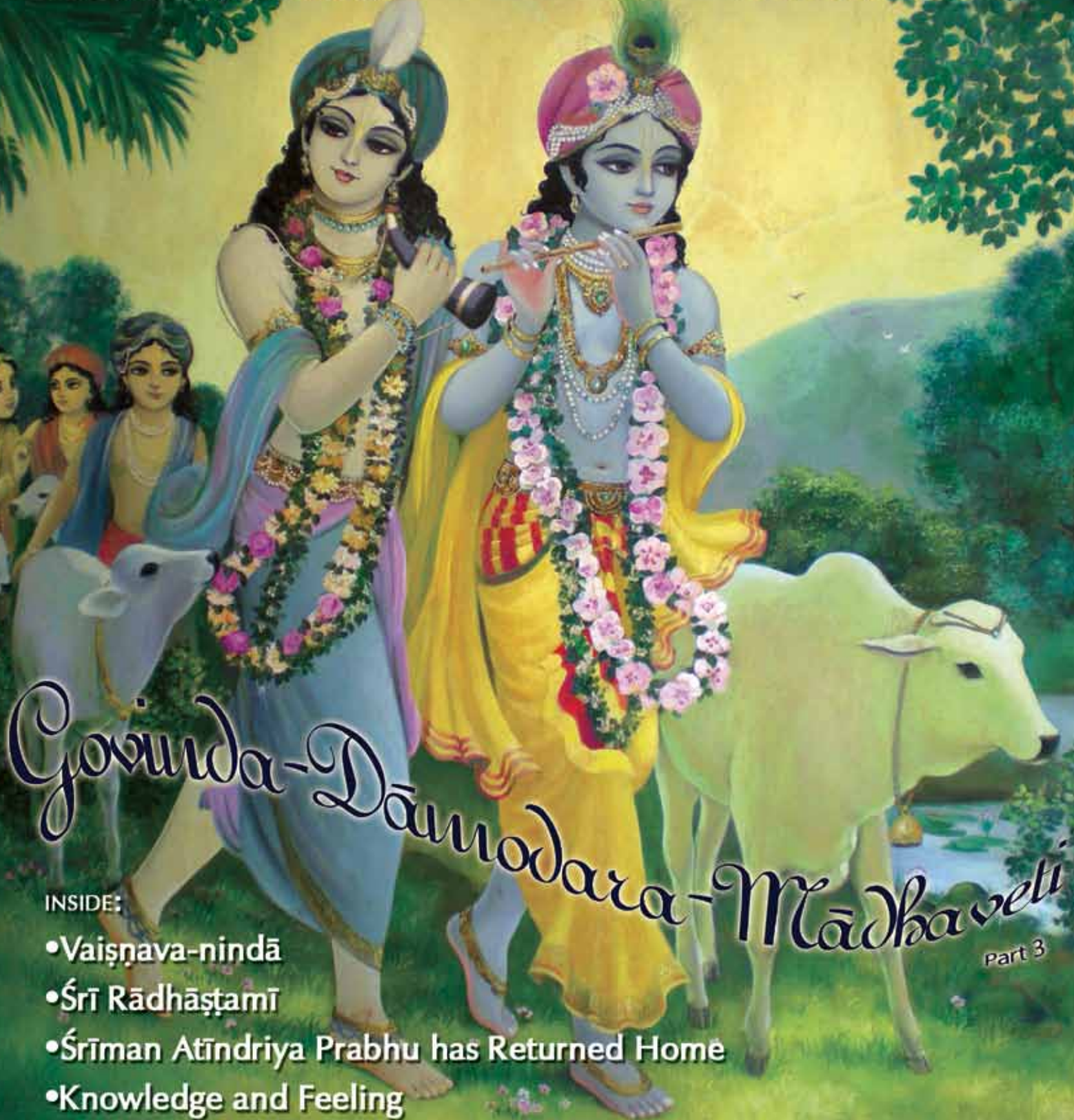


Rays of The Harmonist

GAUDIYA VEDANTA PUBLICATIONS

No. 20 * KARTTIKA 2009



Govinda-Dāmodara-Mādhaveti Part 3

INSIDE:

- Vaiṣṇava-nindā
- Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī
- Śrīman Atīndriya Prabhu has Returned Home
- Knowledge and Feeling

*atrāsīt kila nanda-sadma śakatasyātrā bhavad-bhañjanam
bandhaccheda-karo 'pi dāma-bhirabhūd baddho 'tra dāmodaraḥ
ittham māthura-vṛddha-vaktra-vigalat-pīyūṣa-dhārām pibann-
ānandāśru-dharaḥ kadā madhu-purīm dhanyaś carisyāmy-aham*

Śrī Kavi-śekhara

*quoted in
Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī's
Śrī Padyāvalī (120)*

This is where Śrī Nanda's palace stood. Here, Kṛṣṇa demolished the bullock cart, which was actually a demon in disguise. Here, He who releases all souls from the bondage of illusion was Himself bound to a grinding mortar by the rope of His mother's love. For that He came to be known as Dāmodara: that beautiful boy whose belly was bound by rope.

Oh! When shall I be fortunate enough to wander the land of Mathurā, crying tears of joy as I thoroughly drink, through my ears, the streams of these nectarean pastimes, which flow from the lips of the elderly, realized Mathurāvāsīs?



Rays of
The Harmonist

Gaudiya Vedanta Publications

Kārttika-pūrṇimā 2009



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Dedicated to

ĀCĀRYA KEŚARĪ NITYĀ-LĪLĀ PRAVIṢṬA
OM VIṢṆUPĀDA AṢṬOTTARA-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.

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om viṣṇupāda aṣṭottara-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-rūpānuga-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

When most people rise from bed in the morning, they do not feel comfortable or satisfied until, with a cup of chai tea in hand, they sit down to read the newspaper, which carries the message of sense gratification. How can those who know nothing beyond this earth, those who always sleep in the lap of the witch *māyā*, know about *Rays of The Harmonist* – the messenger of Vaikuṅṭha news – which spreads the message of the Absolute Truth.

Even though the people of this world do not want this medicine, *Rays of The Harmonist* anyhow distributes *harikathā* in order to cure us of the disease of nescience and elevate us to our innate healthy condition. In fact, the very purpose of the magazine's existence is *hari-kīrtana*. Those who seek their eternal welfare should accept its mercy and try to follow its footsteps on the path of elevation to the holy abode of Vraja.

Rays of The Harmonist speaks exclusively about faith in Bhagavān, complete surrender to Him, and absolute, ceaseless engagement in serving Him. It is founded upon *bhakti-siddhānta* and realized within the soul's own nature, for it only carries messages that please and satisfy Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It is such an eternal, well-wishing friend that it brings to us the ever-fresh message of transcendence. It never tires in its efforts to inspire us to engage in transcendental service to the divine lotus feet of Bhagavān.

Our Gauḍīya *guru-varga*, being causelessly merciful to us, has made their divine instructions assume the form (*vigraha*) of *Rays of The Harmonist*. Without the mercy of *vāṇī* (divine instruction) there is no way to attain auspiciousness. *Rays of The Harmonist* travels along the path to Vraja and constantly performs *kīrtana-sevā*, inspiring everyone to join it by attracting us to the lotus feet of śrī guru, the source of all auspiciousness. By its mercy we will develop greed to associate with those already travelling the path.

So, may *kīrtāna* of *vāṇī* be our life. May we get the sires of *Rays of The Harmonist* and the preachers who are servants of *vāṇī* as our real friends.



The spirit of this editorial has been adapted from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*,

Year 61, Issue 1

Śrī Govindā - Dāmodāra Stotram

For parts 1 & 2 of
“Śrī Govinda-Dāmodara-stotram”,
see *Rays of The Harmonist* No. 14
(Kārtika 2004) and No.16 (Kārtika 2006).

Verses 46–71
Śrī Bilvamaṅgala Ṭhākura

ॐ 46 ॐ

*antarjale grāha-grhīta-pādo
visṛṣṭa-vikliṣṭa-samasta-bandhuḥ
tadā gajendro nitarāṇi jagāda
govinda dāmodara mādHAVeti*

antar-jale – within the water; *grāha* – by the crocodile; *grhīta* – seized; *pādaḥ* – foot; *visṛṣṭa* – abandoned; *vikliṣṭa* – greatly pained; *samasta-bandhuḥ* – all his friends and relatives; *tadā* – then; *gajendraḥ* – the king of elephants; *nitarāṇi* – constantly in despair; *jagāda* – cried out; *govinda dāmodara mādHava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! MādHava!; *iti* – thus.

When, within the water, the leg of Gajendra, the mighty king of elephants, was seized by a powerful crocodile in his jaws, the elephant experienced intense pain. Abandoned by all his friends and relatives, he kept crying out in despair, “*He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He MādHava!*”

ॐ 47 ॐ

*haṁsa-dhvajaḥ śaṅkha-yuto dadarśa
putraṁ kaṭāhe prapatantam enam
puṇyāni nāmāni harer-japantam
govinda dāmodara mādHAVeti*

haṁsa-dhvajaḥ – the king named Haṁsa-dhvajaḥ; *śaṅkha-yutaḥ* – accompanied by his priest, Śaṅkha; *dadarśa* – saw; *putraṁ* – [the king’s] own son; *kaṭāhe* – in the pot of extremely hot oil; *prapatantam* – having fallen; *enam* – him; *puṇyāni* – that bring good fortune; *nāmāni* – names; *hareḥ* – of Śrī Hari; *japantam* – softly chanting; *govinda dāmodara mādHava* – Govinda, Dāmodara, MādHava; *iti* – thus.



King Hamsa-dhvaja, accompanied by his priest Śaṅkha, saw that his son Sudhanva, whom he had punished by placing in a pot of burning oil, was softly chanting the holy names of Śrī Hari – “Govinda, Dāmodara, Mādhava.”

ॐ 48 ॐ

*durvāsaso vākyam upetya kṛṣṇā
sā cābravīt kānana-vāsiniṣam
antaḥ pravīṣṭam manasājuhāva
govinda dāmodara mādhaveṭi*

durvāsasaḥ – of the sage Durvāsā; *vākyam* – the words; *upetya* – having arrived there; *kṛṣṇā* – Draupadī, the wife of Kṛṣṇa’s cousins; *sā* – she; *ca* – and; *abravīt* – spoke; *kānana-vāsin* – the resident of the forest; *iṣam* – Lord; *antaḥ-pravīṣṭam* – who has entered the heart; *manasā* – in her mind; *ājuhāva* – she called; *govinda dāmodara mādhaveṭi* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

One day, while Draupadī was living in the forest with the Pāṇḍavas, Durvāsā Ṛṣi arrived at her cottage, accompanied by his thousands of disciples, and requested food for all of them. But since her husbands had all finished eating, and she had taken her meal after them, her magic vessel could no longer supply any food. Feeling helpless and wishing she could show proper hospitality to the ṛṣi, who was her guest, with distress in her voice she called out to Madhusūdana, for He resides in the hearts of all and saves His devotees from all danger: “He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhava!”

ॐ 49 ॐ

*dhyeyaḥ sadā yogibhiḥ aprameyaḥ
cintā-haraś cintita-pārijātaḥ
kastūrikā-kalpita-nīla-varṇo
govinda dāmodara mādhaveṭi*

dhyeyaḥ – contemplated; *sadā* – always; *yogibhiḥ* – by the mystic yogīs; *aprameyaḥ* – the unfathomable; *cintā-haraḥ* – who steals away all one’s anxieties; *cintita-pārijātaḥ* – thought of like a wish-fulfilling tree from heaven; *kastūrikā* – musk; *kalpita* – nicely arranged; *nīla-varṇaḥ* – blue hue; *govinda dāmodara mādhaveṭi* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

Although the *yogīs* meditate on Him at all times, He remains unfathomable to them. He steals away all one's anxieties and seems like a wish-fulfilling tree from heaven. His dark blue body is decorated with nicely painted spots of *kastūri* (musk) and He is always accessible to one who chants His names, like Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!

ॐ 50 ॐ

*saṁsāra-kūpe patito 'tyagādhe
mohāndha-pūrṇe viṣayābhitaṭṭe
karāvalambam mama dehi viṣṇo
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti*

saṁsāra – material existence, or the endless cycle of repeated birth and death; *kūpe* – in the well; *patitaḥ* – fallen; *ati* – very; *agādhe* – deep; *moha* – of delusion; *andha* – blinded; *pūrṇe* – filled with; *viṣaya* – of sense gratification; *abhitaṭṭe* – scorched; *kara* – of Your hand; *avalambam* – support; *mama* – me; *dehi* – please give; *viṣṇo* – O all-pervading Lord; *govinda dāmodara mādhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

I have fallen into the deep well of material existence which is filled with the intensely burning poison of sense gratification and covered with the darkness of delusion. O all-pervading Viṣṇu! Please give me the support of Your lotus hand and protect me. *He* Govinda! *He* Dāmodara! *He* Mādhava!

ॐ 51 ॐ

*tvām eva yāce mama dehi jihve
samāgate daṇḍa-dhare kṛtānte
vaktavyam evam madhuram subhaktiā
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti*

tvām – to You; *eva* – indeed; *yāce* – I beg; *mama* – my; *dehi* – please give; *jihve* – O tongue; *samāgate* – at the arrival; *daṇḍa-dhare* – [Yamarāja] who holds the rod of punishment; *kṛtānte* – at death; *vaktavyam* – this should be uttered; *evam* – thus; *madhuram* – unlimitedly sweet; *subhaktiā* – with great loving devotion; *govinda dāmodara mādhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, I beseech you, when Yamarāja, who wields the rod of punishment, arrives at the time of my death, then with great love and devotion just sing these extremely sweet names: “Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!”

ॐ 52 ॐ

*bhajasva mantram bhava-bandha-muktyai
jihve rasa-jñe sulabham mano-jñam
dvaipāyanādyair munibhiḥ prajaptam
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti*

bhajasva – just worship (by chanting); *mantram* – the Vedic *mantras*, or transcendental sound vibrations which liberate (*tra*) the mind (*man*) from worldly illusion; *bhava* – the cycle of repeated birth and death; *bandha* – bondage; *muktyai* – for liberation; *jihve* – O tongue; *rasa-jñe* – fully knowledgeable in divine humours; *sulabham* – easily obtained; *mano-jñam* – enchanting to the mind; *dvaipāyana-ādyaiḥ* – headed by Vyāsadeva; *munibhiḥ* – by the great sages; *prajaptam* – chanted softly and continuously with great earnestness; *govinda dāmodara mādhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

O my tongue, O relisher of divine nectar! In order to get liberation from the bondage of repeated birth and death, just chant this *mantra*, which captivates the mind, which is so easily available, and which the exalted sages headed by Vedavyāsa always chant with great earnestness: “Govinda, Dāmodara, Mādhava.”

*gopāla vaṁśī-dhara rūpa-sindho
lokeśa nārāyaṇa dīna-bandho
ucca-svarais tvam vada sarvadaiva
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*

gopāla – O protector of the cows and cowherds; *vaṁśī-dhara* – O holder of the bamboo flute; *rūpa-sindho* – O ocean of beauty; *loka-īśa* – O Lord of all the worlds; *nārāyaṇa* – O shelter of humanity; *dīna-bandho* – O friend of the distressed; *ucca-svaraiḥ* – in a loud voice; *tvam* – you; *vada* – utter; *sarvadā* – always; *eva* – indeed; *govinda dāmodara mādhhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, incessantly and loudly call out these names: “*He Gopāla! He Vaṁśīdhara! He Rūpa-sindhu! He Lokeśa! He Nārāyaṇa! He Dīna-bandhu! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhhava!*”

*jihve sadaivam bhaja sundarāṇi
nāmāni kṛṣṇasya mano-harāṇi
samasta-bhaktārti-vināśanāni
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*

jihve – O tongue; *sadā* – always; *evam* – in this way; *bhaja* – worship (chant); *sundarāṇi* – beautiful; *nāmāni* – names; *kṛṣṇasya* – of Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *mano-harāṇi* – that steals the mind; *samasta-bhakta* – of all the devotees; *ārti* – sufferings; *vināśanāni* – destroyers; *govinda dāmodara mādhhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, incessantly serve these beautiful names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, which steal the mind and thoroughly destroy all the sufferings of the devotees: “*Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!*”

*govinda govinda hare murāre
govinda govinda mukunda kṛṣṇa
govinda govinda rathāṅga-pāṇe
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*

govinda – O proprietor of Goloka; *govinda* – O giver of all pleasures; *hare* – O destroyer of all inauspiciousness and remover of the distress of the devotees; *murāre* – O enemy of the demon Mura; *govinda* – O You who give pleasure to the cows; *govinda* – O You who give pleasure to the *gopas*; *mukunda* – O giver of liberation; *kṛṣṇa* – O all-attractive reservoir of pleasure; *govinda* – O You who give delight to the *gopīs*; *govinda* – O You who give delight to the senses; *ratha-āṅga-pāṇeḥ* – O You who wielded the wheel of a chariot in Your hand as You ran towards Bhīṣmadeva during the battle of Kurukṣetra; *govinda dāmodara mādhhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!; *iti* – thus.

O my tongue, always sing Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s names: “*He Govinda, Govinda, Hari, Murāri! Govinda, Govinda! He Mukunda! He Kṛṣṇa! Govinda, Govinda! He Rathāṅga-pāṇe! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhhava!*”

*sukhāvasāne tv idam eva sāram
duḥkhāvasāne tv idam eva geyam
dehāvasāne tv idam eva jāpyam
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*

sukha – happiness; *avasāne* – at the end; *tu* – indeed; *idam* – this; *eva* – only; *sāram* – the essence; *duḥkha* – of suffering; *avasāne* – at the conclusion; *tu* – indeed; *idam* – this; *eva* – only; *geyam* – to be sung; *deha* – the body; *avasāne* – at the termination; *tu* – indeed; *idam* – this; *eva* – only; *jāpyam* – to be chanted; *govinda dāmodara mādhhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!; *iti* – thus.

After all happiness has come and gone, this alone remains as the essence; when all suffering has passed by, sing only this; and at the moment of giving up the material body, this alone should be chanted: “*Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!*”

*durvāra-vākyam pariṅghya kṛṣṇā
mṛgiva bhītā tu katham kathāñcit
sabhām praviṣṭā manasājuhāva
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*



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durvāra-vākyam – the irrepressible demanding words of (Duḥśāsana); *parigrhya* – hearing; *kṛṣṇā* – Draupadī (the wife of Kṛṣṇa’s cousins); *mṛgī* – doe; *iva* – like; *bhūtā* – fearful; *tu katham kathañcit* – somehow or other; *sabhām* – the assembly; *praviṣṭā* – having entered; *manasā* – in her mind; *ājuhāva* – she called out; *govinda dāmodara mād̥hava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mād̥hava!; *iti* – thus.

After hearing Duḥśāsana’s irrepressible demand to present herself in the assembly hall of the Kauravas, even though she was not presentable, Draupadī somehow or other entered there, like a fearful doe. At that time she cried out within her mind, “*He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mād̥hava!*”

ॐ 58 ॐ

śrī-kṛṣṇa rādhā-vara gokuleśa
gopāla govardhana-nātha viṣṇo
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad̥ eva
govinda dāmodara mād̥haveti

śrī-kṛṣṇa – O all-attractive reservoir of infinite pleasure; *rādhā-vara* – O dear lover of Śrī Rādhā; *gokuleśa* – O Lord of Gokula; *gopāla* – O protector of the cows;

govardhana-nātha – O Lord of Govardhana Hill; *viṣṇo* – O all-pervading Lord; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad̥* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mād̥hava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mād̥hava!; *iti* – thus.

O my tongue, always just drink these nectarean names: “O Śrī Kṛṣṇa! *He Rādhā-nātha! He Gokulapati! He Gopāla! He Govardhana-giridhārī! He Viṣṇu! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mād̥hava!*”

ॐ 59 ॐ

śrī-nātha viśveśvara viśva-mūrte
śrī-devakī-nandana daitya-śatro
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad̥ eva
govinda dāmodara mād̥haveti

śrī-nātha – O Lord of Śrī (Rādhā); *viśva-īśvara* – O Lord of the universe; *viśva-mūrte* – O form of the universe; *śrī-devakī-nandana* – O son of Devakī (Yaśodā); *daitya-śatro* – O enemy of the demons; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – ambrosia; *etad̥* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mād̥hava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mād̥hava!; *iti* – thus.



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O my tongue, just drink the ambrosia of these names: “O Śrī Nātha! He Viśveśvara! He Viśva-mūrte! O Śrī Devakī-nandana! He Daitya-nāšana! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhava!”

ॐ 60 ॐ

*gopī-pate kaṁsa-ripo mukunda
lakṣmī-pate keśava vāsudeva
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādHAVeti*

gopī-pate – O beloved of the *gopīs*; *kaṁsa-ripo* – O enemy of Kāṁsa; *mukunda* – O bestower of liberation; *lakṣmī-pate* – O husband of the goddess of fortune; *keśava* – O You who are skilled at decorating Śrī Rādhā’s braid and who killed the Keśī demon; *vāsudeva* – O son of Vasudeva; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādHava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

O my tongue, just drink the nectar of these names: “He Gopī-pate! He Kaṁsāre! He Mukunda! He Lakṣmī-pate! He Keśava! He Vāsudeva! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhava!”

ॐ 61 ॐ

*gopī-janāhlāda-kara vrajeśa
go-cāraṇāraṇya-kṛta-praveśa
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādHAVeti*

gopī-jana – to the damsels of Vraja; *āhlāda-kara* – O giver of bliss; *vrajeśa* – O Lord of Vraja; *go-cāraṇa* – to tend the cows; *araṇya* – within the forest; *kṛta-praveśa* – who enters; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādHava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

O my tongue, always just drink the nectarean names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who gives pleasure to the minds and hearts of the *gopīs*, who is the Lord of Vraja, and who wanders in the forest grazing cows: “Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!”

ॐ 62 ॐ

*prāṇeśa viśvambhara kaitabhāre
vaikuṅṭha nārāyaṇa cakrapāṇe
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādHAVeti*



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prāṇeśa – O Lord of my life; *viśvambhara* – O nourisher of all [especially of all the devotees]; *kaiṭabhāre* – O enemy of Kaiṭabha; *vaikuṅṭha* – O You who exist far beyond any mundane limitations; *nārāyaṇa* – O You who recline upon the transcendental waters; *cakra-pāṇe* – O You who hold a disc in Your hand; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – indeed; *govinda dāmodara mādhaveti* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

O my tongue, always just drink the nectarean names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa: “*He Prāṇeśvara! He Viśvambhara! He Kaiṭabhāre! He Vaikuṅṭha! He Nārāyaṇa! He Cakra-pāṇe! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhava!*”

ॐ 63 ॐ

*hare murāre madhusūdanādīya
śrī-rāma sītā-vara rāvaṇāre
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti*

hare – O You who remove all inauspiciousness and distress from the hearts of Your devotees; *murāre* – O enemy of the demon Mura; *madhusūdana* – O killer of the demon Madhu; *ādya* – O Original Being; *śrī-rāma* – O Śrī Rāma, son of King Daśaratha; *sītā-vara* – O husband of Sītā; *rāvaṇāre* – O enemy of Rāvaṇa; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādha* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, always just drink these nectarean names: “*He Hari! He Murāri! He Madhusūdana! He Ādi-puruṣa! O Śrī Rāma! He Sītāpati! He Rāvaṇāre! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhava!*”

ॐ 64 ॐ

*śrī-yādavendrādri-dharāmbujākṣa
go-gopa-gopī-sukha-dāna-dakṣa
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti*

śrī-yādava-indra – O chief of the Yādava dynasty; *adri-dhara* – O holder of Govardhana Hill; *ambuja-akṣa* – O lotus-eyed one; *go-gopa-gopī* – to the cows, cowherds



and milkmaids; *sukha-dāna* – in giving happiness; *dakṣa* – who is expert; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādha* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, always just drink the nectarean names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa: “*O Śrī Yadupate! He Giridhārī! He Kamalalocana! O You who are expert in giving happiness to the cows, gopas and gopīs! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhava!*”

ॐ 65 ॐ

*dharā-bharottāraṇa gopa-veśa
vihāra-lilā-kṛta-bandhu-śeṣa
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādhaveti*

dharā – of the earth; *bhara* – of the burden; *uttāraṇa* – remover; *gopa-veśa* – You wear the attire of a cowherd boy;

viḥāra-līlā – in order to enact delightful pastimes; *kyta* – assumed; *bandhu* – the friend; *śeṣa* – of Anantadeva; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādḥava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādḥava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, just drink incessantly this nectar of the names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who took the attire of a cowherd boy in order to remove the burden of the earth and who became Śeṣaśāyī Kṛṣṇa, with Anantadeva as His companion,¹ just to enact delightful pastimes. *He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādḥava!*

ॐ 66 ॐ

*bakī-bakāghāsura-dhenukāre
keśī-trṇāvartta-vighāta-dakṣa
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādḥaveti*

bakī – of the demoness Pūtanā; *baka* – of Bakāsura, the crane demon; *aghāsura* – of the python demon; *dhenuka* – of the ass demon; *are* – O enemy; *keśī* – of the horse demon; *trṇāvartta* – of the whirlwind demon; *vighāta* – in killing; *dakṣa* – O You who are expert; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādḥava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādḥava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, always just drink the nectarean names of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who very easily vanquished great demons like Pūtanā, Bakāsura, Aghāsura, Dhenukāsura, Keśī and Trṇāvarta: *He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādḥava!*

ॐ 67 ॐ

*śrī-jānakī-jīvana rāmacandra
niśā-carāre bharatāgrajēśa
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādḥaveti*

śrī-jānakī – of Sitā, the daughter of Janaka Mahārāja; *jīvana* – O life and soul; *rāmacandra* – Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra, who appeared in the Raghu dynasty, the dynasty of the sun; *niśā-cara* – of the *rākṣasas* (man-eating demons) who wander in the night; *are* – O enemy; *bharata* – of Bharata; *agraja* – elder brother; *īśa* – Supreme Lord; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādḥava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādḥava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, always just drink these nectarean names: “O Lord Rāmacandra, life and soul of Jānakī! O enemy of the *rākṣasas*! O elder brother of Bharata! O Supreme Lord! *He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādḥava!*”



¹ In *Bhakti-ratnākara* by Narahari Cakravartī it is described:

“Once Kṛṣṇa laid down on Ananta Śeṣa in the midst of a pond in Vraja (Śeṣaśāyī, Kṣīra-samudra) and Śrī Rādhikā massaged His lotus feet. Their divine beauty cannot be described.”

*nārāyaṇānanta hare nṛsimha
prahlāda-bādhā-hara he kṛpālo
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*

nārāyaṇa – O refuge of humanity; *ananta* – O limitless one; *hare* – O remover of the suffering of the devotees; *nṛsimha* – O half lion, half man incarnation; *prahlāda* – the great devotee Prahlāda; *bādhā* – of impediments; *hara* – O remover; *he kṛpālo* – O merciful one; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādhhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, always just drink the nectarean names of Śrī Hari: “*He Nārāyaṇa! He Ananta! O Hari! He Śrī Nṛsimhadeva, You who removed all of Prahlāda’s obstacles! He Karuṇāmaya, You who are overflowing with compassion! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhhava!*”

*līlā-manuṣyākṛti-rāma-rūpa
pratāpa-dāsī-kṛta-sarva-bhūpa
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*

līlā – [in order to engage in] pleasure-pastimes; *manuṣya* – a man; *ākṛti* – appearance; *rāma-rūpa* – in the form of Śrī Rāma; *pratāpa* – by His great influence; *dāsī-kṛta* – maidservants; *sarva-bhūpa* – all the kings of the earth; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādhhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!; *iti* – thus.

On the pretense of engaging in transcendental pleasure pastimes, You assumed the form of a human being and advented as Lord Rāma. By Your limitless power, You defeated all the kings of the earth. O tongue, always just drink the nectarean names of Śrī Nanda-nandana: “*He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhhava!*”

*śrī-kṛṣṇa govinda hare murāre
he nātha nārāyaṇa vāsudeva
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*

śrī-kṛṣṇa – O Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *govinda* – O You who give pleasure to the senses, cows, *gopas* and *gopīs*; *hare* – O stealer of the distress of the devotees; *murāre* – O enemy of Mura; *he nātha* – O my Lord; *nārāyaṇa* – O shelter for humanity; *vāsudeva* – O all-pervasive son of Vasudeva; *jihve* – O tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādhhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!; *iti* – thus.

O tongue, always just drink these nectarean names: “*O Śrī Kṛṣṇa! He Govinda! He Hari! He Murāri! He Nātha! He Nārāyaṇa! He Vāsudeva! He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhhava!*”

*vaktuṁ samartho 'pi na vakti kaścīd
aho janānām vyasanābhimukhyam
jihve pibasvāmṛtam etad eva
govinda dāmodara mādhhaveti*

vaktuṁ – to speak; *samarthaḥ* – capable; *api* – although; *na vakti* – does not utter; *kaścīd* – anyone; *aho* – alas; *janānām* – of the people; *vyasana* – evil addictions; *abhimukhyam* – inclination; *jihve* – O my tongue; *pibasva* – just drink; *amṛtam* – nectar; *etad* – this; *eva* – only; *govinda dāmodara mādhhava* – Govinda! Dāmodara! Mādhhava!; *iti* – thus.

