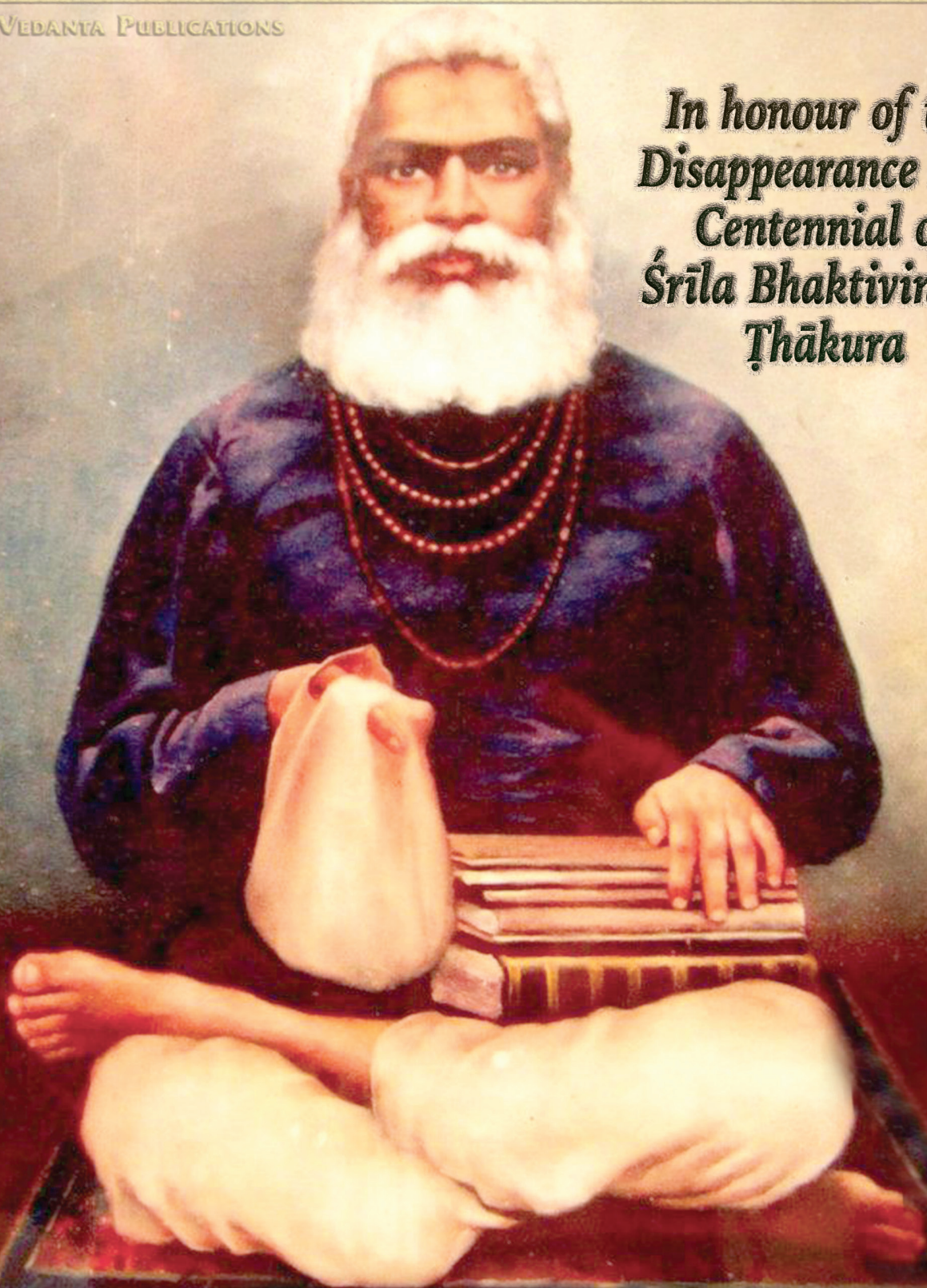


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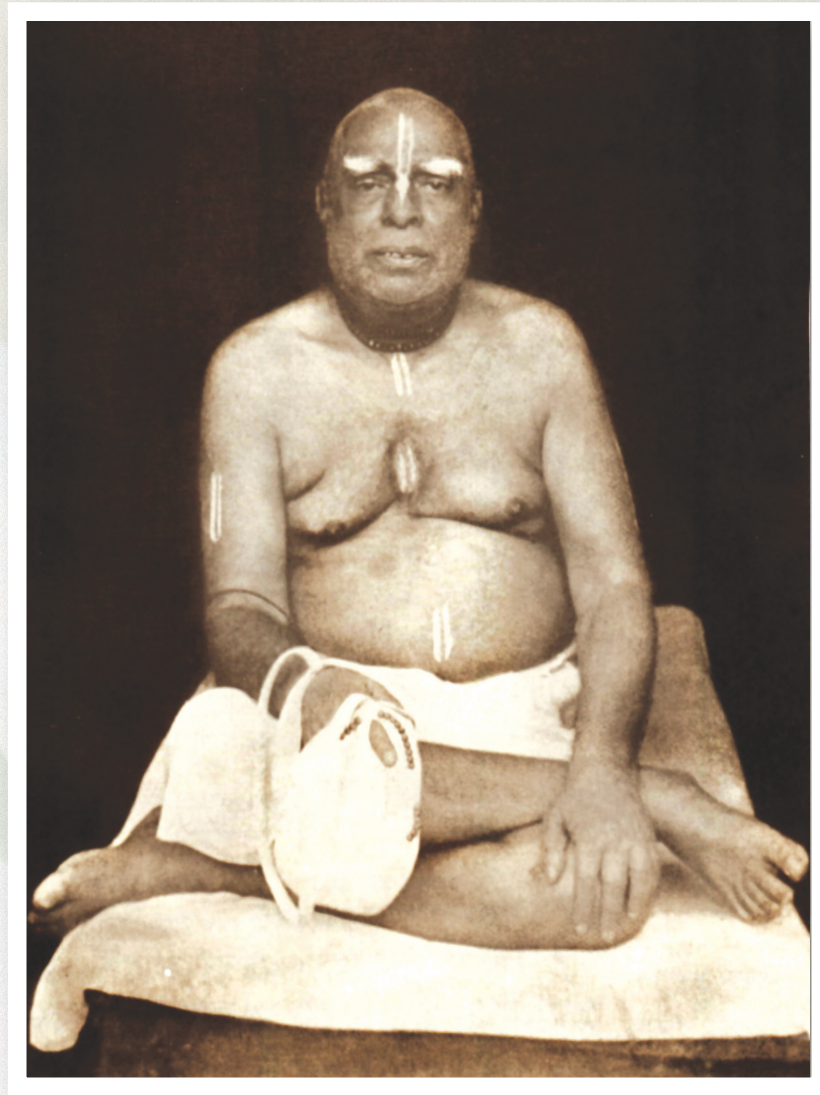
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No. 26

*In honour of the
Disappearance Day
Centennial of
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda
Thākura*



INSIDE: Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda-daśakam • A Speciality of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura's Vāṇī • The Life, Precepts and Contribution of Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura • The Disappearance day of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura • Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka: The Bona Fide Process of Siddha-praṇālī • and more



*namo bhaktivinodāya sac-cid-ānanda-nāmine
gaura-śakti-svarūpāya rūpānuga-varāya te*

I offer *praṇāma* to you, Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura,
the foremost of *rūpānugas* and the personal manifestation of Śrī
Gaurāṅga's *śakti* [Gadādhara Paṇḍita].

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Āṣāḍhī Amāvasyā 2014



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Contents

Editorial	3
Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda-daśakam Śrīmad Bhakti Deśika Ācārya Mahārāja	7
Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda A Speciality of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Vāṇī Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda	12
The Mano'bhīṣṭa of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the Impediments to Fulfilling it A letter by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda	18
Ṭhākura Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja	20
The Life, Precepts and Contribution of Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja	30
A Glimpse of Bhaktivinoda-dhārā Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka Śrīdhāra Gosvāmī Mahārāja	34
Excerpts from The Appearance Day of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja	40
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura viraha-guṇa-gāna Glorification in Separation from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura By an unknown Vaiṣṇava	46
The Disappearance day of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja	51
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Mercy is Vital Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja	54
The Essence of the Life, Teachings and Contribution of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja	56
Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka: The Bona Fide Process of Siddha-praṇālī Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja	65
A drop from the ocean of his transcendental writings Articles by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura	
Relinquishing the Desire for Pratiṣṭhā	72
Mātsarya	74
Vaiṣṇava-nindā	78
Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja	88



Dedicated to

ĀCĀRYA KEŚARĪ NITYA-LĪLĀ PRAVIŚṬA
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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nitya-līlā praviṣṭa 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

It was from the lotus lips of Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī – the master of the Gauḍīyas, the emperor of *bhakti-siddhānta* and the second manifestation of Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself – that we first heard the name *bhaktivinoda*. From the great ocean of mercy, Śrī Caitanyadeva, he extracted the wealth of *bhaktivinoda*, giving delight to Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and presented it to the world.

śaśvad-bhakti-vinodayā
sāmadayā mādhurya-maryādayā
śrī-caitanya dayānidhe
tava dayā bhūyād amandodayā
Śrī Caitanya-candrodaya-nāṭaka (8.10)

From this verse, we can understand that it is Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura who is the unparalleled embodiment of the mercy potency, *kṛpā-śakti* of the ocean of great compassion, Śrī Caitanyadeva. As such, he bestowed *amandodaya-dayā*, all-expansive mercy replete with unending goodness. Among all the qualities of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the quality of *amandodaya-dayā* is splendid, like the jewel in the emerald. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is that jewel. He caused, in the desert of this world, the flow of thousands of currents of the Mandākinī (Ganges) of *amandodaya-dayā*, which the thirsty *jīvas* can drink for unlimited period of time. By drowning in this Ganges of mercy, one never attains an insignificant result; rather he attains the nature of *saccidānanda*, eternity, knowledge and bliss.





Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, as the embodiment of the mercy potency, perpetually gives delight to *bhakti* – *bhaktivinodan*. His pastime of *bhaktivinodan* was to inspire multitude of *jīvas* to discover their constitutional nature and thus drown them in the bliss of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. It was by this mercy potency that the living entities became devoid of desires other than to serve Kṛṣṇa. Intoxicating them in the madness of *vipralambha*, separation from Kṛṣṇa, this mercy potency bestowed upon them the clue to search for *mādhurya-maryādayā*, the highest limit of *mādhurya*, from the ocean of *anarпита unnata-ujjvala-rasāmṛta*, which is attained by the process (*abhidheya*) of performing *kīrtana* of the conclusive truths of *bhakti*, *bhakti-siddhānta*.

Erudite Vaiṣṇavas thus address Śrīla Ṭhākura as Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda, accepting him as a personal associate of Mahāprabhu, and regarding him as best among the followers of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara. As the follower of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, the examiner of *bhakti-siddhānta*, the learned revere Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura as the *sat-siddhānta ācārya*, he whose philosophical conclusions are flawless and free from faults such as *rasābhāsa*, which is antagonistic to *bhakti-siddhānta*. In regard to his activities of *bhaktivinodan*, giving delight to *śuddha-bhakti-rasa*, learned persons have also noted that he was enraptured in his constant endeavor to search Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is known as *saccidānanda* because he dispels the experience of mundane happiness in a world that is spiritually unconscious by distributing Śrī Caitanya [divine consciousness]. He thus bequeathed upon the inhabitants of this world the unwavering quest to seek realization of *saccidānanda*.

In present times, the *prākṛta-sahajiyā sampradāya*, due to their offensive mentality, could not comprehend the speciality of the practice and precepts of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Since they consider him to be mortal like they are, they remain unable to accept the actual process of *śikṣā* of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

We can appreciate that within one hundred years of his disappearance, his predictions and wishes have come to pass. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu had stated, “*prthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma, sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma* – in every town and village, the chanting of My name will be heard” (Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata, *Antya-khaṇḍa* 4.126). Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said, “Unarguably, this order will very soon materialize. There is no doubt about this.” He further predicted, “When all the world’s religions mature, they will transform into a single *nāma-saṅkīrtana dharma*. This will certainly come to pass.”

Generally, not just in worldly society but in the Vaiṣṇava society as well, a great personality’s centennial appearance anniversary

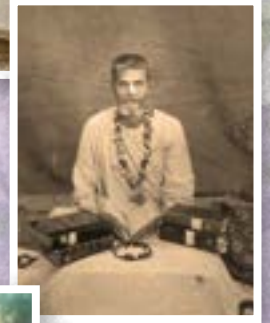
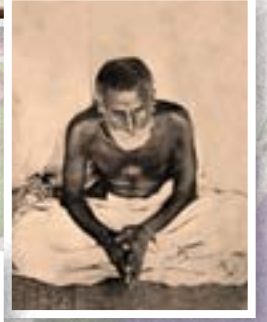
is celebrated, but celebration of their disappearance centennial is not commonly seen. At the same time, scripture states, “*hari, guru, vaiṣṇava tinerā smaraṇa, tinerā smaraṇa haya vighna-vināṣana* – by remembering all three, Hari, Guru and Vaiṣṇava, one’s obstacle on the path of *bhakti* are dispelled”. And “*vaiṣṇavera guṇu-gāna, karile jīvera trāṇā* – by glorifying the qualities of the Vaiṣṇavas, the living entity attains deliverance from the bondage of material existence.” Our Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* have also demonstrated that any time, place or circumstance is appropriate to glorify the Lord and His devotees.

It can be observed that in Vaiṣṇava *sampradāyas*, some Vaiṣṇavas are conventional. Their teachings and approach uphold the age old traditions of the *sampradāya* and maintain the *mādhurya*, the sweetness of the *sampradāya’s* line of thought. And some Vaiṣṇavas are unconventional in their method of propagating the divine message of the Lord and His devotees. They manifest *audārya*, the magnanimity, being completely innovative in their way of propagating the precepts of *bhakti* far and wide.

In the one hundred years since the disappearance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura (1914–2014), we have seen the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu successfully propagated worldwide by unconventional teachers in the *bhaktivinoda-dharā*, the line that follows the current of the conceptions of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda and his disciples and grand disciples especially Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, have spread the message of Śrīman Mahāprabhu throughout all the towns and villages of the world, thus manifesting the mood of unparalleled *audārya*, magnanimity toward all *jīvas*. The personal practices of these unconventional teachers have been also conventional and in strict accordance with the previous *ācāryas* in their line. Thus they were rich in the experience of the *sampradāya’s mādhurya*.

