from the *darśana* of *guru* and Vaiṣṇava are truly peaceful and free from desires.

(Letter dated June 23, 1975)

18. Worldly people are absorbed in their mundane "well and unwell". But those who are seeking the welfare of their soul see no need to attend to their external well-being. They always remain absorbed in the worshipable, the worshipper and worship (*sevya*,

sevaka and *sevā*). Devotees never indulge in topics that have no connection with Śrī Bhagavān, the *bhakta* or *bhakti*. Knowing them to be extraneous, they remain aloof from such topics. Their main focus is the health of the soul; therefore they derive much bliss from such cultivation. If we cannot perform *sādhana-bhajana*, then what is the use of observing the needs of the body and mind? For a person engaged in the welfare of his self, the body, mind and all else will surely become happy. This is the speciality of someone engaged in *sādhana-bhajana*.

(Letter dated June 23, 1975)

19. When the Guṇḍicā, in the form of our hearts, is cleansed, Jagannātha-deva Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra happily takes His place there. *Mādhurya* (sweetness) is superior to *aiśvarya* (opulence), and Śrī Jagannātha-deva travels to Vṛndāvana (the land of sweetness) from Dvārakā or Kurukṣetra (lands of opulence). This indeed is the meaning of Ratha-yātrā. As long as one's consciousness has not been elevated to such a spotlessly pure, transcendental position, it will be impossible to receive a *sphūrti* of "*vraja vipine sakhī sāthe, sevana karuhu rādhānātha* – serving Rādhānātha in the forest of Vraja along with a *sakhī*", or "*kusume gānthobuñ hār tulasī-maṇi-mañjarī tār* – stringing a garland of forest flowers in which *tulasī* buds are the jewelled pendants".

(Letter dated July 11, 1976)

20. As knowledge of the relationship between the *āśraya* (object providing shelter) and the *aśrita* (dependent requiring shelter) develops, eligibility and eagerness on the path of *bhajana* increases. The mercy of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas enables us to advance. There is no alternative or other provision. When deprived of mercy, one falls from one's *bhajana*. There is no greater misfortune for the *sādhaka* than this. Mundane knowledge and intelligence cannot comprehend the transcendental qualities and supra-mundane immortal nature of *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas. In this realm "*yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyaḥ* – the Supreme Lord is only attained by he whom He chooses to favour". This is the sole barometer of eligibility.

(Letter dated September 24, 1976)

21. The sole ornament of one who is surrendered is his service attitude. Full surrender means to engage all one has in service. The surrendered, dedicated *jīva* has no absorption or desire other than *sevā*. Commercial interest or worldly transaction cannot exist in the realm of *sevā*. The mentality of keeping a percentage for oneself leads to *padmaniti*³, and is devoid of a service attitude. Such activity constitutes mundane *karma*. But if we have the mentality, “I am a germ, an insect, the most fallen and the lowest,” there is possibility of us attaining auspiciousness. If, however, we use this attitude to flaunt our “humility” and fortune, it will act as poison.

(Letter dated September 24, 1976)

22. By glorifying *guru* and Vaiṣṇavas on their auspicious appearance days the *jīvas* will certainly attain their ultimate well-being.

*hari-guru-vaiṣṇava tinera smarana
tinera smarane haya vighna-vināśana*

Simply by remembering the spiritual master, the Vaiṣṇavas, and Śrī Hari, all difficulties are destroyed.

“*Vaiṣṇavera guṇagāna karile jīvera trāna* – the *jīva* attains deliverance from this world by glorifying the qualities of the Vaiṣṇavas.”

This regulation is permeated with etiquette. For the *sādhaka*, the appearance or disappearance day of the Vaiṣṇava is a moment sheltered by auspiciousness in which he can evaluate his disqualification and express his suffering with humility.

To repent is the topmost atonement as it purifies one’s heart. Without being steady in *sadācāra*, proper conduct, internal purification does not occur. The dictate in Christianity to confess or admit one’s sins is taken from the *śāstras* of *sanātana-dharma*.

*prabhu bale, torā āra nā karis pāpa
jagāi mādhāi bale, -āra nāre bāpa*

Śrī Mahāprabhu said: “Do not ever sin again.”
Jagāi and Mādhāi replied: “Never again, O Lord.”

3 Padmāvatī, Kāṁsa’s mother, asked the Vrajavāsīs to pay for Kṛṣṇa’s ‘labour’ in Vraja. Her policy is called *padmaniti*.

Confession is part of atonement or repentance. Śrīman Mahāprabhu personally made Jagāi and Mādhāi promise this before Guru Nityānanda. In the absence of such a determined vow, sinful tendencies will attempt to pollute the consciousness.

(Letter dated February 12, 1977)

23. If the *sādhaka* has not performed worship of Navavāna (Navadvīpa), why will Māyāpura-dhāma reveal itself to him? By considering the *dhāma* a mundane village, one commits offenses. The mercy of *śrī dhāma* grants one realisation of the transcendental *svarūpa* of the *dhāma*. Only then can one be introduced to the *dhāma*’s compassion.

“*Māyā krpā kari jāla uṭhāya jakhan, ākhi dekhe suviśāla cinmāyā bhavan* – when the illusory energy mercifully removes its web, or curtain, I will be able to see the vast transcendental realm with my eyes.” This indeed is *aprākṛta darśana*. It is *dhāma-āparādha* to disobey the *dhāma*, *dhāmeśvara* (the lord of the *dhāma*) and the *sādhus* who have taken shelter of the *dhāma*. Only by the mercy of Śrī Gauḍa-dhāma does one attain the qualification to serve in the transcendental Vraja-dhāma. Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, a personal associate of Śrī Gaura, has sung:

*śrī gauḍa-maṇḍala-bhūmi, jevā jāne cintāmaṇi,
tā’ra haya vraja-bhūme vāsa*

One who knows the divine abode of Śrī Gauḍa-maṇḍala, Śrī Navadvīpa, to be transcendental touchstone (*cintāmaṇi*) is in truth a resident of Vrajabhūmi, Śrī Vṛndāvana.