Although all persons are quite capable of engaging their tongues in chanting *śrī harināma*, which is always easily available and supremely sweet, they have become averse to chanting Bhagavān’s names because of their addiction to sense gratification and their habitual perversity. What greater cause of sorrow is there than this? Nonetheless, O my tongue, always just drink the nectar of these holy names: “*He Govinda! He Dāmodara! He Mādhhava!*”



Vaiṣṇava-nindā

Criticizing a Vaiṣṇava

Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura



The Result of Blaspheming a Vaiṣṇava

*A*mong all the different types of offences a *jīva* (living being) can possibly commit, no offence is more severe than blaspheming a Vaiṣṇava. It is therefore essential to contemplate the meaning of *vaiṣṇava-nindā* according to the scriptures. It is written in the *Skanda Purāṇa*:

*nindāṁ kurvanti ye mūḍhā
vaiṣṇavānāṁ mahātmanāṁ
patanti pitṛbhiḥ sārḍhan
mahā-raurava-samjñīte*



Painting by Śyāmarāṇī dāśī, © BBT

“With the wisdom that Śrī Kṛṣṇa resides in the heart of all *jīvas*, one should honour every living being.”

*hanti nindāti vai dveṣṭi
vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no haṛṣaṁ
darśane patanāni ṣaṭ*

That foolish person who criticizes an exalted Vaiṣṇava falls down to the hell known as Mahā-raurava, along with his forefathers. Whoever (1) kills a Vaiṣṇava, (2) blasphemes him, (3) feels malice toward him, (4) does not properly greet him upon seeing him, (5) becomes angry with him or (6) does not feel joy upon seeing him, certainly becomes degraded as a result of these six types of misconduct.

It is written in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.74.40):

*nindāṁ bhagavataḥ śṛṇvāṁs
tat-parasya janasya vā
tato nāpatti yaḥ so 'pi
yāty adhaḥ sukṛtāc cyutaḥ*

A person who does not promptly leave that place where blasphemy of Bhagavān or His dedicated devotee, the Vaiṣṇava, is perpetrated, becomes bereft of all his previously accumulated spiritual merit (*sukṛti*) and meets with degradation.

Different Categories of *Jīvas* and Appropriate Conduct with Each

Having thus been forewarned about *vaiṣṇava-nindā*, it is absolutely imperative to first ascertain what specifically designates one a Vaiṣṇava, and then determine which acts result in *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* (offences to Vaiṣṇavas). All *jīvas* fit into one of four categories: (1) ordinary *jīvas*; (2) religious *jīvas*; (3) *brāhmaṇas* and those *jīvas* who resemble Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇava-prāya jīvas*); and (4) *vaiṣṇava-jīvas*.

With the wisdom that Śrī Kṛṣṇa resides in the heart of all *jīvas*, one should honour every living being. A deeper respect should naturally be shown to the religious *jīva*, and, beyond this, it is imperative to feel even deeper honour for the *brāhmaṇa-jīva* and the *vaiṣṇava-prāya jīva*. But above all, it is enjoined that one must worship and serve the lotus feet of a *vaiṣṇava-jīva*.

If one fails to offer respect to the common *jīva*, special respect to the religious *jīva*, and befitting

honour to the *brāhmaṇa* and *vaiṣṇava-prāya jīvas*, then one incurs sin (*pāpa*). However, to disrespect or dishonour a *vaiṣṇava-jīva* is actually an *aparādha* (an offence against divinity). There is no form of sin that cannot be destroyed by performing ordinary penances, but an *aparādha* committed against a Vaiṣṇava is not easily eradicated. Sins affect the gross and subtle material bodies, whereas an *aparādha* specifically affects the *jīva*'s quest to establish himself in his constitutional position as a pure spirit soul, causing him to fall from his path. Therefore, those who wish to perform loving worship of the Supreme Lord (*bhagavad-bhajana*) must diligently protect themselves from committing *aparādha*.

Three Types of Vaiṣṇavas According to Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: Kaniṣṭha, Madhyama and Uttama

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, three specific categories of Vaiṣṇavas are described in the following three verses:

The neophyte, or *kaniṣṭha*, Vaiṣṇava –

*arcāyām eva haraye
pūjām yaḥ śraddhayehate
na tad-bhakteṣu cānyeṣu
sa bhaktaḥ prakṛtaḥ smṛtaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.47)

He who engages in worshipping the deity as Bhagavān Śrī Hari, with ordinary faith received through some lineage of worldly teachers, but who does not engage in worshipping Śrī Hari's devotees, is a *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇava, or neophyte Vaiṣṇava. In other words, he is just beginning to enter into understanding the science of *bhakti*.

The specific difference between worldly, traditional faith and faith based on the revealed scriptures (*śāstrīya-śraddhā*) is that the former arises from mere conventional, worldly education, whereas in the latter, namely *śāstrīya-śraddhā*, faith in the Vaiṣṇavas arises from deep conviction in the words of the scriptures and is based on the evidence presented therein. It is only with the advent of *śāstrīya-śraddhā* that the *jīva* becomes a *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava, or intermediate Vaiṣṇava.

Until *śāstrīya-śraddhā* has arisen, the obligation of a *sādhaka* (a devotee in the stage of practice) to

perform *karma* does not wane. In this regard, Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

śuddha-vaiṣṇava nahe, kintu vaiṣṇavera prāya

Such persons are not pure Vaiṣṇavas, but they resemble Vaiṣṇavas.

Solely by genuine association with true Vaiṣṇavas, the *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇava, who is a *vaiṣṇava-prāya jīva*, can become a *śuddha* Vaiṣṇava (pure Vaiṣṇava).

The intermediate, or *madhyama*, Vaiṣṇava –

*īsvare tad-adhīneṣu
bālīṣeṣu dviṣatsu ca
prema-maitrī-krpopekṣā
yaḥ karoti sa madhyamaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.46)

He who offers his love to the Supreme Lord, Śrī Bhagavān; remains a sincere friend to all Vaiṣṇavas; shows mercy to the innocent¹; and, through the most appropriate use of indifference, tolerance or even complete avoidance, neglects those who are envious of Bhagavān and the Vaiṣṇavas, is a *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava.

In this way, the *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava even shows fitting mercy to the envious, seeing them as ignorant. Only the *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava is actually qualified to serve the Vaiṣṇavas.

Since the *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇavas do not engage in such service, they cannot be called Vaiṣṇavas; rather, they are known as *vaiṣṇava-prāya* (those who resemble Vaiṣṇavas).

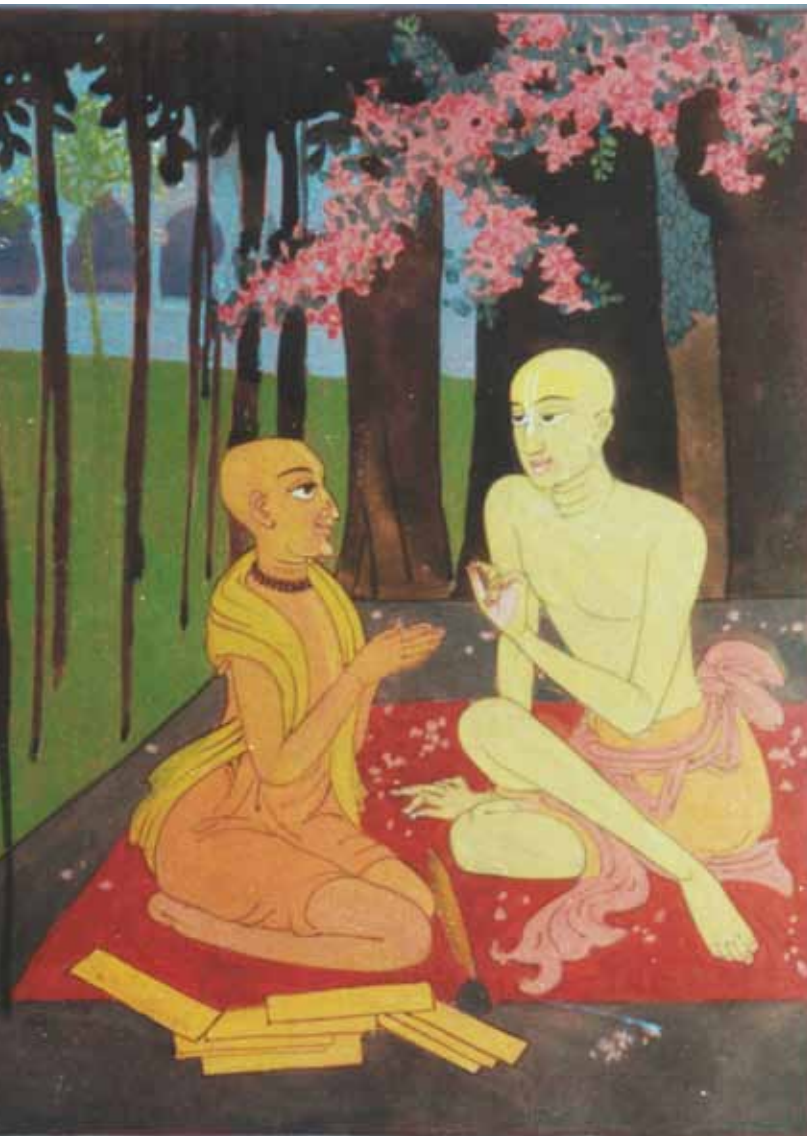
The topmost, or *uttama*, Vaiṣṇava –

*sarva-bhūteṣu yaḥ paśyed
bhagavad-bhāvam ātmanaḥ
bhūtāni bhagavatya ātmany-
eṣa bhāgavatottamaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.2.45)

He who experiences the revelation of his own cherished form of Bhagavān in the hearts of all

¹ This refers to the *vaiṣṇava-prāya jīvas*, or those living entities who resemble Vaiṣṇavas but are not yet conversant with the science of *bhakti*.



“According to these teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, one who merely utters *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is eligible to be described as a Vaiṣṇava.”

jīvas, including his own; who experiences that all *jīvas*, their very existence resting in Bhagavān, are fully surrendered to that same Supreme Absolute Reality; and who perceives everyone in the whole world as a Vaiṣṇava, is known as an *uttama* Vaiṣṇava (topmost Vaiṣṇava). Such a Vaiṣṇava does not see the difference between a Vaiṣṇava and a non-Vaiṣṇava.

Three Classifications of Vaiṣṇavas According to the Teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu: Vaiṣṇava, Vaiṣṇava-tara and Vaiṣṇava-tama

The only conclusion to be drawn then is that when those who were in the *kaniṣṭha* stage attain faith in the scriptures (*śāstrīya-śraddhā*) and hence become eligible to serve the Vaiṣṇavas, they are thereafter described simply as *vaiṣṇava*² (having *vaiṣṇava* qualities) until the time when they attain the other qualities characteristic of a *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava.

Correspondingly, *madhyama* Vaiṣṇavas are described as *vaiṣṇava-tara* (having *vaiṣṇava* qualities to a profound degree) while *uttama* Vaiṣṇavas alone, the topmost Vaiṣṇavas, are described as *vaiṣṇava-tama* (having *vaiṣṇava* qualities to the superlative degree).

It is necessary to deliberate upon the way in which Śrīman Mahāprabhu introduces us to these three types of Vaiṣṇavas:

One who is *vaiṣṇava* –

“*ataeva yānra mukhe eka kṛṣṇa-nāma
sei ta’ vaiṣṇava, kariha tānhāra sammāna*”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, *Madhya-līlā* (15.111)

One who chants the name of Kṛṣṇa³ even once is *vaiṣṇava* (possessed of *vaiṣṇava* qualities). Therefore, you should show all respect to him.

² The word *vaiṣṇava* is here being used as an adjective, as in “having *vaiṣṇava* qualities”, and the affixes *tara* and *tama* modify that adjective to the intensified and superlative degrees respectively.

³ In this article the term *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, or “the holy name of Kṛṣṇa”, refers to *śuddha-nāma* – as distinct from *nāma-aparādha* (offensive chanting of the holy name) and *nāma-ābhāsa* (a semblance of chanting the holy name). *Śuddha-nāma* is directly Kṛṣṇa Himself in the absolutely pure, transcendental form of His holy name.

One who is *vaiṣṇava-tara* –

*‘kṛṣṇa’-nāma nirantara yāñhāra vadane
sei se vaiṣṇavatara, bhaja tāñhāra caraṇe*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (16.72)

One who incessantly chants Kṛṣṇa’s name is *vaiṣṇava-tara* (possessed of *vaiṣṇava* qualities to a profound degree) and one should render service to his lotus feet.

One who is *vaiṣṇava-tama* –

*yāñhāra darśane mukhe āise kṛṣṇa-nāma
tāñhāre jāniha tumi ‘vaiṣṇava-pradhāna’*

*krama kari’ kahe prabhu ‘vaiṣṇava’-lakṣaṇa-
‘vaiṣṇava’, ‘vaiṣṇavatara’, āra ‘vaiṣṇavatama’*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (16.74–75)

One who inspires others to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* merely by being visible to them is *vaiṣṇava-tama* (possessed of *vaiṣṇava* qualities to the superlative degree) and is the topmost Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu thus explained the different grades of Vaiṣṇavas in sequence – those who are *vaiṣṇava*, those who are *vaiṣṇava-tara* and those who are *vaiṣṇava-tama* – in accordance with the symptoms they each exhibit.

According to these teachings of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, one who merely utters [absolutely pure] *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is eligible to be described as a Vaiṣṇava. Among the *kaniṣṭha bhaktas*, those who are described as *vaiṣṇava-prāya* (resembling Vaiṣṇavas), or else *vaiṣṇava-ābhāsa* (the semblance of a Vaiṣṇava) only chant *nāmābhāsa* (a semblance of the holy name). They do not chant *śuddha-nāma* (the absolutely pure holy name). However, those who are, in fact, able to chant *śuddha-nāma*, even once, have *vaiṣṇava* qualities and are *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas; those who incessantly chant *śuddha-nāma* are *vaiṣṇava-tara* (possessed of *vaiṣṇava* qualities to a profound degree); and those who cause others to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma* merely by being visible to them, are *vaiṣṇava-tama* (possessed of *vaiṣṇava* qualities to the superlative degree).

One who chants śuddha-kṛṣṇa-nāma even once is indeed a Vaiṣṇava & Dikṣā (initiation) is unnecessary in terms of the existential reality (tattva) of śrī nāma

At this point, one more thing needs to be considered. Becoming a *śuddha* Vaiṣṇava does not depend on the process of taking *dikṣā* (ceremonial initiation). *Dikṣā* is the process whereby a person receives a *mantra* for the worship of Śrī Hari’s deity form, and thus comes at least to the stage of *vaiṣṇava-prāya*.

In terms of the existential reality of the holy name (*nāma-tattva*), such *dikṣā* is unnecessary. As Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

*prabhu kahe,—“yāñra mukhe śuni eka-bāra
kṛṣṇa-nāma, sei pūjya,—śreṣṭha sabākāra”*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu answered, “He from whose mouth *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is heard even once is worshipful and is the best among human beings.

*eka kṛṣṇa-nāme kare sarva-pāpa kṣaya
nava-vidhā bhakti pūrṇa nāma haite haya*

“Even uttering Kṛṣṇa’s name a single time destroys all of one’s sins. The nine-fold process of devotional service (*navadhā-bhakti*) attains completeness only through *nāma*.

*dikṣā-puraścaryā-vidhi apekṣā nā kare
jihvā-sparśe ā-caṇḍāla sabāre uddhāre*

“One is not required to undergo the process of receiving *dikṣā* or any preparatory regulative rites in order to chant *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. Simply by coming in contact with the tongue, *kṛṣṇa-nāma* delivers everyone, including even the most degraded class of men.

*anuṣaṅga-phale kare saṁsārera kṣaya
citta ākarṣiyā karāya kṛṣṇe premodaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (15.106–109)

“As a secondary result of chanting *kṛṣṇa-nāma*, one’s material entanglement is terminated. The primary result is that the mind and heart of the chanter become uncontrollably drawn to Kṛṣṇa and finally *kṛṣṇa-prema* awakens in his heart.



“The day *kṛṣṇa-nāma* appears on someone’s tongue, even a single time, he will lose all taste for sinful activities.”

“*ataeva yāñra mukhe eka kṛṣṇa-nāma sei ta’ vaiṣṇava, kariha tāñhāra sammāna*”

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (15.111)

“One who even chants Kṛṣṇa’s name a single time is described as a Vaiṣṇava; therefore you should show him utmost respect.”

The Difference Between Śrī Nāma and Nāmābhāsa & Those who Chant Nāmābhāsa are not Vaiṣṇavas

The difference between *nāma* and *nāmābhāsa* is not the topic of our present deliberation. This shall be discussed specifically at another time. Herein, this much can be said: when *kṛṣṇa-nāma* is chanted with *śāstriya-śraddhā* (faith in scripture), that is, with unalloyed surrender, then it is [pure] *nāma*. When *nāma* is chanted with desires unrelated to making Kṛṣṇa happy (*anyābhilāṣitā*), or when it is eclipsed by *jñāna* (dry, impersonal knowledge), *karma* (reward-seeking action), *vairāgya* (renunciation born of aversion) and so forth, it is *nāmābhāsa*.

Although the chanting of *nāmābhāsa* can award any result, even up to emancipation from the material energy (*muktī*), the Vaiṣṇava only chants *śuddha-nāma* and is never inclined to chant any form of *nāmābhāsa*.

When *nāma* is chanted by one who has knowledge of His actual *svarūpa*, who understands that *nāma* and *nāmī* (the name and the named) are non-different, and who has realized that *nāma* only makes His appearance upon the pure transcendental senses of the *jīva*, only then is it [pure] *nāma*.

When that *nāma* appears on someone’s tongue, even once, he becomes a Vaiṣṇava. By the time *nāma* appears, all of one’s fructified (*prārabdha*) and unfructified (*aprārabdha*) sins are destroyed. And along with the awakening of such *nāma* comes love of Godhead.

The Vaiṣṇava who chants *śuddha-nāma* is endowed with all good qualities, is free of sins and has no interest in pious or impious activities

A Vaiṣṇava is naturally endowed with all good characteristics and is devoid of all vice. It is stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*sarva mahā-guṇa-gaṇa vaiṣṇava-śarīre
kṛṣṇa-bhakte kṛṣṇera guṇa sakali sañcāre*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.75)

“All exalted virtues reside in the body of a Vaiṣṇava. All the transcendental qualities of Kṛṣṇa are transmitted to His *bhakta*.

*vidhi-dharma chāḍi' bhaje kṛṣṇera caraṇa
niṣiddha pāpācāre tāra kabhu nahe mana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.142)

A Vaiṣṇava exclusively worships Śrī Kṛṣṇa's lotus feet, so even though he casts aside the regulative principles and conduct prescribed for the discharge of *varṇāśrama-dharma* (righteous societal duty), his mind is never tainted by the inclination to engage in prohibited, sinful activities.

*ajñāne vā haya yadi 'pāpa' upasthita
kṛṣṇa tānre śuddha kare, nā karāya prāyaścitta*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.143)

If, however, a Vaiṣṇava somehow unknowingly becomes implicated in sinful activity, Kṛṣṇa does not make him undergo the ordained method of atonement, but personally purifies him instead.

*jñāna-vairāgyādi—bhaktira kabhu nahe 'aṅga'
ahimsā-yama-niyamādi bule kṛṣṇa-bhakta-saṅga*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.145)

Never mistake the cultivation of knowledge and renunciation as limbs of *bhakti* in their own right, for all good qualities such as gentleness, control over the mind and senses, and appropriate renunciation automatically accompany the *kṛṣṇa-bhaktas*.

*asat-saṅga-tyāga,—ei vaiṣṇava-ācāra
'stri-saṅgi'—eka asādhu, 'kṛṣṇābhakta' āra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.87)

To discard the company of those who diminish one's resolve in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* (*asat-saṅga*) is truly the natural conduct of a Vaiṣṇava. And the most detrimental association of all is those who enjoy the company of women and the non-devotees.

The day *kṛṣṇa-nāma* appears on someone's tongue, even a single time, he will lose all taste for sinful activities. What to speak of taste for sinful activities, he will even lose interest in pious activities.

All three classifications of Vaiṣṇavas – namely those who are *vaiṣṇava*, those who are *vaiṣṇava-tara* and those who are *vaiṣṇava-tama* – are devoid of any form of material contamination, flawless and without sin.

If it is observed, however, that a person is actually inclined toward sinful activities, then he is not to be counted among the Vaiṣṇavas. Even the *kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas*⁴ have no inclination for pious or impious activities.

Wicked people see faults in a Vaiṣṇava in three ways

Pure Vaiṣṇavas have no faults and are therefore above criticism. But those who do criticize them just blame them and vilify them wrongly. Such wicked persons hatefully criticize the Vaiṣṇavas in the following three ways:

- (1) They criticize all the faults that existed in a person before *śuddha-bhakti* manifested in him. In actual fact, as soon as *bhakti* appears in one's heart, all of one's faults begin to quickly disappear.
- (2) During the period of time in which any untoward propensities are being destroyed within the Vaiṣṇava's heart, wicked people take the opportunity to criticize him for any faults that may still remain in him.
- (3) Although an exalted Vaiṣṇava is never inclined toward faulty behaviour, sometimes, due to divine providence, some unwarranted conduct may be observed in him. Though such faulty behaviour can never remain a permanent habit in the Vaiṣṇava, wicked people still criticize him for it.

In this way, these heartless people lead themselves to their own doom by committing the wicked deed of blaspheming a Vaiṣṇava. Therefore, in the book *Nāma-tattva-ratnāmala*, it is said:

*prāg bhakterudyāddoṣaḥ kṣayāvaśiṣṭa eva ca
daivotpannaśca bhaktānām naivālocyaḥ kadācana
saduddeśyamṛte yastu mṛṣāpavādameva ca
doṣānālocayatyeva sa sādhu-nindākoḥadhamah*

One should never reflect upon the faults of a *bhakta* – namely, those that were present in him before *bhakti* awakened in him, those that temporarily remain

.....
⁴ Also known as *vaiṣṇava-prāya*.



during the time when his heart is purified through his practice of *bhakti*, and those that may appear in him accidentally due to providence. One who reflects upon any of these faults, not with a good-hearted purpose but rather with slanderous intent, is a blasphemer of saints and is extremely degraded.

Criticism of a Vaiṣṇava's previous faults is abominable

O readers, any faults that were present in a Vaiṣṇava before the onset of *bhakti* should never be reflected upon, unless there is some good-hearted purpose in doing so. A Vaiṣṇava should not be criticized for the insignificant remnants of his previous faults. This is why Śrī Kṛṣṇa has said in *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30–31):

*api cet sudurācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāḥ
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ
kṣīpraṁ bhavati dharmātmā
śāśvac-chāntīm nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi
na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*

Even a man of abominable character who engages in loving service performed with one-pointed dedication (*ananya-bhajana*) to Me is still to be considered a saint due to being rightly situated in *bhakti*. He quickly becomes virtuous and attains eternal peace. O Kaunteya, declare it boldly that My *bhakta* never perishes.

“If one commits *nāma-aparādha*, a *sphūrṭi* (divine revelation) of *nāma* will never take place, and without such *sphūrṭis* it is not possible to become a Vaiṣṇava.”

It is offensive to criticize a Vaiṣṇava for his waning faults or for any fault that appears by providence

By the influence of *bhakti* all the extremely abominable kinds of behaviour that may have existed in one's heart before the awakening of *bhakti* and have gradually become one's acquired nature (*nisarga*) diminish day by day and are finally destroyed within a very short time. Therefore, criticizing a Vaiṣṇava without a virtuous motive, because of the presence of such waning faults, results in *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. Even if one observes some accidental fault in a Vaiṣṇava that occurs due to divine providence, one should still not criticize him. In this context, Sage Karabhājana has said:

*sva-pāda-mūlam bhajataḥ priyasya
tyaktāny abhāvasya hariḥ pareśaḥ
vikarma yac cotpatitam kathañcid
dhunoti sarvaṁ hr̥di sanniviṣṭaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.5.42)

That person who engages in exclusive *bhajana* of the lotus feet of Śrī Bhagavān, having left all else, is most dear to Him. Even if the tendency to engage in some sinful, forbidden act somehow appears in his heart, Parameśvara Śrī Hari, who resides directly within his heart, not only destroys those tendencies but also removes any reaction that would have come as a result of having committed some sin.

The underlying principle is that wrongly blaming and criticizing a Vaiṣṇava for any of the faults just mentioned, which fit into three categories, leads to *nāma-aparādha*, offences against the holy name. If one commits *nāma-*

aparādha, a *sphūrti* (divine revelation) of *nāma* will never take place, and without such *sphūrtis* it is not possible to become a Vaiṣṇava.

The faults of others can be deliberated upon if one has a virtuous motive

At this point, an opposing argument may arise: would it be appropriate to deliberate on a fault found in a Vaiṣṇava that is not counted among the three types of faults just mentioned? The answer is that no fault other than these three types can exist in a Vaiṣṇava. If someone has faults that do not fit into one of these three types, then, according to the revealed scriptures, they cannot be called Vaiṣṇavas.

We should consider that, without the right motive, it is inappropriate to reflect, even impartially, upon the faults of any living being, what to speak of Vaiṣṇavas. To blaspheme Vaiṣṇavas is an offence, but even blaspheming other *jīvas* is a sin. Vaiṣṇavas have no interest in performing such a sinful act.

However, provided one has the right motive, the scriptures have not condemned a careful critique of someone's faults.

Proper motive is of three types: desiring the welfare of the person criticized, desiring the welfare of the world and desiring one's own welfare

There are three types of proper motive:

- (1) If the intention in analyzing someone's sins is to ensure that he attains his ultimate welfare, then such reflection is auspicious.
- (2) If the motive behind reflecting on someone's sins is to benefit the whole world, then this is to be counted as an auspicious act.
- (3) If such reflection is undertaken for one's own spiritual welfare, then it too, is auspicious. There is no fault in such reflection.

When one reflects upon the historical accounts of personalities like Vālmiki or Jagāi and Mādhāi in light of one or more of these three virtuous motives, then such reflection is never the cause of incurring sin. When a disciple humbly asks his spiritual master to instruct him on how to identify a Vaiṣṇava, the spiritual master, desiring the welfare of his disciple and of the whole world, explains that those who exhibit unholy behaviour

are non-Vaiṣṇavas. He thus points out how to identify true Vaiṣṇavas through antithesis.

With the motive of encouraging one to accept the shelter of the lotus feet of a true Vaiṣṇava by abandoning false, so-called preachers of religion, one neither risks committing blasphemy of saints (*sādhu-nindā*) nor *vaiṣṇava-aparādha* (offence to Vaiṣṇavas). In such cases, even criticism directed at a specific person is free from fault. These are all examples of criticizing with the proper motive.

To Abandon Bad Association and to Accept Association of Devotees

O readers, you must all contemplate this profound subject with the utmost care. As an irrevocably established principle, you must offer all respect to true Vaiṣṇavas and invariably abandon the association of non-devotees. If one criticizes the true Vaiṣṇavas, the existential reality of the holy name will not manifest in one's heart. Thus the instruction has been given in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (11.26.27):

*tato duḥsaṅgam utsṛjya satsu sajjeta buddhimān
santa evāsyā chindanti mano-vyāsaṅgam uktibhiḥ*

For all these reasons, intelligent people reject detrimental association and associate instead with saintly persons. This is because saintly personalities, with their powerful and virtuous instructions, cut unholy, material attachments from the heart and thus dispel all the distress they cause.

It is only possible for a madhyama-adhikārī to serve saintly persons & unrighteous activity is corrupting

You should not think that by serving a non-devotee, considering him to be a saint, you will get the benefit of serving a true saint. The reason the *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava, as mentioned before, is the only one who is able to truly serve saints, is because the *kaniṣṭha* Vaiṣṇava (neophyte) is not yet inclined toward serving saints, while the *uttama* Vaiṣṇava (topmost Vaiṣṇava) does not see the difference between a saintly man and an unsaintly one.

O readers! You are *madhyama* Vaiṣṇavas, and are therefore duty-bound to search out and identify a saint and then befriend him. It is also your duty to shower

mercy upon those who are non-devotees, or in some cases, neglect them. You will be at fault if you abandon your own *adhikāra* (rightful position). The instruction of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* in regard to vice and virtue is this:

*sve sve'dhikāre yā niṣṭhā
sa guṇaḥ parikīrtitaḥ
viparyayas tu doṣaḥ syād
ubhayor eṣa niścayaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.21.2)

Steadfastness in carrying out the duties of one's own, rightful position is declared to be a good quality, whereas deviation from the duties of one's position is considered a fault. In this way, the two are clearly ascertained.