On the strength of the causeless mercy and blessings of *śrī guru* and the *śrī guru-paramaparā*, and with the understanding that Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktisiddhānta Sarsavatī Ṭhākura and his associates are pleased with any tiny attempt to glorify Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, we are herein attempting to do so. In this way, we hope to attract their continuous grace. 🙏

The spirit of the editorial is adapted from the writings of the disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda





Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda-dāśakam

Śrīmad Bhakti Deśika Ācārya Mahārāja



amanda-kāruṇya-guṇākara śrī-
caitanya-devasya dayāvatārah
sa gaura-śaktir bhavitā punaḥ kim
padam dṛśor bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (1)

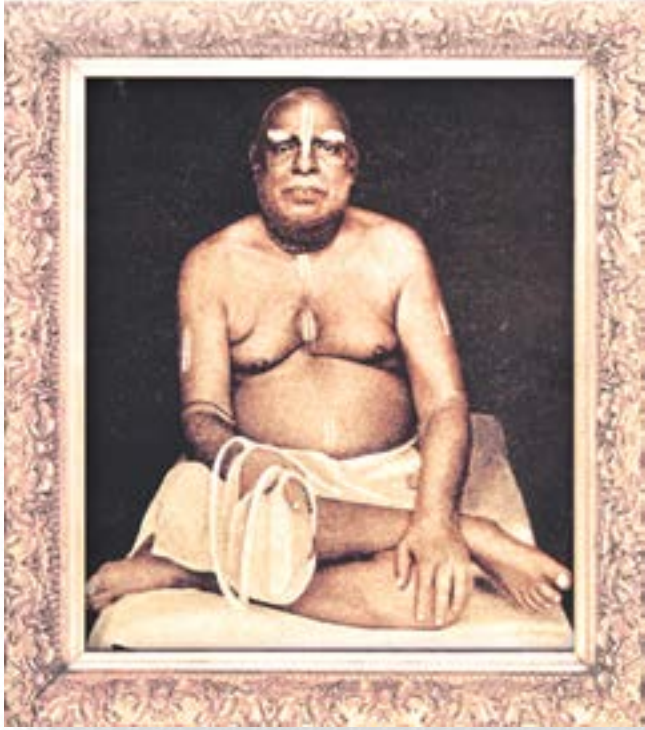
śrīmaj-jagannātha-prabhu-priyo ya
ekātmako gaura-kīśorakena
śrī-gaura-kāruṇya-mayo bhavet kim
nityam smṛtau bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (2)

amanda – great, unending; **kāruṇya** – compassion; **guṇa** – good qualities, virtues; **ākara** – a source [such as an ocean or mine]; **śrī-caitanya-devasya** – of Śrī Caitanya-deva; **dayā** – mercy; **avatārah** – incarnation, descent; **sah** – that; **gaura** – Gaurhari; **śaktiḥ** – potency; **bhavitā** – will be; **punaḥ** – again; **kim** – [a note of interrogation to mark a question]; **padam** – object; **dṛśoḥ** – of the two eyes; **bhaktivinoda** – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; **devaḥ** – the divine personality.

He is the mercy incarnation of Śrī Caitanya-deva – the unending and ever-increasing ocean of compassion – and he is the embodiment of the very potency of Śrī Gaurahari. Will that divine personality, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, again become visible to my eyes?

śrīmad jagannātha – Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji; **prabhu** – the holy master; **priyaḥ** – dear; **yaḥ** – who; **eka** – one; **ātmakoḥ** – consisting of the nature, heart; **gaura-kīśorakena** – with Gaura-kīśora dāsa Bābāji; **śrī-gaura** – Śrī Gaurhari; **kāruṇya** – compassion, kindness; **mayoḥ** – made of, composed; **bhavet** – may be; **kim** – [marks a question]; **nityam** – always, forever; **smṛtau** – in memory; **bhaktivinoda** – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; **devaḥ** – the divine personality.

Will that divine personality, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who is the dear most follower of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja, who is one at heart with Śrīla Gaura-kīśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja, and who is composed of Śrī Gaurahari's compassion, forever be held within my remembrance?



śrī-nāma-cintāmaṇi-sampracāraiḥ
 ādarśam ācāra-vidhau dadhau yaḥ
 sa jāgarūkaḥ smṛti-mandire kim
 nityam bhaved bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (3)

śrī-nāma – the holy name; **cintāmaṇi** – wish-fulfilling gem; **sampracāraiḥ** – by widely preaching, broadcasting; **ādarśam** – the ideal perfection; **ācāra** – observance, conduct; **vidhau** – in the method; **dadhau** – he established; **yaḥ** – who; **saḥ** – he; **jāgarūkaḥ** – be awake; **smṛti** – memory; **mandire** – in the temple; **kim** – [marks a question]; **nityam** – always, perpetually; **bhaved** – may be; **bhaktivinoda** – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; **devaḥ** – the divine personality.

Will that divine personality Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who, by his personal conduct, established the ideal method of widely broadcasting the chanting of the holy name, which is a wish-fulfilling gem, forever remain within the temple of my memory?



nāmāparādhai rahitasya nāmno
 māhātmya-jātaṁ prakāṣam vidhāya
 jīve dayāluḥ bhavitā smṛtau kim
 kṛtāsano bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (4)

nāma – holy names; **aparādhaiḥ** – from offences; **rahitasya** – without, free; **nāmnaḥ** – by chanting hari-nāma; **māhātmya** – glories; **jātam** – caused; **prakāṣam** – manifest; **vidhāya** – making; **jīve** – to the living beings; **dayāluḥ** – merciful; **bhavitā** – will it be?; **smṛtau** – in my memory; **kim** – [marks a question]; **kṛta** – takes; **āsanaḥ** – his seat; **bhaktivinoda** – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; **devaḥ** – the divine personality.

Will that divine personality, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who manifested the glories of *śrī harināma* free from offences and who thus bestowed the greatest benevolence upon the living entities, forever alight the throne of my remembrance?



gaurasya gūḍha-prakaṣālayasya
 sato 'sato harṣa-kunāṭyayoś ca
 prakāśako gaura-jano bhavet kim
 smṛtyās padam bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (5)

gaurasya – of the golden Lord; **gūḍha** – secret; **prakaṣa** – appearance; **ālayasya** – of the place; **sataḥ** – saints; **asataḥ** – miscreants; **harṣa** – joy; **ku** – a prefix implying bad, wicked; **nāṭyayoḥ** – dance; **ca** – and; **prakāśakaḥ** – making manifest, illuminating; **gaura-janaḥ** – the associate of Śrī Gaura; **bhaved** – may it be; **kim** – [marks a question]; **smṛti** – remembrance; **āspadam** – place, seat, abode; **bhaktivinoda** – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; **devaḥ** – the divine person.

As he revealed the hidden appearance place of Śrī Gaurahari, the saints danced with joy, whereas the miscreants displayed their dance of wickedness [being filled with dread]. Will that divine personality, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who is an eternal associate of Śrī Gaurahari, forever become the object of my remembrance?



nirasya vighnān iha bhakti-gaṅgā-
pravāhanenoddhṛta-sarva-lokaḥ
bhagīratho nitya-dhiyān padam kim
bhaved asau bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (6)

nirasya – having cast or thrown out; **vighnān** – obstacles; **iha** – in this world; **bhakti** – devotion; **gaṅgā** – Ganges; **pravāh** – current, flow; **anena** – by this; **uddhṛta** – lifted up; **sarva** – all; **lokaḥ** – people, world; **bhagīrathaḥ** – King Bhāgīratha; **nitya** – perpetual, eternal; **dhiyām** – of meditation; **padam** – place;

kim – [marks a question]; **bhaved** – may be; **asau** – he; **bhaktivinoda** – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; **devaḥ** – the divine personality.

Will that divine personality, *bhakti-bhagīratha*¹ Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who has delivered the entire world by casting away all obstacles on the path of *bhakti* and bringing forth the current of the Ganges River of *bhakti*, forever become the object of my meditation?



viśveṣu caitanya-kathā-pracārī
māhātmya-śaṁsī guru-vaiṣṇavānām
nāma-grahādarśa iha smṛtiḥ kim
citte bhaved bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (7)

1 This verse compares Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to King Bhagīratha, who in ancient times brought forth the river Gaṅgā to this world in order to deliver his ancestors.

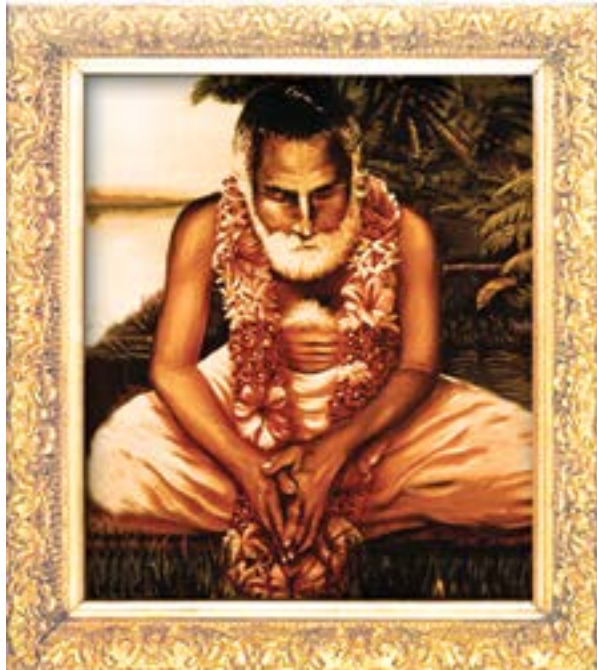


viśveṣu – throughout the world; *caitanya* – Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu; *kathā* – narrations [of his glories, pastimes or instructions]; *pracārī* – preacher; *māhātmya* – glories; *śamsī* – he proclaims; *guru-vaiṣṇavānām* – guru and Vaiṣṇavas; *nāma* – the holy name; *graha* – taking; *ādarśaḥ* – ideal; *iha* – in this world; *smṛtiḥ* – remembrance; *kim* – [marks a question]; *citte* – in heart; *bhavet* – may be; *bhaktivinoda* – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; *devaḥ* – the divine personality.

Will that divine personality, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who has propagated the message of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu throughout the whole world, who has proclaimed the glories of *śrī guru* and Vaiṣṇavas, and who has demonstrated the exemplary method for chanting *śrī nāma*, forever be remembered in my heart?



prajoyanaṁ sann abhidheya-bhakti-siddhānta-vāṅyā samam atra gaura-kiśora-sambandha-yuto bhavet kiṁ citte gato bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (8)

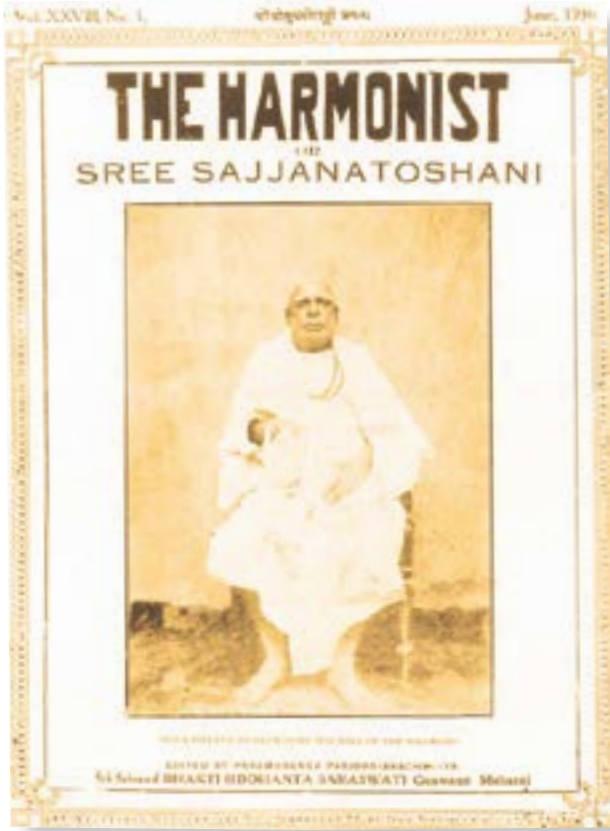


prajoyanam – ultimate goal, object of attainment; *san* – being; *abhidheya* – means to attain that goal; *bhakti-siddhānta* – Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura; *vāṅyā* – with the words or message, Sarasvatī, the goddess of transcendental knowledge; *samam* – accompanied by; *atra* – in this [the heart]; *gaura-kiśora* – Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja; *sambandha* – the mutual relationship between the Lord and the soul; *yutaḥ* – together; *bhavet* – may it be; *kim* – [marks a question]; *citte* – in heart; *gataḥ* – come; *bhaktivinoda* – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; *devaḥ* – the divine personality.

Will that divine personality, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who embodies *prajoyana-tattva*; who is accompanied by Śrīla Gaura-kiśora dāsa Bābāji Mahārāja, who embodies *sambandha-tattva*; along with Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda who embodies *abhidheya-tattva*, forever come into heart?²

.....
2 Our ultimate goal (*prajoyana*) is *bhakti-vinoda* – to give delight (*vinoda*) to Bhakti-devī, Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Our relationship (*sambandha*) is with the youthful Gaurahari (Gaura-kiśora) and our process (*abhidheya*), is to follow of *bhakti-siddhānta-sarasvatī*, that is, the *vāṅī* that embodies the conclusive truths (*siddhānta*) of devotional service (*bhakti*).





*śikṣāmṛtaṁ sajjana-toṣaṇīm ca
cintāmaṇim cātra sa-jaiva-dharmam
prakāśya caitanya-prado bhavet kim
citte dhṛta bhakti-vinoda-devaḥ (9)*

śikṣāmṛtam – Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta; *sajjana-toṣaṇīm* – Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī; *ca* – and; *cintāmaṇim* – Śrī Harināma-cintāmaṇi; *ca* – and; *atra* – this; *sa* – with; *jaiva-dharmam* – Jaiva-dharma; *prakāśya* – by publishing; *caitanya* – spiritual consciousness; *pradaḥ* – bestowing; *bhavet* – may be; *kim* – [marks a question]; *citte* – in heart; *dhṛtaḥ* – held; *bhaktivinoda* – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; *devaḥ* – the divine personality.

Will that divine personality, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who has distributed spiritual consciousness [that is, Śrī Caitanya] to all living entities by publishing Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta, Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī, Śrī Harināma-cintāmaṇi and Jaiva-dharma, be forever held within heart?



*āṣāḍhādarśe 'hani gaura-śakti-
gadādharaḥbhinna-tanur jahau yaḥ
prapañca-līlām iha no bhavet kim
dṛśyaḥ punar bhaktivinoda-devaḥ (10)*

āṣāḍha – the month of Āṣāḍha; *adarśe* – on Amāvāsya, the new moon; *ahani* – on the day; *gaura-śakti* – the potency of Gaurahari; *gadādhara* – Gadadhara Paṇḍita; *abhinna* – non-different; *tanuḥ* – form; *jahau* – gave up, left; *yaḥ* – who; *prapañca* – the material world; *līlām* – pastimes; *iha* – in this world; *naḥ* – for us; *bhavet* – may he be; *kim* – [marks a question]; *dṛśyaḥ* – visible; *punaḥ* – again; *bhaktivinoda* – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; *devaḥ* – the divine personality.