Therefore, in many ways it is better to desire the service of the *dhāma-vāsīs* and remember them from a distance instead of committing offenses by staying in the *dhāma*.

(Letter dated November 21, 1977)

24. *bhramibo dvadāśa vane, rasa-keli ye ye sthāne,
premavese gaḍagaḍi diyā
sudhaiba jane jane, vrajavāsī-gaṇa-sthāne,
nivediba caraṇe dhariya*

“I shall wander through the twelve forests of Vṛndāvana where Śrī Kṛṣṇa performed His

pastimes full of *rasa* and roll on the ground, overwhelmed by *prema*. I shall inquire about the pastimes that took place in each location from all the Vrajavāsīs, reverently offering prayers to them and clasping their lotus feet.”

The *nitya-siddhas*, although *akiñcana* (having no material possessions), offer such prayers to completely liberate those *jīvas* in bondage. We must certainly acknowledge the glories of the place, time and recipient. In the initial stage, the transcendental nature of *līlā* is not realised. When one’s heart is purified however, the nature of the transcendental *dhāma* is revealed there. The speciality of the conscious *dhāma* is that it awakens the dormant spiritual function even of unqualified souls. When a person perceives the oneness of Gauḍa and Vrajavana, he attains the qualification to live in Śrī Dhāma where he realises its *svarūpa* and conscious nature. To achieve the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, the ever-fresh divine couple of Vraja, under the guidance of Their dearest *sakhīs* is the pinnacle of all attainment.

(Letter dated December 13, 1979)

25. As *prema* condenses it is known in its progressive stages as *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *anurāga*, *bhāva* and *mahābhāva*. *Mahābhāva* is indeed the highest stage. In fact, it is never possible for one in a material body to experience *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, etc. These manifestations are only possible for a person who has attained *jāta-rati*, or *prema*. Śrī Rādhārāṇī is *kṛṣṇa-kānta-śiromaṇi*, the crest-jewel of the beloveds of Kṛṣṇa. She embodies the most condensed stage of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. The essence of *hlādinī* is *prema*, and the essence of *prema* is *mahābhāva*; and Śrī Rādhā is *mahābhāva svarūpiṇī*. Śrī Rādhā is the one and only presiding deity of *prema*. The happiness She derives from Her service to Kṛṣṇa alone is Her life and soul. Śrī Rādhā is complete *śakti* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa is complete *śaktimān*. Śrī Rādhā’s very life is for Kṛṣṇa; and She experiences Kṛṣṇa with all Her senses. Therefore She is *kṛṣṇamayī*. The autocrat, *līlā-puruṣottama* Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra, is controlled only by *prema*, and hence, in the presence of Śrī Rādhā’s *prema*, Kṛṣṇa is controlled and defeated. Without *mahābhāva svarūpiṇī* Śrī Rādhā, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra’s *mādhurya*, sweetness, does not manifest or expand.

(Letter dated August 25, 1984) ❀



Some time after the disappearance of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda, one of his prominent disciples, Śrīla Bhakti Hṛdaya Vana Mahārāja, went to reside in Kāśī, the abode of Viśvanātha Śiva. The following is an excerpt from the first chapter of his book, *Vaikuṅṭhara Patha*. His purpose in telling this story is not to promote astrology, but to show the great danger of committing an offense at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru.

Early one morning, in the winter of 1944, I sat on the bank of the Gaṅgā with my eyes closed, chanting my *mantras*. Suddenly, by inner vision, I saw a golden lotus bloom on the surface of the Gaṅgā. Deva Maheśa (Lord Śiva) appeared on that lotus, illuminating the sky with his bodily effulgence. His pale complexion resembled the moon of the autumn season. Various ornaments decorated his body, a smile adorned his face and a trident was in his left hand. He raised his right hand to bless me, and then disappeared suddenly as lightning.

The next moment, I heard an aerial voice: “My dear son, your stay in Kāśī has come to an end. You should journey to Śrīdhāma Vṛndāvana, where your cherished desires will be fulfilled.”

Startled, I wondered, “Oh, what did I actually see and hear? Was it real or just a dream?”

My meditation broke. When I opened my eyes I saw that the sun had risen in the east. The hairs on my body were standing on end. I left the *ghāṭa* and contemplated the experience as I slowly proceeded toward the Śrī Viśvanātha temple. “O Deva Maheśvara! O Jagad-guru! Did I really see you or not? When have I ever performed such *sādhana-bhajana*

A Profound Experience in the Life of Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Hṛdaya Vana Mahārāja

to merit receiving your *darśana*? O Prabhu! Have you bestowed your causeless mercy upon someone as low and unworthy as myself? Alas! My doubtful heart is not ready to believe anything so easily. O Deva! Please prove to me that I really did hear your aerial voice. If, right now, I can purchase a rose-garland from the stall to the far right, among the garland stalls at Śrī Viśvanātha's temple gate, and offer it to your *liṅga* inside, I will believe that I really saw and heard you."

With this childish proposal in my mind, I approached the temple. The nearer I came, the more my heart pounded. My body slackened and my movements slowed down. "What if I can't get a rose garland from that very stall? O Deva! Please give me strength! Please protect my faith. Don't deprive me of your mercy." These were the thoughts flooding my mind.

I chanted *harināma* as I proceeded towards the temple's main gate, glancing with anxiety and fear at the designated stall. Aha! Among all the garlands in that stall there was only one fresh rose garland. The adjacent stalls did not have even a single rose flower, what to speak of a whole garland. I purchased that garland, and devotedly offered it to Śrī Liṅga with the determined vow to go to Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma.