Even if you unintentionally fall into bad association, you will become an offender to *bhakti*. As said in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (3.23.55):

*saṅgo yaḥ saṁsṛter hetur asatsu vihito'dhiyā
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto niḥsaṅgatvāya kalpate*

Even if someone falls into ungodly association due to his ignorance, such association still leads to degradation. But in the same way, even if someone finds himself in the association of saintly persons accidentally, such saintly association very easily leads him away from bad association and cuts his worldly attachment.

The *uttama-bhaktas'* glory of seeing everyone as saints is proclaimed in holy books such as *Bhakta-māla* and *Prapannāmṛta*. However, such conduct should never be imitated by a *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava. For a *madhyama* Vaiṣṇava, such behaviour would lead to the fault known as *an-adhikāra-ceṣṭā* – not acting in accordance with one's eligibility, or position – and he would rapidly become degraded as a consequence.

May the *śuddha-bhaktas* mercifully deem our discussion of all these subjects to have been properly motivated.

 Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*, Year 7, Issue 10

*The following discourse was delivered
by Jagad-guru Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta
Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda in the
Sārasvata assembly hall of Śrī Gauḍīya
Maṭha, on Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī evening,
September 19, 1931.*

There is one person whose name is never mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And yet *Bhāgavatam*'s steadfast readers constantly nurture the ardent hope of becoming that person's devout, one-pointed servant. May that person, who means everything to Śrī Bhagavān, kindly destroy our false ego in all its various forms and bestow upon us the shelter of Her lotus feet.

Today is the day of Her advent.

That personification of grand benevolence, having collected all varieties of graces from Śrī Bhagavān to bestow as gifts upon all beings, is eternally the foremost of the benevolent. May She descend within our hearts and make Her appearance there, and may Her advent be the concern of our worship.

His All in All

It is common for us to hear that the entire earth is sustained by the entity known as Govinda. Many

people speak in these terms. Yet there is one whom Govinda Himself esteems as His all in all, His *sarvasva*. And without the guidance of that entity, we cannot realize what it actually means that She is His everything, His *sarva*.

The word *sva* means "one's own", but it can also mean "one's treasure" or "one's affluence". One who is Govinda's own, or one who is the affluence of Govinda, is Govinda's entire fortune. The treasure that makes Govinda wealthy is naturally the very essence of His all in all – His *sarvasva-vastu*. We can only know the true meaning of loving worship when we make Her – Govinda's *sarvasva-vastu* – the object of our own loving worship.

The Devotees' Only Cherishable Hope

All the scriptures loudly sing that the form of divinity, the personality of Godhead, is the actual object of worship. Other than Him, no one can be worthy of the word *ārādhyā* (the object of loving adoration). Due to being covered by ignorance for the time being, we have given up our loving quest to find Him and have cheated ourselves out of attaining

love for Him. The very moment that we became covered by ignorance,

Translated into English for the first time

Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī

THE DAY OF HER ADVENT

Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda





“The attainment of pure love of God (*prema*) is the sole purpose of all worship. Thoroughly grasping this truth, we shall live by the ardent hope that one day we will be counted among Her entourage. Otherwise, it is preferable to die thousands of times.”

*anarthas*¹ emerged, which led us to mistakenly perceive Him, the Supreme Lord, as some other entity. Our ultimate goal is to attain *artha* (meaningfulness), the antithesis of which lays in *anarthas*. If we do not take up a service attitude and pursue those goals, or perfections, available to us, which are most meaningful to us and dear to our hearts, and if we do not gain an understanding of the principles of service, then, swayed by our own arrogance and ego, we shall end up serving something other than He who is truly meant to be served.

The attainment of pure love of God (*prema*) is the sole purpose of all worship. Thoroughly grasping this truth, we shall live by the ardent hope that one day we will be counted among Her entourage. Otherwise, it is preferable to die thousands of times.

*āśā-bharair amṛta-sindhu-mayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo-mayātigamitāḥ kila sāmpratāni hi
tvañ cet kṛpāni mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiñ me
prāṇair-vrajena ca varoru bakāriṇāpi*

Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī (102)

O *devī* with graceful thighs, now, burdened by hopes of serving You, a hope which is itself an ocean of immortal nectar, I am somehow passing my time with great difficulty, as I wait anxiously. If You will not give me Your mercy then what use to me is my own life's breath? What use to me is being in Vraja? What use to me even is Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who defeated the hideous crane demon, Bakāsura?!

*hā nātha gokula-sudhākara su-prasanna-
vaktrāravinda madhura-smita he kṛpārdra
yatra twayā viharate praṇayaiḥ priyārāt
tatraiva mām api naya priya-sevanāya*

Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjalī (100)

He Nātha, fulfiller of Your devotees' cherished desires! He Gokula-sudhākara, moon of Gokula, who distributes cooling nectar to all the Vrajavāsīs. He Su-prasanna; He Vaktrāravinda. Your face, like a blooming lotus flower, is always cheerful as You grant all of Your devotees' most cherished wishes! He Madhura-smita, You whose smile is so sweet and gentle! He Kṛpārdra, whose heart is melting from

¹ *Anartha* – literally “unmeaningful” or “of no value”; an unwanted or meaningless object or condition.

compassion! Please take me to that place where You and Your beloved Śrīmatī Rādhikā taste pastimes of overwhelming love for each other and let me intimately serve the two of You there.

That hope, the devotees' only cherishable hope, is an ocean of life-giving ambrosia. When will that hope bear fruit? I feel it is essential to sustain my life because of the hope that, some day, I will be counted among Her entourage. But alas, since our eagerness is not increasing, we are not fully realizing our hopes; we are not obtaining that which we have ardently been hoping for. If our hopes are not fulfilled this very day, if Śrī Govinda's beloved, His all in all, does not descend within our hearts and make Her appearance there this very day, then we have been deceived and we shall not be able to find anyone more unfortunate than ourselves throughout all history. If we are cheated out of serving that person whose grace will grant us all that we may ever achieve – including our place within Bhagavān's own holy abode, and our connection to all things related to Him – and if we cannot comprehend Her true identity or discover Her presence in the 18,000 verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, then our study of the *Bhāgavata* has been worthless.

The perfection of loving worship exists solely in Her

Being intimately knowledgeable about Her identity, Śrī Gaurasundara spoke to us about *unnata-ujjala-rasa*². He enumerated the many methods of serving Bhagavān and instructed us in the process of serving Him purely, without the adulteration of any extraneous moods. It is only because He spoke to us about such matters that we can comprehend the existence of such a thing as *ujjala-rasa*. And on account of this, we can indirectly comprehend the unpleasantness of its antithesis: the bleak, mundane *rasa*, with its utterly lacklustre sentiments.

In how many ways has Śrī Bhagavān personally offered us intimate knowledge of Himself just to make us relish transcendental service to Him? Yet it is essential that we wholly understand that person who has rendered such immense service to Śrī Bhagavān that He has made

.....
² The highest (*unnata*) mode of pure loving service to Bhagavān; the blazingly effulgent (*ujjala*) paramour love conceived of by the *vraja-gopīs*; *madhura-rasa* (unwedded conjugal love of God).

Her the object of His own service. Those who adoringly sing about Her can bestow upon us the qualification to serve Her; they alone can awaken *anurāga* (inexhaustible, ardent affection) for Her lotus feet in the core of our being. The intelligence and strength to serve Her is attained by keeping company with Her dear confidantes, who are in Her *ānugatya* (guardianship, or tutelage). By such company we can realize that service to Her is the highest purpose in existence.

As soon as we can come to understand, in light of the teachings of the *mahājanas*, that She is Śrī Bhagavān's everything, we shall proceed to serve Her, knowing that the perfection and prosperity of loving worship exists solely in Her. If we engage in serving Her from this day forth, the day of Her advent, then we shall become qualified to reach the summit of auspiciousness.

Surely, all of us do not pray for that ultimate auspiciousness, but if by some unknown *sukṛti* (blessed activity) we get the association of one of the confidantes of Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī, She who is the embodiment and origin of supreme auspiciousness, and if we are truly granted the fortune of hearing genuinely sublime narrations about Her, then we, too, may develop the inspiration to follow the path of that ultimate auspiciousness.

But if we engage in self-deception by depriving ourselves of service to that person who means everything to *akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*³ Śrī Nanda-nandana, and service to Her faithful followers, who are Her dear confidantes, we can never attain the eligibility to serve Śrī Govinda.

The Secret

To understand Her identity, we believe that it is essential to first know Her name. Yet, while studying *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* we find no apparent mention of Her name anywhere. We only discover descriptions of Her form and beauty, praise of Her qualities, and accounts of the speciality of Her companions and Her pastimes. In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we find everything about the dearest beloved of Govinda but Her name, as though it has not been mentioned there at all. Yet, in the verses of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we discover something:

.....
³ The condensed form of the entirety of all transcendent humours.



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“In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, we find everything about the dearest beloved of Govinda but Her name, as though it has not been mentioned there at all.”

*jñānam parama-guhyam me
yad vijñāna-samanvitam
sarahasyam tad-aṅgaṁ ca
grhāṇa gaditam mayā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.30⁴)

Śrī Bhagavān said: O Brahmā, knowledge of Me (*jñāna*) is the subject matter established in the revealed scriptures. Such knowledge is verily founded upon realization (*vijñāna*) of My *svarūpa* (intrinsic form) and also upon that esoteric secret (*rahasya*), *prema-bhakti*. Both are highly confidential. I am revealing all of this to you, and I am also revealing to you knowledge of *sādhana-bhakti*, which is the preliminary branch (*aṅga*) of *prema-bhakti*. Embrace all of this knowledge, and assimilate it with care.

*kālena naṣṭā pralaye
vāñīyam veda-samjñitā
mayādau brahmaṇe proktā
dharmo yasyām mad-ātmakaḥ*

*tena proktā sva-putrāya
manave pūrva-jāya sā
tato bhṛgu-ādayo 'grhṇan
sapta brahma-maharṣayaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.14.3–4)

Śrī Bhagavān said: The divine message of the Vedas, which describe *dharmā* related to Me, disappeared after the cosmic annihilation due to the passage of time. At the beginning of the next creation, I personally imparted that knowledge to Brahmā.

In turn, Śrī Brahmā instructed this Vedic knowledge to his firstborn son, Manu, and thereafter the seven *brahma-ṛṣis* headed by Bhṛgu Muni accepted the same.

Śrī Bhagavān explained all these matters to the first created being, Brahmā, but over time the people of this world forgot His message, because the collective currents of their thoughts were naturally subjected to the effects of degeneration, dissolution and so forth.

⁴ In the BBT edition of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Verse 12 of this chapter has been treated as a separate verse. Consequently, this verse appears as 2.9.31 in that edition.

*jñānaṁ parama-guhyam me
yad vijñāna-samanvitam
sarahasyam tad-aṅgaṁ ca
grhāṇa gaditam mayā*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (2.9.30)

Now, as I speak to you, hear My words and assimilate them. Knowledge of Me is highly confidential. It is knowledge fully grounded in realization, knowledge that is interwoven with secrets and therefore is itself an extremely intimate secret. The scriptural definition of the word *rahasya* is *rahasi sthitaḥ* – that which is situated in secrecy. Neither these secrets (*rahasya*) nor anything branching from them (*aṅga*) can be grasped through observation of some supposed objective reality.⁵ Swept away by the currents of thought that dominate the external world, we have forgotten the essentiality of taking shelter at the feet of one who has true knowledge of the soul. Nothing else is so essential. Śrī Bhagavān remains in a state of perpetual readiness to reawaken this knowledge.

Śrī Bhagavān said to Brahmā:

“Now, as I speak to you, carefully listen to My words and accept them in your heart. No one is qualified to hear or embrace this message without My grace. Only by My mercy shall those who hear and learn about Me gain this secret knowledge. What am I? What is My form (*rūpa*)? What is My intrinsic nature (*svarūpa*)? What are My qualities (*guṇa*)? What are the specialities of My associates? What pastimes do I perform (*līlā*)?”

“The stage of absorption in My transcendental pastimes, which are saturated with *rasa*, far surpasses the stage of absorption in ordinary mundane sentiments. There is no other way to know all this but through the potency of My mercy.

“I am the foundation of all divine qualities. I am not speaking about qualities that are adulterated by passion and ignorance, but rather of those qualities that are the existential, causal basis of creating, sustaining and destroying the cosmos. Since I am

distinguished by these qualities and since I am the instrumental cause of all effects, I am the original, fundamental entity. This can be known only by attaining My grace.”

Therefore, Śrī Bhagavān has used the word *mad-anugrahaḥ* – My grace, or favour.

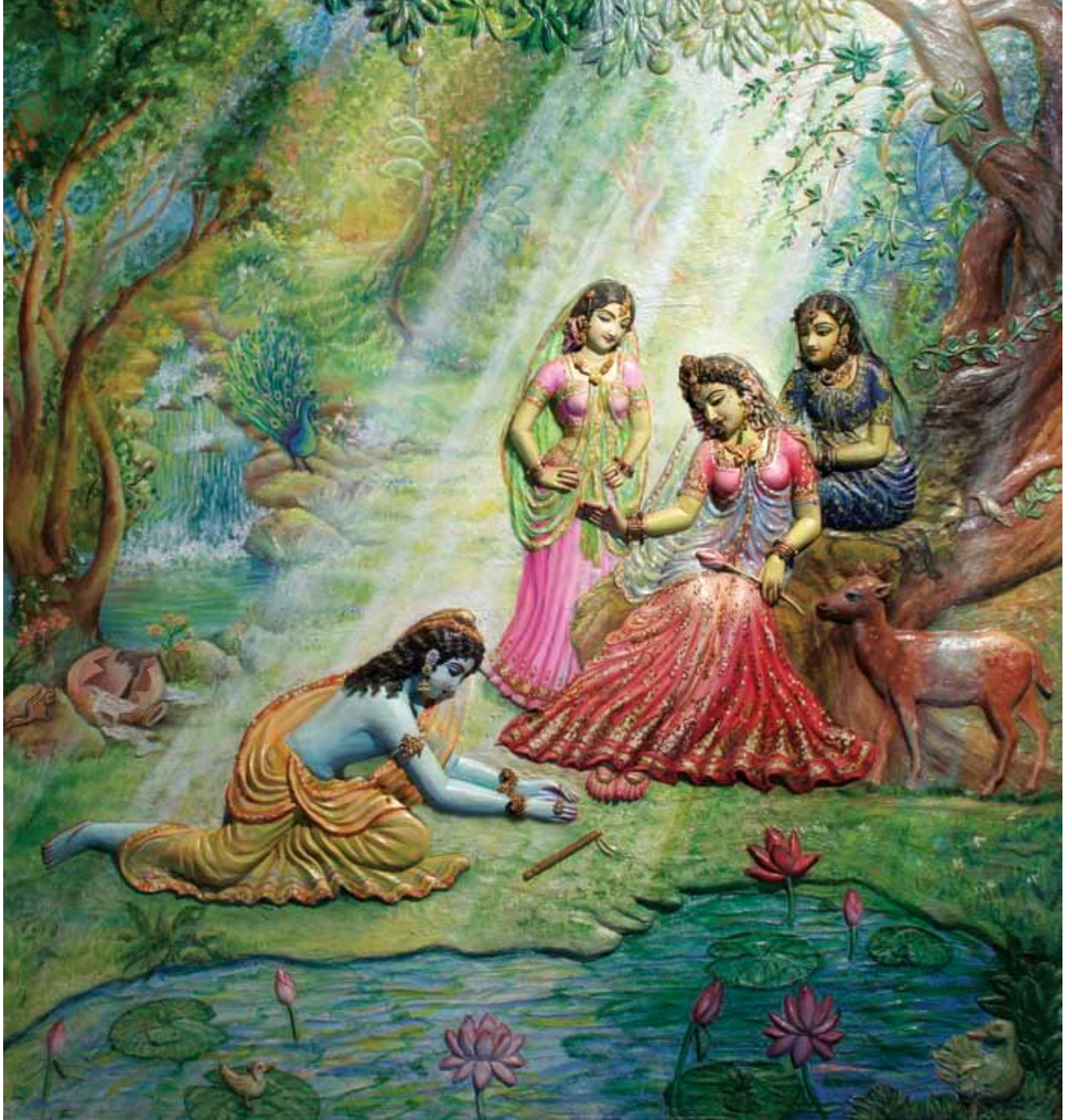
Information about Śrī Bhagavān’s *aṅga* aspect – namely, *sādhana-bhakti*; information about His *rahasya* aspect – namely that most esoteric secret, *prema-bhakti*; information about His *vijñāna* aspect – particularly that realized knowledge which is saturated with sublime consciousness; and information of His personal splendour, which includes His abode, eternal associates and expansions (*tad-rupa-vaibhava*), are all supremely confidential, non-dual knowledge (*advaya-jñāna*). That eternal, highly confidential knowledge can only be attained by the mercy of Śrī Bhagavān. It is never revealed otherwise, for any reason. This secret knowledge is disclosed at the beginning of the four core verses (*catuḥ ślokī*) of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We are fortunate that Śrī Gaurasundara has revealed this mystery to the world, as though unlocking a treasure chest.

The secret should not be revealed to impersonalists

A secret (*rahasya*) has been mentioned, an account of it given, but the name of the person about whom this secret is concerned has not been disclosed. Since that name is a secret, it should not be disclosed to those subscribing to schools of ignorant thought, and has not therefore, been openly revealed. After hearing the pastimes of Śrī Nandananda told in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, these ignorant people, what to speak of gaining any faith, discard all accounts of the Lord’s pastimes and just contemplate the impersonal feature of the Absolute, which is in line with their mundane conception. And some of them deem it sensible to merge their very selves with that impersonal reality. Without hearing from a genuine, bona fide source, people’s perception of reality suffers from this form of distorted vision. Due to their immense aversion towards serving the Lord, they can never comprehend the intrinsic nature of *bhagavad-bhakti*.

But, in our own hearts, which are radiant with pure, existential goodness (*sattva*), the day of *rasa-mayī* Parameśvarī’s advent has arrived in the course of

⁵ *Rahasya* here refers to *prema-bhakti* (pure, loving devotion), and its *aṅga*, or limb, is *sādhana-bhakti* (the practices employed to ultimately attain pure, loving devotion).



“When will I relish that most wonderful festival of attachment to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā by keeping that most supreme ambition of serving them, in the core of my heart?”

the sun’s orbit. The roaming sun is today revealing the appearance of that Supreme Goddess. Hence, for us, the sun-god, too, is showing us supreme favour by unveiling the arrival of the secret at hand. Our duty now is to submit ourselves to someone who has knowledge of that secret. A poet by the name Manohara Dāsa has said:

*rādhā-pada-paṅkaja bhakata ki āśā
dāsa manohara kara ta 'piyāsā*

The *bhaktas*' ardent wish is that they may someday serve Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet. This is also Dāsa Manohara's only aspiration.

Kṛṣṇa is bound by Vārṣabhānavī's prema

The single most cherished aspiration of the topmost devotees is to serve the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā:

*śrī rādhā-pada-dāsyam-eva
paramābhīṣṭam hṛdā dhārayan
karhi syāmi tad-anugraheṇa
paramādbhutānurāgotsavaḥ*

Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhānidhi (259)

When will I relish that most wonderful festival of attachment to the lotus feet of Śrī Rādhā by keeping that most supreme ambition of serving them, in the core of my heart?

In an *aṣṭa-paḍī*⁶, Śrī Jayadeva has said:

*kaṁsārīr-āpi saṁsāra-
vāsanā-bandha śṛṅkhalām
rādhām ādhāya hṛdaye
tatyāja vraja-sundarīḥ*

Śrī Gīta-govinda (7.1)

Even though Kṛṣṇa is the one who causes everyone's happiness to swell, and even though He is the Supreme hero who was destined to conquer evil King Kaṁsa, His heart had been bound with the fetters of Śrīmatī Rādhikā's love. Since, within His heart, He was always absorbed in Rādhikā's *prema*, which is the quintessence of *madhura-rasa*, He naturally abandoned all the countless other beautiful *vraja-devīs*.

At the *rāsa-sthalī* (the place of the *rāsa* dance), all the *gopīs* are present with Gopīnātha, who is engrossed in *rāsa*-laden pastimes with them. When the daughter of Vārṣabhānu Mahārāja, Vārṣabhānavī Śrī Rādhā, arrived there, She saw that countless *gopīs* were immersed in serving Bhagavān by dancing with Him in a circle. Reproaching that sight within Her mind, She thought, "Today My Kṛṣṇa is in the hands of others and My own confidantes are busy enjoying themselves!" To effect a feeling of separation (*vipralambha-bhāva*), which actually nourishes the thrill of meeting (*sambhoga-rasa*), Vārṣabhānavī ran away from the *rāsa-sthalī* instead of entering it and joining the *rāsa*-dance.

⁶ A song composed of eight stanzas. *Gīta-govinda* consists of twenty-four *aṣṭa-paḍīs*.

Remain proudly in Her ānugatya

It is at this point that Śrī Jayadeva has written:

"Kṛṣṇa, the enemy of Kaṁsa, suddenly broke away from the *rāsa-sthalī*. Rādhā is likened to a chain that binds Śrī Kṛṣṇa in intense desires to relish the essence of Her love. With thoughts of that Śrī Rādhā weighing deeply on His heart, Kṛṣṇa deserted all the other beautiful *vraja-devīs* and went to search for Her, unaccompanied by anyone else."

When someone abandons the *ānugatya* (guardianship, or tutelage) of Rādhikā, any skill he may display in gratifying Kṛṣṇa's senses is not actually faithful to the true propensity of his soul: exclusive devoutness to serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Although all the *gopīs* are direct manifestations (*kāya-vyūha*) of Rādhikā, it is particularly those confidantes of Kṛṣṇa's *sarvasva*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā who, while remaining proudly in Her *ānugatya*, can provide Kṛṣṇa the utmost delight.

*śrīmān rāsa-rasārambhī
vaṁśī-vaṭa-taṭa-sthitaḥ
karṣan veṇu-svanair gopīr-
gopīnāthaḥ śrīye 'stu naḥ*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (1.17)

Śrīman Gopīnātha, who stands at the base of Vaṁśī-vaṭa and who orchestrates the loving emotions (*rāsa*) that arise during the *rāsa*-dance, attracts all the *gopīs* by the sweet sound of His flute, drawing them to His side. May He bless us with all auspiciousness.

Contemplating enjoying *sambhoga*, that is, contemplating enjoying the company of Śrī Govinda without being in the *ānugatya* of She who means everything to Him, is something we shall never do. To shed light on this matter, Śrī Jayadeva Gosvāmī, the author of the *aṣṭa-paḍī*, reveals something that supplements the description in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He says, "*tatyāja-vraja-sundarīḥ* – abandoning the beautiful *vraja-devīs*..." Kṛṣṇa abandoned the *gopīs* even as they danced with Him during the *rāsa-līlā*. He left them all to find Śrīmatī Rādhikā, while carrying Her in the deepest chamber of His heart. The binding chains of love of the other *gopīs* are faint, feeble and vulnerable when compared to the chains of Vārṣabhānavī's love, which are immensely and profoundly powerful.



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“Śrī Rādhikā is the abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s intense love (*praṇaya*). Amidst His other beloveds, She is foremost and dear-most in every respect.”

After Śrī Kṛṣṇa had left them, all the *gopīs* took shelter of Vṛṣabhānu-nandini’s *adhirūḍa-mahābhāva*⁷. Overwhelmed by emotions such as *mohana*⁸ and *mādana*⁹, they set out in search of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They all understood that without taking shelter at the feet of *govinda-sarvasva* Śrī Vārṣabhānavī, *madhura-rasa* can never find complete nourishment.

All moods and expressions of love with which the *gopīs* perform their services exist simultaneously in Śrī Vārṣabhānavī, and only in Her do such moods of love exist in their entirety and perfection. Therefore, abandoning all the other *gopīs*, who were each absorbed in one of the eight moods of a heroine, such as the feeling of separation from her lover (*proṣita-bhartṛkā*), Kṛṣṇa left the *rāsa* dance, forcefully drawn by Śrī Vārṣabhānavī’s power of attraction, for She alone possesses all these *bhāvas* to their full extent. As such, He set out in search of She who verily attracts the all-attractive being.

The *gopīs* are expansions of Rādhikā. Because they are eternally the fractional portion (*aiṅsa*) of She who is the originating and complete whole (*aiṅsinī*), they could not bind Kṛṣṇa, for He is solely Her property. Rādhikā thus extracted Kṛṣṇa, He who attracts everyone, from the *rāsa*-dance.

These topics can only be fathomed by someone if the innate faculties of his soul (*ātma-vṛtti*) have already awakened to the taste of divine amour (*madhura-rati*). Yet still, if someone’s heart is the seat of intense parental love (*vatsalya-rasā*), then they, too, can understand the

7 The final limit of *mahābhāva* is known as *adhirūḍa-bhāva*. It is the very essence of Kṛṣṇa’s pleasure-giving potency and it is characterized by the feeling that each moment is like a day of Brahmā (billions of years) when one is separated from Kṛṣṇa, and that an entire day of Brahmā is like a moment when one is meeting Him.

8 The exalted state of *prema* known as *mohana* manifests in Śrī Rādhā at the time of Her separation from Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this state, She experiences extreme anguish due to Her longing to meet with Him.

9 The exalted state of *prema* known as *mādana*, or *mādanākhyā-mahābhāva*, is eternally and splendidly manifest in Śrī Rādhā, to the exclusion of all others. It is the highest stage of *mahābhāva* and only arises at the time of Śrī Rādhā’s meeting with Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It never arises in any other *gopī*, including Lalitā and the other principle *sakhīs*.

sweetness and beauty of the pastimes of She who is the complete whole.

The Glory of Her Ānugatya

The *gopīs* came to the place where the *rāsa* dance was to take place, attracted by Kṛṣṇa and pulled to Him by the sweet melodies of His flute. Then, when Śrī Vārṣabhānavī, the embodiment of divine amour (*madhura-rati*) in its fullest form, desired to serve Śrī Nanda-nandana Gopinātha Rādhā-ramaṇa, the object of our service, He abandoned the less extraordinary attraction of all the other *gopīs* and became a victim of Śrī Vārṣabhānavī's charm. The most attractive being became helplessly attracted. Therefore, when liberated souls gain the qualification required to fathom Rādhikā's position, they understand the following:

*karmibhyaḥ parito hareḥ
pṛiyatayā vyaktim yayur jñāninas
tebhyo jñāna-vimukta-bhakti-paramāḥ
premaika-niṣṭhās tataḥ
tebhyas taḥ paśu-pāla-paṅkaja-
dṛśas tābhyo 'pi sā rādhikā
preṣṭhā tadvad iyaṁ tadīya-sarasī tām
nāśrayet kāḥ kṛtī*

Śrī Upadeśāmṛta (10)

One who selflessly performs virtuous acts in accordance with the path of *karma-yoga* is superior to those who merely seek to fulfil their selfish desires. The *brahma-jñānīs*, who by dint of their spiritual knowledge are transcendental to the three modes of material nature, are more dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than those pious followers of the *karma* path, who are forever occupied in performing virtuous deeds. More dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than the *brahma-jñānīs* are His devotees like Sanaka, who have abandoned the pursuit of knowledge and who consider *bhakti* alone to be the best path. But pure devotees like Nārada, who are resolutely fixed in *prema* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, are even more dear to Him than all such devotees. And yet the lotus-eyed *vraja-gopīs*, whose very lives belong solely to Kṛṣṇa, are even more beloved to Him than all such loving (*premi*) devotees like Nārada. Amongst all those beloved *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is more dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa than His own life, and in precisely the same way, He dearly loves Her pond, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa. Therefore, what highly

fortunate, spiritually intelligent person would not reside on the banks of Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa in a state of transcendental consciousness, performing *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's eightfold daily pastimes?

*kṛṣṇasyoccaiḥ praṇaya-vasatiḥ
preyāsibhyo 'pi rādhā
kuṇḍam cāsyā munibhir abhitas
tādṛg eva vyadhāyi
yat preṣṭhair apy alam asulabham
kim punar bhakti-bhājām
tat premedam sakṛd api sarāḥ
snātur āviṣkaroti*

Śrī Upadeśāmṛta (11)

After thorough deliberation on the matter, the sages have unanimously declared (in the *Padma-purāṇa*) that just as amongst all the *gopīs*, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is the foremost object of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's great love, in precisely the same way this pond of Hers is also the topmost object of His love. Upon one who simply bathes in its waters just once with great devotion, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa bestows that rare treasure of *gopī-prema*, which is so immensely difficult to attain even for such dear devotees of Bhagavān as Nārada – what to speak of ordinary *sādhakas*.

Śrī Rādhikā is the abode of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's intense love (*praṇaya*). Amidst His other beloveds, She is foremost and dear-most in every respect. Even Uddhava and other exalted devotees pray for the foot-dust of the *gopīs*. Yet, these *gopīs* consider that their lives will be successful if they can attain a position in the *ānugatya* (guidance, or tutelage) of Śrī Vārṣabhānavī. And the most exalted devotees, those who are inclined toward *madhura-rasa* and who have reached the summit of *bhakti* to the Supreme Lord, take shelter at the place of Her pastimes and bathe in the sacred waters of Her pond, Śrī Rādhā-kuṇḍa.