On the dark-moon day of the month of Āṣāḍha, that divine personality, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, whose form is non-different from Śrī Gadadhara Paṇḍita – the potency of Śrī Gaurahari – gave up his pastimes in this material world on the very same day that Śrī Gadadhara Paṇḍita gave up his worldly pastimes. Will he ever again come before our vision? 🙏





Ṭhākura

A Speciality of Śrīla

His specific kindness to those engrossed in all kinds of mental speculation

We avail of the opportunity offered by the anniversary celebrations of the advent of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda to reflect on the right method of obtaining those benefits that have been made accessible to humanity by the grace of this great devotee of Kṛṣṇa. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has been specifically kind to those unfortunate persons, who are engrossed in mental speculation of all kinds. This is the prevalent malady of the present age. The other *ācāryas* who appeared before Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda did not address their discourses so directly to the empiric thinkers. They had been more merciful to those who are naturally disposed to listen to discourses on the Absolute without being dissuaded by the specious arguments of avowed opponents of Godhead.

Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has taken the trouble of meeting the perverse arguments of mental speculationists by the superior transcendental logic of the Absolute Truth. It is thus possible for the average modern readers to profit by the perusal of his writings. That day is not far distant when the priceless volumes penned by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda will be reverently translated, by the recipients of his grace, into all the languages of the world.

The writings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda provide the golden bridge by which the mental speculationist can safely cross the raging waters of fruitless empiric controversies that trouble the peace of those who choose to trust in their guidance for finding the Truth. As soon as the sympathetic reader is in a position to appreciate the sterling quality of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's philosophy the entire vista of the revealed literatures of the world will automatically open out to his reclaimed vision.

It is not possible to understand the message of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda without securing his guiding grace

There have, however, already arisen serious misunderstandings regarding the proper interpretation of the life and teachings of Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. Those who suppose they understand the meaning of his message without securing the guiding grace of the *ācārya* are disposed to unduly favour the methods of empiric study of his writings. There are persons who have got by heart almost everything that he wrote without being able to catch the least particle of his meaning. Such study cannot benefit those who are not prepared to act up to the instructions lucidly conveyed by his words.

Bhaktivinoda

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Vāṇī

by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

There is no honest chance of missing the warnings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. Those, therefore, who are misled by the perusal of his writings, are led astray by their own obstinate perversity in sticking to the empiric course which they prefer to cherish against his explicit warnings. Let these unfortunate persons look more carefully into their own hearts for the cause of their misfortunes.

The personal service of the pure devotee is essential for understanding the spiritual meaning of the words of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. The editor of this journal, originally started by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, has been trying to draw the attention of all followers of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda to this all-important point of his teachings. It is not necessary to try to place ourselves on a footing of equality with Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda. We are not likely to benefit by any mechanical imitation of any practices of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda on the opportunist principle that they may be convenient for us to adopt. The *guru* is not an erring mortal whose activities can be understood by the fallible reason of un-reclaimed humanity. There is an eternally impassable line of demarcation between the saviour and the saved. Those who are really saved can alone know this. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda belongs to the category of the spiritual world-teachers who eternally occupy the superior position.



The teachings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda cannot be accessed by hearing from someone who is not devoted

The present editor has all along felt it his paramount duty to try to clear up the meaning of the life and teachings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda by the method of submissive listening to the transcendental sound



“The devotee is right even when he apparently mis-quotes, the non-devotee is wrong even when he quotes correctly the very words, chapter and verse of the scriptures.”

from the lips of the pure devotee. The *guru* who realizes the transcendental meaning of all sounds, is in a position to serve the Absolute by the direction of the Absolute conveyed through every sound. The transcendental sound is Godhead, the mundane sound is non-Godhead. All sound has got these opposite aptitudes. All sound reveals its divine face to the devotee and only presents its deluding aspect to the empiric pedant. The devotee talks apparently the same language as the deluded empiric pedant who had got by heart the vocabulary of the scriptures. But notwithstanding apparent identity of performance, one has no access to the reality while the other is absolutely free from all delusion.

Those who repeat the teachings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda from memory do not necessarily understand the meaning of the words they mechanically repeat. Those who can pass an empiric examination regarding the contents of his writings are not necessarily also self-realized souls. They may not at all know the real meaning of the words they have learned by the method of empiric study. Take for example the name “Kṛṣṇa”. Every reader of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda’s works must be aware that the name manifests Himself on the lips of His serving devotees, although He is inaccessible to our mundane senses. It is one thing to pass the examination by reproducing this true conclusion from the writings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda and quite another matter to realize the nature of the holy name of Kṛṣṇa by the process conveyed by the words.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda did not want us to go to the clever mechanical reciter of the mundane sound for obtaining access to the transcendental name of Kṛṣṇa. Such a person may be fully equipped with all the written arguments in explanation of the nature of the divine name. But if we listen to all these arguments from the dead source, the words will only increase our delusion. The very same words coming from the lips of the devotee will have the diametrically opposite effect. Our empiric judgment can never grasp the difference between the two performances. The devotee is always right. The non-devotee in the shape of the empiric pedant is always and necessarily wrong. In the one case there is always present the substantive truth and nothing but the substantive truth. In the other case there is present the apparent or misleading hypothesis and nothing but un-truth. The wording may have the same external appearance in both cases. The identical verses of the scriptures recited by the devotee and the non-devotee may be apparently misquoted by the non-devotee, but the corresponding values of the two processes remain

always categorically different. The devotee is right even when he apparently misquotes, the non-devotee is wrong even when he quotes correctly the very words, chapter and verse of the scriptures.

The direct, unambiguous appearance of divinity

It is not empiric wisdom that is the object of quest of the devotee. Those who read the scriptures for gathering empiric wisdom will be pursuing the wild goose chase. There are not a few dupes of their empiric scriptural erudition. These dupes have their admiring under-dupes. But the mutual admiration society of dupes does not escape, by the mere weight of their number, the misfortunes due to the deliberate pursuit of the wrong course in accordance with the suggestions of our lower selves.

What are the scriptures? They are nothing but the record by the pure devotees of the divine message appearing on the lips of the pure devotees. The message conveyed by the devotees is the same in all ages. The words of the devotees are ever identical with the scriptures. Any meaning of the scriptures that belittles the function of the devotee who is the original communicant of the divine message contradicts its own claim to be heard. Those who think that the Sanskrit language in its lexicographical sense is the language of the divinity are as deluded as those who hold that the divine message is communicable through any other spoken dialects. All languages simultaneously express and hide the Absolute. The mundane face of all languages hides the truth. The transcendental face of all sound expresses nothing but the Absolute. The pure devotee is the speaker of the transcendental language. The transcendental sound makes His appearance on the lips of His pure devotee. This is the direct, unambiguous appearance of divinity. On the lips of non-devotees the Absolute always appears in His deluding aspect. To the pure devotee the Absolute reveals Himself under all circumstances. To the conditioned soul, if he is disposed to listen in a truly submissive spirit, the language of the pure devotee can alone impart the knowledge of the Absolute. The conditioned soul mistakes the deluding for the real

aspect when he chooses to lend his ear to the non-devotee. This is the reason why the conditioned soul is warned to avoid all association with non-devotees.

His teachings demolish the empiric method of approaching the Absolute

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda is acknowledged by all his sincere followers as possessing the above powers of the pure devotee of Godhead. His words have to be received from the lips of a pure devotee. If his words are listened from the lips of a non-devotee they will certainly deceive. If his works are studied in the light of one's own worldly experience their meaning will refuse to disclose itself to such readers. His works belong to the class of the eternal revealed literature of the world and must be approached for their right understanding through their exposition by the pure devotee. If no help from the pure devotee is sought, the works of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda will be grossly misunderstood by their readers. The attentive reader of those works will find that he is always directed to throw himself upon the mercy of the pure devotee if he is not to remain unwarrantably self-satisfied by the deluding results of his wrong method of study.

The writings of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda are valuable because they demolish all empiric objections against accepting the only method of approaching the Absolute in the right way. They cannot and were never intended to give access to the Absolute without help from the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. They direct the sincere enquirer of the truth, as all the revealed scriptures do, to the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, to learn about Him by submitting to listen with an open mind to the transcendental sound appearing on His lips. Before we open any of the books penned by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, we would do well to reflect a little on the attitude with which, as the indispensable pre-requisite, to approach its study. It is by neglecting to remember this fundamental principle that the empiric pedants find themselves so hopelessly puzzled in their vain endeavour to reconcile the statements of the different texts of the scriptures. The same difficulty is already in the process of overtaking many of the so-called followers of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda for the same reason.



“Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda’s greatest gift to the world consists in this; that he has brought about the appearance of those pure devotees who are, at present, carrying on the movement of unalloyed devotion to the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by their own whole-time spiritual service of the divinity.”

Only the Absolute can give Himself

The person to whom the *ācārya* is pleased to transmit his power is alone in a position to convey the divine message. This constitutes the underlying principle of the line of succession of the spiritual teachers. The *ācārya* thus authorized has no other duty than that of delivering intact the message received from all his predecessors. There is no difference between the pronouncements of one *ācārya* and another. All of them are perfect mediums for the appearance of the divinity in the form of the transcendental name, who is identical with His form, quality, activity and paraphernalia.

The divinity is absolute knowledge. Absolute knowledge has the character of indivisible unity. One particle of absolute knowledge is capable of revealing all the potency of the divinity. Those who want to understand the contents of the volumes penned by the piece-meal acquisitive method applicable to deluding knowledge available to the mind on the mundane plane, are bound to be self-deceived. Those who are sincere seekers of the truth are alone eligible to find Him, in and through the proper method of His quest.

In order to be put on the track of the Absolute, listening to the words of the pure devotee is absolutely necessary. The spoken word of the Absolute is the Absolute. It is only the Absolute who can give Himself away to the constituents of His power. The Absolute appears to the listening ear of the conditioned soul in the form of the name on the lips of the *sādhu*. This is the key to the whole position. The words of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda direct the empiric pedant to discard his wrong method and inclination on the threshold of the real quest of the Absolute. If the pedant still chooses to carry his errors into the realm of the Absolute Truth, he only marches by a deceptive bypath into the regions of darker ignorance by his arrogant study of the scriptures. The method offered by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda is identical with the object of the quest. The method is not really grasped except by the grace of the pure devotee. The arguments, indeed, are these. But they can only corroborate, but can never be a substitute for, the word from the living source of the truth who is no other than the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa, the concrete personal Absolute.

His greatest gift

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's greatest gift to the world consists in this; that he has brought about the appearance of those pure devotees who are, at present, carrying on the movement of unalloyed devotion to the feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa by their own whole-time spiritual service of the divinity. The purity of the soul is only analogously describable by the resources of the mundane language. The highest ideal of empiric morality is no better than the grossest wickedness to the transcendental perfect purity of the bona fide devotee of the Absolute. The word 'morality' itself is a mischievous misnomer when it is applied to any quality of the conditioned soul. The hypocritical contentment with a negative attitude is part and parcel of the principle of undiluted immorality.

Those who pretend to recognize the divine mission of Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda without aspiring to the unconditional service of those pure souls who really follow the teachings of the Ṭhākura by the method enjoined by the scriptures and explained by Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda in a way that is so eminently suited to the requirements of the sophisticated mentality of the present age, only deceive themselves and their willing victims by their hypocritical professions and performances. These persons must not be confounded with the bona fide members of the flock.

His prediction: the religious unity of the world

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has predicted the consummation of religious unity of the world by the appearance of the only universal church which bears the eternal designation of the Brahma Sampradāya. He has given mankind the blessed assurance that all theistic churches will shortly merge in the one eternal spiritual community by the grace of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya. The spiritual community is not circumscribed by the conditions of time and space, race and nationality. Mankind had been looking forward to this far-off divine event through the long ages. Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda has made the conception

available in its practicable spiritual form to the open minded empiricist who is prepared to undergo the process of enlightenment. The key stone of the arch has been laid which will afford the needed shelter to all awakened animation under its ample encircling arms. Those who would thoughtlessly allow their hollow pride of race, pseudo-knowledge or pseudo-virtue to stand in the way of this long hoped for consummation, would have to thank only themselves for not being incorporated in the spiritual society of all pure souls.

These plain words need not be misrepresented, by arrogant persons who are full of the vanity of empiric ignorance, as the pronouncements of aggressive sectarianism. The aggressive pronouncement of the concrete truth is the crying necessity of the moment for silencing the aggressive propaganda of specific untruths that is being carried on all over the world by the preachers of empiric contrivances for the amelioration of the hard lot of conditioned souls. The empiric propaganda clothes itself in the language of negative abstraction for deluding those who are engrossed in the selfish pursuit of worldly enjoyment.

But there is a positive and concrete function of the pure soul which should not be perversely confounded with any utilitarian form of worldly activity. Mankind stands in need of that positive spiritual function of which the hypocritical impersonalists are in absolute ignorance. The positive function of the soul harmonizes the claims of extreme selfishness with those of extreme self-abnegation in the society of pure souls, even in this mundane world. In its concrete realizable form the function is perfectly inaccessible to the empiric understanding. Its imperfect and misleading conception alone is available by the study of the scriptures to the conditioned soul that is not helped by the causeless grace of the pure devotees of Godhead. ☉

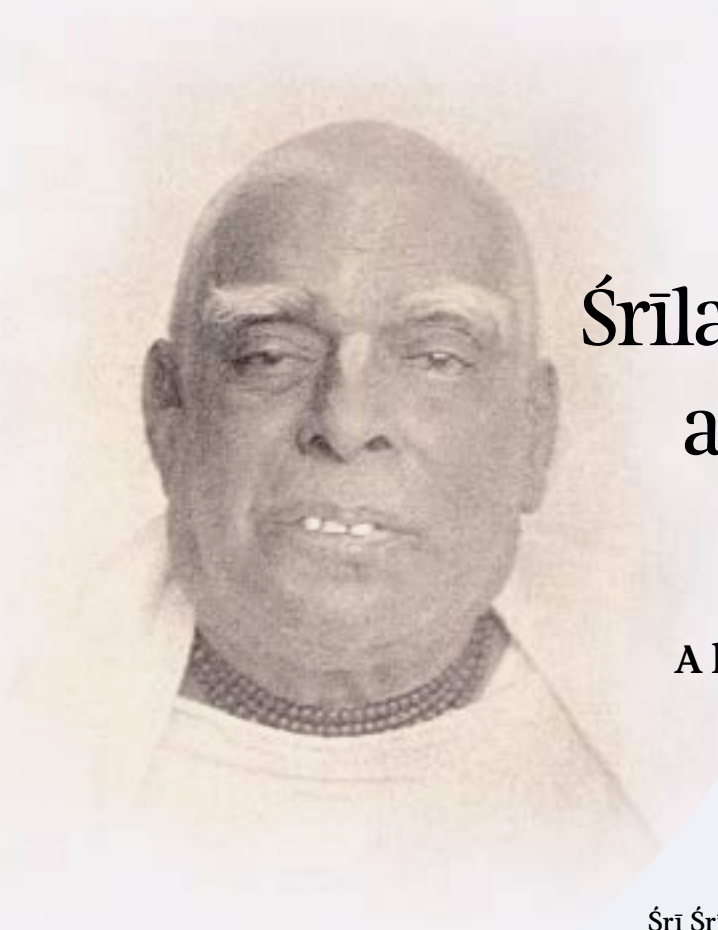
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The Mano'bhīṣṭa of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and the Impediments to Fulfilling it

A letter by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī
Ṭhākura Prabhupāda

Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurangau Jayatah

Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha, Kolkata
1 April, 1926

With due address¹ –

One evening, during the first half of the month of Vaiśākha (April–May), in 1320 (1914 AD), at Bhakti-bhavana in Kolkata, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura made this prophesy in very clear words, right before me:

In due course of time, the contaminated seed of the Rūpa Kavirāṅgi *apa-sampradāya* named *atibāḍī* shall be transmitted to you people and will make the hollow tree of your heart the residence of frightful animals such as snakes whose poison destroys pure devotional service.