When I returned to my *āśrama*, I offered *praṇāmas* to my deities, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, and prayed for the compassion of Vṛndāvanēśvarī. Without Her mercy one does not become qualified to enter Her *dhāma*, what to speak of personally serve Her.

I went to Vṛndāvana for a day and offered *praṇāmas* to Śrī Govindadeva. By the mercy of Vṛndāvanēśvarī I was fortunate to be able to arrange a small place for my *bhajana* near the southern gate of Śrī Madana-mohana Temple. Fixing my return to Vṛndāvana, I then journeyed back to Kāśī.

In Kāśī, I began to give regular *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta* classes in my neighbour's house. I became intimate friends with another neighbour, Śrī Hema Bābu. I briefly told him my reason for leaving Kāśī and going to Śrī Vṛndāvana.

I once mentioned to him that I felt I had been a *sannyāsī* in the last twenty years of my previous life, but by some misfortune I was forced to return to this world. Hema Bābu could not really discard my words as mere speculation, but at the same time, he thought me to be a little mad. "Granted, you may well have been a *sannyāsī* in your past life," he said, "but what proof do you have?"

I had no proof but I told him that certain events from my previous life were now reflecting on the screen of my memory with as much clarity as the picture on a cinema screen. "You may think I am mad, but what I say is true. Really, the only people who can understand this are those who have had a similar experience. I have no concrete proof."

Hema Bābu became grave and stopped belittling my experience. He said, "Everything is possible in the kingdom of Bhagavān. To what extent can a man understand this? In the spiritual realm, faith is everything. Progress is impossible without it."

At noon on the day I was to leave Kāśī, Hema Bābu came to me and reminded me to go to the temple to take Śrī Viśvanātha's permission to leave. I told him that we would go at three o'clock, as at that time the temple would be less crowded. We passed the interim speaking *hari-kathā*. Then he asked me a question that seemed irrelevant to our topic of discussion. He wanted to know if someone had done my astrological chart, which shows the planets' positions at the time of birth. I told him that my father, Śrī Rajnikānta Mukhopādhyāya, was a master of *jyotiṣa śāstra* (astrology), and had calculated my chart. I had a copy of that chart but without a detailed interpretation. Hema Bābu said, "Anyway, it will serve the purpose."

I drew that chart on a piece of paper and placed it in his hands. He carefully put it in his pocket and said, "It's almost three o'clock; let's go to the temple." We walked along the bank of the Gaṅgā and eventually came to Daśāśvamedha-ghāṭa. Hema Bābu smiled and suggested we visit someone he knew in Viśvanātha Lane. I followed

him without question. We walked along a narrow alley and entered an old house.

There, surrounded by many books, sat an elderly *paṇḍita*. Hema Bābu greeted him and inquired about his well-being. He took the piece of paper from his pocket, gave it to the *paṇḍita* and asked him if he had that chart. I was intrigued as to how he could have my birth chart. Paṇḍitjī went into another room and began to search through old books. Hema Bābu turned to me and said, “This is Bṛghu’s office.” Mahārṣi Bṛghu, the son of Lord Brahmā, knew past, present, and future. He made more than one hundred thousand categories of charts, which accommodate the astrological birth details of all *jīvas*. Five minutes later Paṇḍitjī came out smiling. “I have found the chart.”

Meanwhile, Paṇḍitjī started reading out loud Bṛghu’s statements that pertained to my chart, and we listened attentively. Upon hearing this explanation I asked Paṇḍitjī if it was possible to procure a copy of it. He replied that it was possible for a ten rupee fee.

We left his house and again silently proceeded toward the Viśvanātha temple.

It was afternoon so the temple was not crowded. I approached the deity of Śrī Āśutoṣa and bathing him with my tears, I submitted to him my heartfelt prayers. “O Deva! Your *līlā* is unprecedented and inconceivable. You hold my hand at every step. Where are you taking me?”

I postponed my journey to Śrī Vṛndāvana for a few days and the next day I went to ‘Bṛghu’s office’ and requested Paṇḍitjī to let me copy Bṛghu’s words in relation to my chart. Usually Paṇḍitjī would never have given that old book to anyone for fear of it becoming more dilapidated. But seeing that I was a *sannyāsī* and having observed some exceptional features in my chart, he kindly placed that book in my hands. I wanted to personally copy the details to ensure no chance of error. Also, I did not want to doubt Paṇḍitjī by suspecting he may have fabricated some portions of it just to please me. I copied the chart and paid him ten rupees.

After deliberating on the position of stars in my birth chart as described in *Bṛghu Samhitā*, and the subsequent events that took place, many questions arose in my mind. I pondered how that chart had mentioned significant events in the forty-two years of my life that had passed, with complete accuracy. Not all the details of my previous life were mentioned, but those that were mentioned were accurate.

The chart then revealed more heart-shattering and astonishing news. In my previous life, while living as a *sannyāsī* in my *guru’s āśrama*, I had a difference of opinion with him on one issue. I had opposed and insulted him, thereby committing severe offenses at his lotus feet. Consequently I deviated from the path of liberation and had to accept yet another birth in this world. Even if I disregarded the chart’s accurate reference to the incidents in my present life, its mention of this incident alone was enough to knock heavily at the closed doors of my heart.

I have no doubt that I committed a severe offense in my past life. In this life, also, I caused great pain to the extremely soft heart of my eternally worshipable, supremely compassionate Śrī Gurudeva. Just one year before his disappearance I unrelentingly opposed the very infrastructure of the Gauḍīya Mission that he established, as well as the policies of the mission, the sinful deeds of some of the *maṭha* residents and the aggressive competitiveness among some of Gurudeva’s servants for profit, adoration and fame. I also objected to the lack of focus on trying to subdue such tendencies, the way the mission functioned and its managerial ideas.