In pursuit of awakening the faculties of awareness within the soul proper, they constantly immerse themselves in the holy waters of that lake and dwell by its side. The confidantes of Śaibya, Candrā and other rival *gopīs* do not even qualify to approach that place. To perpetually live by the bank of such a pond, and to bathe in its transcendental waters by following the soul's own faculties of awareness is not affordable for any ordinary, fortunate person.

As long as the transcendental nature of Śrī Vārṣabhānavī's age and of Her childish innocence, even in the midst of Her dawning adolescence, does

not become the subject of our reflection, we cannot understand the glory of achieving a position in Her *ānugatya*.¹⁰

We must know Her name

In order to perform *bhajana*, those who study *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* must know the name of their venerable deity, for one can only perform *bhajana* beginning from *nāma*. One cannot begin his *bhajana* directly from *līlā*. It is said in scripture:

*prathamam nāmanah śravaṇam-antaḥ-karaṇa-
śuddhyartham-apekṣyam | śuddhye cāntaḥ-karaṇe
rūpa-śravaṇena tad-udaya-yogyatā bhavati |
samyag-udite ca rūpe guṇānām sphuraṇam
sampadyate sampanne ca guṇānām sphuraṇe
parikara-vaiśiṣṭyena tad-vaiśiṣṭyam sampadyate |
tatas teṣu nāma-rūpa-guṇa-parikareṣu samyak
sphuriteṣu līlānām sphuraṇam suṣṭhu bhavaty-
abhipretya sādhana-kramo likhitaḥ |*

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's *Krama-sandharbha*
commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.5.18)

First, a person must hear and chant the holy name to achieve purity of consciousness. Thereafter, when his heart has become pure, it is a fit appearance place for the Lord's beautiful form, and as soon as the Lord's form thoroughly manifests in his heart as a result of hearing descriptions of that form, the *bhakta* experiences revelations about the Lord's qualities. As the Lord's qualities fully unfold, the defining characteristics of His associates and thus His own defining characteristics, that is, His unique interrelationship with each of them, are exhibited. After that, when the Lord's name, form, qualities and associates have completely manifested in the *bhakta*'s heart, the Lord's pastimes blossom in their full splendour. The progression of *sādhana* has been delineated in this way with the intention of acquainting the *bhaktas* with the sequential process involved in the Lord's appearance within their hearts.

¹⁰ Although Śrīmatī Rādhikā is apparently an eternal *kiśori* (adolescent), She remains intrinsically a *kaumari* (pre-adolescent).

Therefore, unless we begin, on account of attraction to *śrī nāma*, to contemplate within our heart the transcendent *rasas*, we are not qualified to study the form, qualities and pastimes of the Lord. People may have perfected their comprehension and expression of the words of scripture from an external, worldly perspective, yet as long as their conduct remains contrary to the conduct of realized souls, narrations of the Lord's *rāsa-līlā* are beyond the reach of their understanding. Therefore, Śrī Gaurasundara has instructed us about *nāma-bhajana* (divine worship in the form of chanting the holy name).

Kṛṣṇa's name is *tāraka-brahma-nāma*, the holy name who delivers us. Alongside His name we can see the word *hare*. As long as one does not gain realized knowledge of the direct meaning (*vidvad-rūḍhī*) of that word, one remains at a great disadvantage. For that matter, when we try to understand the word *rāma*, also, we are usually carried away by historical considerations.¹¹

Too often, the purity of our intellect is sullied and ruined by figurative and metaphorical doctrines, metaphysical theories, and that preposterous act of projecting man's nature on the figure of God. If someone tries to obtain the *darśana* of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda but lacks knowledge of Reality's secret truths (*rahasya-jñāna*), he finds that his vision is veiled.

In the *mahā-mantra*, the name Harā¹², which refers to Śrī Vārṣabhānavī, becomes Hare when it is uttered in the vocative case. In a similar way, the name Rādhikā-ramaṇa Rāma becomes Rāma when it is uttered as a personal address. Those who have attained neither eligibility to enter the realm of *madhura-rati* (divine amour) nor knowledge of Reality's hidden truths (*rahasya-jñāna*) assume that the name Hare is simply Hari in the vocative case and therefore another name of Bhagavān Himself. Some even say that the word *rāma* means *ātmārāma*, or He who is satisfied in Himself, and they forgo scrutinizing the matter any further.

¹¹ Thinking in terms of history, ordinary people usually interpret *rāma* as Lord Rāmacandra.

¹² Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī's first definition of Hare: "Śrī Kṛṣṇacandra's transcendental beauty captivates the minds of all, but Śrīmatī Rādhikā captivates the mind of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by exercising Her unrivalled cleverness. Therefore, She is known as Harā. The vocative case of Harā is Hare."

To state that the Lord, who is known as Puruṣottama (the Supreme Person), exists in solitude is to present only half of His identity. Statements that fail to account for the other half of reality just deceive us. And when we are cheated of the understanding that there exists a Supreme Divine Couple, we are bound to reject the conception of the unity and identity of the potent (*śaktimāna*) with His potency (*śakti*). And as a consequence of this, whatever limited understanding of Puruṣottama we may have already attained, also degenerates, terminating in the conception of an emasculated, impotent God (*kliva-brahmā*).

The conception of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda is of the Absolute Truth in utmost completeness. On the other hand, the conception of Puruṣottama in solitude, where the Lord exists alone as the Supreme Reality, cannot bring the *ānugatya-dharma* of the soul (the innate commitment of the soul to remain in the charge and care of a higher guide) past the moods of parenthood (*vatsalya*), friendship (*sakhya*) and servitude (*dāsya*). It never touches on the topic of *unnata-ujjala-rasa*. And describing the Lord by His titles like *brahma* or *paramātmā*, can never convey the fullness of the Absolute Truth that is so effectively established by names such as Rādhā-nātha or Rādhā-ramaṇa.

The Summit of Transcendence

All those souls who, while seeking out the kingdom of *prema-bhakti*, journey through *sādhana-bhakti* and reach beyond it to the stage of *bhāva-bhakti*, must realize that divine love of Śrī Vārṣabhānavī, which is the topmost summit of *prema-bhakti*, is only available in Her *ānugatya*. Without being in Her *ānugatya*, the soul gains but a feeble eligibility within the realms of spiritual existence.

When we transcend Devī-dhāma (the material world, which is presided over by the goddess of the illusory energy) and cross the Virajā River (the threshold between the divine and mundane worlds), even transcending Brahma-loka (the realm of the impersonal absolute) and totally evading the conception of opulence found in the *paravayoma* (the spiritual sky, or kingdom of God); when we even surpass the intimate moods of friendship and parental love found in Goloka and at long last, grounded in the perfect, eternal (*nitya-siddha*)

identity of our soul, we become acquainted with the conception of Śrī Rādhā-ramaṇa, then our eligibility shall be so exalted that we shall be the most fortunate of the fortunate and our service shall rise to the very pinnacle of its perfection.

Such a state cannot simply be called “realization”, nor even *aparokṣa-anubhuti* – direct experience of the imperceptible absolute – as seen in the language employed by the *jñānīs*. No. What we shall attain are the extraordinary functions of love known as *mohana* and *mādana*. What we shall experience is known by names like *udghūrṇa*¹³, *citra-jalpa*¹⁴ and *mahābhāva* (the ultimate stage of ecstatic love of God). Now we live confined within our gross bodies, which consign profuse obstructions to such experiences. Even the sensitivity achieved by our subtle bodies actually still encumbers us. If our *ātmā-vṛtti*, the very calling of our soul, cannot find unimpeded and unceasing shelter in the *ānugatya* of Śrī Vārṣabhānavī, then we can never grasp even the slightest hint that such achievements exist. So, taking the foot-dust of the foremost *rūpānuga*, Śrīla Dāsa Gosvāmī, upon our heads, we fervently pray:

*hā devi! kāku-bhara-gadgadayādyā vācā
yāce nīpaṭya bhuvī danḍavad udbhaṭārtiḥ
asya prasādam abudhasya janasya kṛtvā
gāndharvike! nija-gaṇe gaṇanām vidhehi*

Śrī Gāndharvā Samprārthanāṣṭakam (2)

O Devī Gāndharvikā! I am suffering greatly and therefore, today, I am throwing myself on the ground like a stick and desperately imploring You, with a choked voice, to be merciful to this fool and count me as one of Your own confidantes.



Translated from the weekly *Gaudiya*,

Year 10, Issue 11, October 1931

¹³ The state of divine madness (*dīvyā-unnāda*) in which one deliriously endeavours to serve the beloved, despite their absence, is known as *udghūrṇa*. Śrīmatī Rādhikā experienced *udghūrṇa* when Śrī Kṛṣṇa departed for Mathurā.

¹⁴ The incoherent, delirious babbling resulting from intense longing is known as *citra-jalpa*. C.f. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Tenth Canto, Chapter 47 (*Bhramara-gītā*).

A white domed temple with a full moon in the sky and a boat on the water.

Svadhāme Atīndriya Prabhu

*Srīman Atīndriya
Prabhu has
Returned Home*

Appearing in English for the first time



By Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna
Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

An Outburst of Locked Up Grief and the Day of His Passing

Anyone who has heard about the exceptional services being rendered to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura, must be aware of who *bhakti-guṇākara* Śrīla Atīndriya Prabhu¹ is. For how long can *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā* conceal from the world the sorrow caused by Śrīla Atīndriya Prabhu's departure, as though it were keeping a veiled, coy bride secluded and concealed in her new home? Today, our swelling grief has erupted and revealed itself. As we begin disclosing the news of separation from him, we are enchanted by his multitude of virtues, virtues that could only exist in a pure Vaiṣṇava. His conduct, conceptions and behaviour make him forever memorable.

At the end of this past year, 1355 Baṅgābda (1949 AD), on the thirtieth day of the month of Caitra, he exhibited his departure from his mortal frame. This solar year ended in a *yoga*² that represents a torrential flow of tears.

The separation-memory of a Vaiṣṇava purifies the soul

Remembering the Vaiṣṇavas while experiencing pangs of separation from them completely purges the heart of its filth and liberates it from the intoxication of being infatuated with illusory phantasms. On our way along life's path, the eagerness and loving tendency of the Vaiṣṇavas to engage in service is a support for us, just as the cane is the support for a blind man. On that note, for my own purification, today I shall eulogize a few of the many ways Atīndriya Prabhu served *śrī guru*.

Baḍa-bābu's Worldly Profession

Śrīla Atīndriya Prabhu was employed as the chief registrar in the office of the District Traffic Superintendent of the Dhānabāda division of the East India Railway. He used to carry out all his office duties with great expertise and

¹ Śrīla Atīndriya's title was *bhakti-guṇākara* – the gold mine of devotional qualities. *Atīndriya* literally means "beyond the senses"; it is one of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's secondary names (*gauṇa-nāma*), or titles describing His supreme position, like Parabrahma (the Supreme Spirit) and Paramātmā (the Supersoul).

² In Vedic astrology, *yogas* are planetary combinations placed in specific relationships to each other.

with whatever time he had left, he would endeavour with all his vitality to serve Śrīla Prabhupāda and assist in preaching his mission. Recognizing the dignity of his professional status, the people of Dhānabāda and the residents of the *dhāma* addressed him as Baḍa-bābu – chief registrar. Indeed, everyone knew and honoured him by the name Baḍa-bābu more than by his own name.

During his professional tenure, he provided for his wife, son and family, well aware of the obligation of a *sat-grhastha* (truly righteous house-holder). Yet he provided for them modestly, to the extent that was required for their maintenance, and he would not spend even a penny on any luxury that would simply cater to their desire for sense gratification. Rather, he always expended his money in the service of the *maṭha*'s resident *sannyāsīs* and Vaiṣṇavas or in bringing them to Dhānabāda to repeat the message of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and its specialities, for the benefit of the public. And for the same purpose, he also performed *kīrtana* of that message whenever he was there alone. Due to his efforts, many respectable residents of Dhānabāda became graced by the shelter of Śrīla Prabhupāda's lotus feet, whereupon they received many chances to serve him and earn profuse devotional merit.

In Dhānabāda, this Baḍa-bābu – *bhakti-guṇākāra* Śrīla Atīndriya Prabhu – was the principal propagator of the divine teachings of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābājī and Śrīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda (*śrī bhaktivinoda-gaura-sarasvatī-vāṇī*).

Gathering Living Drums of Consciousness

To serve Śrīla Prabhupāda, Baḍa-bābu recruited a host of *jīvanta-cetana-mṛdaṅgas*, or living drums of consciousness³; for this his presence will remain with us forever. Although he forever roams in a plane that is concealed from our mortal vision, if we reflect upon the descriptions of the services he rendered with incorruptible sincerity, he will remain bound within our hearts forever.

Of the many living *mṛdaṅgas* of consciousness he gathered, I shall recount only one, and then desist from

³ Just as the *bṛhad-mṛdaṅga*, or great drum, refers to the printing press on account of the far reaching *kīrtana* accomplishable through printed books, the phrase *jīvanta-cetana-mṛdaṅgas*, or living drums of consciousness, refers to Śrīla Prabhupāda's missionaries, who travelled the globe spreading the message of Godhead.



“In other words, Śrīla Atīndriya Prabhu recruited the living *mṛdaṅga* who went on to be called Śrīla Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu.”

mentioning others. When Śrīla Prabhupāda obtained that one living *mṛdaṅga*, he sounded it in such a way that its divine vibration (*aprākṛta-sabda*) travelled beyond the Eastern world, even reaching the most distant Western countries. ‘*Mṛdaṅga-vādyā, śunite mana, avasara sadā yāce* – My mind is always eager to hear the sound of the *mṛdaṅga*.’

To sing the essence of *bhakti* (*bhakti-sāra*), *jagad-guru* Śrīla Prabhupāda accepted the assistance of this

divine *mṛdaṅga* and cherished great joy in doing so. Now, accompanied by the *sāraṅga* (Indian stringed instrument), that *mṛdaṅga* went on to earn the unparalleled title “*aprākṛta bhakti-sāraṅga* – the divine, quintessence of devotion”. In other words, Śrīla Atīndriya Prabhu recruited the living *mṛdaṅga* who went on to be called Śrīla Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu⁴.

The initial Fuel for the Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda Institute

As soon as he retired from his job, Baḍa-bābu arranged for the construction of a permanent residence in Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. He saw that life in a worldly village offered his wife and children no chance of attaining any spiritual welfare, so on a plot of land adjacent to Śrī Gaura’s birth-site in Śrī-dhāma, he had a two-storey brick home built and began living there with his family. Yet his family’s spiritual well-being was only the external reason he moved to Śrīdhāma Māyāpura. His actual motive was to render constant service to Śrī Gurupāda-padma. For as long as Śrīla Prabhupāda was present, Baḍa-bābu never made a single mistake in serving him.

When Nimāi and Sītānātha, his two eldest sons, grew old enough, they were enrolled in an English-speaking high-school in the village of Bilva-puṣkariṇī. But Baḍa-bābu was dissatisfied. One day he said to me, “The education given in schools nowadays is demoniac and the cause of the children’s degradation. Can you not do something about this?” Immediately, I took him to Śrīla Prabhupāda to present his concern to him. Śrīla Prabhupāda told us that he intended to establish a theistic, English-speaking high-school, and then and there, he put that idea into action. Sadly, many so-called respectable servants of Śrīla Prabhupāda fiercely opposed the idea and refused to offer their assistance.

In the course of time, that exemplary school fell under the administration of those same people. Still, many of the students who attended there were graced with the good fortune of offering themselves entirely to the service of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. Needless to say, Atīndriya Prabhu, that exalted Vaiṣṇava, achieved both great success and fulfilment through his abundant efforts to develop the school, the Śrī Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda

⁴ After Śrīla Aprākṛta Bhakti Sāraṅga Prabhu accepted *sannyāsa*, his name became Śrīla Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

Institute. Along with other students from the school, his eldest son, Nimāi-caraṇa, passed his entrance examination to university.

Atula-bābu’s Irrevocable Dedication to Truth

Baḍa-bābu’s parents had named him Śrī Atula-candra, and his initiated name, as given by Śrīla Gurudeva, was Śrī Atīndriya Prabhu. It is not possible to abstain from praising Atula-bābu’s valiant dedication to the truth. Some time after Śrīla Prabhupāda’s disappearance, Śrīdhāma Māyāpura was completely shaken by the destructive dance of irreligion, which had taken the guise of true religion, so much so that Śrīla Prabhupāda’s one-pointed, devoted servants were being forbidden to serve there, even though they undeniably had the right to. As a result, swarms of offenders (*guru-drohīs*), heretics (*pāṣaṇḍīs*), womanizers (*kiṣorī-bhajās*), self-centred narcissists who claim to be God (*kartā-bhajās*), and immature, artificial holy-men (*bhajana-khājās*) cast a shadow over the moon of Śrī Māyāpura like the planet Rāhu eclipses the moon. Unspeakable atrocities began to be perpetrated against pure devotees (*śuddha-vaiṣṇavas*).

Even then, Atula-bābu stayed in Śrī Māyāpura, fearlessly and vehemently opposing the activities of those demons. Irrevocably sworn to the truth, he stood alone against no less than five hundred demoniac *bhajana-khājās* (artificial holy men). When they formed a group and surrounded him in an array reminiscent of when the Kuru warriors surrounded Abhimanyu,⁵ he accepted Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti⁶, which was founded with the intention of trampling the hordes of impostors and striking down the depraved, as his only shelter. As a gesture of triumph over those demons, he unconditionally donated full ownership of his fenced, two-storey brick home to the Samiti (Committee); an act for which he will be held in perpetual esteem.

Through his knowledge of the sphere of *dharma*, which he had gained in the eighty-six years that he remained manifest in this world, he came to clearly

⁵ During the Mahābhārata war, within the heart of the most deadly military formation known as the Cakra-vyūha, Abhimanyu valiantly fought against many of the most powerful warriors of the Kuru clan, who had surrounded him and by whom he was unjustly slain.

⁶ The committee established by the author on Akṣaya Tṛtīyā in the month of Vaiśākha (April) 1940.

understand that only Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is capable of ridding the world of misfortune. Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti is the only congregation of pure Vaiṣṇavas that is capable of eradicating the darkness that has temporarily descended on Śrīdhāma Māyāpura and revealing that holy abode's true self and most complete manifestation, just as Śrīla Prabhupāda had wished.

With a simple heart, *parama-pūjanīya bhakti-guṇākara* Śrīla Atīndriya Prabhu renounced the illusory sense of propriety over his home. He submitted the necessary paperwork for the donation, transferred the land-title, and registered the deed in the town of Kṛṣṇa-nagara.

Atīndriya Prabhu's Compilation – Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra

Atula-bābu would always introduce himself by his initiated name, Śrī Atīndriya dāsa Adhikārī, not by his birth-name. Whoever witnessed his love for devotional literature was invariably astonished. For the benefit of the scholars of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world, he compiled one matchless book. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas don it as a necklace and it is therefore named *Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra* (a necklace for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas). In this necklace are set eighteen gems of existential truth (*tattva*) – beginning from *śrī guru-tattva* (the existential truth regarding *śrī guru*) and ending with *prayojana-tattva* (the existential truth regarding the ultimate destination). It boasts the swinging pendant of *pramāṇa-tattva* (the existential truth regarding what is to be accepted as valid proof) set with the central jewel of his divine *guru's* blessings. Only those who have read *Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra* can fathom the enormous effort he exerted in compiling it, and thereafter express their gratitude for his toil. Its succinct foreword named “Sūtra”, written by Śrīla Prabhupāda, is essential for everyone to read:

“Sūtra” – the Succinct Foreword to Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra

In *Śrī Śrī Prema-bhakti-candrikā*, Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura Mahāśaya sings:

sādhu-sāstra-guru-vākya, hṛdaye kariyā aikya
satata bhāsiba prema-mājhe

Making the words of the saints, the scriptures, and *śrī guru* one with my heart, I will float forever in divine love.

The truth of these words has been protected in *Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra*. *Śrī gurudeva* sings nothing but the words of *sāstra* (the revealed scriptures), and if not for *śrī guru*, the words of *sāstra* would not be sung anywhere. *Śrī gurudeva* gives but one instruction: follow the path of the saints (*sādhus*) and the ancient *mahājanas* (great souls).

The conduct of saints – the conduct of *śrī guru* – is itself *sāstra*. The words they speak are *sāstra*. *Sāstra* alone is the saint and *sāstra* alone is *śrī guru*. And the saints are *sāstra*, the *bhāgavatas*⁷ themselves. And *Śrī guru* is *sāstra*, the ideal personification of the *bhāgavata*. The words of the saints, the scriptures and *śrī guru* are strung on the same thread and together create a glorious symphony.

The soul is inherently inclined toward serving. Within that inclination, in the union of full-hearted surrender (*praṇipātā*), sincere inquiry (*paripraśna*) and the motivation to engage in service (*sevā-vṛtti*),⁸ that symphony becomes a reality. The conclusive truths (*siddhānta*) presented in *Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra* are absolutely congruent with the conduct of the saints, or *mahājanas*, they are in accordance with the scriptures, and they represent the *śrauta-vicāra*⁹ sanctioned by *śrī guru*, or the *ācārya*.

This *Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra* is strung on the thread of that symphonic union. It is fashioned from eighteen gems of *bhakti-siddhānta* (the perfect, conclusive truths regarding *bhakti*), a pendant (*pramāṇa-tattva*) and a central jewel (the blessings of *śrī guru*). The gems, presented with their sources and translations, are arranged in a sequence beginning from *sambandha* (transcendent, existential relationship), proceeding through *abhidheya* (the process by which the ultimate goal is attained), and concluding with *prayojana* (the ultimate attainment). May the Gauḍīyas adorn themselves with this necklace and relish the nectar of *prema* forever. This is my humble prayer.

7 The word *bhāgavata* is used to indicate anything intimately connected to Bhagavān, especially His eternal servants, the *bhāgavatas*, and scriptures devoted to Him, as in the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*.

8 C.f. Bhagavad-gītā (4.34).

9 The word *śrauta* means “that which is heard”, and *vicāra* means “thoroughly deliberated upon”. The teachings of the *guru-paramparā*, which descend from *guru* to disciple through the process of hearing and subsequent thorough deliberation, are referred to as *śrauta-vicāra*.



Bhakti-guṇākara’s Guru-Bhakti

Bhakti-guṇākara Prabhu compiled *Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra* and offered it as an oblation in dedication to Śrī Gurudeva. The special Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava writing style and lexicon, which this most exalted Vaiṣṇava has preserved in that dedication, is millions of times superior to anything employed by mundane authors in the dedications they write. The mood with which he submitted his devotional offering to Gurupāda-padma and the words he used are such that if read with sobriety, the zenith of the profound *unnata-ujjvala-guru-bhakti* (exalted, resplendent *bhakti* for *śrī guru*) that is present in his heart shall manifest itself to us in full. We are incapable of adequately expressing the nature of his heart; only his own writings can reveal his identity. I now quote his words:

An Oblation of Devotion – Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra’s Dedication

Into the tender, lotus-like palms of *paramārādhya paramābhīṣṭa-deva paramahansa parivrājakācārya-varya aṣṭottara-śata-śrī cid-vilāsa om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura, I submit this dedication:

O supremely worshipful Prabhupāda,

You are the direct incarnation of *bhakti-siddhānta-vāṇī* (the message of perfect devotional truths) – the personification of *bhakti* characterized by *kīrtana*. By your grace, even a person like me, who is opposed to the Lord, has been able to witness this.

Śrī Gaurasundara, the benevolent saviour of this age, spoke the words “*kīrtanīyaḥ sadā hariḥ* – forever sing of Śrī Hari.”

You are verily the personification of those words.

You have descended upon this earth to perpetually soothe, in the tranquil waters of your *hari-kathā*, the myriad souls of this world, who are burning alive in the flames of mundane existence. Your heart is the resting place (*āśraya*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya, who is Himself the embodiment of *kīrtana*. And you are a manifestation of Śrī Caitanya, inconceivably distinct yet identical. You are truth living in reality – the intimate associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

A stream of the powerful and blazingly effulgent conclusive truths constantly flows from your lips. You are a boundless, fathomless ocean, the origin of the jewels of *bhakti-siddhānta* (the perfect conclusive truths regarding *bhakti*). I have no ability to immerse myself in that ocean, for I am but a feeble soul. But out of your innate benevolence, you have scattered the seashore with many gemstones, of which I have tried to collect just a few.

The timeless, divine words of the *ācāryas (śrauta-vāṇī)*, like waves of *hari-kathā*, emanate from your lips and flow through the pages of your *Śrī Gauḍīya* [weekly periodical]. I have collected eighteen clusters of jewels from those pages and compiled this book with the help of my god-brothers, who are all nourished by your divine mercy.

You are the foremost of the followers of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and you are the foremost of Gauḍīyas. If this *kaṅṭhahāra* (necklace) earns your liking, I will understand that it is fit to adorn the necks of all Gauḍīyas. I offer this *kaṅṭhahāra* into your lotus-like hands. I offer what is already yours back into your hands as an oblation of devotion (*bhakti-arghya*). Please be kind to me and accept it. The radiance of this bejewelled necklace, which inherits its luminance from the graceful, tender touch of your lotus hands, shall undoubtedly dissipate the darkness of ignorance that shrouds so many fallen souls like me.

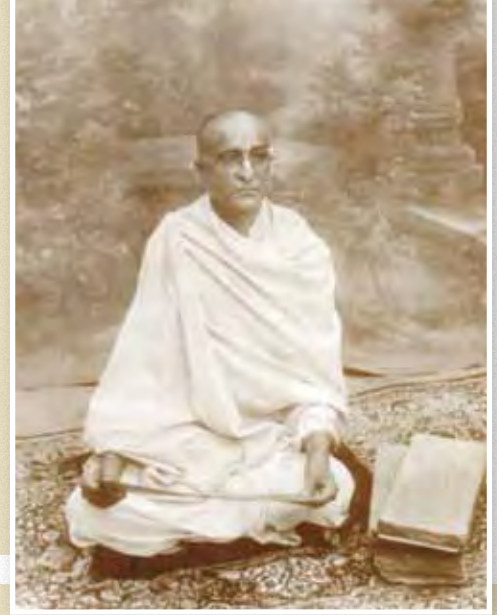
O dear-most of Mukunda, although I am entirely unworthy, I am convinced that anything offered into your hands shall be personally accepted by Śrī Hari. My hope is that this garland of gems, now lying in your hands, will be shone upon the tips of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s lotus feet as an offering to them and then presented to all Gauḍīyas, to adorn their necks. When they receive the divine mercy of those remnants, which they will wear forever, they shall shower upon me profuse blessings. Their blessings are all that I cherish.

O My dear Master, may you be pleased. In your grace lies the grace of the Lord. May *kīrtanākhya-bhakti* (*bhakti* characterized by *kīrtana*) be my *sādhana* (devotional practice) as well as my *sādhya* (ultimate goal). May you be decorated with all glories.

Begging to serve your lotus feet,
an unworthy semblance of a servant,

Śrī Atīndriya dāsa Adhikārī

Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī Day
440 Gaurābda (1927 AD)



Jagad-guru Śrīla Prabhupāda's Joyful Blessings

We have served Śrīla Prabhupāda many times. A servant's purpose in serving his master is to bring his master joy. But is my master truly pleased? Or is it just that I have become pleased upon serving him? This is something we must carefully consider, since, most of the time, we perform service with the aim of pleasing ourselves.

However, upon reading Śrīla Prabhupāda's response, it becomes clear how immensely pleased he was with the dedication written by Śrīla Bhakti-guṇākara Prabhu. When will we become worthy recipients of that same kind of mercy from Śrīla Prabhupāda? I only sustain my life in anticipation of that occasion. Only if one can secure the true grace of those who have been blessed by *śrī guru*, can one achieve the grace of *śrī guru* himself. I therefore submit this prayer: "O Atīndriya Prabhu! O Vaiṣṇavas! In every respect, kindly grant your mercy to such a wretch as myself, so that as I follow in your footsteps (*ānugataya*) I may also attain a fraction of Śrī Gurupāda-padma's mercy."

Śrīla Prabhupāda's Letter to Atīndriya Prabhu

To the best of pure devotees, Śrīmad Bhakti-guṇākara Atīndriya dāsa Adhikārī,

I have no words to describe the extent of the joy I felt upon receiving the *kaṅṭhahāra* you compiled. And you have already appropriately expressed the great qualification I will achieve in worshipping and serving Śrī Hari by placing this *Gauḍīya-kaṅṭhahāra* on the necks of all the unpretentious, pure devotees in the line of our Gauḍīya *guru-varga*.

Many succumb to a substandard, crippled form of devotion (*viddhā-bhakti*¹⁰) and instead of serving Śrī Hari, they treat Him as something to be enjoyed. But I feel that even they can realize their true constitutional position and desist from their malicious feud with us poor wretches if they don this necklace.

By introducing himself as the sweeper of the marketplace of the holy name, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has manifested his transcendental pastime. We, like brooms, are the instruments in his service of purifying the souls of this world. The few hundred of us following the *mahājanas* and rejecting the pursuit of all unfavourable association may be held in contempt by the rest of the world, but only by being his instruments, his brooms, shall we secure our greatest good.