I am so unfortunate that at that time, I protested against this statement, saying,

Those people are proud to be your followers. They shall never engage in openly organizing themselves to preach against the ideal of service to Śrī Hari as taught by you, and in case they do so, I shall obstruct them with all my might, without even caring for my own life.

Thinking that all of you would be aggrieved at heart [to hear of this conversation], I did not tell you about my vow until now. Through ... [people's names were not listed] and so forth, you have already instigated all of these acts, and at each and every step till date, you have acted to obstruct the fulfillment of Śrīla Bhakti

¹ to those who were so-called followers of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Vinoda Ṭhākura's cherished transcendental desires. Therefore, *śuddha-bhakti* (pure devotional service) and Śrīla Ṭhākura Mahāśaya himself never has any relation whatsoever with an *apa-sampradāya* such as yours. I have been proclaiming this very loudly from the outset. You have not listened to that, and now you have wandered off track. I will write down some of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's cherished desires that he personally expressed to me:

- (1) Those who take pride in their worldly aristocracy, due to not achieving a true aristocracy or noble birth [as servants of Bhagavān] state that even a genuine Vaiṣṇava's birth in a family of lower caste is the result of his past sinful activities. By saying this, they are committing an offence. Therefore, in order to counteract the words of such people, the divine social system, *daiva-varṇāśrama-dharma*, which is based on one's disposition and qualities, must be established. The endeavour to establish it, which you have already started, is to be known as true service to the Vaiṣṇavas.
- (2) Due to the absence of the preaching of *śuddha-bhakti-siddhānta*, the pure conclusive truths of devotional service, detrimental impressions of femininity², and education in immorality have been fostered as *bhakti* by the men and women of *apa-sampradāyas*, such as *sahajiyā* and *atibādī*. Always demolish all such erroneous *siddhānta* by engaging in the preaching of *śuddha-bhakti-siddhānta*, the actual principles of pure devotional service, and through pure conduct.
- (3) As soon as possible, you must try to organize Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma *parikramā*. Through this activity alone, everyone in this world shall be able to achieve *kṛṣṇa-bhakti*. You should make special endeavour to ensure that service to Śrī Māyāpura is permanently established and that it becomes more radiant day-by-day. Solely by establishing book publishing, by preaching the *bhakti-granthas*, devotional scriptures, and by preaching through *nāma-haṭṭa* (rather than by performing *nirjana-bhajana* in secluded place) can true service be rendered to Śrī Māyāpura. By performing *nirjana-bhajana* for your own self, do not damage the preaching, or service to Śrī Māyāpura.
- (4) After my departure [from this world], you should reverentially engage in service to Śrī Māyāpura. Make a special endeavour to do this. This is my specific instruction to you. Ill-mannered people such as **** are never able to perform *bhakti*, and you should never seek their advice. You should neither inform them of this nor let them come to know of it.
- (5) My whole-hearted endeavour was to reveal that the purport of scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Ṣaṭ-sandarbhā*, *Vedānta-darśana* etc. pronounce only *śuddha-bhakti* and nothing else. You should accept responsibility for that task. By establishing a school for spiritual education in Śrī Māyāpura, the glory of Śrī Māyāpura will be enhanced.
- (6) You should never try to gain knowledge or earn wealth with the objective of gratifying your own senses. Rather, you should only engage in these activities with the objective of serving the Supreme Lord. Never take bad association to gain wealth or with any other selfish motive.

Today I am stopping here. I am going elsewhere in service to the Vaiṣṇavas and shall reply to the remaining part of your letter upon my return.

Grieved by your distress,
Śrī Siddhānta Sarasvatī

Translated from Śrīla Prabhupādera *Patrāvālī*

.....
2 This refers to equating transcendental sentiments with mundane femininity.



Ṭhākura

Glorification of the exalted ācārya
on his disappearance day

By Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava
Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The inclination to remember Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in the mode of separation

The *sat-cit-ānanda vastu* is the truly abiding substance composed of pure eternal reality, cognizance and bliss. If *sat-cit-ānanda vastu* remains hidden from our view, from the ordinary people of this plane, we will not be able to conceive of it and it will be beyond our revelation. Indeed, that which remains beyond our vision we describe as being in the unmanifest (*aprakāṣa*) state. But even though unmanifest, the *śuddha-sattva vastu* (the truly abiding substance comprised of pure existence) is never absent in any way. Only when our vision of its absence is itself absent, will we perceive *sādhyavastu* (the ultimate object of attainment) and describe it as eternal (*nitya*) and primeval (*sanātana*). The *sat-cit-ānanda vastu* is indeed eternal and primeval and there is certainly no better revelation of its meaning than “Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura”. Although we constantly have all kinds of discussions about him, on this day, feeling separation from Saccidānanda, we have engaged in remembering some of the especially unique features of his pastimes. Such remembrance is a form of service to his lotus feet. Śrīla Ṭhākura concealed himself from ordinary vision on the new moon day of Āṣāḍha thirty-five years ago today.¹

.....
1 Āṣāḍha is the third month of the Bengali calendar and falls between June and July. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura disappeared on the new moon day (*amāvasyā*) of this month in the year 1914.

Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda

Reflecting upon the transcendental sat-cit- ānanda vastu is only possible through śabda

We are constantly hearing and discussing the following principles:

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

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 9.194)

Perception of spiritual objects (*aprākṛta vastu*) is not within the range of the material sense organs and contemplating them is beyond the range of the mind. The Vedas and Purāṇas proclaim this repeatedly.

*kṛṣṇa—sūrya-sama; māyā haya andhakāra
yāhāṅ kṛṣṇa, tāhāṅ nāhi māyāra adhikāra*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.31)

Kṛṣṇa is like the sun and māyā is darkness. Wherever Kṛṣṇa is present, the influence of māyā cannot remain.

Although these statements have become embedded in our minds, we have not realized them in our hearts. There is a process (*sādhana*) by which the *sanātana*

vastu (eternal entity) is revealed within the heart. But through the statements just mentioned, we are being warned to first consider carefully the proper methodology of that *sādhana*. One who initiates discussions about Saccidānanda Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura with words or statements made of sound vibrations that have emerged from the material sky is acting in a manner exactly opposite to Śrīla Ṭhākura's teachings. My consciousness will never be capable of revealing Śrīla Ṭhākura's identity through language unless my *idam-jñāna* (knowledge of this mundane plane) is subdued by *tad-jñāna* (knowledge of that transcendental plane). Therefore, although it is beneficial for me to remain silent as long as my *idam-jñāna* dominates, Śrīla Ṭhākura's words, which are full of assurance, are constantly inspiring us to discuss this subject matter. He has made it clear that the divine truth (*aprākṛta-tattva*) can only be deliberated on through *śabda* (words).

The nature of the śabda-tattva referred to by Śrīla Ṭhākura

In this context, *śabda* must not be taken to mean the words that have their origin in the material sky, nor does it mean the words emanating from the lips, teeth and throats of expert grammarians. It is neither the *śabda*



that the empirical scientists define as being produced by periodic waves of compressed air, nor the words of men who simply give credence to philosophers based on popularity. This *śabda* is absolutely beyond the four faults of the senses;² it is eternal (*nitya*), pure (*śuddha*), absolutely complete (*pūrṇa*), liberated (*mukta*), and immortal (*atimartya*). It is the unquestionable source of all knowledge (Veda) and the perfect message received in the succession of bona fide *gurus* (*āmnāya-vānī*). For the purpose of emancipating the *baddha-jīvas* (souls who are conditioned by ignorance), this lineage of the transcendental message (*vānī-paramparā*) awakens within the core of their hearts, which at that time are supremely pure (*viśuddha*). In the hearts of those blessed

2 The four faults of the conditioned soul's senses: (1) *bhrama* – illusion, or the tendency to come to the wrong conclusion based on appearances, (2) *pramāda* – the tendency to make errors in general, (3) *vipralipsā* – the tendency to deceive as characterized by baseless denial of something beyond the senses, and (4) *karaṇāpātava* – the insufficiency and limitations of the senses.

by destiny, this *vānī* has awakened and enabled them alone to become factually established in all *siddhānta* – the consummate truth. Certainly, the most prominent speciality of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's appearance was manifesting *siddhānta-vānī*³. Thus, he who was *nadiyā-prakāśa*, who revealed the birth place of Mahāprabhu, was also *siddhānta-vānī-prakāśa*, he who manifested *siddhānta-vānī*.

Śrīla Ṭhākura is worshipful because he played the central role in revealing ancient Nadiyā

Śrīla Ṭhākura *mahāśaya* is indeed known as “Nadiyā-prakāśa” for he revealed the actual birth place of Nadiyā-śaśī – the moon of Nadiyā, Śrīman Mahāprabhu – where the Supreme Lord enacted His early pastimes. Therefore, we lovingly serve Nadiyā-prakāśa by establishing and worshipping his deity form. Śrīla Ṭhākura is present

3 It will be explained that Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura is the intended meaning of *siddhānta-vānī*.



in his eternal deity form in *seva-sevaka-bhāva*⁴ at Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja within Śrī Nāma-haṭṭa, the marketplace of the holy name, or the *aprākṛta* Svarūpa-gaṅja. Situated thus, he is reminding us:

*muktā api lilayā vighrahaṁ
kṛtvā bhagavantaṁ bhajante*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 24.112)

Even liberated souls accept divine forms so they can participate in the transcendental pastimes of Śrī Bhagavān and serve Him.

.....
4 The object of one's service, or the personality to whom one renders service, is known as the *seva*, and the servant is known as the *sevaka*. In this sentence *seva-sevaka-bhāva* can be understood in two ways: (1) In the mood of a *sevaka*, Śrīla Ṭhākura is worshipping *seva*, Śrī Bhagavān or (2) Śrīla Ṭhākura is accepting our service in the mood of the *seva* and simultaneously serving his worshipful Lord in the mood of *sevaka*.

Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda is the progenitor of Siddhānta-vāṇī

The transcendental message (*vāṇī*) he manifested is the very form of the original goddess of transcendent knowledge – Sarasvatī. That *vāṇī* is indeed Siddhānta-vāṇī or Siddhānta Sarasvatī. By studying the example Śrīla Ṭhākura set in his own life as well as by studying the *granthas* (sacred texts) written by him and the direct continuation of his transcendental message (*vāṇī-paramparā*), we learn that without taking shelter of the immaculate instructions received through the succession of bona fide *gurus* (*āmnāya-vāṇī*) or of the irrefutable evidence of Vedic sound-vibration (*śabda-pramāṇa*), we cannot bring delight (*vinoda*) to *sat-cit-ānanda bhakti*. With this in mind, and with the sole aim of worshipping Śrīla Ṭhākura for his satisfaction, we exclusively take shelter of Siddhānta-vāṇī (Siddhānta Sarasvatī) and respectfully offer ourselves to his lotus feet.

tāte kṛṣṇa bhaje, kare gurura sevana
māyā-jāla chuṭe, pāya kṛṣṇera caraṇa

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 22.25)

Therefore, the entangled *jīvas* should absorb themselves in *kṛṣṇa-bhajana* and simultaneously do *guru-sevā*. Then only will they be released from the net of *māyā* and finally attain the lotus feet of Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Characteristics of some of Śrīla Ṭhākura's relatives and acquaintances

On many occasions I have heard people say that when Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was in the *gṛhastha āśrama*, they had been his very close relative. They wanted to show that they had been intimate with him and familiar with his identity. Simply hearing this recount, my most venerable *ācāryadeva*, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura would say, “They could not even see him, let alone be near him or know his real identity.” In *Jaiva-dharma*, written by Śrīla Ṭhākura himself, in the Fifteenth Chapter entitled “Prameya – Jīva-tattva (the established proof regarding the living entity)”, we have learned the significance of such statements and the benefit they give when they ultimately bear fruit. Therein we find the following analysis:

“Mind and speech both have their origin in inert matter, and they cannot be made to touch *cit-vastu* (transcendental objects) despite the greatest endeavour. The Vedas declare, ‘*yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha* – Speech and mind return unsuccessful in their attempt to reach *brahma*.’”

Śrīla Ṭhākura warned us continuously: it is impossible to obtain knowledge of transcendental objects through gross and subtle senses. Śrīla Ṭhākura is himself *sat-cit-ānanda bhakti-vinoda* (the *sat-cit-ānanda* form who brings delight to the personification of *bhakti*), so what question is there of him having a material covering? It is completely impossible for the gross body with its external senses or the subtle body to approach him or comprehend his identity and it would defy all logic to claim that they could. He is a *mahāpuruṣa* (a noble and exalted personality) who

is *nitya-mukta* (eternally liberated) and *atimartya* (beyond mortality). Mortal living beings who are bound by the illusory material energy are completely unable to form any conception about who he is.

Realizing Śrīla Ṭhākura's quality of being beyond mortality

The manner in which Śrīla Ṭhākura has demonstrated how to reflect on *jīva-tattva* within the Fifteenth Chapter of *Jaiva-dharma*, makes evident his qualities of *atimartyatā* (immortality) and *sarvajñatā* (omniscience). He has exposed various irrational arguments for rejecting *cetana-vilāsa* (the blissful activities of spiritual life) based on fear of *jaḍa-vilāsa* (the attempt to enjoy transient matter), which appears to be similar. He has informed us that to bring about true divination of an object, total and pervasive knowledge about it (*vyāpti-jñāna*), as well as guidance from superior counsel are necessary. In this context one may put forth the argument of “seeing a pearl in an empty oyster shell” and “mistaking a rope for a snake” to establish that the phenomenal world is a total falsity; but these contradict fundamental axioms. From these astonishing insights of Śrīla Ṭhākura, I am realizing his position as the *atimartya ācārya*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the Ācārya

Even within the field of traditional philosophical deliberation, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is the *ācārya* in every sense of the word. By virtue of his literary contributions to the field of philosophy, such as his commentaries *Vedānta-bhāṣya*, *Upaniṣad-bhāṣya*, *Sahasranām-bhāṣya*, *Gītā-bhāṣyam*, and so on, it is easily apprehensible to us that without a doubt, he is situated on the most elevated platform within the community of *ācāryas*. Formerly, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa obliterated the controversy that sprang from the unfounded charge that Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, for lack of a formal commentary, were not authentic adherents of Vedānta. Subsequently, Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda arose as the most exalted and noble personality to reform the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava society.