The contaminated nature of my previous life has indeed been reflected in my present life, and as I ponder this, my heart burns in the agony of regret and of feelings of separation from my Gurudeva.

A person’s misfortune lies in not adopting the process by which he can be pardoned for his offense at the lotus feet of Śrī Guru, whose causeless and unlimited compassion enables one to attain service to the lotus feet of Śrī Hari. My offenses at the lotus feet of Śrī Gurudeva birth after birth have caused me to deviate from my goal. I realise this and know that when my heart becomes pure like molten gold by burning in the fire of regret, Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra will bestow His mercy upon me. Contemplating this, the creeper of hope in my heart flourishes.

My Gurudeva is the embodiment of mercy. He will surely forgive me, knowing me to be his eternal servant. “*Aparādhī jane kṛpā vitraṇe śodhite nahe se kātara*— he is so liberal; his mercy rectifies even an offender.” These words are full of hope. Gurudeva always forgives the disciple. This very moment is the predestined time to wash away my offenses, from my present and previous lives, by bathing the lotus feet of Śrī Guru with the tears from my eyes and offering the flower of my life at his feet.” ❀



Loyalty is the Key

to Success

A Preaching Report by Svāmī B.V. Mādhava

In April, 2005, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja began his summer preaching tour in Australia. From there he proceeded to Fiji for six days, then to Hawaii for one month of concentrated writing. In mid-June he reached California, where he spoke on *Śrī-bhāgavatārka-marīci-mālā*, after which he stayed outside Houston for a four-day program. Then he moved on to The Hague, Holland, for the grand finale. Over one thousand eager devotees from distant corners of the world all flocked together to attend his program.

In Holland, Śrīla Gurudeva spoke on a variety of relevant topics. He gave very beautiful discourses on the chipped-rice festival of Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jagannātha-deva's bathing ceremony (*snāna-yātrā*), Mahāprabhu's separation in Ālālanāth, the secret meaning behind the cleaning of the Guṇḍicā Mandira, Ratha Yātrā and Herā-pañcamī. He discussed the life histories of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Śrī Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. In the last few days Śrīla Gurudeva gave classes on one of his favorite topics, Rāmānanda Saṁvāda.

Throughout the tour, Śrīla Gurudeva discussed subtle aspects of *guru-tattva*, which are essential for us to understand. The excerpts below are from his classes, *darśanas* and morning walks.



Śrīla Gurudeva: All *śāstras* emphasise the necessity of accepting the shelter of a *guru*. This applies in all *yugas* - Satya, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. Simply accepting a *guru*, however, is not sufficient in itself. One must serve him. Only a person who is serving his Gurudeva can perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān.

When Śaṅḍa and Amarka, the teachers of Prahlāda Mahārāja, left the classroom they would sometimes appoint Prahlāda Mahārāja, the best of the *bhaktas*, class monitor. At such times Prahlāda would instruct his demoniac classmates in the process of *hari-bhajana*. "This process is very easy and simple," he said.

*guru-śuśrūṣayā bhaktyā
sarva-labdhārpaṇena ca
saṅgena sādhu-bhaktānām
īśvarārādhanena ca
Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (7.7.31)*

One should serve the *guru* with loving devotion, offer him everything in one's possession and perform *bhajana* of Bhagavān while constantly residing in the company of devotees.

How should we offer all we have to Śrīla Gurudeva? Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has described this in the following *bhajana*:

*mānasa, deho, geha, jo kichu mora
arpilū tuwā pade, nanda-kiśora (1)*

Mind, body, family, everything I own I offer at Your lotus feet, O Nanda-kiśora!

*sampade vipade, jīvane-marāṇe
dāy mama gelā, tuwā o-pada barāṇe (2)*

In good fortune or in bad, in life or in death, I take shelter at Your lotus feet. All of my possessions I have given to You so now I no longer take any responsibility for them.

*mārobi rākhobi-jo icchā tohārā
nitya-dāsa prati tuwā adhikārā (3)*

Slay me or protect me as You wish. You have this right because I am Your eternal servant.

*janmāobi moe icchā yadi tora
bhakta-grhe jani janme hau mora (4)*

If it is Your will that I be born again, then may it be in the home of Your devotee.

*kīṭa-janma hau yathā tuwā dāsa
bahir-mukha brahma-janme nāhi āśa (5)*

May I be born even as a worm, as long as I remain Your devotee. I have no desire to be born as Brahmā averse to You.

*bhukti-mukti-sprhā vihīna je bhakta
labhaite tāka saṅga anurakta (6)*

I yearn for the company of that devotee who is completely devoid of all desire for worldly enjoyment or liberation.

*janaka, janani, dayita, tanoya,
prabhu, guru, pati-tuhū sarva-moy (7)*

Father, mother, lover, son, Lord, preceptor and husband – You are everything to me.

*bhaktivinoda kahe, śuno kāna!
rādhānātha! tuhū hāmāra parāṇa (8)*

Bhaktivinoda says, "O Kāna, please hear me! O beloved of Rādhā, You are my life and soul!"

Śrīpāda Sajjana Mahārāja: Śrīla Gurudeva, what does Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura mean by these words? Is it possible for us to directly surrender everything to Śrī Nanda-kiśora?

Śrīla Gurudeva: No, we cannot surrender to Him directly. First we must surrender everything to *āśraya-bhagavān*, a bona fide *guru*. When Śrī Gurudeva sees our mood of surrender, he will transfer it to the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He will not try to enjoy our surrender for himself.

Śrīpāda Dāmodara Mahārāja: Śrīla Gurudeva, in ancient times people were naturally more simple than the people of Kali-yuga. Did this same process of surrender to *guru* apply then?