The eternal servant of the saviour of the fallen souls,
who neither gives benedictions nor offers homage to anyone,

Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī

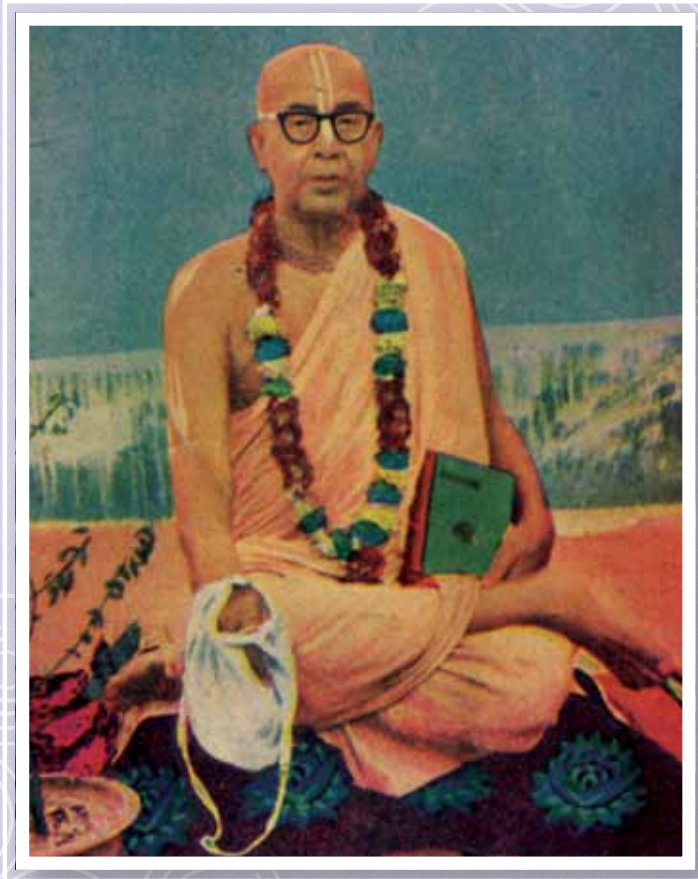
Śrī Rādhā-āvirbhāva-vāsara (Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī Day)
440 Gaurābda (1927 AD)

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*, Year 1, Issue 5, 1949

¹⁰ The word *viddhā* means mixed, or adulterated. Hence the term *viddhā-bhakti* refers to *bhakti* mixed with, or adulterated by, *karma*, *jñāna* or both.

KNOWLEDGE & FEELING

Vidyā and Vedanā



Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sāraṅga Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The heart has reasons which reason cannot know

*K*nowledge is acquired through mental vigour, but feelings are realized within the heart. The brain is the domain of knowledge, or erudition, but *bhakti*, being totally unconcerned with knowledge, seeks to blossom in the heart. It is said, “The heart has reasons which reason cannot know.”

Knowledge, or *vidyā*, is superior to ignorance, or *avidyā*, yet if neither can rid us of mundane conceptions

and rouse fully transcendental *bhakti* within our hearts, then both prove to be the cause of extreme misfortune. If knowledge fails to subdue ignorance and make the heart beat only to serve Adhokṣaja Viṣṇu (the all-pervasive Lord who is beyond sense perception), then it will simply befriend ignorance and together they will just become engaged in enjoying worldly pleasures. Sometimes the forces of knowledge and ignorance battle each other and together fall to the jaws of death.

Conceited Intellectuals

Those endowed with keen intellect can become scholarly and knowledgeable. They can become acquainted with the winding current that flows endlessly through the ages, carrying the various conceptions of the external world. These philosophers, using their intellect and genius, can astound the world by inventing ever new channels of thought. Through their erudition in treatises like the *R̥g Veda*, *Sāma Veda*, *Yajur Veda* and *Atharva Veda*, and through their mastery of a range of fields of knowledge such as education (*śikṣā*), prescribed rituals (*kalpa*), grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), etymology (*nirukta*), poetry (*chanda*), astrology (*jyotiṣa*), medicine (*āyurvedā*), natural science (*vijñāna*), archaeology (*pratnatattva*), sculpting (*śilpa*), fine arts (*kalā*), music (*saṅgīta*), politics (*rājanīti*), economics (*arthanīti*) and sociology (*samājanīti*), such thinkers have earned revere world wide.

In each and every one of these fields of knowledge, the eager apprentice idolizes some expert from his chosen field and becomes his student. Although upon observing the majesty of contemporary intellectuals, the eager apprentice may be instantaneously impressed and astonished, he nevertheless devotes his time to studying under the tutelage of the distinguished champion of his particular interests. And the principal motive that drives all his ostentatious admiration of his hero is the prospect of fulfilling his own personal ambitions – namely erudition and respectability. Like this, desperately struggling to remain afloat in the diverse seas of knowledge, so many intellectuals fail to cross the vast ocean of mundane existence, all because conceit, arrogance and intolerance shackle their selfish, blinded eyes solely to this mundane realm.

*andhaṁ tamaḥ praviśanti
ye 'vidyām upāsate
tato bhūya iva te tamo
ya u vidyāyām ratāḥ*

Śrī Īsopaniṣad (9)

Those who embrace nescience enter into the darkest ignorance, but those who absorb themselves in so-called erudition fall into an even bleaker darkness.



The soul cannot rely on knowledge to gain true freedom

Illusion, or *māyā*, has two modes: knowledge (*vidyā*) and ignorance (*avidyā*). The influence of knowledge erodes mundanity, while ignorance nourishes and furthers it. Those who become overwhelmed by worldliness remain in a state of ignorance, and the divine nature (*cit-prakṛti*) of their souls becomes enveloped by the murk of mundanity. On the other hand, those who are detached from worldliness can demolish their mundane existence and all its confines. But without *bhakti*, even these detached persons cannot easily earn the shelter of the Lord's *svarūpa-śakti* (His most intimate, internal potency). Consequently, such persons inevitably destroy their own souls and plummet into the most ghastly darkness.

No soul in this world, a world that is plagued by illusion, can ever truly free himself from mundane existence by relying on the influence of knowledge if he fails to establish his relationship with the Supreme Self (Paramātmā). Therefore, the Vedas state, "O living entity, the truth of the soul, the truth that you are seeking, is neither knowledge nor ignorance. Rather, it is something that stands apart from both."

It is part of the soul's very constitution that he may fall under the sway of *māyā* (illusion), since he is but an infinitesimal spark of consciousness (*aṅu-caitanya*). Manipulated by such illusion, the soul is gripped by



“No soul in this world, a world that is plagued by illusion, can ever truly free himself from mundane existence by relying on the influence of knowledge if he fails to establish his relationship with the Supreme Self (Paramātmā).”

sorrow. To find relief from his sorrow and sufferings, the soul seeks refuge in knowledge, and the monistic thoughts he subsequently entertains become the cause of the worst of his miseries.

*ye 'nye 'ravindākṣa vimukta-māninas
tvayy asta-bhāvād aviśuddha-buddhayaḥ
āruhya kṛcchreṇa paraṁ padaṁ tataḥ
patanty adho 'nāḍṛta-yuṣmad-aṅghrayaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.2.32)

O lotus-eyed Lord, some people proudly consider themselves liberated, despite having no realization of You, the Absolute Truth. Their speculations spoil their intelligence and no matter how much they fancy they have elevated their state of consciousness through their severe penance and austerity, they inevitably fall from their imaginary platform, because they disregard worship of Your lotus feet.

The Awakening of Feeling

To rescue us from this painful predicament, the Vedas say:

*īśāvāsyam idaṁ sarvaṁ
yat kiñca jagatyāṁ jagat
tena tyaktena bhun̄jithā
mā ḡrdhaḥ kaśyasvid-dhanam*

Śrī Īśopaniṣad (1)

The Supreme Lord is the controller and proprietor of all that is, of every animate and inanimate entity throughout creation. One should accept for himself what the Lord has given him as his share, and never try to take another's portion.

In his commentary on this verse, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

By His own potency (*ātma-śakti*), the Supreme Lord created this universe, and by the strength of that same potency He then entered within each and every atom, thus pervading everything. Likewise, you too, O soul, are a unique existential principle (*viśeṣa-tattva*) and have emanated from one of His energies. He is Paramātmā, the Supreme Soul, and you are *ātmā*, a minute soul. From the perspective of your constitutional function (*ātma-dharma*), none is as intimately kindred to you as He.

But at present, on account of misconceptions about your identity, you have labelled all but yourself as 'other' and allowed yourself to exploit all other entities for your own selfish indulgences. Yet if you could perceive the Supersoul's existence within all things and thereby free yourself from selfishness, you would no longer be compelled to misappropriate all perceptible objects for your own indulgence, considering them to be something 'other'.

Offer all things in the service of the Lord. Whatever you may acquire, accept it as His grace. If conducted thus, all your deeds will be shaped by the constitutional nature of your pure soul.

Because Bhagavān Adhokṣaja – the transcendent proprietor of all potencies – possesses natural authority over everything, He can reveal Himself, without discrimination, even to such an unworthy, miserable being as me, and He is never apathetic about bestowing His mercy. The *jīva* fails to conceive of such causeless, infinite grace as found in so kind a Lord. But when he realizes that the grandeur of erudition is but trivial, he experiences the wavering of feelings within his heart. The acute feeling within our heart full of yearning to serve that most auspicious Lord, He who is the actual goal of all service, is what gradually leads us to the foreground of *prema* (pure love). These very feelings, which become fortified by saintly company, are capable of giving us a hint of *viśuddha-sattva* because they rid our consciousness

of distress arising from the three mundane modes – namely, ignorance, passion and worldly goodness.

He watches over me, He listens when I speak, He worries for me and, when I forget Him, He cannot forget me. He is the very origin of all sublime qualities. His sacred body is not mundane. Rather, He possesses a form wherein there lies no difference between soul and body; a divine form comprised entirely of cognizance, eternity and joy.

He is my master, and I am His infinitesimal, yet similarly transcendental, servant and eternal associate. Discarding His company and service to Him, at times I beckon ignorance in the form of *karma-kāṇḍa*, the prescribed methods for attaining mundane prosperity. At other times, acquiring excessive knowledge leads me to seek the impersonal *brahma*, which in turn leads me into the grimmest, most ghastly darkness. This kind of knowledge stems from the illusory potency.

The constitutive nature of the finitude and transience of sensuous objects is such that, when too much addicted to, they naturally create an aversion on the part of the ego. And the averseness which is described in the Vedānta system as *iha-amutra phala-bhoga-virāgaḥ* [disinterest in or detachment from enjoying the results of action, either in this life or the next] forms the doorway to right knowledge. And, because such averseness follows from the very nature of the products of *māyā*, it is but fitting that *vidyā*, as a doorway to right knowledge, is an effect of the *māyā-śakti*.¹

The sublime, transcendent ideal of both knowledge and ignorance resides within the Lord’s spiritual potency (*cit-śakti*). If a person endeavours to demolish the perverse forms of knowledge and ignorance, which are offered by the illusory potency, by setting that ideal as his objective, he comes to see through a special characteristic function of the *cit-śakti*. By adhering to that special vision, he shall never again fall prey to destruction at the hands of mundane knowledge, which has impersonalism as its signature trait.

Knowledge stemming from the illusory potency will lead the soul from mundanity only to the point of impersonal immortality. When the ignorance that stems from the illusory potency points at its own

¹ This entire paragraph appeared in English in the original article.

sublime counterpart, it itself transforms into that ideal *tattva* (aspect of reality). It is only then that the soul’s *aprākṛta svarūpa* (transcendental, intrinsic form), Śrī Parameśvara’s *aprākṛta svarūpa*, and the divine, mutual relationship between them will shine forth in all brilliance and produce the supreme *rasa* (supra-mundane, liquid emotions), which stems from the spiritual potency.

Finding Nectar

*vidyāṁ cāvidyāṁ ca yas tad vedobhayaṁ saha
avidyayā mṛtyuṁ tīrtvā vidyayāmṛtam aśnute*

Śrī Īsopaniṣad (11)

He who simultaneously comprehends both knowledge and ignorance will transcend dying in ignorance and will enjoy the immortal nectar of knowledge.

It is then only, at that auspicious moment, that one finds a trace of the nectar of divinity. Only then does his spiritualized heart experience intense feelings for Śrī Hari’s transcendental lotus feet.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu has also said:

*prabhu kahe, “vidyā madhya kona vidyā sāra?”
rāya kahe, “kṛṣṇa-bhakti vinā vidyā nāhi āra”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (8.245)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu inquired, “What is the most essential knowledge amidst all forms of knowledge?” to which Rāya Rāmānanda replied, “Other than *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*, there is no knowledge.”

And Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has sung:

*jaḍa vidyā jata, māyāra vaibhava,
tomāra bhajane bādhā
moha janamiyā, anitya saṁsāre
jīvake karaye gādhā*

Śaraṇāgati – Song 3

All mundane knowledge is but an extension of illusion. It is a hindrance to your *bhajana* and simply spawns delusional infatuation for this transient world, making the soul act like a donkey.

Learned Rogues

These load-carrying donkeys may earn tremendous praise from common people, who fancy them to be



“All mundane knowledge is but an extension of illusion. It is a hindrance to your *bhajana* and simply spawns delusional infatuation for this transient world, making the soul act like a donkey.”

learned thinkers, but if their hearts do not quiver with feeling for Śrī Hari, they cannot bring welfare to the world. Rather, they only increase its unrest.

If the scholars' knowledge turns their hearts to stone, then such scholars are better described as fiends or swindlers than as scholars. The world's marketplace has no scarcity of such rogues. Because of their immense numbers, they are seen everywhere, especially in the vicinity of Mālābāra (a hub of impersonalism in Kerala, South India) and Vārāṇāsī. The fields, bathing *ghāṭas* and courtrooms are all teeming with them. These selfish people become obsessed with the urge for sensual pleasure and thereby erect barriers across the path to their own true well-being. And, due to envy of Śrī Hari, who is all-auspicious, they fall into a state of deplorable degradation.

*mahimānantu bhaktestu bhaktā eva vijānate
mahatīm sūtipīḍāntu bandhā nānubhavet kacit*

As a barren woman can never know the intense pains of childbirth, the non-devotees can never fathom the glory of *bhakti*. Only the devotees are acquainted with it.

May the Supreme Lord, Vāsudeva, who hails from the sublimely pure mode of existential cognizance (*viśuddha-sattva-guṇānvita-cit-prasūta*) save us from being swallowed alive by the throes of illusion.

Selfish Knowledge

If acquired knowledge, intelligence, wealth, admirers, and one's life and youth are engaged, not for the highest purpose (*para-artha*), but rather to feed one's own petty,

lowly and self-indulgent purposes, then the cycle of mutual exploitation will swell until the havoc it wreaks destroys oneself along with the entire world. For this reason, such selfish people are never favoured by Śrī Viṣṇu, the guardian and sustainer of the world.

On the other hand, when a person's acquired knowledge is engaged for the highest purpose (*para-artha*), he advances on the path of auspiciousness and earns the favour and grace of Śrī Viṣṇu. Such saintly souls, who are able to grasp life's essence (*sāra-grāhī*), travel the path of auspiciousness, being religious and endowed with spiritual merit. Saintly men and demonic men have opposite destinies, and they have waged war against each other since time without beginning.

*paritrāṇāya sādhumānīm
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām
dharma-saṁsthāpanārthāya
sambhavāmi yuge yuge*

Bhagavad-gītā (4.8)

To protect My unalloyed *bhaktas*, to annihilate the wicked and to re-establish *dharma*, I appear millennium after millennium.

When the demonic dynasties swell in numbers, Bhagavān Śrī Viṣṇu personally incarnates. With His Sudarśana-cakra (His divine disc weapon, which bestows divine vision), He cuts to shreds the poisonous influence of demonic people, whose perception is corrupt, and rescues saintly people, whose perception is pure.

In the battle of Kurukṣetra, Kṛṣṇa's dear friend Bhīma crushed and hacked off the heads of countless demonic men with his deadly mace. There, he established the

futility of their corrupted genius. The moral he imparted was that one should discard vanity and cultivate being even more humble than the lowly straw and more tolerant than the enduring tree.

Knowledge and Feeling

If the brain's capacities are made to assist the heart, providing opportunities to further the heart's true inclination (*sad-vṛtti*), then, by the effect of keeping saintly company, we can shed our arrogance and set foot on the path that leads to life's supreme goal. We can then become more humble than a blade of grass.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.2) we find the statement “*vedyaṁ vāstavam-atra vastu śivadam* – only a truly existing entity, which is related to the Absolute and thus supremely auspicious, is worthy of being known.” If we seek out communion with the all-auspicious Absolute Truth, our hearts will melt and we will be elevated to the forefront of sublimely pure existence (*viśuddha-sattva*). Our serene hearts, thus established in pure cognizance, can then become the playground for Śrī Adhokṣaja's loving pastimes.

*brahma-bhūta prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate param*

Bhagavad-gītā (18.54)

A person thus situated in *brahma* becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires anything. Being equally disposed to all beings, he attains *bhakti* to Me, which is blessed with the symptoms of *prema*.

In our serene hearts, feelings for Śrī Adhokṣaja will make their appearance. Thereafter we will be delivered from this mundane world and by the mercy of *śrī guru*, we will discover the spiritual pastimes of the Lord and become expert relishers of one of the transcendental humours, namely servanthood, friendship, parenthood or amorous love. Only in a heart radiant with pure goodness can *rasa* make its appearance.

*vyatītya bhāvanā-vartma yaś-camatkāra-bhāra-bhūḥ
hṛdi sattvojjvale bāḍhaṁ svadate sa raso mataḥ*

Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu,
Southern Division (5.132)



In the stage of *bhāva*, each of the ingredients of ecstatic emotion, like *vibhāva* and *vyabhicārī-bhāva*, are relished independently of one another. After transcending this stage, all the ingredients of ecstatic emotion combine. The ecstasy that arises from that combination causes a state of intense astonishment to arise in the heart, which has become resplendent with *śuddha-sattva* (pure existential goodness). That most relishable ambrosia of transcendent, liquid emotions is technically called *rasa*.

If someone completes his study of the Vedas, the various limbs of the Vedas, and the supplemental Vedic literatures, but divine *rasa* does not awaken within his heart, then fie on his erudition!

*śrutam-apyaupaniṣadam
dūre hari-kathāmṛtāt
yan śānti drava-citta-
kampāśru-pulakādayaḥ*

Even though one may listen to the recitation of the Upaniṣads, if one's heart does not melt and the symptoms of trembling, tears, horripilation and so forth do not subsequently appear, then that person is very far away from relishing the nectar of *hari-kathā*.

Bhagavān alone is the one true reality we must come to know. Knowledge that does not bring feelings

“If someone completes his study of the Vedas, the various limbs of the Vedas, and the supplemental Vedic literatures, but divine *rasa* does not awaken within his heart, then fie on his erudition!”

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for Him into our hearts is self-destructive. May Śuddhā Sarasvatī – Bhakti-devī herself, the goddess of pure, transcendental knowledge – shelter us from the clutches of such harmful knowledge. May we become students in the school of absolute, transcendental knowledge, and thus avoid the bewilderment of dry knowledge.

Empty Trance

The Śaṅkara of Mālābār, with his over-inflated erudition, exercised his intellect in the process of negation, relying solely on knowledge derived through direct sense perception (*aparokṣa jñāna*). He regarded the Lord as an entity within the grasp of intellect and became situated in trance on that conception. Yet, in that trance, no emotion nor any love for Śrī Adhokṣaja arose in his heart. He was therefore unable to transcend the stage of presuming the Absolute Reality to be within the comprehension of material senses.

And Bodhi-sattva (Sakya-singha Buddha), ‘the enlightened one’, regarded the voided trance that he had once buried himself in as he had sat beneath the Bodhi tree, as the highest precept there is.

We do not wish to become as unenlightened as the enlightened one or as over-inflated with erudition as Śaṅkara of Mālābār.

Śrī Bodhāyana Muni², on the other hand, represents our ideal.

By following his example, we will be saved from the clutches of the two kinds of trance just mentioned. In the land of Śrī Puruṣottama, we will sit by the shore of the ocean in Bodhāyana-kūṭira, which lies not far from the sacred *samādhi* of Śrīla Haridāsa Ṭhākura. There, by serving Śrī Śrī Gaura-Gadādhara, who are situated atop Caṭaka-parvata, we can discover the *unnata-ujjala-rasa*³ of Śrī Gopinātha.

The Pains of Transcendent Love

*yugāyitaṁ nimeṣeṇa cakṣuṣā prāvṛṣāyitaṁ
śunyaīyitaṁ jagat sarvaṁ govinda-virahēṇa me*

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam (7)

O *sakhī*, in separation from Govinda, even a moment seems like a millennium. Tears begin to shower from My eyes like rain from the clouds, and this entire world seems void.

These words spoken by Śrī Gaura, condemn the two kinds of trance mentioned before and impart to our hearts an emotion so mighty that we regard it as thousands of times superior to *brahma-sukha*, that is, the felicity that arises from eliminating all mundane feelings and imagining oneself to be one with the unchangeable *brahma*. What joy is there in a heart where only the pretentious imitation of happiness can be found and where feelings of loving service to Govinda never arise?

The feelings that arise in the hearts of mundane lovers by the influence of Madana, the mundane god of love, in times of separation and in times of union cannot be equated with the feelings of separation and meeting experienced in relation to Śrī Madana-mohana, that transcendental God of

² Śrī Bodhāyana Muni was a major proponent of the Vaiṣṇava, theistic interpretation of the *Vedānta-sūtra* and the author of the *Brahma-sūtra-vṛtti*, which predates Śaṅkara Ācārya’s *Śārīraka-bhāṣya*.

³ *Unnata-ujjala-rasa* – The highest (*unnata*) mode of pure loving service to Bhagavān; the blazingly effulgent (*ujjala*) paramour love conceived of by the *vraja-gopī*s; *mādhurya-rasa* (unwedded conjugal love of God).

Love, who even enchants the heart of Madana. And on the other side, we must distance ourselves from *brahma-sukha*, the happiness of monistic emancipation. Only when we follow the guidance of Śrī Gaura's devotees and thus learn to experience the feelings, or the pains, of separation from Śrī Govinda within our heart, will we achieve supreme joy.

In the home of Śrīvāsa Ṭhākura known as Śrīvāsa-āṅgana, there was a maid who served the devotees of Śrī Gaura when they came there. Her name was Duḥkhī-devī, "the sad one", but Śrīman Mahāprabhu changed her name to Sukhī, which means "the happy one".⁴

Bearing the pangs of separation from Śrī Govinda that arise within our hearts, and calling out as we weep loudly and piteously, "He Kṛṣṇa! He Kṛṣṇa!" we will cross the ocean of mundane existence.

O seekers of the impersonal absolute, the painless joy of emancipation you are presently fantasizing about in your distressed state will soon become very painful for you. The forceful wind will make the serene ocean of your heart surge and overflow. Why? Know that Śrī Madhva Muni (Śrī Madhvācārya), the incarnation of the wind-god (Vāyu-devatā), is known as the *guru* of the whole world because he makes the most serene hearts into places of agonizing feelings of love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

*ānanda-tīrtha-nāmā sukha-maya-dhāmā yatir-jīyāt
saṁsārārṇava-taraṇīm yamiha janāḥ kīrtayanti budhāḥ*

Prameya-Ratnāvalī

All glories to the crest jewel of *saṁnyāsīs*, Śrī Ananda Tīrtha (Madhva Muni), who is the abode of divine joy. The most learned personalities have praised him as the sturdiest of boats who can carry the conditioned souls across the ocean of material existence.

Sublime Joy

It is the work of illusion that one should fantasize about feeling joy by becoming bereft of all feeling. There are those who cannot comprehend the conception of loving separation (*vipralambha*) from the Lord. They assert the doctrine that perpetual union with Him (*sambhoga*) is superior. They thus make themselves incapable of performing *anukula-kṛṣṇāmuśīlanam* – constant, fervent endeavours born of genuine kindness toward

⁴ See *Śrī Caitanya-Bhāgavata, Madhya-khaṇḍa* (25.11–22)

Him, which ultimately result in His greatest well-being. We note that, even in this world, the total absence of cold would render heat torturous. Similarly, without the presence of heat there would be no pleasure in feeling cold. In the absence of one, the presence of the other shall never be appealing. Mundane natural scientists say:

Both coolness and warmth are delightful when they co-exist and neither of them is so when it exists apart, by itself. Consequently, both of them are painful in the absence of the other. Moreover, when hunger and food exist together, they are both delightful. But in the absence of food, hunger is painful and vice versa.⁵

However, in the land of divine love (*prema*), both union and separation yield sublime joy. In monistic emancipation (*sayujya mukti*), joy turns into distress due to the absence of feeling. Some, therefore, say that the aim of impersonal emancipation, which is to mitigate both joy and distress, is only possible by cultivating divine love. Since, in the realm of divine love, both the object of love (the Lord) and the resting place of love (His devotees) would realize profound happiness even in laying down their own lives for each other, such love leaves no scope for any mundane joy and distress. Mundane sentiments, which stem from adulterated consciousness, can never be equated with the feelings that arise from pure consciousness.

The Life and Soul of the Goddess of Knowledge

*bhārata-bhūmite haila manuṣya jamma jāra
janma-sārthaka kori' kara para upakāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā (9.41)

If someone has taken human birth in the sacred land of India, he must make his life successful by striving to actualize the greatest welfare for all.

Achieving the greatest welfare (*para-upakāra*) obviously does not mean destroying one's own soul along with everyone else's by pursuing temporarily pleasing goals of no true significance just because of the goading of one's impetuous brain. Rather it means to cleanse the mirror of one's own heart and at the same time cleanse the mirrors of all others' hearts through the medium of *śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*. It is only possible for Śrī Kṛṣṇa to appear in a heart that is *viśuddha* (supremely

⁵ This entire paragraph appears in English in the original Bengali article.



“As a result of performing *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, one relishes complete nectar at each and every step and one’s proclivity to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa swells more and more until it entirely engulfs and bathes the soul.”

pure). As a secondary result of *śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana*, the blazing fire of mundane existence is extinguished, and one attains one’s ultimate good.

Śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana is the life and soul (*jīvanā*) of the goddess of knowledge, who is like His bride (*vidyā-vadhū*).⁶ A bride without life would have no feeling in her heart, no movement in her limbs, no cheer on her face, no enticing glance in her eyes and no consciousness in her being. The expressionless, unblinking stare of a lifeless woman can actually spark her lover’s feelings of detachment, for it is sure that she can never join him in amorous pastimes. Knowing that a lifeless, material body will soon rot away, we find it urgent to give up our association with it, for it is no more than a corpse.

So we will relinquish our pursuit of the cadaverous bride of monistic knowledge, for she is completely emptied of life-giving *kīrtana*. She is voiceless, motionless, and totally unconscious. Instead, by the influence of *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* we will cross the ocean of material existence. We will perform that *kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* under the exclusive guidance of His bride: the goddess of supreme, transcendental knowledge (*para-vidyā-vadhū*), for *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana* is her very life.

Śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana causes the ocean of divine joy to surge and swell moment by moment. The petty happiness found in impersonal emancipation is like a glow-worm

in front of the sun. It is useless to compare it to the nectarean ocean of divine love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. As a result of performing *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, one relishes complete nectar at each and every step and one’s proclivity to serve Śrī Kṛṣṇa swells more and more until it entirely engulfs and bathes the soul.

May Śrī Gurudeva, he who performs *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, be glorified everywhere! May Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the embodiment of *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, be victorious everywhere!

*śrīyatām śrīyatām nityam
gīyatām gīyatām mudā
cintyatām cintyatām bhaktāś-
cāitanya-caritāmṛtam*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Antya-līlā (12.1)

O devotees! Just listen to it – listen to it for all time! Sing it and chant it to your hearts’ delight! Forever meditate and contemplate *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛtam*, the nectarean anthology of the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya, the embodiment of the awakening of ecstatic consciousness through *śrī kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*.

om hari om

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⁶ C.f. Śikṣāṣṭaka (8)



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Śrī Kṛṣṇa-līlā and Mundane Sense Gratification

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja

Is human misery a pastime of God?

“Is God responsible for all the varieties of misery that man must face, or not?”

When a *svāmī*, who is a regular visitor to Delhi, was asked this question by the good Dr. Sharma, he presented his answer in front of everyone in the assembly:

“The miseries visible in human life, whatever they may be, are all a pastime of the Lord.”

Dr. Sharma lives, and practices medicine in Delhi. He is a keen seeker of truth and an avid reader of our *Back to Godhead* magazine; and he often inquires from me on a variety of topics. The good doctor found the *svāmī*'s answer to his question completely unsatisfying.

He countered by saying that if all of a person's activities are to be considered a pastime of the Lord, then why is it said that man must experience the results of his own pious and sinful activities?

When the *svāmī* attempted to justify his explanation simply by repeating the same phrase “it is all a pastime of the Lord”, Dr. Sharma exclaimed, in the midst of that assembly, “I am not satisfied with your answer.” But the common people in the audience were simply listening to their arguments. No one could understand the essence of the topic, nor did anyone even try to understand it.