“Mortal living beings who are bound by the illusory material energy are completely unable to form any conception about who he is.”



And yet, we cannot see the entire manifestation of Śrīla Ṭhākura’s contribution because many of his treatises are hitherto unpublished. Therefore, it would be an act of great beneficence upon the entire world for noble-hearted seekers of the truth to endeavour to publish this literature.

Śrīla Saccidānanda Ṭhākura’s delineation of true benevolence (*paropakāra*)

The false concept that the *jīva* is a temporarily covered or reflected form of Bhagavān, and the proposition that real benevolence means to free the *jīva* from *sat-asat-vilakṣana-anirvacanīya*⁵ and reinstate him as Bhagavān completely differs from the knowledge we have acquired from this most elevated *ācārya*’s teachings about benevolence. The purpose of Śrīla Ṭhākura’s commentaries is to establish the *jīvas* on

5 Māyāvādīs consider *māyā*, the basis of the material world, to be neither *sat* (real) nor *asat* (unreal). Thus, they claim, *māyā* is inexplicable (*anirvacanīya*).

the platform of Absolute Truth by fixing their faith in the reality of their eternal devotional existence. The word *para* (supreme) in *paropakāra* (benevolence) indicates an object’s beginningless, natural attribute of being the greatest. Actions that seek to nullify the real greatness of the living entity cannot be called benevolent. That entity who is fully saturated by eternal bliss (*nityānanda*) is truly *para*, and real benevolence to the *jīva* awards him the fruit of becoming fully established in *nityānanda*. What is the use of accepting the existence of *jñāna* (knowledge) but denying the existence of *jñāta* (the possessor of knowledge)? How can such conceptions benefit the conscious soul? The living entity is by nature *ānanda-svarūpa* (a form that is inherently made of happiness), but if he becomes spiritually inactive by negating ultimate reality along with his own existence, who will remain to experience that *ānanda* and to whom will benevolence be shown? Śrīla Ṭhākura condemned such so-called benevolence as contemptuous. He did not accept it as benevolence at all because in relation to their conception of

*vyavahārika mithyā-vastu*⁶ (the falseness of commonly experienced reality – the phenomenal world), even their *paramārthika satya-ānanda* (their concept of true happiness as the experience of oneness with the absolute reality – *brahma*) becomes a symbol of falseness and devoid of *ānanda*.

However, the actual principle of mistaking a rope to be a snake has nothing to do with the explanation given by the Māyāvādīs. Snakes and rope are both real, and in order to mistake a rope for a snake, one must have had prior experience of both. In poor light, he mistakes the rope to be a snake because his mind superimposes his prior impression of a snake on to the rope. Someone who has never actually seen a snake, such as an infant, cannot mistake a rope for a snake. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no possibility of some inexplicable third category like the Māyāvādīs' *sat-asat-anirvacanīya*, which they use to explain *māyā*.

The achievement of temporary fruit is not the goal of benevolence

If the result of an action is undoubtedly seen to have a non-permanent nature, then seeking opportunities to engage in it or becoming subservient to it is not in accordance with the explanation of benevolence given by Śrīla Ṭhākura, nor with any of his teachings. In his analysis of the results of action, he has apprised us that only attainment of the Absolute Truth (*tattva-vastu*) bestows the highest limit of *ānanda* in the

6 From Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī's *Tattva-sandharbha* (Text 40), we learn that the Māyāvādī followers of Śrī Śankarācārya use the example of mistaking a rope for a snake to prove that worldly existence (*vyavahāra*) is neither real (*sat*) nor unreal (*asat*) and is thus inexplicable. Their logic is as follows: If snakes were not real, then there would be no possibility of mistaking a rope in the darkness to be a snake, for a nonexistent thing can never be conceived of. Thus, they explain, the mistaken perception of the snake is not unreal, nor is it actually real, for in the light it will be seen that no snake is present. Thus the Māyāvādīs conclude that a third, inexplicable (*anirvacanīya*) category exists which is neither *sat* nor *asat*, and they claim that *māyā* is of this third category.

svarūpa (intrinsic nature) of the living entity. Indeed, with the desire to attain that highest limit of *ānanda*, the *jīvas* accept the flickering happiness of gross and subtle material nature as the *prayojana* (the ultimate goal of life). Such temporariness is never included in the conception of benevolence taught by Śrīla Ṭhākura. The fruit of this so-called benevolence gradually dwindles until it becomes so weak that it can no longer be detected. It withers away to such an extent that it is at last destroyed, and one sorrowfully realizes that it was completely insignificant.

Attainment of prayojana essentially depends on mercy, not on one's own sādhana

The process that leads one to finally obtain the ultimate goal (*prayojana*) – as conceived by Śrīla Ṭhākura – successively bestows both the ability to perform *sādhana* and later the *sādhya* itself.⁷ Certainly, by definition, the word *sādhya* means “that which can be attained through performing *sādhana* and is thus dependent on *sādhana*”. Nevertheless, by hearing the teachings of Śrīla Ṭhākura on *sādhyavastu* (the final object of attainment) from the mouth of Siddhānta-vāṇī, we can understand that the *sādhyavastu* is, in reality, beyond the reach of *sādhana*. Thus, attainment of *sādhya* is actually dependent on the mercy of the Absolute Truth (*tattva-vastu*). Moreover, the imperfections of language are bound to interfere while expressing the definition of the word *sādhya*.⁸ It is concluded that, in all respects, *sādhya* manifests through *ārādhana* – loving worship. It is stated in Vedānta-sūtra (3.2.24) “*api samrādhane*

7 Initially, one obtains the ability to do *ārādhana* (loving worship) – in the stage of *sādhana* – by mercy, and later mercy alone gives the result of that *sādhana* – the *sādhya* (or *prema-bhakti*). Hence attainment of the *prayojana* completely depends on mercy.

8 From the viewpoint of an etymologist, the word ‘*sādhya*’ indicates “that which can be attained through performing *sādhana* and is thus dependent on *sādhana*”. But in reality, the attainment of the *sādhya* is beyond the reach of *sādhana*. Thus it is clear that the imperfections of language are interfering with the actual definition of *sādhya*.

“It is concluded that, in all respects, *sādhya* manifests through *ārādhana* – loving worship.”



pratyakṣānumānābhyām – In all respects, it is by the power of subservience to Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī that the living entities become established on the platform of *viśuddha-sattva* and thus behold the Absolute Truth. That Absolute Truth becomes directly visible before them (*pratyakṣa*) and is the basis and substance of all their thoughts (*anumāna*.)” In other words, the *tattva-vastu* becomes the object of their *anuśīlana* (the cultivation of constant endeavours to serve), as well as the object of their constant meditation (*dhyāna*).⁹ In the absence of perfect *ārādhana*, or *śuddha-bhakti*, the conscious being, due to misuse of his free will, finds himself in the presence of mundane perception and false knowledge.

⁹ “Directly visible” (*pratyakṣa*) is parallel to “the cultivation of constant endeavours to serve” (*anuśīlana*), and “the basis and substance of all their thoughts” (*anumāna*) is parallel to “constant meditation” (*dhyāna*).

Anuśīlana of the tattva-vastu is in fact abhidheya (the procedures of devotional service)

From the *Vedānta-sūtra* (3.2.26) “*prakāśaś ca karmaṇy abhyāsāt*”, we can learn the actual conception of *anuśīlana* (the cultivation of constant endeavours to serve Bhagavān). This *anuśīlana* is completely different from fruitive work (*karma*) or regular studies (*abhyāsa*); rather this *sūtra* is a *mantra*¹⁰ that dispels the misconception that merely accumulating knowledge is the means to attain the desired goal. In a practical sense, one cannot attain one’s desired fruit simply by gaining proficient knowledge about a particular subject matter. The only means to obtain it is to engage in *anuśīlana*

¹⁰ The root *mana* means “mind” and *tra* means “to deliver”.

Thus, a *mantra* is that which frees the soul from the platform of mental speculation.



with great earnestness. In the same way, mere knowledge cannot actually bring us within direct proximity of the *tattva-vastu*. The *tattva-vastu* will manifest to us only after we properly engage in its *anuşilana* again and again. Therefore, the meaning of *prakāśaś ca* in this *sūtra* is “manifestation of the *tattva-vastu*”, and the meaning of *karmaṇyabhyāsāt*¹¹ is “the result that can be attained by engaging in *anuşilana* again and again”. In every *grantha* by Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda, we will discover this truth by deliberating on the chapters in which *abhidheya* is discussed.

Śrīla Ṭhākura appeared in Vīranagara

Rather than attempting to speak something about Śrīla Ṭhākura Saccidānanda independently, we should take shelter of Siddhānta-vāṇī. Only then will we be able to truly know him completely. What *jagad-guru* Śrīla

¹¹The most general meanings of *karma* include both action and the result, or product, of action. The literal meaning of *abhyāsa* is to concentrate, practise, exercise, or study something repeatedly.

Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda has revealed to us in his introduction to *Jaīva-dharma* is the sole essence of what we should learn about Śrīla Ṭhākura. There, he revealed that the place of appearance of *caitanya-vastu* (Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu) and *advaita-vastu* (Śrī Advaita Ācārya) is also the very place of appearance of *sat-cit-ānanda-vastu* (Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura). Such amazing oneness saturated with speciality is always observed in *ātma-tattva* (spiritual reality). Furthermore, he manifested his pastime of appearing to the world in the place called Vīranagara (in Gauḍadeśa). This is fitting, for it is impossible for *ātma-tattva* to manifest anywhere that lacks spiritual strength (*bala*).¹²

All dualities converge in perfect harmony within the aprākṛta-tattva alone

Despite my desire to become purified by discussing many more topics about Śrīla Ṭhākura, I fear my

¹²The literal meaning of *vīra* is “strength”, and the meaning of *nagara* is “town” or “city”.



Śrīla Saccidānanda
Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's
appearance place (left
and above photos) at
Viranagara (photo in
previous page).

doing so will make this article too lengthy. I have thus concluded here by briefly mentioning his appearance, even though it is the day of his disappearance. Such a contradiction may seem inconsistent from the ordinary perspective, but considering the third *sūtra* of Śrīla Ṭhākura's *grantha*, *Tattva-sūtra*, “*viruddhadharmaṁ tasmīn na citraṁ* – The existence of contradicting attributes in the Supreme Absolute Truth is in no way astonishing, for it is entirely natural in Him,” we come to know that in the *aprākṛta* (supra-mundane) *sat-cit-ānanda-vastu* the beautiful harmony of all contrary attributes is eternally present. Apart from this, the appearance and disappearance of the *mahājanas* both serve the same purpose. Therefore, the disappearance day – the day of separation – is also a day of celebration. This *amāvasyā* is indeed a most auspicious *tithi* (lunar day), for it has granted the illumination of great auspiciousness.¹³

¹³The lunar day of the new moon is called *amāvasyā*. It is the last day of the waning moon and it leaves the night completely dark. Therefore, with respect to mundane considerations, it is an inauspicious *tithi* (lunar day).

*namo bhaktivinodāya sac-cid-ānanda-nāmine
gaura-śakti-svarūpāya rūpānuga-varāya te*

I offer my *praṇāma* unto Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the exalted personality who brings delight to Bhakti-devī (Bhakti-vinoda) and who is known by the name Saccidānanda because he is the embodiment of pure eternal reality, cognizance and bliss. He is the personification of Śrī Gaura's internal potency, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita, and he is the foremost *rūpānuga* Vaiṣṇava. 🙏

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*, Year 1, Issue 5, 1949
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Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja has concluded by reconciling the apparent contradiction of auspiciousness in inauspiciousness. The event of Śrīla Ṭhākura's disappearance, although apparently leaving the world in darkness, is a most auspicious celebration due to the special opportunity to remember and glorify him. Thus, this dark *tithi*, the day of separation from Śrīla Ṭhākura, has become illuminated by auspiciousness.



When it comes to discussing the life of *mahā-puruṣas* (great self-realized personalities who are transcendental to mortal existence), it would be a mistake to consider their birth, life span and death to be similar to that of mere mortals, because *mahā-puruṣas* are beyond birth and death. They are situated in eternal existence, and their coming and going from this world is strictly a matter of their own appearance and disappearance.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura appeared on Sunday, September 2, 1838, and thus illuminated the sky of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. He took birth in a high class family in a village named Vīra-nagara (also known as Ulāgrāma or Ulā), which is located within the Nadiyā district of West Bengal, not far from Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura, the appearance place of Śrī Gaurāṅga. He disappeared from this world on June 23, 1914, in the city of Calcutta. At that time, he entered the midday pastimes of Śrī Śrī Gāndharvikā-Giridhārī, who are the supreme objects of worship for the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

In his brief lifespan of seventy-six years, he instructed the world by personally carrying out the duties of the four *āśramas* (stages of spiritual life): *brahmacārya* (celibate student-life), *gṛhastha* (religious householder-life), *vānaprastha* (withdrawal from worldly duties), and *sannyāsa* (formal renunciation). He first underwent *brahmacārya*, and obtained various elevated instructions. After that, he entered *gṛhastha* life, and set an ideal example of how to maintain family members through honest and noble means. All householders should follow this example.

During his *gṛhastha* life, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda traveled all over India as a highly placed officer in the administration and justice department of the British government of India. By his exacting

The Life, Precepts Saccidānanda

discrimination and expert administrative skills, this great personality managed to regulate and bring to order even those places that were infamous as lawless states. In the midst of family duties, he astonished all his contemporaries by the religious ideal he displayed. Although engaged in pressing responsibilities, he wrote many books in different languages. We have recorded the dates of composition in our list of his books. If the reader studies this, he can clearly deduce Bhaktivinoda's incredible creative power.

Disregarding the opinion of those who might have had a prejudice about language, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has broadcast the transcendental instructions of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in many different languages. He has written approximately one hundred books in Sanskrit, Bengali, Oriya, Hindi, Urdu and English. The names of some of the more important of these works have been given below along with their dates of publication:

Sanskrit

- (1) *Vedāntādhikaraṇa-mālā*, 1872
- (2) *Datta-kaustubham*, 1874
- (3) *Datta-varṇa-mālā*, 1876
- (4) *Bauddha-vijaya-kāvya*, 1878
- (5) *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*, 1880
- (6) *Sanmodana bhāṣya (Śikṣāṣṭakam)*, 1886
- (7) *Daśopaniṣad-cūrṇikā*, 1886
- (8) *Bhāvāvalī* (commentary), 1886

- (9) *Śrī Caitanyacaranāmṛta bhāṣya* (commentary on *Śrī Caitanya-Upaniṣad*), 1887
- (10) *Śrī Āmnāya-sūtram*, 1890
- (11) *Tattva-vivekaḥ* or *Śrī Saccidānandānubhūtiḥ*, 1893
- (12) *Tattva-sūtram*, 1894
- (13) *Vedārka-dīdhiti* (commentary on *Śrī Īsopaniṣad*), 1894
- (14) *Śrī Gaurāṅga-līlā-smaraṇa-maṅgala-stotram*, 1896
- (15) *Śrī Bhagavad-dhāmāmṛtam* (commentary), 1898
- (16) *Śrī Bhāgavata Arka-marīci-mālā*, 1901
- (17) *Śrī Bhajana-rahasya*, 1902
- (18) *Svaniyama-dvādaśakam*, 1907
- (19) *Brahmamsūtra bhāṣya* (commentary)
- (20) *Śikṣā-daśamūlam* etc.