Śrīla Gurudeva: The *śloka* we are discussing, *guru-śuśrūṣayā bhaktyā*, was spoken in Satya-yuga by Prahlāda Mahārāja to his *asurika* classmates. It therefore follows that this regulation in regard to surrender existed then also.



Śrīmatī Syāmārānī dīdī: Śrīla Gurudeva, what is the process of *guru-sevā* and surrender?

Śrīla Gurudeva: Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra is *maryādā puruṣottama*, that Supreme Personality who embodies the etiquette of religious principles. In Tretā-yuga He established the ideal method of *guru-sevā*. One should be attentive to what actually pleases the *guru*. In the initial stages of *bhakti*, *guru-sevā* consists of picking flowers for Śrī Guru, massaging his feet, and so on. Such service will help a person to advance in *bhajana*. Śrī Gurudeva will then transfer the disciple's service tendency to Śrīman Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and the devotee will directly serve Them by offering Them *tāmbula*, massaging Their feet and so forth.

In Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura's commentary on this *śloka* (*guru śuśrūṣaya*) spoken by Prahlāda Mahārāja, he says that *śuśrūṣaya* and *snapana samvāhanādhikaya* mean arranging for Gurudeva's bath, massaging his feet and performing other such

services. Moreover, it means surrendering everything in one's possession at his lotus feet. How should we surrender? "*Taccārpanam bhaktyaiva, na tu pratiṣṭhādi hetunā* – one's act of surrender should be in a mood of devotion, not with a desire for *pratiṣṭhā* (name, fame and adoration), which will destroy one's *bhakti*."



Śrīpāda Brajanātha prabhu: Śrīla Gurudeva, nowadays some devotees say that Śrī Guru may be expert in *bhajana*, but not in management. This is painful to hear. How should we respond to this?

Śrīla Gurudeva: Four types of people have this attitude:

- 1) those who are ignorant,
- 2) those who are neophytes,
- 3) those who are arrogant and
- 4) those who are attached to their scholarship.

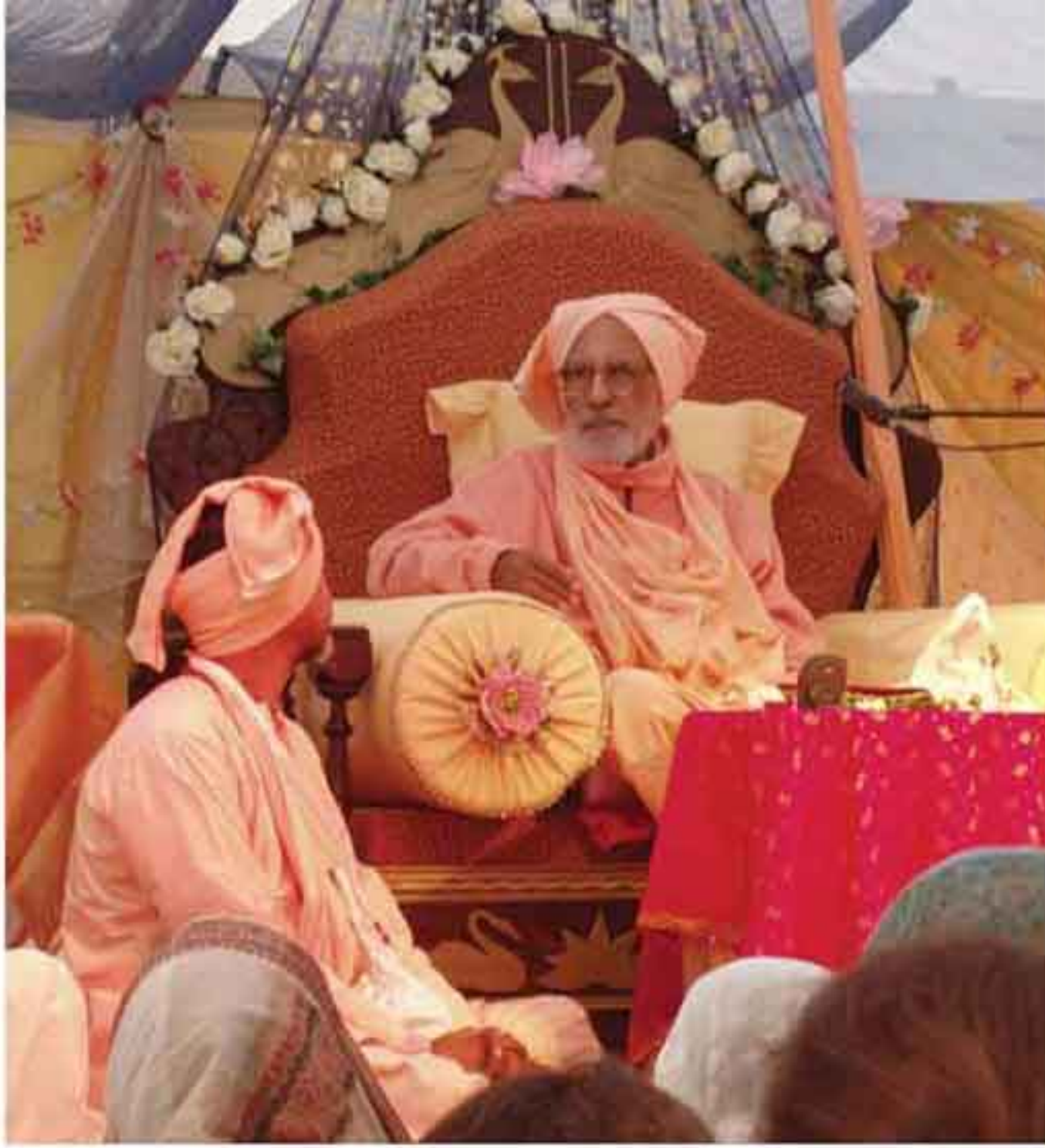
A self-realised *guru's* expertise is all-encompassing. Many examples prove this.