On many occasions, we, too, come across this question, which is ever stirring in the human mind,

“Why did God create so much misery in this world? Is it all His pastime?”

The truth, though, is quite different from what this question implies.

Among all the meaningless obstacles monists have created in this world by conceiving of God and the living entity as existing in total oneness, none is more severe than the introduction of this particular type of doubt.

The activities of souls that are imprisoned by the material energy are mundane. But these impersonalists, on account of their claim that God and the living being exist in total oneness, are obliged to attribute such mundane activities to the pastimes of God. Without doing so, they would not be able to reconcile their statements like “God is in distress,” or “God is begging alms.”

Therefore, it is not possible to support the doctrine of impersonalism, a doctrine which completely destroys one's spiritual life, without concocting the alleged ‘divine’ theologies that are conveyed by statements such as “Nārāyaṇa has become impoverished to enact the pastime of begging;” “Nārāyaṇa has become a pig to enact the pastime of feeding on stool;” “The supreme spirit in the form of deliciously prepared chicken eggs is reposed within the belly of that same supreme spirit in the form of a holy mendicant” and the like.

It is for this reason that Śrīmān Mahāprabhu clearly stated, “*māyāvādi-bhāṣya śumile haya sarva-nāśa* – hearing the commentary of a Māyāvādī completely destroys one's spiritual life.” As long as this form of artificial spiritualism, known as impersonalism, is not expelled from this world, the common man shall not be able to comprehend Śrī Kṛṣṇa's identity, nor His name, qualities and so forth. Foolish people readily accept such malformed theologies simply because they are sold



“He thus exhibited
supreme benevolence
towards His devotees
by manifesting the
divine *rāsa-līlā* of
Goloka, even within
this material world.”

out to their sect, but they are unable to comprehend the real implication of their conception.

What else could be the fate of a common man who keeps the harmful association (*asat-saṅga*) of the impersonalists but to be misled and converted to atheism, only to engage in mere sense-gratification?

Transcendental pleasure necessitates variety

In all the *Sātvata-tantras* (treatises on the science of worshipping Śrī Kṛṣṇa) and in various Vedic literatures such as the *Purāṇas*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead Śrī Kṛṣṇa is proclaimed to be *līlā-puruṣottama* – the Supreme Person, who is always engaged in charming, transcendental pastimes. And this same topic has been given special attention in Chapter Fifteen of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, entitled “Puruṣottama-yoga”. The severity of the damage caused by the *Māyāvādīs* (impersonalists, who consider all variety to be an illusion) in equating the transcendental pastimes of *līlā-puruṣottama* Śrī Kṛṣṇa with the ordinary mundane activities of a mortal human being is indescribable.

At one point in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī was establishing the unequalled and unsurpassed position of *śrī kṛṣṇa-līlā* (Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s transcendental pastimes), King Parīkṣit inquired about an apparent indecency. In reply, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī explained to the king that *śrī kṛṣṇa-līlā* can never be indecent. He who is the sole enjoyer of all, in the entire realm of material nature (*prakṛti*), and who is residing in the hearts of all the living beings as *Antaryāmī* – that Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is witness to the intelligence of all – manifested His transcendental form during His pastimes with the damsels of Vraja. He thus exhibited supreme benevolence towards His devotees by manifesting the divine *rāsa-līlā* of Goloka, even within this material world.¹

In the *Vedānta-Darśana* (*Vedānta-sūtras*), the *sūtra* “*ānandamayo ’bhyāsāt* – the Supreme Absolute Truth (*para-brahmā*) is full of rapture; the scriptures repeatedly describe Him as such” (*Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.12) points exclusively to Parabrahma Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The impersonalist commentators encounter extreme difficulties when they try to explain this *sūtra*, because they cannot comprehend the true meaning of rapture (*ānanda*). They just try to protect the reputation of their *sampradāya* by saying “*haya haya*”².

1 c.f. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* Tenth Canto, Chapter 30, especially (10.30.39) beginning *vikrīḍitaṁ vraja-vadhūbhir*.

2 This phrase translates roughly to “yes, yes, it is so”. In the present context it indicates “yes, yes, there is *ānanda*”.

But the simple explanation is that rapture (*ānanda*) can never be experienced in undifferentiated oneness. Accordingly, *brahma* cannot be alone, for how can rapture (*ānanda*) exist without the existence of some kind of variegatedness? And how then can someone ever experience rapture if he conceives of Bhagavān as devoid of any distinguishing features? Such a conception can only reside in the brain of an impersonalist; no one else could ever conceive of such a thing. *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā* (12.5) has therefore clearly mentioned that there is no limit to the miseries of the impersonalists: “*kleṣo dhikataras teṣām avyaktāsakta-cetasām*—Those whose minds are attached to the featureless absolute must experience great difficulty, for how can an embodied soul fix his mind on something unmanifest?”

Why are big cities like Delhi so populated? These big cities have a special allure because they offer countless forms of enjoyment. They feature wide, open roads; enormous skyscrapers; spacious parks and gardens; a variety of vehicles for transportation; a plethora of centres for entertainment and recreation; different businesses and trade centres; and a broad diversity of cuisines. On account of all this, people are gradually flocking into the cities just as insects rush into a dazzling fire-lamp.

Enchanted by the beauty of the countryside, the English poet Cowper stated, “God made the country, and man made the town” (*The Task*). But the natural beauty of a village is also just a special variety of allure, which itself evokes a certain kind of enjoyment. Be it in the village or the city, everyone is simply mad to experience some special, variegated pleasure. How can it be denied, then, that rapture exists in a state of abundant variety?

The impersonalists assert that just as mundane variegatedness is illusory, transcendental variegatedness is also illusory. This alone is their most incurable ailment. The conclusion that the supreme, absolute spirit would also not experience rapture without such variegatedness is clearly established in the *sūtra ānandamayo bhyāsāt*.

The Ploy of the Impersonalists

That *svāmī* from the assembly had renounced his home and accepted the attire of a renunciant. He, too, is especially striving to taste *brahmānanda* (spiritual rapture), while remaining exclusively within Delhi's city limits. And indeed, how would he have been able to experience the '*brahmānanda*' of relishing a cup of tea and resting in an opulent Delhi palace or the

'*brahmānanda*' of being in the company of beautiful young ladies, if he had instead taken up residence in some dull, monotonous forest? Still, he does not fail to render God featureless.

Unquestionably, that *svāmī* is himself a specimen of *brahma*. If those '*brahmas*' who are in the grip of *māyā* (i.e. the infinitesimal fragments of spirit) can be so attached to material variegatedness, then why can't *brahma* (i.e. the supreme spirit, Bhagavān), who is ever-liberated, be attracted to transcendental variegatedness? Only the depraved impersonalists can foolishly assert that variegatedness only exists in mundane matter, and hence, they dare to manipulatively equate their own mundane sense gratification with '*līlā*'.

Apart from such manipulative rationalization, the impersonalists could find no recourse for their blatant sense gratification. According to them, all material variegatedness is temporary and corporeal (*acit*). They therefore find it difficult to accept any kind of variegatedness and so, try to establish that the pastimes of the Lord, too, are corporeal and temporary. But the Vaiṣṇavas, who are the particles of dust affixed to the lotus feet of He who enjoys transcendental variety, know very well that the existence of *cid-vilāsa*, the playful dalliance of transcendence, in no way denies the existence of material variegatedness. In fact material variegatedness is a perverted reflection of its eternal, transcendental counterpart.

As such, the pastimes of the Supreme Personality of Godhead, quite opposite to their perverted reflection, are in fact the supreme, eternal truth, which completely vanquishes all deception. Therefore, variegatedness is also present in the transcendental world, where the playful dalliance of transcendence is supremely admirable. This alone is the true meaning of the *sūtra* “*ānandamayo bhyāsāt*—the supreme absolute truth (*para-brahma*) is full of rapture; the scriptures repeatedly describe Him as such.”

Just worship Govinda

The Supreme Personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, is the embodiment of *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* (eternity, knowledge and bliss), and to amplify His bliss, He has expanded Himself in two ways: expansions of His own, personal form (*svāmīśa*) and His infinitesimal, separated parts (*vibhinnāmīśa*). The argument that by expanding Himself to become many He has lost His own identity,

goes against the purport of the hymn from Śruti, “*pūrṇasya pūrṇam ādāya pūrṇam evāvaśiṣyate* – Whatever emanates from the Absolute Whole is itself completely whole, and even after unlimited complete wholes emanate from Him, He remains the Absolute Whole” (*Śrī Īsopaniṣad* Invocation). This *mantra* declares the existence of the Supreme, Absolute Being.

He is “*ekam eva advitīyam* – one without a second” (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 6.2.1 and *Vedānta-sūtra* 1.1.2), but just as fire is one, yet exists everywhere, He exists in His spiritual abode of Goloka with His multifarious potencies, where He engages in His eternal pastimes, and He alone exists within the heart of every living being, as the indwelling Supersoul (*antaryāmī*). So, in this manner, *līlā-puruṣottama* Bhagavān has, indeed, expanded His pastimes everywhere, but the transcendental rapture of these pastimes can never be equated with mundane pleasure.

Monists are actually attracted to nothing but Bhagavān’s bodily effulgence, the *brahmajyoti*, which pervades all that is. They have thus become beggars, aspiring for spiritual rapture, or *brahmānanda*. When even the lustre of the toenails of Śrī Bhagavān’s lotus feet contain millions of *brahmajyotis*, how can Bhagavān’s pastimes, or the rapture therein, be material? The insignificant living beings can easily become attracted to spiritual rapture (*brahmānanda*) because it is many millions of times more substantial than the pleasure available in inert matter (*jaḍānanda*). But the eternal pastimes that have manifested for the pleasure of *sat-cit-ānanda-vigraha* Śrī Kṛṣṇa are one of the special characteristics of Kṛṣṇa’s internal potency of pleasure, the *hlādinī-śakti*, and the pastimes that are manifested by that potency are called *kṛṣṇa-līlā*.

Those who are inclined towards *brahmānanda*, are not able to comprehend even the smallest fraction of that divine *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. Considering it to be just like mundane sense enjoyment, they engage in practices that are devoid of any joy. It is impossible for anyone to comprehend the subject matter of *hlādinī-śakti* until one becomes qualified to delve deep into the meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, which is the natural commentary on the *Vedānta-sūtra*.


Since the impersonalists cannot attain the necessary qualification to fathom the deep meaning of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrīpad Śaṅkarācārya has written a commentary on *Vedānta* named *Śārīraka Bhāṣya*, just

to bewilder them and ensure that they remain occupied only with his commentary. This deed was, in truth, a pastime, carried out by Śrīpad Śaṅkarācārya for the purpose of misleading the demons. Śrīpad Śaṅkarācārya actually knew everything. As such, up to his last day, he actually instructed the dull-headed Māyāvādīs just to perform loving worship of Śrī Govinda.

This mundane plane, which caters to the human being’s thirst for sense enjoyment is nothing but the arena of the threefold miseries. Transcendental pastimes can in no way be enacted on this mundane stage. There is no one more untraditional and contrary than he who considers the divine pastimes of the Lord and the living beings’ material sense enjoyment – which is simply the result of their previous *karma* – to be one and the same.

It is to be understood that it is simply due to the insurmountable material energy’s influence upon the impersonalists that they plan to become full of pleasure in this mundane world. Any intelligent person can easily understand that this world is not the place to take up permanent residence. That realization is indeed absolute truth. It is very different from the notions that have arisen out of some counterfeit scriptures or the school of half baked ideas. In a world full of miseries, mundane sense enjoyment is nothing more than the result of attempting to eliminate distress through mundane endeavours. Everyone here endlessly endeavours, with all their vitality, to fulfil their dreams of achieving happiness, but such endeavours are also part of this mundane, illusory plane.

The influence of the material energy is so intense that it renders our endeavours unsuccessful, hundreds of times over. Does that then mean that we should give up all kinds of effort to achieve happiness? No, that is not possible. But we must engage in that pursuit in which even a small endeavour can free us from the most fearful troubles: “*svalpam apyasya dharmasya trāyate mahato bhayāt* – Those who engage themselves in the activities of *sanātana-dharma*, that is, *bhāgavat-dharma* (their spiritual duty to Bhagavān), even slightly, will surely be delivered from the most severe terror: fear of death and the dread of any hellish fate” (*Śrīmad-Bhāgavad-gītā* 2.40).

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Appearing in English for the first time

Jāvālā and Satyakāma

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja





Jāvālā was a widow. She had one young son named Satyakāma. One day, Satyakāma approached her and said, “Mother, I want to adopt a vow of sacred celibacy and take up residence in the school of my *guru*. But to do so, I must know my family lineage.”

“O my son,” replied Jāvālā. “I do not know which lineage you belong to. In my youth, I was a concubine. I begot you after serving a number of different men. So you see, I do not know to which lineage you belong. You are simply Satyakāma, and I am Jāvālā, your mother. When the *ācārya* inquires about your identity, introduce yourself as Satyakāma of Jāvālā.”

Satyakāma of Jāvālā

Satyakāma approached Ṛṣi Hāri-drumata Gautama, and expressed to him his resolve to live in his school. Gautama Ṛṣi inquired from the small boy, “O gentle soul, to which lineage do you belong?”

Satyakāma answered, “My lord, I do not know to which lineage I belong. When I asked my mother about this, she replied that in her youth she served many persons as a concubine before obtaining me as her son. My mother’s name is Jāvālā and my name is Satyakāma.”

Gautama Ṛṣi became immensely satisfied to see the child’s honesty and steadfast devotion to truth. He therefore said, “One who is not of brahminical lineage could never speak with such simplicity and truthfulness. Gather wood for a sacred sacrificial fire. I shall bestow upon you the sacred thread of a *brāhmaṇa*. You must never sway from the truth.”

Ṛṣi Gautama then granted Satyakāma the sacred thread. Thereafter, he entrusted the boy with the responsibility of a special service. The *ṛṣi* lead four hundred malnourished cows from the cowshed and instructed Satyakāma to herd them in grazing pastures and to care for them in all respects. As Satyakāma was setting out with the cows, he promised his *guru*, “I shall not return until the number of cows in this herd has swelled to a thousand strong.”

The Science of the Absolute

Satyakāma herded the cows for many years, serving them with all his heart. Gradually, the number of cows in the herd grew until it approached one thousand.

One day, the wind-god entered a bull from the herd. The bull then spoke to Satyakāma: “O gentle one, our numbers have reached one thousand. Now you can lead us back to the *ācārya*’s dwelling.”

The bull continued:

“The eastern, western, northern and southern directions comprise the first quarter of the opulence of the Absolute Truth (*brahma*). He who worships the four-fold directions of the Absolute Truth as *prakāśvān*, the source of all illumination, shall attain to the planets of light in the after-life.

“Soon, the god of fire will describe the second quarter of the Absolute Truth’s opulence.”

The next day, Satyakāma gathered the cows and set out with them toward his *guru*’s house. That evening, as dusk drew on, he let the cows rest and then lit a fire. At that time, the fire-god spoke to him from within the fire. He instructed Satyakāma regarding the second quarter of the Absolute Truth’s opulence – the opulence of being the unlimited one, or *anantavān* – and then told him that the sun-god would soon appear to him in the form of a swan to describe the third quarter of the Absolute Truth’s opulence.

The next morning, Satyakāma gathered all the cows and resumed his journey towards his *guru*’s house. And at the place where they were met by dusk, he let the cows rest and then lit a fire. As he sat by the fire, facing east, a swan flew toward him and came to rest by his side.

The swan began to instruct Satyakāma, especially regarding the third quarter of the Absolute Truth’s opulence – namely that *brahma* is *jyotiṣmān*, the origin of divine light. The swan then informed him that the god of the life-air would appear to him in the form of



The Absolute Truth is the source of all illumination in the four directions, the unlimited one, the origin of divine light, the all-pervading foundation of everything.

a *madgu* (aquatic bird) to describe the fourth quarter of the Absolute Truth's opulence.

The next morning, Satyakāma continued his journey and again, when dusk came, he lit a fire and sat facing east. The god of the life-air then appeared to him in the form of a *madgu* bird and began instructing him regarding the last quarter of the Absolute Truth's opulence. He explained that *brahma*, the Absolute Truth, is *āyatanavān* – the all-pervading foundation of everything.

His Return to His Guru's House

Assisted by those four demigods, Satyakāma thus learned the science of the Absolute Truth (*brahma-tattva*). Finally, he reached the *āśrama* of his *guru*. The moment the *ṛṣi* saw Satyakāma, he could understand that Satyakāma's sincere, non-duplicitous service had borne the fruit of divine knowledge; he had become *brahma-vit* – a knower of the Absolute Truth. Gautama Ṛṣi addressed Satyakāma, "O gentle one, you are shining like one who has knowledge of the Absolute Truth. Who has instructed you?"

Satyakāma replied, "The beings who imparted these teachings to me were not of human birth. Even so, O master, please personally impart them to me again so that I may achieve perfection and make my life successful, for I cherish these teachings more than anything. I was fortunate enough to have heard

that knowledge imparted by the *ācārya* is supremely beneficial, for it rewards the recipient with perfection. I therefore beseech you, please instruct me."

Seeing that Satyakāma was praying with heartfelt sincerity to receive instructions exclusively from the *ācārya*, Gautama Ṛṣi verily imparted all that knowledge to Satyakāma a second time.

Ācārya Satyakāma

In due course of time, Satyakāma also became an *ācārya*. His students like Upakośala and others, adopted strict twelve year vows of celibacy and resided with Satyakāma while he instructed them in the science of the Absolute Truth.

Once they graduated, Satyakāma asked all his students to return to their homes – all except Upakośala. Upakośala had become very dear to him and was his intimate servant, so Satyakāma wished to reveal to him all the esoteric secrets of divine knowledge of the Absolute Truth. For that end, he tested him repeatedly.

Ultimately, he imparted *ātmā-vidya*, divine knowledge of the soul, to Upakośala, and he instructed the people in general with this brief statement:

"Just as a lotus petal never allows a drop of water to cling to itself, but instead causes it to roll off, he who knows the Absolute Truth is never implicated in sinful deeds. The path of worship set out by the gods will enable one to attain the Absolute Truth. One who

pursues that path will never have to return to worldly existence.”

From this narration, we glean four lessons:

The First Lesson – There is no virtue like simple-hearted honesty

The Śrutis have stated, “Simplicity and honesty are the defining qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*.” Even though worldly society condemns illegitimate progeny as extremely unfortunate and worthy of criticism, Satyakāma did not even slightly hesitate to confess his identity to the *ācārya*. His behaviour reveals that the brahminical qualities of truthfulness and simplicity were natural for him. Gautama Rṣi recognized this and granted him the sacred thread, thus bestowing upon him the eligibility to serve *śrī guru* and study the Vedas. Those who possess natural brahminical qualities are honoured and worshipped everywhere, regardless of their family lineage.

When Śrīman Mahāprabhu – the Personality of Godhead who descended to purify the fallen souls of this degraded age of Kali – delivered Amogha dāsa in Śrī Kṣetra (Jagannātha Purī), He specified how to recognize a *brāhmaṇa* through the following statements:

*sahaje nirmala ei 'brāhmaṇa'-hṛdaya
kṣṇera vasite ei yogya-sthāna haya*

*'mātsarya'-caṇḍāla kene ihāñ vasāile
parama pavitra sthāna apavitra kaile*

*Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta,
Madhya-līlā (15.275–276)*

The heart of a *brāhmaṇa*, being naturally simple and pure, is a fit place for Śrī Kṣṇa to reside. Why have you let the dog-eating savage of envy creep inside such an otherwise supremely pure place and contaminate it?

The Second Lesson – A man’s virtues define him, not his birth

The scriptures establish the superiority of he who is recognized to be a *brāhmaṇa* on account of his virtues. There is no way to please Śrī Bhagavān other than to live according to the conduct prescribed by

the pure, original system of social castes and roles (*viśuddha-varṇāśrama*)¹. The *Bhagavad-gītā* reveals that all those who fail to accept the system of *varṇa* (caste) and *āśrama* (societal roles at different stages of life), which was created by Śrī Bhagavān, are in the category of demoniac persons. If a living entity remains inimical to Śrī Bhagavān, then no matter how great the position he earns, from the worldly perspective, no matter how great his material qualification may be, his achievements shall never help him attain ultimate well-being.

Inner tranquillity, self-restraint, austerity, cleanliness, contentment, forgiveness, simplicity, knowledge, compassion, devotion to God, and truthfulness are all among the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*. The activities allocated for each of the four *varṇas* are prescribed solely in accordance with the innate qualities of four types of individual. And according to these qualities and their coincident prescribed activities, the four *āśramas* (societal roles at different stages of life) were created. This system of four-fold *varṇas* and *āśramas* originated from Śrī Bhagavān Himself. Therefore, if someone does not accept it, he disobeys Śrī Bhagavān and falls victim to degrading influences.

In Satya-yuga, there was only one *varṇa* and it was known as *hamsa* (swan). Then in Treta-yuga, along with the three Vedas², the four *varṇas* were created. Specific, highly scientific methods, which took into consideration the four human archetypes,³ were used to ascertain a person’s *varṇa*. It was never decided by parentage.

It is never accurate to assign someone to a particular *varṇa* based on their parentage, because the reality of birth, death and the necessities of life are common to all four *varṇas*. Neither the soul nor the body, along with its parentage and acquired knowledge; nor even

¹ The modern caste system, which groups people into castes according to birth, diverges from the original *varṇāśrama* system, which groups people into social divisions based on their inherent qualities and the work they are fit to perform.

² At the dawn of creation, a single Veda existed – *Atharva Veda*. Later it was divided and three more Vedas were created – *Rg Veda*, *Sāma Veda* and *Yajur Veda*.

³ Namely *brāhmaṇas* (priests), *kṣatriyas* (warriors and rulers), *vaiśyas* (merchants, land-owners and entrepreneurs) and *sūdras* (artisans and skilled labourers).

the actions a person performs externally, make him a *brāhmaṇa*. Rather, only he who is self-realized, devoid of attachment and envy, free from conceit and false ego, and endowed with the qualities of inner tranquillity and self-restraint, is in fact a *brāhmaṇa*. Hence it has even been seen that a person born to outcastes has been able to enter the highest *varṇa*.

Scripture provides abundant examples of people attaining brahminical status because of their disposition and qualities. If someone has the qualities of a *sūdra*, despite being born to *brāhmaṇa* parents, or the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa* despite being born to *sūdra* parents, then his caste must be assigned according to those qualities, regardless of his parentage.

In *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (7.11.35), the verse beginning *yasya yat-lakṣaṇāni proktāni* establishes the superiority of ascertaining *brāhmaṇa*hood through a consideration of one's innate disposition, or through absolute, spiritual considerations. Determining a person's *varṇa* in accordance with his degree of inner tranquillity, self-restraint and so on, is the subtle, scientific methodology prescribed by scripture. If qualities such as inner tranquillity and self-restraint are evident in someone, scripture dictates that, even if he was not born to *brāhmaṇa* parents, his *varṇa* should be determined by his manifest qualities, while his ordinary parentage should be overlooked.

It is written in *Mahābhārata*, “Śrī Pārvatī-devī was pondering how the other three *varṇas*, such as the *kṣatriyas* (warriors), might attain the qualities of a *brāhmaṇa* via their own respective natures. She inquired about this from *jagad-guru* Śrī Śambhu (Śiva), the greatest of Vaiṣṇavas, who instructed her on the method of ascertaining a person's *varṇa* according to their nature and characteristics.”

In the context of the story of *Dharma-vyādha*, the *Mahābhārata* also confirms that even a person born in the lowest caste is to be deemed a *brāhmaṇa* if he is

resolute in proper conduct, honesty and religious duty, for it is a virtuous character alone that makes someone a *brāhmaṇa*. Scripture states that those who have twice born brahminical status (*dvija*) but are violent and greedy, who earn their livelihood by any means, even unscrupulously, who persistently indulge in unholy foodstuffs not fit to be consumed by a true *brāhmaṇa*, who are unclean, and who have abandoned their Vedic *dharma*, are called *sūdras*. “*Matsya-māṁse sadā lubdha vipro niṣāda ucyate*— so-called *brāhmaṇas* who are greedy to feast on fish and meat are called *niṣāda-brāhmaṇas* (wild, out-caste hunters in the guise of *brāhmaṇas*).”

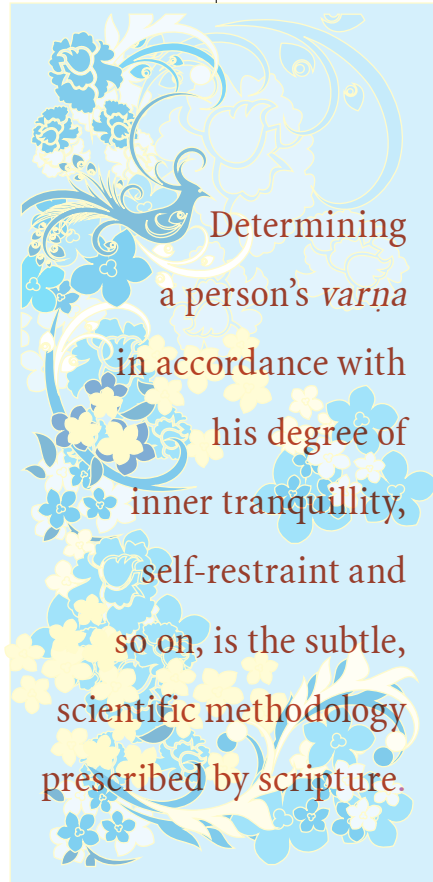
The scriptures condemn those who know nothing of the Absolute Truth but conceitedly flaunt the threads they ceremoniously received, designating their brahminical status, by calling them *paśu-vipras* – animals dressed up like *brāhmaṇas*. A so-called *brāhmaṇa* who cooks for *sūdras*, sells the holy name for profit, and sells his knowledge for monetary gain is compared to a defanged serpent. In other words, his performance of rituals and sacrificial ceremonies shall bring no good to the household families that employ him. Though he may perform many sacred rituals meant to benefit someone in their next life, those rituals never yield the proper results. This is the version of scripture.

Persons of all four *varṇas* – the priests, the warriors, the businessmen and the artisans –

perpetually debate over who among them is superior and who is inferior. Śrī Tulasī dāsa, a devotee poet, says:

*brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, sūdra saba koi karata vicāra
tulasī kahe—hari na bhaje ta cāro ‘cāmār’
hari bhaje ta cāro jāta milakara eka varaṇa ho jāya
aṣṭa dhātu-me paraśa lāgaoye eka mūl-se bikāya*

The meaning of this verse is that if these four classes of man do not perform loving service to Śrī Hari, then they are only leather-smiths, all of them, eyeing varieties of skins. Eight kinds of metal can be used to make a



mūrti, and when a *mūrti* is sold, its value depends on how much of each kind of metal is present in it. But as soon as the *mūrti* is transformed by a touchstone, it inherits a single, high value. In the same way, when people from different *varṇas* engage in loving service to Śrī Hari, they all belong to one caste; they all become *brāhmaṇas*.

The quintessential instruction of all scriptures in this regard is that only those who in fact have the nature of a *brāhmaṇa* are fit to be addressed as such. On the other hand, if a person does not have any of the nature or qualities of a *brāhmaṇa*, he is viewed as a *sūdra*.

The Third Lesson – Ideal Service to Śrī Guru

Aspiring devotees who yearn to engage in sincere *bhajana* should forever strive to follow the ideal of service to *śrī guru* that was exemplified by Satyakāma. If a person's sole concern is his own personal pleasure and leisure, then he cannot possibly immerse his mind in fully serving his *guru* from the core of his being.

When someone develops the conception that, “I belong to Gurudeva, and everything is an instrument to be used in service to him,” then he experiences a feeling of natural affinity and possessiveness for anything connected with his *guru*. When that insight awoke in Satyakāma's heart, he exhibited tenacity in dedicating himself exclusively to expanding his *gurudeva's* grandeur.

Many individuals leave their homes, claiming that they moved to the *maṭha* to perform *hari-bhajana*. In reality, however, they remain unconcerned with thoughts of service and just make a show of chanting *harināma* – which in their state of consciousness is riddled with worthless desires (*anarthas*) – and just indulge in sloth. Satyakāma did not follow that path. Rather, with solid determination, he nurtured a herd of four hundred malnourished cows with so much care that it flourished to a thousand strong, and only then did he return to his *guru's* home.

By serving his *guru* earnestly and without duplicity, he became fit to realize the truth about the Supreme Lord (*bhagavat-tattva*). “*Hari-bhakti āche yānra sarva-deva bandhu tānra* – he who has devotion for Śrī Hari has all the gods as his friends.” Therefore, in accordance with the intentions of *ācārya* Gautama Ṛṣi,


the demigods instructed Satyakāma on the science of the absolute.

Considering one's own efforts and capacities sufficient for understanding everything or considering oneself to be above accepting any further instruction from anyone are mentalities that almost inevitably lead to the downfall of a living entity engaged in the stage of spiritual practice. On the strength of his *guru's* grace, Satyakāma realized that when knowledge about a *mantra* is personally imparted to the disciple by the *guru*, it swiftly yields the fruit of perfection. Consequently, he heard the science of the Absolute Truth a second time, directly from his own *śrī guru*. To receive instruction and guidance directly from one's *śrī gurudeva* is the method advised by scripture. In the absence of that, one may resort to association with the scriptures as a form of saintly company.