Bengali (prose)

- (1) *Garbha-stotra* (translation), 1870
- (2) *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī* (monthly magazine), 1881
- (3) *Rasika-Raṅjana* (commentary on *Bhagavad Gītā*), 1886
- (4) *Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta*, 1886
- (5) *Prema-pradīpa*, 1886
- (6) Published *Śrī Viṣṇu-sahasra-nāma*, 1886
- (7) *Vaiṣṇava-siddhānta-mālā*, 1888
- (8) *Siddhānta-darpaṇam* (Bengali translation), 1890
- (9) *Vidvad-raṅjana* (commentary on *Bhagavad Gītā*), 1891
- (10) *Śrī Harināma*, 1892
- (11) *Śrī Nāma*, 1892

and Contribution of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

An excerpt from the Introduction to Jaiva-dharma by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja

- (12) *Śrī Nāma-tattva*, 1892
- (13) *Śrī Nāma-mahimā*, 1892
- (14) *Śrī Nāma-pracāra*, 1892
- (15) *Śrīman Mahāprabhura Śikṣā*, 1892
- (16) *Tattva-muktāvalī* or *Māyāvāda-satadūṣaṇī* (translated and published), 1894
- (17) *Amṛta-pravāha-bhāṣya* (commentary on *Caitanya caritāmṛta*), 1895
- (18) *Śrī Rāmānuja Upadeśa*, 1896
- (19) *Jaiva-Dharma*, 1896
- (20) *Prakāśinī-ṛtti* (commentary on *Brahma-saṁhitā*), 1897
- (21) *Pīyūṣa-varṣiṇī-ṛtti* (commentary on *Upadeśāmṛta*), 1898
- (22) *Śrī Bhajanāmṛtam* (translation and commentary), 1899
- (23) *Śrī Saṅkalpa-kalpadrumā* (Bengali translation), 1901 etc.

Bengali (verse)

- (1) *Hari-kathā*: Topics of Lord Hari, 1850
- (2) *Śumbha-Niśumbha-yuddha*, 1851
- (3) *Vijana-grāma*, 1863.
- (4) *Sannyāsī*, 1863.
- (5) *Kalyāṇa-kalpataru*, 1881
- (6) *Manah-Śikṣā* (translation and commentary), 1886
- (7) *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-vijaya* (published), 1887
- (8) *Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma-mahātmya*, 1890
- (9) *Śaraṇāgati*, 1893
- (10) *Gītāvalī*, 1893
- (11) *Gītāmālā*, 1893
- (12) *Śoka-śātana*, 1893
- (13) *Śrī Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga*, 1899
- (14) *Śrī Harināma-cintāmaṇi*, 1900
- (15) *Śrī Prema-vivarta* (published), 1906 etc.

Urdū

- (1) *Vālide Rejīṣṭrī*, 1866. etc.

English

- (1) Poriade, 1857–58.
- (2) Maṭhas of Orissa, 1860.

- (3) Our Wants, 1863
- (4) Speech on Gautama, 1866
- (5) The Bhāgavat: Its Philosophy, Its Ethics, and Its Theology, 1869
- (6) Reflections, 1871
- (7) Ṭhākura Haridāsa, 1871
- (8) The Temple of Jagannātha at Purī, 1871
- (9) The Monasteries of Purī, 1871
- (10) The Personality of Godhead, 1871
- (11) A Beacon of Light, 1871
- (12) Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, His Life and Precepts, 1896 etc.

When one sees this list, one can easily infer that the author was a vastly learned scholar of many different languages. I think it necessary at this point to shed some light on a special feature of the author's life. Although he was a pre-eminent scholar of Western thought, he was completely free from Western influences.

Western educators say, "Don't follow me; follow my words." In other words, "Don't do as I do; do as I say." The life of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura refutes this principle, for he personally applied and demonstrated all the instructions of his books in his own life. Therefore, his instructions and manner of *bhajana* are known as *bhaktivinoda-dhārā* (the line of Bhaktivinoda).

There is not a single instruction in his books that he did not personally follow. Therefore, there is no disparity between his writings and his life, between his actions and his words. They are one in all respects. It is natural for readers to be curious to learn about a great personality who possesses such extraordinary character. Modern readers, in particular, who seek to know about any subject, cannot have faith in an author's writings without being acquainted with him.

After retiring from his government responsibilities, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda adopted the stage of *vānaprastha*, and intensified his spiritual practice. At that time, he established an *āśrama* at Surabhi-kuṅja in Godrumadvīpa, one of the nine districts of Navadvīpa. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura remained there and performed *bhajana* for a considerable time.

Later, he accepted the life of an ascetic, and stayed at Svānanda-sukhada-kuṅja, which was nearby. While

residing there, he established the appearance place of Śrī Caitanyadeva and many other places of *gaurā-līlā*. In this, he followed the example of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His followers, the Six Gosvāmīs, who had discovered the birthplace and other pastime places of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. If Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda had not appeared in this world, the pastime places and instructions of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu would have disappeared from the world.

The entire world of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas will therefore remain indebted to him forever. It is for this reason that he has been awarded the highest honour in the Vaiṣṇava community by being addressed as the Seventh Gosvāmī.

This *mahā-puruṣa* instructed the world both through the ideal example of his personal life and by writing books in many different languages. In addition, there is yet another unique gift that he bestowed, and it would be a display of ingratitude on my part if I neglected to mention this. Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda brought a great personality into this world, who was the commander-in-chief in propagating the *dharma* revealed by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. This great personality is my beloved *gurudeva*, and he is renowned throughout the world as *jagad-guru om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa-kula-cūḍāmaṇi aṣṭottaraśata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Ṭhākura*. It was an incomparable and unprecedented accomplishment on the part of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to bring this *mahā-puruṣa* into the world. The Vaiṣṇava community honours Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura with the shorter title of Śrīla Prabhupāda, and hereafter, I will also refer to this supremely liberated *mahā-puruṣa* as Śrīla Prabhupāda.

Śrīla Prabhupāda appeared as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's son and successor. Throughout the world, he raised the brilliant banner of Śrī Madhva-Gauḍīya *vaiṣṇava dharma*, which was practised and propagated

by Śrīman Mahāprabhu, Śrī Caitanyadeva. In so doing, he brought tremendous welfare and elevation to the religious domain. Even Western and Far Eastern countries like America, England, Germany, France, Sweden, Switzerland and Burma were not deprived of

his mercy. He established sixty-four Gauḍīya Maṭha preaching centres in India and around the world, and from these he propagated the teachings of Śrī Caitanya. He also circulated all the books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and thus established his incomparable fame throughout the world.

By the influence of time and the onslaught of the age of Kali, various types of corruption and false doctrines had infiltrated Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *dharma*. As a result, thirteen distorted sects (*apasampradāyas*) had emerged,

and they are named in this *śloka*:

*āola bāola karttābhajā neḍā darveśa sāi
sahajīyā sakhī-bhekī smārta jāti-gosāi
atibāḍī cūḍādhārī gaurāṅga-nāgarī
totā kahe e teraha saṅga nāhi kari*

Totā says that he will not associate with the thirteen *apasampradāyas*: *āola, bāola, karttābhajā, neḍā, darveśa, sāi, sahajīyā, sakhī-bhekī, smārta, jāti-gosāi, atibāḍī, cūḍādhārī* and *gaurāṅga-nāgarī*.

Śrīla Prabhupāda significantly curbed the mischievous activities of these *apasampradāyas* through his preaching and by publishing the books of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. 🕉

*From the English rendering of
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja's
Hindi translation of Jaiva-dharma
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Contents slightly reordered for this publication.*

A Glimpse of

the line of thought

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣaka
Śrīdhāra Gosvāmī Mahārāja

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura hears the puzzlement of great mahājanas

Once, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had a dream in which he was wandering in the sky chanting the holy name. He came upon the court of Yamarāja, where Yamarāja himself was sitting with Brahmā, Nārada, and others discussing a point from a verse in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.30):

*api cet su-durācāro
bhajate mām ananya-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ
samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*

The generally accepted meaning of this verse is “Even if one commits the most abominable action, if he is an *ananya-bhāk* devotee, one who worships Me alone in devotional service, free from *karma* and *jñāna*, then he is to be considered saintly because his endeavours are completely on My behalf and his determination is fixed.”

Here, Kṛṣṇa says, “Whatever he has done, if he is exclusively given to Myself, he should be considered as My devotee. *Samyag vyavasito hi saḥ*. And whatever he is doing is cent percent right.” But then the next passage (*Bhagavad-gītā* 9.31) says *kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā* – very soon he will be a man of righteousness; he will become *dharmātmā*, dutiful.



Bhaktivinoda-dhārā

of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura ❧

As Yamarāja, Brahmā, and Nārada discussed this point, a question came up. Kṛṣṇa says, “*bhajate mām ananya-bhāk* – one who is My exclusive devotee.” The question arises, “What is exclusive devotion, or *ananya-bhajana*?” Kṛṣṇa says, “Give up all other religious conceptions and surrender to Me alone – *sarva dharmān parityajya, mām ekaṁ śaraṇam vraja*. That is exclusive devotion. But if one is practising exclusive devotion, then he is already *dharmātmā*, he is already righteous. How is it then, that in the very next verse, Kṛṣṇa says, “Soon he becomes *dharmātmā*”?

How are we to adjust this? Kṛṣṇa says:

*kṣipraṁ bhavati dharmātmā
śāśvac-chāntiṁ nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānihi
na me bhaktaḥ pranaśyati*

Bhagavad-gītā (9.31)

He soon becomes righteous (*dharmātmā*) and attains lasting peace. O son of Kuntī, declare it boldly that My devotee never perishes.” This is the general meaning of this verse. Kṛṣṇa tells Arjuna, “He soon becomes *dharmātmā*. My devotee is never ruined. Go and declare this to the public.

Kṛṣṇa says that after the devotee became *ananya-bhāk*, that is, after he gave up all sorts of duties and surrendered to Kṛṣṇa, then again he will be (*dharmātmā*) a dutiful man.

As Brahmā, Nārada, and Yamarāja discussed this point, they saw Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura walking in the

sky and taking [chanting] the holy name. One of them suggested, “There is a pure devotee. He should be able to give the real meaning.” Then Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was invited in their midst and asked, “How shall we adjust these points? Kṛṣṇa has said that this person is an exclusive devotee, that he has renounced all sorts of duties and surrendered to Kṛṣṇa. And yet, in no time it will be seen that he is very dutiful. How can we understand this?”

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explained that “he quickly becomes righteous” refers not to the exclusive devotee, but to one who considers the exclusive devotee pure in all circumstances. “Even if he performs some abominable act, he is really a *sādhu*, a saint.” One who can think of an exclusive devotee in that way will soon become *dharmātmā*. *

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura perfectly harmonizes the seeming contradiction

He gave the meaning. *Api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk* – despite his outer practices, the exclusive devotee (*ananya-bhāk*) is to be accepted (*mantavyah*) as a cent-percent saint (*sādhu*). Therefore, the conclusion is that he who can realize this, he who declares that an exclusive devotee of Kṛṣṇa, regardless of his outer practices, is cent-per-cent saintly, will soon become *dharmātmā*, virtuous and religious. His statement and conclusion is cent-per-cent correct, and his conduct will soon become very pure and he, too, will have the chance of accepting the path towards eternal truth. **



“Make a public announcement that My devotee is never ruined ... But one who declares, ‘an exclusive devotee of Kṛṣṇa is saintly no matter what he does’ soon becomes righteous.”

The man who boldly declare that an exclusive devotee is a sādhu becomes righteous

In this way, in my commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*, I have followed Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s explanation. I also saw that it was redundant to say that an *ananya-bhāk* devotee becomes *dharmātmā*. Kṛṣṇa says that an exclusive devotee should be thought of as a *sādhu*, an honest man. One who says that an exclusive devotee, a surrendered soul to Kṛṣṇa, should be thought of as pure, whatever be his external practices – the man who is making this remark, he becomes righteous. This is the proper conclusion. What he says is cent percent truth.

And the next thing Kṛṣṇa says is that he who can remark in such a way will be purified very soon. Kṛṣṇa says that by such appreciation of the exclusive devotee, a person will soon come to his eternal duty and attain eternal peace. “So I ask you, O son of Kuntī, Arjuna, to go and promise in public that My exclusive devotee will never be lost – *kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati*.” Then you will get the benefit of the man whose remark improves his life. Otherwise, why should

Kṛṣṇa tell Arjuna, “Make a public announcement that My devotee is never ruined”? What effect will there be for Arjuna? But one who declares, “an exclusive devotee of Kṛṣṇa is saintly no matter what he does” soon becomes righteous.

If Arjuna declares this, he will become *dharmātmā*. He will get the benefit. So Kṛṣṇa tells him, “You make this remark. Take a bold step; take a risk and make this remark. Then you will also get that benefit I have described.” Of course, Arjuna is a *pārśada*, an eternal associate of Kṛṣṇa, but using him as an example, Kṛṣṇa tells him, “You do it.” Arjuna has taken the position of an inquirer independent of his *pārśada* character. *

Whether or not we obey provincial laws, we must obey His Absolute law

“So Arjuna, you take advantage of this and boldly declare to the public that My devotee who gives himself wholly unto Me can never come to ruination. Even if he may be seen to be outwardly doing something wrong, he will be saved. His successful life is assured. By this declaration,

you will get the benefit of becoming righteous and have the chance of attaining eternal spiritual peace. Whoever can understand this and has the courage to declare that My exclusive devotee is never subject to ruination, he, in turn, gets his chance to come to this path of exclusive devotion, and he will attain eternal peace.”

He will attain everything because he has the proper appreciation for exclusive devotion.

Everything is for the Lord, and not for any other part. In the Absolute, everything is ‘for itself’. ‘The Absolute is for itself.’ Whether we obey or disobey the laws of provincial or separate interest, we must without fail obey the rule that everything is for Him. This is the main rule, and all others are subsidiary. We may or may not carry on our duties, but we must carry on our duty towards the centre; this is the all-important factor in every case. Thus, one who can appreciate this and boldly assert it to the public must have substantial appreciation for this conception, and he is sure to survive and improve his future condition very soon. “He will attain the path of eternal peace, and that is the service of Myself, Kṛṣṇa.” This is the underlying meaning.

The highest quality in every part of the whole is that everyone must be dedicated towards the centre, even crossing his dutifulness in respect to any other environmental position. And one who can feel, appreciate, and assert this – he will also soon achieve such a position. His inner heart can appreciate, and that is something of a realization on that path; it will very soon take effect, and the public will see, “Oh, he is also entering this path of *ananya-bhajana*, the exclusive adherence to the call of the Absolute Centre, and that is all-in-all.”