Śrīpāda Nīrguṇa prabhu: Śrīla Gurudeva, it would be very helpful if you could illustrate this with one or two examples.

Śrīla Gurudeva: My Gurupādapadma was the son of a wealthy landlord. He used to look after Prabhupāda's land holdings. Do you think he lacked knowledge of management? Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura was a bona fide *guru* and *rūpānuga ācārya* who actively engaged in preaching activities, yet he tended to the affairs of his extensive kingdom.

Prior to meeting Mahāprabhu, the two brothers, Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī and Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, used to manage the kingdom of King Hussein Shah.

And what to speak of big institutions, huge kingdoms and whole countries, Śrī Brahmā, the original *guru* of our *sampradāya*, manages the entire universe! So to think that *guru* is expert in *bhajana*, but that he lacks expertise in material affairs is a severe offense. People with this mentality should attentively make a concerted effort to change their way of thinking, otherwise they will not be able to sustain themselves on the path of *bhakti*. Śrīman Mādhava Mahārāja should elaborate further on this.



Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja: I will try to repeat only what I have heard from the lips of Śrīla Gurudeva and our *guru-varga*. If my words contain any error, please forgive me.

A person in the advanced stage of *sādhana-bhajana* has full command over five types of knowledge. One of our previous *ācāryas*, Śrī Nārada, has stated in his book *Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra* (1.2.44):

*rātraṅ ca jñānavacanāṃ jñānaṃ pañcavidhaṃ
smṛtamtenedam pañcarātraṃ ca pravadanti
manīṣiṇaḥ*

Rātra means “knowledge”, of which there are five (*pañca*) types. For this reason the *munis* have named this book *Pañcarātra* or “five types of knowledge”. They are: (1) Knowledge of all types of worldly matters, such as management of estates and other types of management. This is known as *vaiśayika jñāna*. (2) Knowledge of the path of *yoga*. (3) Knowledge of the cycle of birth and death (4) Knowledge about how to attain liberation, including the highest form of liberation (5) Knowledge about how to attain *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* (*kṛṣṇa-bhakti-prada*).

One who doubts the authenticity of *Śrī Nārada-pañcarātra* is completely foolish. Śrī Vedavyāsa, who divided the Vedas, wrote the Purāṇas and manifested the topmost Purāṇa (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*). He is also a *śaktyāveśa-avatāra* (empowered manifestation) of Bhagavān and a disciple of Nārada. How, then, can we doubt the authenticity of Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi’s book? Śrī Nārada

has written that the topmost Vaiṣṇava, Śiva Ṭhākura, heard this knowledge directly from the lips of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Nārada in turn heard it from Śrī Śiva and wrote the *Pañcarātra*. Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī wrote in his *Paramātma-sandarbha*: “*pañcarātrasya kṛṣṇasya vakta tu bhagavān svayaṃ* - Bhagavān himself spoke this *Pañcarātra*.” Furthermore, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī also wrote *nisaṃsayeṣviti*, which means “without any doubt”. It indicates that if a person wants to quickly grasp the actual meaning of the Vedas, he must study *Pañcarātra*.



Śrīpāda Jīva-prīya brahmacārī: Śrīla Gurudeva, recently, when I heard some devotees discussing *guru-tattva*, a question came to my mind that I would now like to present at your lotus feet.



Śrīla Gurudeva: You may ask, not withholding any doubts.

Śrīpāda Jīva-prīya brahmacārī: According to the explanation of the *śloka* that best defines *bhakti*, *anyābhilāṣitā-śūnyam*, it could appear, from an external perspective, that Mother Yaśodā’s act of putting Kṛṣṇa down from her lap when the milk pot was boiling over was unfavourable because it displeased Kṛṣṇa. Mother Yaśodā was feeding Kṛṣṇa her breast milk, and He was happily drinking it. She forcefully put Him down off her lap though He had not yet taken to His full satisfaction, and went to save the milk. It seems that her action is tainted with fault, but factually this cannot be so. Such perception is *avyapti doṣa*, or an under-extension of the definition of *bhakti*.

I have heard you explain that *bhakti* means constantly endeavouring to satisfy Kṛṣṇa (*anukūlyena-kṛṣṇānuṣīlana*). Even in this instance she is performing *uttamā-bhakti*. Her sole intention was to make Kṛṣṇa happy, not miserable. She was thinking, “I cannot make yogurt, butter, *khīra* and so forth from my breast milk,



so if I don't save the milk from boiling over, what will my beloved son have to eat? I can only act for His welfare."

You have also explained that as *sādhakas* we cannot offer our feelings and possessions directly to Kṛṣṇa; first we must offer them to Śrīla Gurudeva.

Considering all these points, a neophyte *sādhaka* could conclude that if his internal mood is actually to please his *guru*, as Mother Yaśodā's internal mood was to please Kṛṣṇa, then any activity he performs with that mood is *uttamā-bhakti* and all his activities are therefore the highest *guru-sevā*. That *sādhaka* may thus compare his Gurudeva's exhibition of being displeased with him, to Kṛṣṇa appearing to be displeased with Mother Yaśodā, when actually He was not displeased with her at all.