The Fourth Lesson – The Guru and Disciple

If *śrī gurudeva*, who bestows divine knowledge, is pleased with the disciple, then he achieves all perfection, along with knowledge of established truths of the Vedas and Vedānta. To pursue the most intimate ambition of *gurudeva* is the only way to please him. For a sincere disciple, who is forever surrendered to *śrī guru*, nothing in this world is out of reach. Only a simple, earnest servant of *śrī guru* is fit to benefit the people of the world by his conduct and teachings. He alone becomes a *paramahansa ācārya* (preceptor in the final stage of spiritual perfection) and vows to propagate the message and inner ambition of *śrī gurudeva*.

The vox populi does not decide one's eligibility to enter the renounced order of life, nor does it decide one's eligibility to enter the *paramahansa* stage beyond it, which transcends all societal castes and roles. One's eligibility depends solely on one's spiritual progress, and this is a permanent fact. The relationship between *guru* and disciple is eternal, and the succession of bona fide *gurus* and their disciples, and the flow of divine knowledge therein, is also, therefore, eternal. In fact, there is no division between the relationship of a single *guru* and his disciple and the entire succession. Rather, they are as inseparable as a body and its limbs.

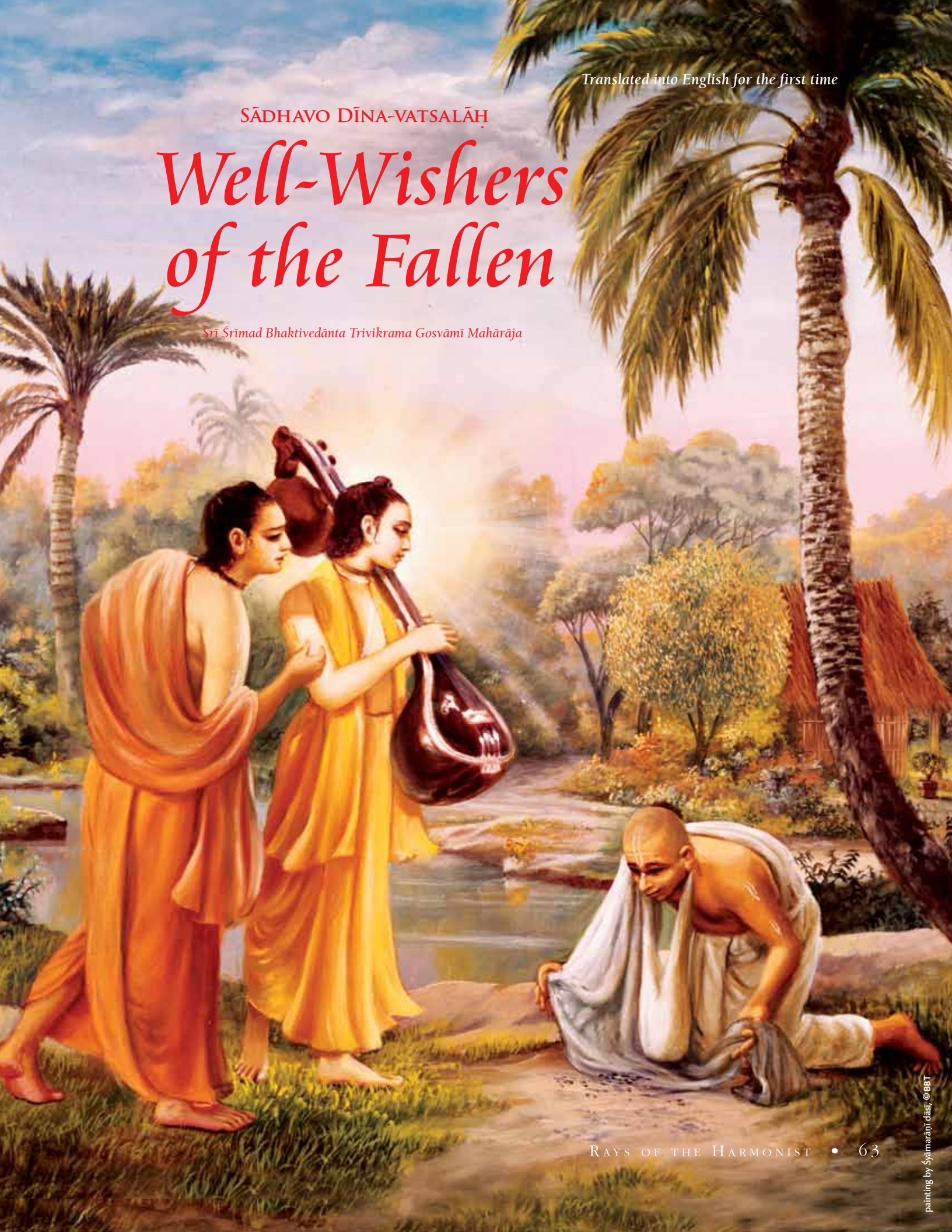
 Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*
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SĀDHAVO DĪNA-VATSALĀḤ

Well-Wishers of the Fallen

Srī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja





One day, the exceptionally kind and compassionate Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī was walking through the forest on his way to Prayāga. He planned to bathe there, in the confluence of the three sacred rivers Gāṅga, Yamunā and Sarasvatī. Along the way he saw a deer lying on the forest floor. The deer was writhing in agony, for it had been pierced by an arrow and its legs broken. This sight struck Nārada’s heart with intense pangs of grief.

Not too far ahead from where the deer lay, he spotted a wild boar, fallen and writhing upon the ground in the same way. The boar had also been left to convulse in pain, also pierced by an arrow and its legs broken. All of this perturbed Nārada greatly. Again, a short distance away, he found a rabbit in the same condition. His heart, enveloped by the pain of those living beings, became extremely restless.

As he proceeded further, he spotted the man who was responsible for such cruelty. Behind a tree stood a dark complexioned hunter. His eyes were red and his figure was fearsome and wild. He looked like the lord of death. He had already fixed an arrow to his bow and taken aim at his next prey. Completely unable to remain apathetic, Nārada left the path that led to the confluence of the three sacred rivers and walked into the forest toward the hunter. The hunter’s prey, a couple of deer, were startled when they saw Nārada coming and fled.

The hunter began boiling with fury. He truly wanted to shout profanities at Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī, but the influence

of that greatest of sages was so powerful that he realized he was completely unable to do so. Instead, when he opened his mouth, he spoke as follows, “O respected sir,” he began, “for what purpose were you compelled to leave your path and walk towards me? Upon seeing you, the deer, who were my prey, have fled.”

“My dear boy,” Nārada said, “I lost my way, and came here to ask you for directions. But I also came to you hoping you would answer a doubt I have. Along the path, I saw a deer, a boar and other animals writhing in pain. Their flesh had been pierced by arrows and their legs crushed. Would I be right to assume they, too, were your prey?”

“Yes,” admitted the hunter. “You are right. They were my prey.”

Nārada said, “You are a hunter, so your occupation is to give chase to animals. But why do you not swiftly end the lives of your prey? Why do you leave them half dead, unable to leave their bodies? What is your purpose in such actions?”

“Please hear me, good sir,” said the hunter. “My name is Mṛgāri, and I have learned my hunting skills from my father. I wound my prey so severely that they cannot flee, and in that half dead state, they simply lie writhing in agony. This sight fills me with a kind of happiness that I cannot experience if I kill them swiftly.”

Śrī Nārada, who is most compassionate, listened to the hunter’s explanation and then spoke to him.

“I want to beg something from you,” he said, humbly folding his hands in front of the hunter, “Will you give me what I ask?”

The hunter became very pleased upon hearing this, and a genuine desire arose in his heart to serve Śrī Nārada, who was such an exalted saint. So he replied, “If you so need, you can take the fallen deer or other animals for yourself. Or, if you want deer-skin or tiger-skin, come to my home. I will give you whatever you want.”

Spiritual Merit

If we contemplate the immense benediction this hunter was about to receive that day, by dint of some unknown spiritual merit (*sukṛti*) of his, we will become awestruck by his good fortune. In a past life, he certainly must have served a devotee of the Lord or the Lord Himself, perhaps without even knowing it. As a result, on that day, he was conversing with such an exalted devotee of the Lord as Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī. Moreover, he was feeling genuinely inclined to serve him. Because of all this, he was soon to achieve ultimate auspiciousness.

It is written in scripture:

*bhaktis tu bhagavad-bhakta
saṅgena pariṣyate
sat-saṅgaḥ prāpyate pumbhiḥ
sukṛtair-pūrva-saṅcitaiḥ*

Bṛhat-nāradaīya Purāṇa (4.33)

Bhakti becomes manifest by the association of the pure devotees of Bhagavān (*sādhu-saṅga*). Such *sādhu-saṅga* is attained by the influence of previously accumulated spiritual merit (*sukṛti*).

Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī personally accepted this hunter’s fate as his own responsibility, for the hunter had accumulated some spiritual merit.

“I do not want the deer, its skin, or anything else,” explained Nārada. “I just want that from this day on, you will not leave all the animals you hunt half-dead. Instead, slay them swiftly, so that they leave their bodies immediately.”

When the hunter heard this, he said, “You are asking this of me, but what is in it for you? And why do you forbid me to leave the animals half-dead? Please explain to me what is wrong with leaving them like that?”

Śrī Nārada replied, “To render the creatures unable to die is to inflict much more pain on them than

outright killing them. To cause another entity distress is to guarantee that you yourself will consequently experience the same suffering. Hence, causing pain to others is tantamount to arranging the same suffering they experience for yourself. Just imagine, due to misunderstanding the laws of life, all the creatures you have killed, shall kill you, one birth after another for the same reason.

In the Vedas it has been said: “*mā hiṁsyāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni* – no living entity should be made to suffer.” And Manu, the father of mankind, has similarly said: “*māṁ sa khādati amūtra yasya māṁsam-ihādmyaham* – Whoever eats me, I shall later kill and take his flesh.”

The hunter had been a merciless and extremely savage person his entire life, but now, deeply affected by his encounter with such an exalted devotee of Bhagavān, faith in the inescapable reality of the fearsome consequences of his sins developed within his heart. As he began to vividly contemplate the many wicked deeds he had committed in his lifetime and then the inevitable, torturous punishments he was fated to suffer for them, he became engulfed by intense anxiety.

He cried out, “Ever since my childhood I have been killing living entities. There must be no end to the sinful reactions I have incurred. Is there any way to save me? Now I surrender myself at your sacred feet. Please save me from the reactions to my countless sins.”

When Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi heard the hunter’s earnest prayer to be delivered from his terrible fate, he said, “If you do what I tell you, and maintain your trust in me, you can be delivered from the reactions of all your sins.”

“I shall do whatever you say,” the hunter said.

The following points should be noted:

First of all, spiritual piety (*sukṛti*) is essential. It is impossible to meet saintly personalities – the devotees of the Lord – without it, but it can be acquired knowingly or unknowingly. As a result of the hunter’s previously acquired spiritual merit, Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi came to him, but his faith in Nārada was not roused simply by seeing him. In fact, he had at first even wished to abuse Nārada with foul language, yet after speaking with him, the hunter developed faith in him. Therefore, although it is enjoined *ādaḥ śraddhā* – at first there is faith – it actually implies *ādaḥ sukṛti* – at first there must be *sukṛti*. Only after someone has spiritual merit is this faith (*śraddhā*) attained. Thereafter, he attains the company of *sādhus* (saints), and along with that the inclination to follow their instructions is born.



painting by Śyāmarāṅī dāsr, ©BBT

“He truly wanted to shout profanities at Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī, but the influence of that greatest of sages was so powerful that he realized he was completely unable to do so.”

Wealth is a hindrance to one's eternal well-being

Secondly, through the statements of scripture or through their own words, the *sādhus* sever our attachments to all that is mundane and illusory. So in order to rescue the hunter from sensualistic life, Śrī Nārada ordered him to break his bow, which was the root of his futile pursuits (*anarthas*) as well as the principal means of his livelihood. For a soul entangled in the clutches of *anarthas*, wealth causes far greater harm than high birth, erudition, or physical beauty.

Śrī Nārada once said:

*na hy anyo juṣato joṣyān
buddhi-bhraṁṣo rajo-guṇaḥ
śrī-madād ābhijātyādir
yatra strī dyūtam āsavaḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.10.8)

Of all temptations for enjoyment, the allure of becoming rich bewilders a man's intelligence even more than his physical beauty, high birth or erudition. When an ignorant person is privileged with wealth, he squanders it indulging in wine, women and gambling.

Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa said:

*yasyāham anuḡrṇāmi
hariṣye tad-dhanaṁ śanaiḥ
tato 'dhanam tyajanty asya
svajanā duḥkha-duḥkṛitam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.88.8)

When I wish to show someone special favour, I slowly strip him of his wealth. Eventually, his relatives and friends abandon him for being poverty-stricken. Thus he suffers one calamity after another.

Śrī Śaṅkarācārya has also explained that wealth is a hindrance to one's eternal well-being:

*yāvad-vitopārjan-asaktaḥ
tāvan-nija-parivāro-raktaḥ
paścā-jīvati jarjara-dehe
vārta ko 'pi na pṛcchati gehe*

As long as a man is committed to earning money, his family loves him. But later, as his body dwindles with age and he becomes incapable of working, everyone in his house ceases talking to him or even taking care of him.

“The truth of the words ‘*ye yata patita haya, tava dayā tata tāya* – the more fallen someone is, the more mercy is available for him’ exists forever in *śrī guru-tattva*, which is represented by Śrī Nārada.”



Chanting the holy names of Śrī Bhagavān is the most beneficial spiritual path mankind can pursue, but the intoxication of wealth is a formidable obstruction on that path. Therefore, Śrī Kuntī-devī once said:

*janmaīśvarya-śruta-śrībhir
edhamāna-madaḥ pumān
naivārhaty-abhidhātum vai
tvām akiñcana-gocaram*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.8.26)

You are easily attainable for those who are exhausted with this mundane world. On the other hand, no one who has become intoxicated by the four privileges of prestigious birth, wealth and luxury, erudition and physical beauty can approach You with true sincerity.

On account of all this, Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī ordered the hunter to break his own bow, thus terminating his sinful method of earning a livelihood and encouraging him instead to adopt the life of a mendicant. That was the only way the hunter would be able to experience the Lord’s kindness and to realize his own insignificance.

As long as someone remains attached to forbidden, sinful activities, which are driven by passion and ignorance, his consciousness will never awaken to the reality of the *sādhus*, the scriptures and the Lord:

*yāvat pāpaistu malinānī hṛdayānī tāvad-eva hi
na śāstre satya-buddhiḥ syāt sad-buddhiḥ sad-guro tathā*

As long as one’s heart is polluted by sin, his intelligence cannot have faith that the scriptures and *sad-guru* are real.

In the matter of attaining one’s eternal, spiritual well-being (*paramārthā*), poverty is indeed favourable. Mundane prosperity and sensualism are never favourable in the life of a person practising *bhakti*. And it will never suffice to simply feign spiritual realization and perfection; one must genuinely rise to the platform of spiritual realization. Material wealth and other temptations can never delude or intoxicate a *siddha-puruṣa*, or perfected soul, but if one who has not realized perfection attempts

to mimic the behaviour of a realized personality, it will only result in his own ruination.

*naitat samācarej jātu
manasāpi hy anīśvaraḥ
vinaśyaty ācaran mauḍhyād
yathārudro ’bdhi-jam viṣam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.33.30)

If an ordinary person foolishly mimics the behaviour of a powerful master or god, he will ruin himself, just as drinking an ocean of poison as Śiva once did would annihilate any ordinary, mortal man.

We have heard that when someone is still in the early stages of chanting, he constantly commits offences to the Lord’s holy names. As a result of those offences, he verily obtains profuse material wealth and fame as well as abundant opportunities for sense enjoyment. And he even sees this affluence and recognition as signs of the Lord’s favour on him. If he fails to understand that this opulence is the result of his offences and in fact an obstacle in the path of *bhakti*, and if he does not act cautiously, then the chances of him becoming *trnad api sunica* – that is, more humble than a blade of grass – are very low, and rather undermined. In this way, impediments to chanting the pure form of the holy name (*śuddha-nāma*) arise.

In actuality, no amount of wealth or luxury can delude a self-realized soul, nor can they intoxicate him with vanity. Only one who is still gripped by *anarthas* should be fearful of these things. Supreme auspiciousness for *sādhakas* who are affected by sensual urges lies in poverty and being totally without possessions. Hence, abandoning all riches and opulence in favour of voluntary poverty shall prove propitious for the devotees.

We have heard from the accounts of Śrī Nārada Ṛṣī’s life how that most gracious, universal *guru*, showered his mercy upon the two sons of Kuvera. He demonstrated that once the vanity of wealth is eradicated, a person earns an eligibility for *bhakti*. In Nārada Ṛṣī’s life history, we find that he never accepted a wealthy or famous disciple out of greed for wealth and opulence.



“Genuine *gurus* are totally above envy. It is impossible for them to feel envy of another’s competence as *guru*. Śrī Nārada and other genuine *gurus* are never seen contesting each other, scuffling over any highly educated, honourable, or wealthy person, hoping to make him their disciple.”

The truth of the words “*ye yata patita haya, tava dayā tata tāya* – the more fallen someone is, the more mercy is available for him” exists forever in *śrī gurutattva*, which is represented by Śrī Nārada. *Gurus* like Śrī Nārada never exploit their disciples for money on the pretext of bestowing eternal well-being upon them, as many corrupt *gurus* are known to do. Such flaws, which are self-evident in the behaviour of bogus *gurus*, cannot be found in the character of *gurus* like Śrī Nārada. The Purāṇas state, “*guruvo bahavaḥ śiṣya-vittāpahārakāḥ* – many *gurus* exploit their disciples for wealth.”

Genuine *gurus* are totally above envy. It is impossible for them to feel envy of another’s competence as *guru*. Śrī Nārada and other genuine *gurus* are never seen contesting each other, scuffling over any highly educated, honourable, or wealthy person, hoping to make him their disciple. On the contrary, when they meet another *guru*, especially one of a similar disposition and calibre, the profound camaraderie they feel for one another becomes evident.

Whole-hearted Surrender to Guru

Some days later, Śrī Nārada went to see Mṛgāri, who had now become a penniless mendicant, in order to give him his association. On his way to Mṛgāri’s straw hut, he was pleasantly surprised to meet his friend Parvata Ṛṣi. Overjoyed and thinking of his disciple’s welfare, Nārada begged Parvata Ṛṣi to accompany him. Parvata Ṛṣi affectionately accepted his invitation and together they headed toward the hunter’s cottage.

Meanwhile, Mṛgāri developed genuine faith in Śrī Nārada, his *gurudeva*, for he had beheld with his own eyes the glory and divine potency of Śrī Nārada. Nārada Gosvāmī had instantly healed the deer and other two animals that Mṛgāri had shot and all but killed the day they had met, and let them run off into the forest. And from that day on, people had miraculously began bringing him a large amount of food every day to maintain him, without his ever asking.

Because of these divine phenomena, Mṛgāri became staunchly and unpretentiously inspired to serve his *gurudeva*, Śrī Nārada. Without anyone urging him, he whole-heartedly surrendered himself to his *gurupāda-padma* and attained a state of fixed dedication to him. He never succumbed to making a shallow or pretentious show of affection for Nārada or submission to him, or to

any other form of deceit. Consequently, he longed for the company of his *śrī gurupāda-padma*, and became increasingly restless to see him moment by moment.

And so, on the day Nārada came with his friend Parvata Ṛṣi to visit him, his heart brimmed with such intense love that as soon as he saw his *śrī gurupāda-padma* approaching from a distance, he started to run toward him, anxious to fall prostrated at his lotus feet. However, since a multitude of ants covered the path, he could not run. Being very careful not to kill or injure a single ant, he began to tread most carefully, using his cloth to gently sweep them from the path. Having done so, he prostrated himself before his *śrī gurupāda-padma*. When Śrī Nārada saw the extraordinary kindness and non-violence that had appeared in one who had once been such fearsome and heartless hunter, he said:

*ete na hy adbhutā vyādha tavāhimsādayo guṇāḥ
hari-bhaktau pravṛttā ye na te syuḥ para-tāpinaḥ*

Skanda Purāṇa



“The meaning of this verse is that once a person attains *bhakti* for Śrī Hari, the desire to kill or hurt anyone, even a tiny ant or an insect, will not remain in his heart.”

O Hunter, it is not at all remarkable that you have developed such good qualities like non-violence, for those who earnestly take up devotion to Śrī Hari never wish to inflict pain on others.

The meaning of this verse is that once a person attains *bhakti* for Śrī Hari, the desire to kill or hurt anyone, even a tiny ant or an insect, will not remain in his heart. Therefore, those who wish to attain *bhakti* completely avoid violence, even in the matter of eating and so forth.

By the Grace of Śrī Guru

Mṛgāri respectfully seated Śrī Nārada Gosvāmī and Parvata Muni on *kuśa* grass mats within his courtyard. He washed their feet and drank the water, sprinkling some of it on his head, and then began chanting the names of Kṛṣṇa with great love. As he chanted and danced in front of his *guru*, his body trembled, his hairs stood on end, and he began weeping. Beholding the hunter’s remarkable transformation and pure love of God, Parvata Muni was wonderstruck by the glory of Śrī Nārada’s supernatural power to bestow divine love of God upon the living entities.

He addressed Śrī Nārada as follows:

*aho dhanyo 'si devarṣe kṛpayā yasya tat-kṣaṇāt
nīco 'py utpulako lebhe lubdhako ratim acyute*

Skanda Purāṇa

Aho, Nārada Muni! You are extolled as the sage among gods. By your grace, even a lowborn hunter can instantly develop ecstatic symptoms like horripilation and become attached to the Lord.

Thus it is seen that *prema-bhakti* is attainable by the effect of saintly association. Material gain, adoration and fame do not find a place, in any way, in the heart of a person who has such divine company; this is certain.

Even as the bogus *guru* instructs his disciple on the topic of *guru-bhakti*, it is unbearable for him to contemplate to what extent he is actually qualified to be a *guru*. Indeed, there is nothing more painful for an artificial *guru* to contemplate. Therefore, we feel the utmost honour for the following words: “*durlabha sad-gurur devi śiṣya-santāpa-hārakaḥ* – O Pārvatī-devī, rare is a bona fide *guru* who can truly end the suffering of his disciples.”

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*
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vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhir

Continuously Hear About Rāsa-līlā

An explanation of the commentaries of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Originally spoken in English, 19 February, 1994,
at Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Mathurā

*vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ
śraddhānvit'nuśṛṇuyād atha varṇayed yaḥ
bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya kāmam
hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoty acireṇa dhīraḥ*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (10.33.39)

vikrīḍitam – the playful pastimes; *vraja-vadhūbhir* – with the newly married girls of Vraja; *idam* – this; *ca* – and; *viṣṇoḥ* – by Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the all-pervading Lord; *śraddhā-anvitaḥ* – imbued with faith; *anuśṛṇuyāt* – continually hears; *atha* – or; *varṇayet* – describes; *yaḥ* – one who; *bhaktim* – devotional service; *parām* – supremely transcendental; *bhagavati* – unto the Supreme Personality of Godhead; *pratilabhya* – obtaining; *kāmam* – mundane lust; *hṛt* – of the heart; *rogam* – the disease; *āśu* – quickly and easily; *apahinoti* – sends far away; *acireṇa* – without delay; *dhīraḥ* – sober.

A sober person who, with full faith, continuously hears or describes Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa's transcendental *rāsa-līlā* with the damsels of Vraja will first attain *parā-bhakti* for the lotus feet of Bhagavān. Thereafter, he will quickly conquer his senses and become forever free from the disease of the heart – worldly lust.

Vikrīḍitam vraja-vadhūbhir idam ca viṣṇoḥ. The *gopīs* are Kṛṣṇa's *vadhūs*. A *vadhū* is a young, newly married girl. A newly married girl will be so careful not to act shamefully. She will not talk very much, she will look very beautiful and she will have so many other qualities. The *gopīs* are described in this way.

If anyone listens with *śraddhā* (deep faith) to descriptions of the unprecedented and unparalleled *rāsa-līlā*, he will receive *prema-bhakti* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa within his heart. The word *anuśṛṇuyāt* indicates continuous hearing. The word *varṇaye* means "to explain". First he will engage in continuous *śravaṇa*, or hearing, and then he will engage in continuous *kīrtana*, or singing about and describing this pastime. And after that he will be able to engage in continuous *smaraṇa*, or remembrance.

The word *anumodana* means appreciation. Even if someone cannot engage in continuous *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa* (auditory reception, vocal explication and mental recollection) of *rāsa-līlā*, yet still feels appreciation for it, then he, too, will receive *prema-bhakti*, the topmost *bhakti*, for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, within the core of his heart. First *prema-bhakti*, the most elevated form of devotional service (*parā-bhakti*), will enter his heart and then, afterward, *hṛd-rogam āśv apahinoti* – the disease of the heart will be driven out very quickly.

The term *hṛd-roga*, or "disease of the heart", primarily indicates lust, or *kāma*. It also means attraction to any illusory entity (*mayika-vastu*), including mundane adoration, name and fame, and every other attractive feature of this world. A man's love for his dog, for a girl, for his father, mother, wife or anyone else, is included in the term *hṛd-roga*. All forms of attraction to anything in this world – the attainment of residence in the heavenly sphere, sense enjoyment and so on – are included in the term *hṛd-roga*. But *hṛd-roga* especially refers to lust, or *kāma*.

So, at first, *prema-bhakti*, the topmost form of devotional service (*parā-bhakti*), will enter a person's heart, and then, after that, he will forever be *jīvendriya*, the conqueror of his senses. All forms of mundane attraction will permanently go far away and he will happily and continuously engage in *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana* and *smaraṇa* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's *rāsa-līlā*. Then, at last, he will attain residence in the abode of that topmost *bhakti*, Goloka Vṛndāvana.



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Śrī Kṛṣṇa is *līlā-puruṣottama*, the supreme personality of all *līlā*, and the *gopīs* are *līlā-puruṣottamā*. The meaning of *puruṣottamā* is *līlā parā śakti*, the supreme potency of all *līlā*. And the *rāsa-līlā* between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* is the best of all *līlās*, in which every other *līlā* may arise. For example, *dola-līlā*, wherein Śrī Kṛṣṇa plays with the *gopīs* on beautiful swings, has so many special features of its own. In this *līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa wants to embrace the *gopīs*, but they are too shy to embrace Him in front of each other. However, when the swing they are seated upon is pushed higher and higher, the *gopīs* become afraid and tightly embrace Him. All the special features of this pastime and all the features of hundreds of thousands of other *līlās* are included within *rāsa-līlā*.

As such, *rāsa-līlā* is known as *cakravartī* – the emperor of all *līlā*. One who hears about *rāsa-līlā*, and even one who only longs to hear about it, is to be known as the *cakravartī* among all those who listen to *hari-kathā*. One who explains this *līlā* and sings about it is to be known as the *cakravartī* among all those who explain the pastimes of Śrī-Kṛṣṇa. But what is the proof of this? The proof is also *cakravartī*, for this explanation is given by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.

If someone longs to hear about these pastimes, his longing is also to be known as *cakravartī*. By continuously



hearing Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s *rāsa-līlā*, he will become qualified to explain it. And by continuously explaining it and hearing about it, *rāsa-līlā* will automatically appear in his heart, without any tiresome endeavour. Such proof of the efficacy of this process is the *cakravartī* of all proof.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura further clarifies that by hearing about this *rāsa-līlā* and by explaining it; by remembering it and even by *anumodana*, appreciating it, a man will obtain *gopī-prema*. First he will enter *rāgāmuga-bhakti*¹ in *gopī-bhāva*, then he will achieve *svarūpa-siddhi*² in that same *bhāva* and at last *vāstu-siddhi*³. And in *gopī-bhāva* he will directly join in that same *rāsa-līlā* with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*. This is certain. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has stressed this point by using the affix *nu* – surely.



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- 1 Devotional service following in the footsteps of an eternal associate in Vraja is called *rāgāmuga-bhakti*.
 - 2 The perfection of realizing the inherent form of one’s own soul is called *svarūpa-siddhi*.
 - 3 The attainment of one’s eternal, fully spiritual body, which is completely untouched by the material energy, is called *vāstu-siddhi*.

If a person never hears *rāsa-līlā kathā*, his birth is useless. He should die, for he is actually a *nāma-aparādhī* and a *vaiṣṇava-aparādhī*. This is a very strong statement, and although it is beneficial for all to hear it, not all are qualified. Previously, when we were in Jagannātha Purī during the month of Puruṣottama, I expressed the same truth Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura is explaining here. It is essential to hear all of these truths, for one who fails to understand them is bound to become a *nāma-aparādhī*.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has also commented on this verse. In his commentary he explains that, through this verse, Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī has given blessings to all *śrautas* (listeners) and all *bhaktas* who are to come after him – to all those who will explain this *rāsa-līlā kathā*, to all those who will hear it, to all those who will remember it, and also to those who will have appreciation for it. He has given blessings to all of them.