In the standard, or most general, interpretation, the beginner in devotional service may have so many bad tendencies in his behaviour, but when he matures, these must disappear. Nonetheless, undesirable behaviour may sometimes be seen to persist, at least externally.**

By chewing his poison, poison will come to me

The more we are particular about the conduct of others, the more we lose our own time and energy. Instead of benefiting us, such a practice is reactionary. If I try to

find fault with anyone, especially a devotee, the fault will come back to me. By chewing the poison in his body, that poison will come to me. Avoid such association. Try to find the good in others. That will help you.

There was a system in our *maṭha* at the time of our Guru Mahārāja. He ordered one devotee to praise another, especially one that the devotee disliked. Thus, the devotee would be forced to find the goodness in the other devotee who he didn’t particularly like, and thereby be benefited. Eliminating what was bad in his conception of the other person, he was to search for what good he could find, and thereby be benefited. **

One who has surrendered to Kṛṣṇa is accepted as His own

When I was publishing my commentary on *Bhagavad-gītā*, a godbrother once told me, “If you give such an explanation, then in the name of *ananya-bhāk-bhakti*, exclusive devotion, less advanced devotees will take advantage of this. What you are revealing here is a very hidden meaning. It is not meant for the public. It is a confidential point: *api cet su-durācāro bhajate mām ananya-bhāk sādhuḥ eva* – he may be the worst debauchee in his outer life, but if he is *ananya-bhāk*, a surrendered soul, he should be considered a really honest man. If you explain things like this, everyone will say, ‘Oh, I am an *ananya-bhāk* devotee,’ and they will go on with their debauchery. So please don’t express this so explicitly.”

But I published my commentary over this objection because the principle underlying this verse is an important one. One who has surrendered to Kṛṣṇa is accepted as His own. And just as Kṛṣṇa has rights over everything and is never a trespasser, so his own man should never be considered a trespasser at any time. This is confirmed elsewhere, in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*: *ātma-bhūyāya ca kalpate* – My devotee belongs to Me. So one who works by inspiration from Kṛṣṇa should never be considered a trespasser. He can enjoy anything on Kṛṣṇa’s behalf if he is really a surrendered soul. He should be considered as Kṛṣṇa’s. He has free access to everything that belongs to Kṛṣṇa.

But some objected, saying, “Don’t be so broad in your interpretation. If you do so, then the people at

large will do abominable things in the name of pure devotion. They will say, 'Oh, I am Vaisnava. I am *acyuta-gotra*, I am one of Kṛṣṇa's own men. What is his property is mine. I can enjoy everything.' " *

A genuine devotee thinks, "I can't be an *ananya-bhāk-bhakta*"

Then of course the question comes, "How do we recognize *ananya-bhāk-bhakti*, exclusive devotion?" The real trouble is here. Merely professing that I am a pure devotee won't do. Rather, a real devotee will think, "I am not a real devotee." That will be his understanding, his inner feeling. Exclusive devotion is not a small thing. A genuine devotee thinks, "I can't be an *ananya-bhāk-bhakta*. I have not attained that stage. It is very difficult. Rather I am going away from that." That will be the general tenor of his attitude.

What to speak of lesser devotees, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī herself says, "People associate Me with Kṛṣṇa. They say that I have an illicit connection with Kṛṣṇa. But what they say is all false. My grief is that I could not give My entire heart to Kṛṣṇa. I cannot say that I am completely His. My internal trouble is that I could not become wholly His and they falsely think that I am. I have no objection to becoming fully His, even to having an illicit connection with Him; but that I can't become so, this is My great fault." That will be the general attitude of a real *ananya-bhāk-bhakta*. Just the opposite tendency will come. *

The real measure of devotion must be there

Whether externally pure or impure, the whole principle is that our exclusive devotion for Kṛṣṇa is the only necessity. In the ordinary sense, the *gopīs* are also sinners. They crossed the laws of society and the *śāstras*, so they are 'sinners'. But they hold the highest position of purity by their exclusive devotedness to Kṛṣṇa and no other. They cannot help but to serve Kṛṣṇa cent-percent, even at the risk of crossing the entire code of morality. They are considered to be the highest devotional ideal.

But that sort of devotion is not so cheap that everyone will go on with their activities in this world, taking advantage of such ideals. That won't do. The real measure of devotion must be there, not that anyone

may do anything passing in the name of pure devotion, like the *prākṛta-sahajiyās*. That can't be allowed. **

All relative conceptions of ownership are false

The fact is that one who has accepted Kṛṣṇa exclusively has no taste for any other thing, so really he is not *durācari*, he is not capable of acting in an abominable way. Internally he is always connected with Kṛṣṇa. In external life he is indifferent. So what he is doing is not done by him. One who acts on that plane of reality may destroy thousands of universes, but does not do anything (*hatvāpi sa imāl lokān na hanti na nibadhyate*). He is acting on the transcendental plane, the *nirguṇa* plane. He is not to be seen in terms of what is good or bad in the calculation of this world. He is absent here. What is in connection with Kṛṣṇa is all good; it is *nirguṇa*, transcendental, without material qualities.

In this world, truth is a relative thing. "This is true, this is not true, this is mine, this is yours." What value do these things have? If a devotee steals a flower for Kṛṣṇa, you may say, "Oh, why are you stealing my flower?" But what is the guarantee that the flower belongs to you? These are different stages of bogus conceptions of reality. A man who has possession of some land declares himself the owner. Then a big landowner comes and says, "You are not the owner. I have real possession of this land. I have allowed you only to use it."

But beyond the landowner a king may come and say, "Oh no, this is my land. Your ownership is only relative. I am the ruler of this land. It belongs to me." In this way, one relative conception of truth fights with another. And morality stands only on this conception: this is mine, this is yours. All these conceptions of ownership are false. All these transactions of morality are false, because they are not in connection with the Supreme Truth. So the devotee's apparent misbehaviour is quite the contrary in reality.

'*dvaite*' *bhadrābhadrā-jñāna, saba* — '*manodharma*'
'*ei bhāla, ei manda,*' — '*ei saba 'bhrama*'

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Antya-līlā* 4.176)

In the material world, conceptions of good and bad or right and wrong are all mental concoctions.

Therefore, saying, ‘This is good and this is bad’ is all a mistake. So in the deepest plane of reality, the deepest wave of Kṛṣṇa consciousness is moving, and there, so many *jīva* souls are dancing. And that dance is the absolute dance wherein everything surrenders to Kṛṣṇa in the mood of Vṛndāvana: *sarva dharmān parityajya mām ekam*. Everything belongs to Kṛṣṇa, and for his satisfaction anything and everything can be done. This is the only principle followed by the exclusive devotees without caring for the many relative demands and strictures of this false plane. That is *nirguṇa*, transcendental. In that plane, the calculation of false ownership can’t be applied. All claims of ownership have no value in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *

It is the background of the action that is to be considered, not the action alone

There is another point that may also be considered in this verse. Kṛṣṇa says in the *Bhagavad-gītā* that it is not the action but the background of the action that is to be considered. That is to be examined, not the action alone. The motive underlying the action – not the *karma*, but the purpose – that is the culprit. So the internal meaning of an act, its purpose, should be considered; not the external action. The higher principle is served not by following ordinary law, but by following some higher law. In that case, the ordinary law is surpassed. One might think a devotee a culprit from the consideration of ordinary law, but from the consideration of a higher law, Kṛṣṇa has said that if you can appreciate their law-breaking, you will be uplifted.

*ājñayaivam guṇān doṣān
mayādiṣṭan api svakān
dharmān samtyajya yaḥ sarvān
mām bhajet sa ca sattamaḥ*


Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (11.11.32)

“The rules of the scriptures come from My direction, My order. But if anyone breaks those rules to satisfy Me, he should be considered a better devotee.”

Kṛṣṇa says, “The rules of the scriptures come from My direction, My order. But if anyone breaks those rules to satisfy Me, he should be considered a better devotee.” Sometimes it may be necessary to show even greater loyalty to the king by crossing over the laws of the king. So here, God is above law. When we consider the nature of divinity, we must conclude that Kṛṣṇa is above law. Law is for us. But law may not be applied in His case. He is absolute. When one has actually come in connection with the Absolute, he cannot but ignore the laws meant for ordinary people.

This is the nature of Kṛṣṇa’s entire *vraja-līlā*. In Vṛndāvana, all considerations of individual and local interest are sacrificed. In Vṛndāvana, there is the highest self-sacrifice, to the degree that everyone’s own particular interest or consideration is sacrificed into fire. Only when you come to that stage of self-sacrifice can you take birth in Vṛndāvana, not before. This is the conclusion of *Bhagavad-gītā*.

*sarva-dharmān parityajya
mām ekam śaraṇam vraja
ahaṁ tvām sarva-pāpebhyo
mokṣayiṣyām mā śucaḥ*

Kṛṣṇa says, “You must risk all your prospects, you must risk everything, with no prospects other than Myself. I cannot tolerate the presence of any second entity in your heart. I cannot tolerate that you will come to Me with some consideration. My relation with you must be unconditional. I can’t tolerate any other interest in the heart of My devotee. Only one interest, and that is Me. Sacrifice all your so-called interests, all your prospects, everything. Then you can come to meet Me in Vṛndāvana.” * 

Excerpts from

* Subjective Evolution of Consciousness and

** Sermons from the Guardian of Devotion, Volume 1

EXCERPTS FROM

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A LECTURE GIVEN IN LONDON,

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by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja

One who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa can be guru

So today is a very auspicious day, Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda's birthday. He was one of the *ācāryas* of the disciplic succession from Kṛṣṇa.

So there is a disciplic succession. And the *ācāryas*, they're authorities. Our process of knowledge is very simple. We take it from the authority.

If you want to know the transcendental science, then you must approach a *guru* – *tad-vijñānārthaṁ (sa) gurum eva abhiṣacchet* [Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad 1.2.12]. You must approach *guru*. *Guru* means the disciplic succession, as I have explained.

So Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is an ideal *guru*. He was not a *sannyāsī*; he was *gṛhastha*, householder, living with family, wife, children. Still, he was *guru*. So anyone can become *guru*. Not that a *sannyāsī* can become *guru*. A householder also can become *guru*, provided he knows the science.

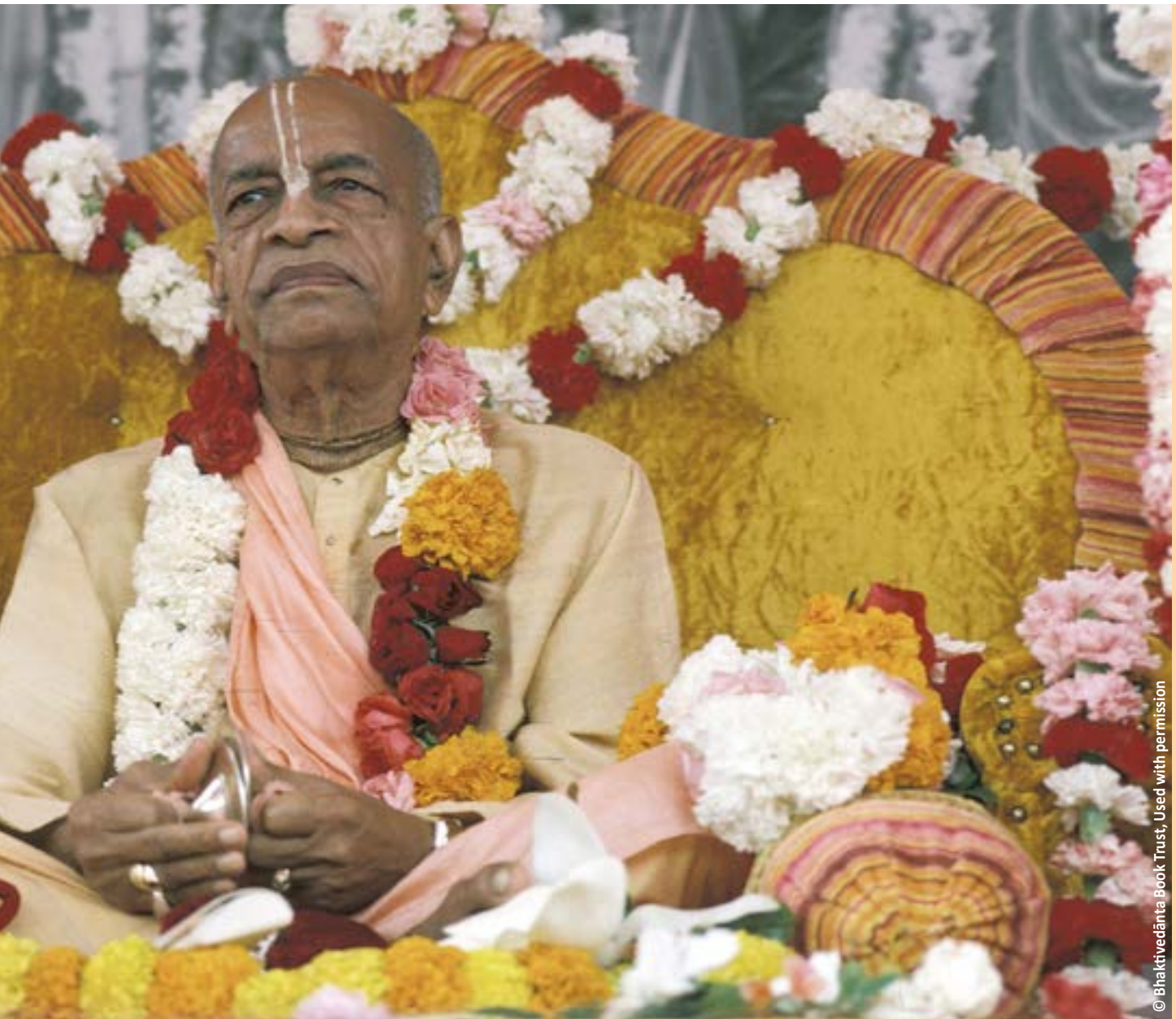
*kibā vipra, kibā śūdra, nyāsi kene naya
yei kṛṣṇa-tattva-vetta, sei 'guru' haya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 8.128)