Śrīla Gurudeva: A person who thinks like this has not correctly understood the principles of *bhakti*. Mother Yaśodā is the eternal mother of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and Nanda Mahārāja is His eternal father. Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *svayam-bhagavān*, the original Personality of Godhead, yet His mother and father do not see Him as such. Once, as Mother Yaśodā was feeding Him breast milk, she

saw the Universal Form. This same pastime happened twice. Mother Yaśodā thought that maybe her vision was the result of the evil eye, a ghost, or some similar phenomenon. She stopped feeding Kṛṣṇa and told Nanda Bābā to call the *brāhmaṇas* and bathe Kṛṣṇa in cow urine, chant *mantras* and donate cows in charity. Thereafter, she again fed Him her breast milk. Kṛṣṇa's mother and father are always thinking of His welfare, therefore they are His well-wishers.

Kṛṣṇa touches the feet of His superiors and offers His obeisances to them. It is not possible for a disciple, however, to become the father or mother of the *guru*, or to become the *guru's* superior in any way, and act for his ultimate benefit, as Mother Yaśodā acts for Kṛṣṇa's. A disciple's mood must be sober and filled with awe and respect for his *guru*. This principle cannot be transgressed. A devotee's *bhajana* may develop to a high level, but he will always be imbued with respect and honour for his *guru*. Kṛṣṇa's parents and *guru-jana* (respectable elders) will accept His *praṇāma* and bless Him in return, and sometimes they will chastise Him and twist His ear. But can a disciple do this to his *guru*?

“ A devotee’s *bhajana* may develop to a high level, but he will always be imbued with respect and honour for his *guru*. Kṛṣṇa’s parents and *guru-jana* (respectable elders) will accept His *praṇāma* and bless Him in return, and sometimes they will chastise Him and twist His ear. But can a disciple do this to his *guru*? Never! ”



Never! You should understand that a disciple who wants to accept the *praṇāmas* of his *guru* and bless him in return, has become quite insane.



Śrīpāda Bhūdhara prabhu: Śrīla Gurudeva, what is the easiest way to please Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas?

Śrīla Gurudeva: By one’s loyalty. To the extent that the disciple can be loyal to his *guru*, to that extent he can please Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇavas, especially his *guru*. In the realm of *bhajana*, you can easily become successful if you are loyal.

Śrīpāda Bhūdhara prabhu: Śrīla Gurudeva, please define “loyalty” so that we can easily grasp its meaning.

Śrīla Gurudeva: Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has described this very simply in this song:

sarvasva tomāra, carāṇe saṁpiyā,
poḍechi tomāra ghare
tumi to’ ṭhākura, tomāra kukura,
boliyā jānaho more (1)

He Prabhu! I have surrendered my everything at Your lotus feet and remain forever in Your house as your ready servant. You are my Lord and I am Your dog. Kindly accept me as such.

bāndhiyā nikāṭe, āmāre pālibe,
rohibo tomāra dvāre
pratīpa-janere, āsite nā dibo,
rākhibo gaḍera pāre (2)

Chain me nearby and maintain me. I shall stand guard at the door of Your house. I will not allow

anyone to enter who is unfavourable to you. I will send them far away.

tava nija-jana, prasāda seviyā,
ucchiṣṭa rākhibe jāhā
āmāra bhojana, parama-ānande,
prati-din ha’be tāha (3)

Daily in supreme bliss I will accept the remnants of Your dear devotees who have honored Your *prasāda*.

bosiyā śuiyā, tomāra caraṇa,
cintibo satata āmi
nācite nācite, nikāṭe jāibo,
jakhona ḍākibe tumi (4)

When lying down and sitting up, I will constantly remember Your lotus feet, and when You call me, I will immediately come to You, dancing in bliss.

nijera poṣaṇa, kabhu nā bhāvibo,
rohibo bhāvera bhore
bhaktivinoda, tomāre pālaka,
boliyā varaṇa kore (5)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda says, “O Prabhu! Never thinking of my own sustenance, I will perpetually remain submerged in *bhāva*, because I have accepted You as my maintainer.”

There is no more simple definition than this. My most worshipable Gurudeva would pounce like a tiger upon anyone who dared to glance inimically towards Śrīla Prabhupāda. This is the meaning of *pratīpa janera asite nā dibo rākhibo gaḍera pāre*. This *kīrtana* best defines loyalty. Loyalty is the key to success. ❀

Ānanda-kanda, Nitāi-canda (Nityānanda guṇa)

Śrī Rādhā-vallabha Dāsa



**ānanda-kanda, nitāi-canda,
aruṇa nayana karuṇa chanda
karuṇa-pūra, saghane-jhura,
hari hari dhvani bola re (1)**

ānanda – divine ecstasy; kanda – the root; nitāi-canda – the moon-like Nityānanda Prabhu; aruṇa – the hue of the crimson sunrise; nayana – eye; karuṇa – bestow compassion; chanda – desire; karuṇa – of mercy; pūra – an abode (or flow); saghane – ceaselessly; jhura – fall in drops; hari hari – Hari, Hari; dhvani bola – everyone chant; re – Oh!

The root of divine ecstasy, Nitai-candra, has eyes the hue of the crimson sunrise. They overflow with the desire to bestow compassion. From the abode of mercy comes a constant stream of compassion as He cries out to everyone, “Chant Hari! Hari!”

**naṭana-raṅga, bhakata-saṅga,
vividha-bhāsa rasa-taraṅga
īṣata-hāsa, madhura-bhāsa,
saghane gīma-dola re (2)**

naṭana – of dance; raṅga – performance; bhakata – devotees; saṅga – with; vividha – various; bhāsa – floating; rasa – mellows; taraṅga – waves of; īṣata-hāsa – slightly smiling; madhura-bhāsa – sweet speech; saghane – ceaselessly; gīma (ghāḍa) – neck; dola – swaying about; re – Oh!

While engaged in dancing along with His devotees, He floats in a variety of waves of *rasa*. He smiles gently, His words are imbued with full sweetness and He nods His head again and again.