What blessings has he given? With the words *bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya*, Śrīla Śukadeva has blessed all those who hear, speak, remember, and appreciate this *kathā* to surely attain that *parā bhakti*. The term *parā-bhakti*, or the topmost *bhakti*, refers to *prema-bhakti*. But which form of *prema-bhakti*? *Vātsalya-prema*? *Sakhya-prema*? No. They will surely

attain *mādhurya-bhāva*. They will become *gopīs*, just as the personified Śrutis did. But while the personified Śrutis took a very, very long time to attain the positions of *gopīs*, those who receive Śrīla Śukadeva's blessings will attain *mādhurya-bhāva* in a very short time.

If you hear about, explain, remember and appreciate these pastimes then you will obtain the *darśana* and blessings of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, as well as Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī and Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura.



In his commentary, Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī quotes a verse from *Gītā*:

*brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā
na śocati na kāṅkṣati
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu
mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parām*

Bhagavad-gītā (18.54)

A person thus situated in transcendence becomes fully joyful. He never laments or desires anything. Being equally disposed to all beings, he attains *bhakti* to Me, which is blessed with the symptoms of *prema*.

Those who are *brahma-bhūtaḥ* constantly remember *brahma*, *brahma*, *brahma*. They are no longer in the grips of *māyā*, which primarily refers to mundane lust. All their desires have been removed and all their *anarthas* have disappeared. Such personalities do not desire anything. *Brahma-bhūtaḥ prasannātmā*. They are always *prasanna*, or pleased, since they are *ātmā-rāma* (one who rejoices in the self) and do not crave anything in the entire world. And they never experience any regret or sorrow. If they lose something, they never hanker (*kāṅkṣati*) for it.

Then, *sarveṣu bhūteṣu*, they are equal to all. At that stage, *mad-bhaktiṁ labhate parā*, they may attain *parā bhakti* for Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Here, one's progress toward the attainment of *parā-bhakti* is the opposite of what we have previously discussed, for it is in relation to *brahma-jñānīs*. This verse describes that such *brahma-jñānīs* will first have to conquer lust and all of their *anarthas*. They will have to give up all their desires, which will take a long, long time. Only then will they attain *parā bhakti*, as Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī or Sanaka, Sananda,

Sanātana and Sanat-kumāra did. And by this method, even if one attains *prema-bhakti*, it will only develop to the point of *sānta-rasa*.

But in the verse beginning *vikrīditam*, we find that first *parā-bhakti* enters the heart and then lust and all other *anarthas* will automatically disappear. Those who follow the process that is described in the verse beginning *brahma-bhūta prasannātmā* will have to labour so much to become free from lust and all other *anarthas*. And they may not succeed. Among hundreds of thousands of *brahma-jñānīs*, perhaps one will succeed. There is no guarantee. But through the process described in the verse beginning *vikrīditam*, anyone with *śraddhā* is qualified, and they do not have to make any laborious endeavour. They must simply hear, *anuśṛṅṣyād*, and the topmost *prema-bhakti*, *gopī-prema*, will enter their heart, what to speak of *sānta-rasa*. This gives us great hope.



The words *idam ca* indicate that we will not only enter *rāsa-līlā*, but also so many other varieties of *vilāsa* like it. That we will be so fortunate is our greatest hope. The word *idam* (in this) specifically indicates *rāsa-līlā*, the apex of all *līlā*, while *ca* (also) indicates all other *līlās* like it, such as *holi-līlā*, wherein Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* battle each other with water that has been died all different colours; *dola-līlā*, or swing pastimes; *jala-līlā*, or pastimes of playing in the water; *gamana-līlā*, wherein the *gopīs* wander about with Śrī Kṛṣṇa while holding His hands; and all others. He will enter *māna-līlā*, the pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa trying to counteract the angry jealousy of the *gopīs*; He will enter *dāna-līlā*, wherein Śrī Kṛṣṇa harasses the *gopīs* for taxes before he allows them to pass by Him; He will enter *kuñja-līlā*, wherein Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* play together in beautifully decorated forest gardens; He will enter every *līlā*. What great fortune he shall attain!

Why has the name Viṣṇu, the all-pervasive one, been used in *idam ca viṣṇoḥ*? During *rāsa-līlā*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa has manifested Himself beside hundreds of thousands of *gopīs*, expanding one form for each of them. Viṣṇu, in this context, refers to that Kṛṣṇa, that Viṣṇu, not the Viṣṇu who resides within each atom of the material creation.



Continuing his explanation, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura gives an elucidation of the term *śraddhānvitah*, or “imbued (*anvitah*) with complete faith (*śraddhā*)”.

*‘śraddhā’-śabde – viśvāsa kahe sudṛḍha niścaya
kṛṣṇe bhakti kaile sarva-karma kṛta haya*

Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā (22.62)

The word *śraddhā* means immovable trust that by engaging in *kṛṣṇa-bhakti* one will undoubtedly fulfil all of one’s duties, on every level.

In this context, *śraddhā* refers to the conviction that if one continuously hears *rāsa-līlā*, continuously explains it, and continuously remembers it and appreciates it, then he will attain *gopī-prema* and eventually attain the position of a *gopī*. The words *sudṛḍha niścaya* indicate the immovable determination that “surely it will come to pass”. If one is imbued with this kind of conviction then he is *śraddhā-anvitah*.

In relation to a man who possesses such *śraddhā*, the word *nu* has been used which means “certainly”. In other words, those who possess this kind of *śraddhā* will certainly attain *gopī-prema* and enter into *rāsa-līlā* with Śrī Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs*; of this there is no doubt. Also it is explained that if someone has faith in his *guru* and faith in *śāstra* then his conviction shall be called *śraddhā*. This is the verdict of *śāstra*, of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī.



If someone is deeply convinced that “surely it will come to pass” and hears *rāsa-līlā kathā* with such conviction, then he is qualified to hear it and will certainly attain *prema-bhakti*. He will attain a form of *prema* in accordance with what the *gopīs* experience in relation to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. First he will attain *kṛṣṇa-prema – bhaktim parām bhagavati pratilabhya* – and then the disease of the heart, which includes all forms of mundane attraction, especially lust for the opposite sex, will go far away.

Lastly, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says *dhīraḥ*. One who is *dhīraḥ* is also described as a *pañḍita*, a deeply realized person, or as *munivara*, the best of saints. Who is being referred to as *dhīra* in


this verse? Those who proclaim, “In *śāstra* it has been written that we should hear *hari-kathā*, and specifically the apex of all *hari-kathā*. By such hearing, the disease of lust will go far away.” One who believes in this fact very firmly is called *dhīra* – a deeply realized, saintly personality.

On the other hand, those who hear this *śloka*, and other *ślokas* in this line, but do not believe in them, are not qualified and the disease of lust will not leave their hearts. They proclaim, “First give up lust and only then can you hear all these topics. First become qualified and then hear about *rāsa-līlā*.” Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has referred to such people as *nāstika* (atheists) and *nāma-aparādhīs* (offenders of the holy name). He explains:

Such people are not *dhīraḥ*, rather they are *nāma-aparādhīs*. But those who very thoughtfully consider Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī’s words and hear *rāsa-līlā kathā* with the conviction that “surely it will come to pass” are truly *dhīraḥ*. Those who do not believe in the precepts of *śāstra*, thinking instead, “We should first become qualified by giving up lust and all other forms of mundane attraction, and only after that should we hear *rāsa-līlā kathā*,” are in fact *nāma-aparādhīs*. They do not believe in the words of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, the words of *śāstra*, and are therefore *nāma-aparādhīs*. Those who do not depend on the words of Śrīla Śukadeva Gosvāmī, with full confidence, are actually atheistic.

Those who have no faith in the precepts of *śāstra* cannot attain *prema* because they are *nāma-aparādhī*. But if someone has even a trace of *śraddhā*, if he hears *rāsa-līlā kathā* he will attain full-blown *śraddhā* and thus become truly qualified to hear. Even for him, *prema* will first enter his heart, and then lust will go, completely and permanently.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī concludes his commentary on this verse by saying, “*He Prabhu! He Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu*, it is You who gave this idea to the world. It is You making me dance inside and outside, inspiring me to explain all of this and to realize those explanations. You are making a person like me, a mundane fool like me, dance internally and externally. Because of the impetus of love for that Caitanya Mahāprabhu, I am writing all of these things.”

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has concluded his own commentary in a similar manner. 

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī

WORLD-TOUR



Mahārāja's

A REPORT OF SOME OF HIS PREACHING ACTIVITIES
FROM APRIL 2009 TO OCTOBER 2009

Svāmī B. V. Mādhava



China

After Gaura Pūrṇimā, on March 29th, Śrīla Gurudeva left from New Delhi for Guangzhou, China. Before Śrīla Gurudeva left for his first world preaching tour in 1996, he made an oath to never, under any circumstance, give up his *sannyāsa* robes. Kṛṣṇa is *bhakta-vatsala*, ever affectionate to His devotees, so He protected Śrīla Gurudeva's vow and, although it is forbidden, we were allowed entrance without changing out of our *sannyāsa* robes by being classified as Indian monks.

Śrīla Gurudeva's preaching in China has some special features. First, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja spread Śrīman Mahāprabhu's message everywhere. Although he never personally travelled to China, by his unlimited mercy and by the causeless mercy of Śrīla Paramgurudeva – *om viṣṇupāda* Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja – Śrīla Gurudeva, in Indian *sannyāsa* dress, engaged in extraordinary preaching in China.

Another special feature of Gurudeva's preaching in China was that Weng Sho Qin was finally able to receive *harināma* and *dīkṣā* from Śrīla Gurudeva, which he had wanted for so long. Although Weng Sho Qin was being hospitalized, the doctor reluctantly allowed him to take the two and a half hour flight to meet Śrīla Gurudeva. Weng Sho Qin's initiated name is Kṛṣṇa-dāsa.

What is so special about this patient that he was able to compel the hospital to let him leave in such poor health?

Kṛṣṇa-dāsa is an extraordinarily famous Buddhist *guru*. He has forty thousand direct disciples, but he is greatly honoured by everyone, including the doctors. He has already constructed a beautiful mandira, with seventy rooms, and begun the process of registering it with the government. Buddhist *gurus* are very highly respected in China. Once Kṛṣṇa-dāsa completes the registration process, the Chinese government will lift the present ban against Indian monks in China, and Śrīla Gurudeva will personally install deities there. Śrīla Gurudeva has named the first Gauḍīya Maṭha in China Śrī Śyāma-brahma Mandira.

How wonderful was Śrīla Gurudeva's preaching tour in China!

Nepal

Śrīla Gurudeva returned to India for Śrī Rādhāṣṭamī after one week of very successful preaching in Nepal. He mainly



Above photos: © Sulatā dāśī

discussed these four subjects: the purpose of performing devotional service, even when one is already materially successful; the gradations of devotees according to the level of their devotional service; the reasons Śrī Kṛṣṇa descended upon the earth; and the childhood pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Gurudeva visited different holy places in Nepal and Janakpura, including the world famous Śrī Paśupati-nāthajī, a form of Lord Śiva. This temple is situated on the banks of the most famous river in Nepal, the Bagamati. It has four gates facing the four directions but, just like at Śrī Jagannātha's temple, most pilgrims enter through the Simha-dvāra in the East.

About ten kilometres from there is the temple of Śrī Padmanābha, a large deity of Viṣṇu resting in a lake upon the coils of Śrī Anantadeva. A farmer was once ploughing his field and discovered him there, buried in the ground.

Śrīla Gurudeva had a long cherished desire to visit Janakpura, the appearance place of Śrī Sītā-devī, which was just a twenty-five minute plane trip from the capital city of Nepal. But after so many years of waiting, on the day Śrīla Gurudeva was meant to go there, heavy rains forced all the airplanes in the region to remain on the ground. Śrīla Gurudeva prayed to Śrī Nṛsiṃhadeva, "I travelled all across the world, I visited all the holy places and I preached the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu everywhere I went, but I still haven't visited Śrī Janakpura. O Lord, please instruct Śrī Indradeva to stop the rain."

The rain stopped and the flights were resumed.

Janakpura is the capital of King Janaka's kingdom. In the main temple of Janakpura, Lord Śrī Rāmacandra, the embodiment of perfect moral conduct, is sitting with all of His brothers dressed as grooms. Just below him, Śrī Sītā-devī is sitting with all of her sisters on a single throne dressed as brides.

There are four temples situated at the four corners of the huge *parikramā-mārga* outside the marriage altar. Śrī Rāma and Śrī Sītā-devī are situated in the first, and his brothers and their wives in the others. Śrī Sītā and Rāma, the bride and groom, are served sweet preparations like sweet-rice, to the exclusion of all else, and only Śrī Sītā-devī's girlfriends are allowed to serve them in that *kuñja*; no men are allowed. There, splendidly situated upon their marriage altar, they engage in joking and laughter.

Eighteen kilometres from Janakpura is a village named Dhanuṣā, which means "bow". When Śrī Rāma famously broke the Śiva's enormous bow and won Sītā-

devī's hand in marriage, a piece of the shattered frame of the bow fell in this village, producing a narrow crater and a hole that has always remained full of water, even to this day. No one knows how deep the hole is. We all tried to touch the bottom, but the local priest said, "Even if you try to touch the bottom with a very long rod, you will not find the base."

There is always a huge Pipal tree there. That is, whenever one dries up, a new one automatically begins to grow. The same phenomenon occurs at the birthplace of Śrīman Mahāprabhu as well as in Nandigaon nearby Ayodhyā, the place where Śrī Rāma met Śrī Bharata after the end of the term of His exile.

Gaura-premānande, Hari Hari bol! 🌸

Interviews

China (March 30–April 3)

Lakṣmī-priya dāsī (Hong Kong)

The magic of the festival in China was that we had no money, no *saṅga*, no organization, no experience and no idea of how many people to expect. The only thing we were sure of was that the Chinese security would be watching us. The police had designated the place for the festival and were watching it to see if we were a potential threat. Somehow, money came in and every single expense was covered.

About 250 devotees came to the two day program from all over China. It was exciting to see how enthusiastic they were. Some of them had never seen Śrīla Gurudeva before and they lovingly offered him many gifts. A Buddhist guru became his disciple and developed much enthusiasm for chanting the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*. Gurudeva has a lot of affection for the Chinese devotees. Actually, he asked to come to China; we did not even invite him to come. The festival was so successful. No one had a single complaint.

An Intimate Gathering, Hilo, Hawaii (May 6-8)

Candrakānta dāsī (Hawaii)

With only a few weeks notice, we set out to prepare for the three day Hawaii festival. The devotees felt so much intimacy with Śrīla Gurudeva, just like it was years ago, so it was very sweet. Śrīla Gurudeva spoke on Prahāda-caritra on Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva's appearance day. Two plays were presented, both about Lord Nṛsiṃhadeva's pastimes.





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The first was by the adults. Śrīla Gurudeva specifically requested this play. The second play was performed by the children.

The next day a very small, intimate program was held in the house of Maṅgala didī, Gaurasundara dāsa's mother. Śrīla Gurudeva spoke on the importance of making real progress in our *sādhana*. In the beginning of the class he said, "Everyone here is a devotee." Everyone was inspired to learn and focus more on our goal – pure *bhakti*. We were all very sad when it ended so quickly.

Remembrances of Śrīla Gurudeva in Las Vegas (May 14–19)

By Kundalatā dāsī (Las Vegas)



© Vasantī dāsī

Before the start of the Houston festival, Śrīla Gurudeva mercifully stopped in Las Vegas to rest for a few days in our home. This was his third visit, but the intensity of the experience strikes me anew every time. How can one possibly describe the experience of having Śrīla Gurudeva residing in one's home as a beloved family member? It is a state of unlimited and uninterrupted happiness.

During the occasions in which Gurudeva took a short break from his writing, he wandered from his room into the kitchen and inquired about the status of the cooking from my mother or into living room and gave a brief *darśana*, to the immense delight of everyone in my family. Each morning, my father drove Gurudeva to a local park for his walk. After returning, he sat in the living room and quizzed us on the meaning of important *ślokas*, correcting any mistakes or ambiguities and giving the inner meaning. He sometimes asked my sister to lead a *bhajana* and sang along with us. There is nothing more beautiful than the sound of Śrīla Gurudeva's voice.

Houston (May 23–29) Sītā dāsī (Las Vegas)



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To welcome Śrīla Gurudeva, the devotees stood outside the auditorium with *puṣpāñjali* flowers in their hands, performing ecstatic *kīrtana*. Some had not seen him for many months, and some for an entire year, or perhaps even longer. When his car drove into the parking lot, they rushed toward him with the momentum of a powerful river breaking its dam. Śrīla Gurudeva, wearing a beautiful smile and raising his hand in benediction,

walked into the hall, offering words of welcome and encouragement. Every person felt completely rejuvenated upon receiving his merciful glance.

Śrīla Gurudeva's *hari-kathā* ranged from the histories of Dhruva Mahārāja and Prahlāda Mahārāja to mother Yaśodā binding Kṛṣṇa and the glories of the *gopīs*. On the fourth night he also spoke very sweetly about *śrī rāma-līlā*, in Hindi! He spoke the entire evening, pausing only for the English translation. Śrīla Gurudeva was visibly weeping as he spoke, which moved the entire audience. It was an unforgettable experience for everyone there.

Brighton England (June 1–5) Anāṅga-mohini dāsī (England)

Gurudeva had not been to our house for five years. When Śrīpada Vāna Mahārāja came, it made me realize how much I missed Gurudeva, so I prayed as deeply and intensely as I could for him to come. The very next morning, I heard that he was coming to my house for some rest, and that it was to be a secret!

You think your house is clean, but when you start to prepare for Gurudeva it's a whole other ballgame. You are not just cleaning your house; you are cleaning your consciousness. We started work, but it seemed to be an endless task and, because it was a secret, we could not ask anyone to help. You can never really prepare adequately for Gurudeva. He made our house into a temple, leaving his oil soaked footprints on the untreated wooden floor. After his morning walk, he would give a short *darśana*. It seemed to me that rest for him only meant resting from lectures and *darśanas*, not writing. I've never seen anyone work so hard. In the end, we had a last minute program for the devotees who were not going to Italy.

The Festival of Smiles, Venice, Italy (June 6–12) Prema-mayī dāsī (Oregon)

During the Italy festival, Śrīla Gurudeva made Mahāprabhu so present for all of us through his *hari-kathā* and mood. One day, we all travelled by boat to Venice for *harināma-saṅkīrtana*. The boat held what seemed like an endless flow of devotees. The *kīrtana* soared as we passed other boats and a big cruise ship, capturing everyone's attention as they enthusiastically raised their arms in response to the happiness we carried, which came from the lotus feet of our Gurudeva.



Above photos: © Vasantī dāsī



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At the end of each day, we sang sweet *bhajanas*, inspired by Vijaya-kṛṣṇa Prabhu, which could be heard all the way from the camping grounds. It felt like we really were a family and even devotees who were not such expert *kīrtaniyās* found themselves leading really ecstatic *kīrtana*. Everyone felt such joy and togetherness because they were focused on pleasing Gurudeva and respecting each other. That was the general mood of the whole festival.

Nepal (August 17–23) Rāmacandra dāsa (Nepal)



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I had been thinking how both Śrīla Svāmī Maharāja and Śrīla Gaura Govinda Mahārāja had never visited our country, and how much auspiciousness would come to this land if Śrīla Gurudeva placed his lotus feet on the soil of Nepal. Then Śrīpada Mādhava Maharaja called to tell me that Śrīla Gurudeva was coming to Nepal to take *darśana* of Janakapura, Sītā-devī's birthplace. It had been a strong desire of his since his childhood.

As you can imagine, all the local devotees were elated. We all set about arranging a two day program in Katmandu so that the local people would have the good fortune of hearing Śrīla Gurudeva's *hari-kathā*. Although we didn't have so much time to prepare, the program turned out to be very successful and Śrīla Gurudeva expressed his satisfaction with our humble efforts to please him. For me, the highlight of Śrīla Gurudeva's visit was that fifteen members of my own family, including my elderly mother and father, took initiation. Śrīla Gurudeva *ki jaya!*

Gujurat (September 1–2) Puruṣottama dāsa (Gujurat)



On September 1st, Śrīla Gurudeva made history by inaugurating India's first nano-bio technology plant at Khatraj, Gujarat, which cost the equivalent of three million U.S. dollars to build. The facility produces Receptol, which is made from the first milk a cow gives after the birth of her calf. Receptol can treat and cure over one hundred diseases, like Swine Flue, AIDS and Cancer.

Śrīla Gurudeva worshipped a cow at the plant's entrance, and then toured the plant. He addressed the prominent visiting dignitaries and said that he was extremely happy to see such a large scale, high-tech facility in India, which was designed just to save millions of lives through cow's milk. Gurudeva said that when people all over the world

use Receptol, they will start respecting the cow and stop slaughtering her. And as a consequence they will start to glorify the Vaiṣṇava tradition, for it is so intertwined with Kṛṣṇa and His cows. On September 5th, Śrīla Gurudeva even inaugurated the selling of this product in Mumbai's Airport.

Mumbai (September 5–9) Subāla-sakha dāsa (Mathurā)

Śrīla Gurudeva was supposed to arrive on September 3rd, but then one devotee quietly told me, “Gurudeva may not come.” But he finally did come on the 5th. Śrīla Gurudeva said that it was due to Dr Puruṣottama's natural medicine that he was allowed to come. The day he arrived, we were sitting and waiting. The devotees were hankering to see him and their faces were so bright.

About six-hundred people attended the Sunday program. Śrīla Gurudeva later said that he has come many times to Mumbai, but never before had so many people come to see him. He was very satisfied. On the first night of the program, the devotees were introducing Gurudeva to the audience, extolling Gurudeva's exalted position. “He is so high, a *nitya-siddha parikāra*.” Then Gurudeva spoke. “What they have told is not true. I am not like that. I am just like you, but I have served my *gurudeva* with my whole heart. And because of that, all are listening to me all over the world.”

Bangalore (September 10–14) Veṅu-gopāla dāsa (Canada)

Śrīla Gurudeva once said, “I've wanted to preach in South India for thirty years.” This year he came to Bangalore for the third time. Previously he stayed in the large *āśrama* outside the city, but this year he stayed with Candra-kānta Prabhu's family, above the new city *āśrama*.

In what was probably Gurudeva's *līlā*, an important minister of the Karnataka state government lost his way and ended up meeting Śrīla Gurudeva. He was immediately charmed by him and said he would help him acquire land in the city for a new temple.

One guest speaker, a high court judge, turned out to be an impersonalist. Śrīla Gurudeva gently corrected him: “If the *jīva* is *sanātana* (eternal) as described in *Gītā*, then how can he ever lose his identity by merging with *brahmā*?” The man was humbled and astounded. I don't think he'd ever heard such a clear refutation of impersonalism from such a powerful personality.



Above photos: ©(i)©krsnakarunya



Puri (September 15–24) Brajendra-nandana dāsa (Badger)

For me, two things were especially prominent about Śrīla Gurudeva's trip to Purī. The first was the day he took us to Haridāsa Ṭhākura's *samādhi* and *bhajana-kutira*, Ṭoṭā Gopinātha, Gambhīra, and other holy *tīrthas*. He spoke sweetly and briefly at each place, and his *hari-kathā* helped us develop a sense of the depth of Mahāprabhu's pastime places and the prominent moods there.

The other prominent aspect was his two classes. In the first, he gravely stressed the importance of not hiding anything from *guru*. If we do so, he warned, one day it will explode like a bomb. He spoke extensively on humility and tolerance, Our mood should always be to serve others and we should never criticize anyone.

Śrīpada Bodhāyana Mahārāja, the present *ācārya* of Śrī Gopinātha Maṭha, had personally invited Śrīla Gurudeva to speak at the appearance day celebration of Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and Śrīla Gurudeva honoured that invitation. The following day, devotees from Śrīpada Bodhāyana Mahārāja's *maṭha* came, and after receiving them with due honour, Gurudeva reiterated the points in his previous day's class to them.

Delhi Ratha-yātrā (September 26) Lalitā devī dāsī (Delhi)

The devotees had gone to every nook and cranny of Delhi, inviting one and all to come to the Lord Jagannātha Śobha-yatra, or Rathayātrā. On that day, non-devotees turned into devotees. People came from all castes and communities, all age groups and all religions. Even Muslims and Sikhs came and had *darśana* of a pure devotee, listened to his *hari-kathā*, and took *mahā-prasāda*. In fact, 15,000 plates of *prasāda* were distributed, and at least 20,000 people participated. The chief minister of Delhi, Shiela Diksīt, came and garlanded Śrīla Gurudeva.

When Lord Jagannātha, Baladeva and Subhadrā arrived on Their cart, everyone ran to receive Their mercy. But there was no stampede or quarrel, just simple-hearted enthusiasm. Also, although the procession took up one side of the road, leaving the other half for all the ordinary traffic, there were no accidents. Without the blessings of the pure devotee, this would not have been possible. It was so peaceful and organized that it was obvious that everything was in the hands of a higher power. 🌸

Vande Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-sutā-pada

Song Three of Śrī Gitāvalī by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura

vande śrī vṛṣabhānu-sutā-pada / kamala-nayana locana-sampada (1)

vande – I offer obeisances; *śrī* – divine beauty; *vṛṣabhānu-sutā* – the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja; *pada* – feet; *kamala-nayana* – lotus-eyed one; *locana* – the eyes; *sampada* – the wealth.

O Vṛṣabhānu-sutā Śrī Rādhikā! I offer my obeisances to Your divine, lotus feet. Your lotus feet are the treasured object of lotus-eyed Śrī Kṛṣṇa's vision.

nakhara mukura-jita koṭi sudhākara / mādharma-hṛdaya-cakora manohara (2)

nakhara – toenails; *mukura* – mirror; *jita* – defying; *koṭi* – millions; *sudhākara* – moon; *mādharma* – Mādhava Śrī Kṛṣṇa; *hṛdaya* – heart; *cakora* – cakora bird; *manohara* – enchanting.

O Śrī Rādhē! Glittering like spotless mirrors, Your toenails put to shame the brilliance of millions of moons. Thus Your lotus feet enchant the *cakora* bird of Śrī Mādhava's heart.

kamala-nuta saubhaga-rekhāñcita / lalitādi-kara-yāvaka-rañjita (3)

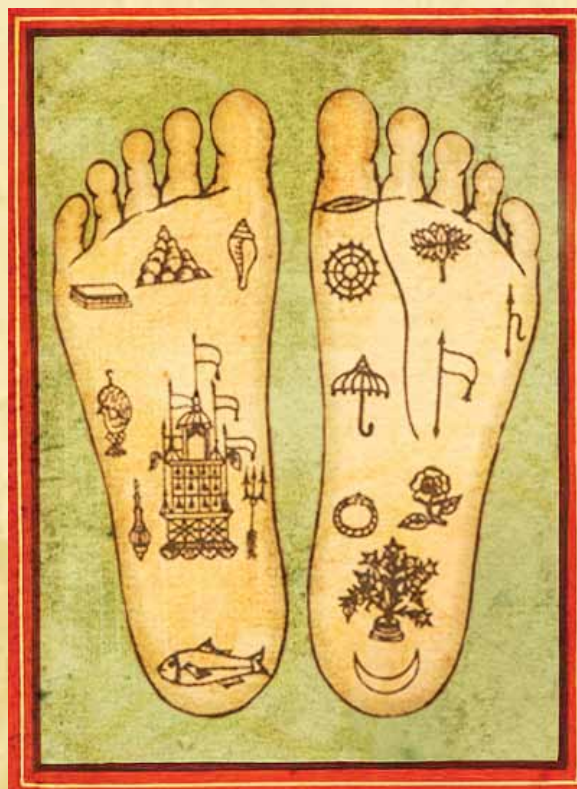
kamalā – Lakṣmī Devī; *nuta* – praised; *saubhaga* – fortune; *rekhā* – marks; *āñcita* – decorated; *lalitā* – Lalitā; *ādi* – and others; *kara* – hands; *yāvaka* – vermilion; *rañjita* – coloured.

Vaikunṭheśvarī Śrī Lakṣmī forever sings the glories of Your lotus feet, which are beautified by the marks of the barley corn, the goad, the lotus and other auspicious symbols and lines. Śrī Lalitā-devī and Your other intimate friends use their bare hands to lovingly anoint the soles of Your lotus feet with fragrant reddish powder.

saṁsevya giridhara mati maṇḍita / rāsa-vilāsa-naṭana-rasa paṇḍita (4)

saṁsevya – by serving; *giridhara* – carrier of mountains; *mati* – mind; *maṇḍita* – ornamented; *rāsa* – the *rāsa* dance; *vilāsa* – playful pastimes; *naṭana* – dance; *rasa* – nectar; *paṇḍita* – one who is adept.

Giridhari Kṛṣṇa carefully serves Your lotus feet, which always decorate His thoughts. Your lotus feet are expert in expanding the flow of *rasa* by dancing in the *rāsa-līlā*. 🌸



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