**patita kora, japata gaura,
dina-rajani ānanda bhora
prema-ratana, kariyā yatana,
jagajane karu dāna re (3)**

patita – fallen; kora – in lap; japata – chanting softly; gaura – the names of Gaura; dina – day; rajani – night; ānanda – blissfully; bhora – absorbed; prema – divine love; ratana – jewel; kariyā – with; yatana – with great care; jagajane – on the entire world; karu dāna – bestow; re – Oh!

Taking all the fallen souls upon His own lap (promising to deliver them), He softly chants the names of Gaura as he drowns in joy day and night. With great care He bestows the jewel of *prema* upon the entire world.

**kīrtana-majha, rasika-rāja,
yaichana kanayā-giri virāja
braja-bihāra, rasa-bithāra,
madhura madhura gāna re (4)**

kīrtana – chanting the holy names; majha – middle; rasika-rāja – king of those who taste mellows (*rasika-bhaktas*); yaichana – as much as; kanayā-giri – golden mountain (Sumeru); virāja – graceful presence; braja-bihāra – [absorbed in the] sportive pastimes of Vraja; rasa – divine mellows; bithāra – spread out; madhura madhura – [through] sweet, sweet; gāna – songs; re – Oh!

He is the centre of the *kīrtana* and the king of *rasikas* (those who taste *rasa*). Oh! His presence is as graceful as the golden Mount Sumeru. Absorbed in the sportive pastimes of Vraja, He spreads *rasa* everywhere through His sweet, sweet songs.

**dhūli-dhūsara, dharaṇī-upara,
kabahuṅ luṭhata preme gara-gara
kabahuṅ calata, kabahuṅ khelata,
kabahuṅ aṭṭa-hāsa re (5)**

dhūli – dust; dhūsara – covered; dharaṇī – the ground; upara – upon; kabahuṅ – sometimes; luṭhata – rolling about; preme – with divine love; gara-gara – overwhelmed; kabahuṅ – sometimes; calata – restlessly move about; kabahuṅ – sometimes; khelata – play tricks; kabahuṅ – sometimes; aṭṭa-hāsa – roaring laughter; re – Oh!

Overwhelmed by *prema*, sometimes He rolls on the ground, covering Himself with dust. Oh! Sometimes He restlessly wanders about, sometimes He plays tricks on people and sometimes He roars in laughter.

**kabahuṅ sveda, kabahuṅ kheda,
kabahuṅ pulaka, svāra-vibheda
kabahuṅ lampha, kabahuṅ jhampa,
kabahuṅ dīrgha-śvāsa re (6)**

kabahuṅ – sometimes; sveda – sweat; kabahuṅ – sometimes; kheda – grieve; kabahuṅ – sometimes; pulaka – hairs stand on end; svāra-vibheda – voice falter; kabahuṅ – sometimes; lampha – leap into the air; kabahuṅ – sometimes; jhampa – jump up and down; kabahuṅ – sometimes; dīrgha-śvāsa – deeply sigh and pant; re – Oh!

Sometimes He perspires, sometimes He grieves, sometimes His hairs stand on end and sometimes His voice falters. Sometimes He leaps high into the air and sometimes He jumps up and down. Sometimes He deeply sighs and pants.

**karuṇā-sindhu, akhila bandhu,
kali-yuga-tama-pūraṇa-indu
jagata-locana, paṭala-mocana,
nitāi pūrala āsa re (7)**

karuṇā-sindhu – an ocean of mercy; akhila bandhu – the friend of everyone; kali-yuga – the age of quarrel and hypocrisy; tama – ignorance; pūraṇa – full; indu – moon; jagata-locana – keeping His eyes on the world; paṭala-mocana – savior of the masses; nitāi – Nityānanda Prabhu; pūrala – fulfillment; āsa – hopes and aspirations; re – Oh!

He is the ocean of mercy, the friend of all, and the full moon dissipating the darkness of ignorance in Kali-Yuga. He is glancing over the whole world and saving everyone. Oh! The fulfillment of all of my hopes and aspirations rest in Nityānanda Prabhu.

**andha-adhama, dīna-durajana,
prema-dāne karala mocana
pāola jagata, kevala vañcita,
e rādhā-ballabha dāsa re (8)**

andha – [spiritually] blind; adhama – lowest; dīna – destitute; durajana – the most wicked; prema-dāne – the gift of *prema*; karala – bestow; mocana – delivered; pāola – received; jagata – the world; kevala – only; vañcita – deprived; e rādhā-ballabha dāsa – this Rādhā-vallabha Dāsa; re – Oh!

He has delivered the spiritually blind, the lowest, the destitute, and the most wicked souls, by bestowing upon them *prema*! Oh! The whole world has received His gift; only this Rādhā-vallabha dāsa is deprived. ❀

*ayi dīna-dayārdra nātha he
mathurā-nātha kadāvalokyase
hṛdayam tvad-aloka-kātaram
dayita bhrāmyati kim karomy aham*

– Śrīla Mādhavendra Purīpāda

O Master, whose heart melts in compassion for the destitute! O Lord of Mathurā! When will I see You again? O beloved Lord of My life, I fervently hanker to see You, so much so that My heart has become intensely restless. What shall I do now?

*sūnyāyate mahā-goṣṭham girīndro 'jagarāyate
vyāghra-tundāyate kuṇḍam jīvātu-rahitasya me*

– Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī

Now that I am without that person who sustains my life, the land of Vraja seems empty and desolate, Govardhana Hill appears like a great python, and Rādhā-kuṇḍa appears like the gaping mouth of a tigress.

*pāṣāṇe kuṭiba māthā anale paśiba
gaurāṅga guṇera nidhi kothā' gele pāba*

– Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura

I shall dash my head upon a stone or enter into fire! Oh, where can I go to find such a great treasure-house of wonderful qualities as Gaurāṅga and His associates?

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