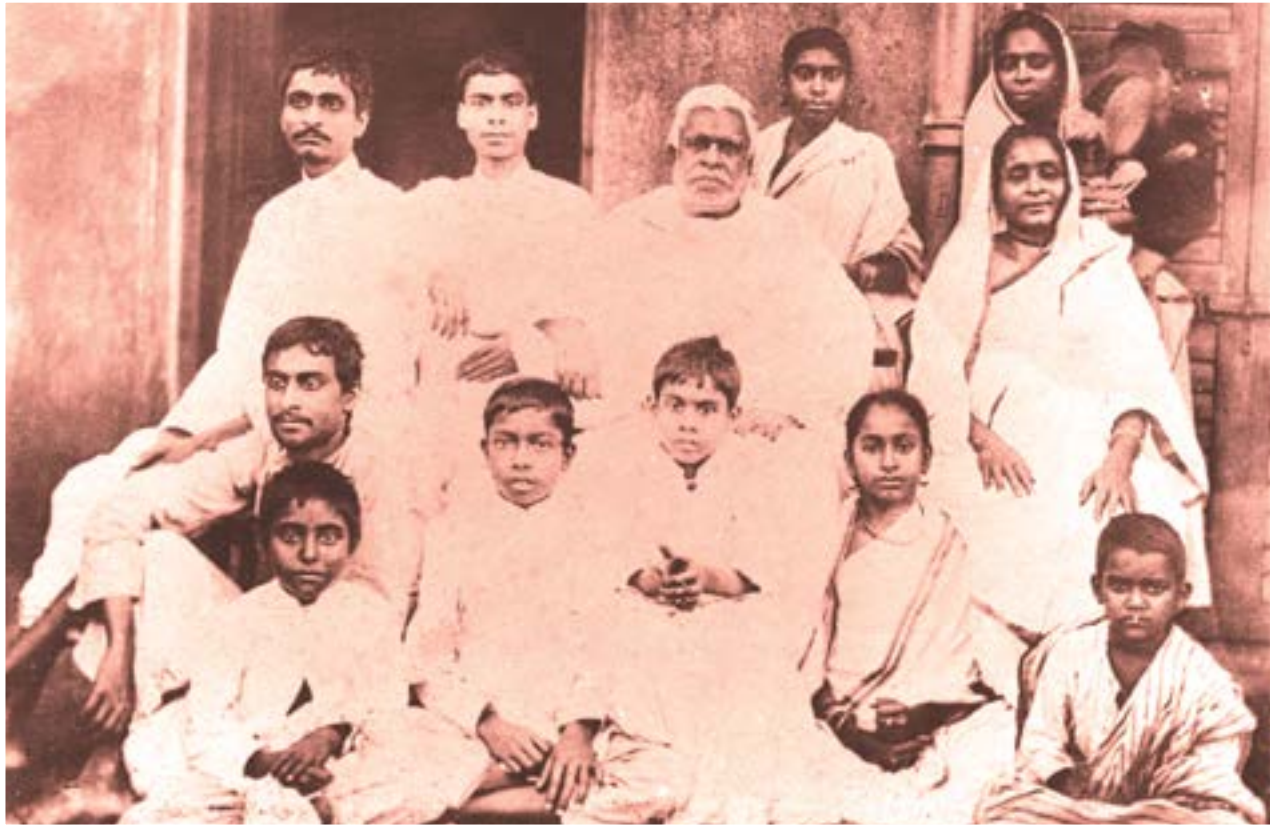
Kibā vipra, kibā śūdra. *Vipra* means *brāhmaṇa*. And *śūdra* is the fourth-grade human being. *Brāhmaṇa* is the first grade. So, *kibā vipra, kibā śūdra*. He may be a first grade human being or the lowest grade human being, or he may become a



Day of Bhaktivinoda Thākura



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sannyāsī or a *grhastha*. It does not matter. Anyone who knows the science of Kṛṣṇa can become *guru*. This is the verdict, because spiritual science does not belong to the bodily platform.

His exemplary life

So Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was *grhastha*, [and a] very responsible officer, a magistrate. He was so exalted that he would come from his office generally at five o'clock, then take his supper and immediately go to bed. Immediately. So suppose he went to bed at seven o'clock in the evening and woke up at twelve o'clock at night; it is sufficient sleep; five hours. One should not sleep more than five to six hours. Minimize as far as possible. The Gosvāmīs used to sleep not more than one and a half hour, or two hours. Sleeping is not a very important thing. Even big politicians, they used to sleep for two hours. So especially in the spiritual line they should minimize as far as possible eating, sleeping, mating, defending. Minimize. Gradually it comes to nil. Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, he was eating only a little piece of butter every alternate day, not daily.

So Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura regularly was coming from his office, and after taking his supper immediately he goes to bed and woke up at twelve o'clock, and he used to write books. He wrote, he left behind, about one hundred books. And he excavated the birthplace of Lord Caitanya and organized how to develop it, in Māyāpura. He had so many business. He used to go to preach about Śrī Caitanya's philosophy. He used to sell books to foreign countries. In 1896 he attempted to sell *Life and Precepts of Caitanya* to the MacGill University in Montreal. So he was busy, *ācārya*. So one has to adjust things. Not that "Because I am a *grhastha*, householder, I cannot become a preacher. It is the business of the *sannyāsī* or *brahmacārī*." No. It is the business of everyone.

The whole world is suffering for want of knowledge. The present civilization is animal civilization. They do not know anything beyond eating, sleeping, mating and defending. That's all. An animal does not know beyond these four principles of life: eating, sleeping, mating and defending; that's all. Human life is meant for something else: "What am I? What is God? What is my relation with God? What is this material world? Why I am here? Where do I have to go next?" There

are so many things one has to learn. *Athāto brahma jijñāsā*¹. This is human life. Not eat and sleep and have sex life and die some day, like cats and dogs.

Therefore, there is need of *ācāryas*, teachers, for propagating spiritual knowledge, Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Although he was a *grhastha*, a householder, a government officer, magistrate, he was *ācārya*. So from his dealings, from his life, we should learn how one can become a preacher in any stage of life. It doesn't matter what he is.

The pseudo yogī who claimed to be God

There was one incidence, very interesting. When he was the magistrate in Jagannātha Purī. Jagannātha temple is a very big establishment. In the temple, fifty-six times daily, *bhoga* is offered. And you will always find at least five hundred to one thousand people gathered. If you go and ask in the Jagannātha temple that “We are one men come from outside. We want *prasāda*,” yes, immediately ready.

The Jagannātha temple is managed by a body, and it is the custom that the local magistrate of the district becomes the president, or manager. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was manager in that sense, because he was magistrate. The managing committee was presided by him.

So there was a complaint. This Jagannātha temple is situated in Orissa, Utkāla. This state was originally belonging to Dhruva Mahārāja. His son's name was Utkāla, Mahārāja Utkāla. Anyway, so this Utkāla, there was a pseudo *yogī*. He declared himself that... Just like you'll find nowadays, also, there are so many rascals declaring that “I am an incarnation of God.” And they know some mystic power, play some jugglery, and foolish people take them, “Oh, he is God.”

So there appeared one like such pseudo God, pseudo Viṣṇu, in a village in Orissa. He was dancing *rāsa* dance, and foolish people were sending their daughters and wife to dance with him. You see? People are so foolish, they do not know. They want to be cheated, and these cheaters come. He declared that “I am God. I am Viṣṇu.” So, there were some sane men

1 Now one should inquire about Brahman.

also. They took objection, “What is this nonsense? This man is dancing with ladies and girls.” So they filed a complaint. At that it was British rule. They complained to the governor or the commissioner, very high officer. The commissioner knew that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura... His name was Kedāranātha Datta, his household name. So the commissioner of that division, he knew that Kedāranātha Datta is a religious man, and he's magistrate in charge. So he handed over the case for inquiry, “What is this complaint? You please inquire and do the needful.”

The omnipotent Lord can manifest even in wood and stone

So he [Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura] was a pure devotee, and he understood that “This rascal is a bogus man, cheating people. I must inquire.” So he went to the village in plain dress with some constables, police constables. They were also in plain dress.

And as soon as he approached that rascal *yogī*, he said, “Oh, you are Kedāranātha Datta. So, very nice. I shall make you king of India. Please don't try to bother me.” Because he could know that “He has come to inquire about my *rāsa-līlā*.”

So Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura first of all said, “Sir, you are such a great *yogī*. Why you are in the village? Why don't you go to Jagannātha Purī? There is a temple there and Lord Jagannātha is there. Better you go there and see the Lord and be happy. Why you are in this village?”

“Oh, Jagannātha?” [the *yogī* said.] Ah, that is made of wood. I am personally the Supreme Lord. That [Jagannātha] is made of wood.”

Oh, then Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, he was a devotee, he became like fire. He was insultings. *Arcye śilā-dhīr guruṣu nara-matiḥ*. According to *śāstra*, if somebody thinks... Just like here is a deity. If somebody thinks, “Oh, it is made of stone...” It is stone to the eyes of the non-devotee, but it is personally Supreme Personality of Godhead to the devotees. It requires the eyes to see. Devotees see in a different angle of vision. Just like Caitanya Mahāprabhu, when He entered Jagannātha temple immediately He fainted. “Oh, here is My Lord.” And the non-devotee is seeing, “It is wood, a lump of wood.”

Therefore, to the non-devotee, Jagannātha remains always as wood, but to the devotee, He speaks. That is the difference. *Premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena (Brahma-saṁhitā 5.38)*. If God is everything, why wood, through wood and stone, God cannot manifest? If God is everything? That's a fact. God, omnipotent. He can express Himself even through wood and stone. That is God's omnipotency. That is called omnipotency. Not that God is unable to express Himself through wood and stone. Then how's He omnipotent?

Omnipotent means His potency can be expressed through anything. Because anything, everything, is the expansion of God's energy. *Parasya brahmaṇaḥ śaktis tathedaṁ akhilaṁ jagat*. The whole world is manifestation of the different energies of God. Just like through the energy of electricity, the electric powerhouse, although far, far away from this place, was expressing. Through this glass, through these wires, the power can be expressed. There is a process.

Fearless in the face of death

So Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura became very much... Because a devotee cannot tolerate blasphemy of another devotee or God. So as soon as he [the *yogī*] said that "Why shall I go to Jagannātha Purī to see the wooden Jagannātha? I am personally Viṣṇu," Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura immediately ordered his constables, "Arrest him. Arrest this rascal." So he was arrested. And when he was arrested... He had some yogic mystic power. All the constables, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, and his family members became affected with high fever, a 105 degrees fever. So when he came back, his wife became very much disturbed that "You arrested Viṣṇu, and we are all going to die. We have got now high fever."

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura replied, "Yes, let us all die, but this rascal must be punished." This is the view of pure devotee. So the *yogī* was put into the custody. And there was a date fixed for his trial, and all these days, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura himself and his family especially, they were suffering from high fever. Maybe that *yogī* was planning to kill the whole family. But it was going on as fever. So on the trial day, Bhaktivinoda

Ṭhākura, Kedāranātha Datta, when he came to the bench, the man was presented, the so-called *yogī*, and he had big, big hairs. So Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura ordered that "Bring one barber and cut his hair."

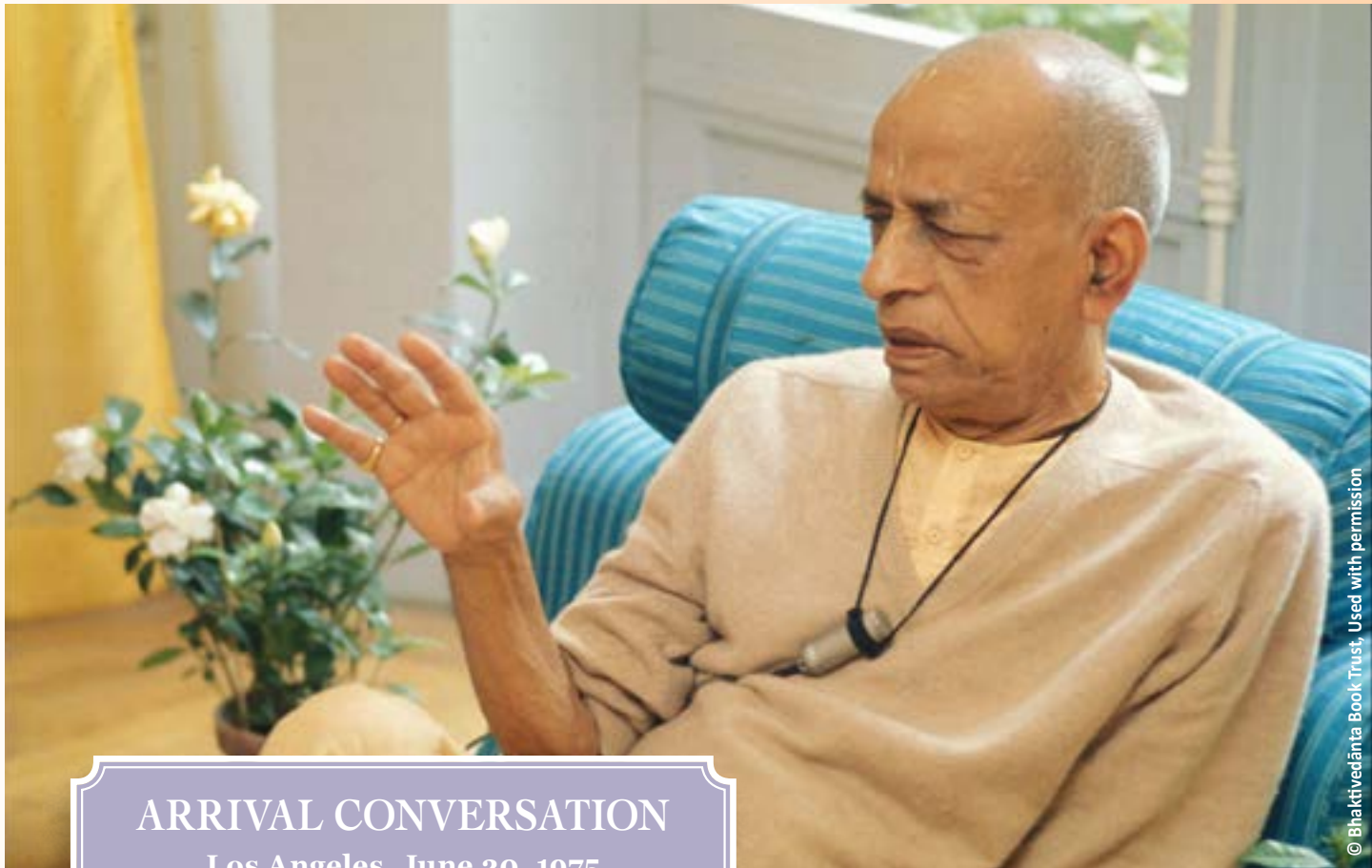
So no barber dared. The barbers thought, "Oh, he is Lord Viṣṇu. If I offend, then, just as he's suffering from fever, so I shall also die." So Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura ordered, "Give me the scissor. I'll cut." So he cut his hairs and ordered him to be put into jail for six months, and in the jail that 'Viṣṇu incarnation' managed to take some poison, and he died.

So this is one of the incidents. There are many incidences. He was a very strong man. He punished many *paṇḍas* in the *tīrthas* who exploit visitors. So this is the position of devotee. In spite of his becoming a responsible magistrate, a householder, still, he was *ācārya*. So we have to follow the *ācāryas*.

So this Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's birthday, we should adore, we should worship, because in the modern age, he reintroduced the disciplic succession. From Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu... Five hundred years ago, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught this philosophy, but within two hundred years... Because this material world is so made that whatever you introduce, in due course of time, will deteriorate

His Legacy

So Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura happens to be *ācāryas*. And he has left behind many books. *Caitanya-śikṣāmrta*, *Jaiva-dharma*. These are very important books. They are in Bengali, in Sanskrit. And many songs. He has prepared many books of song. So we are trying to present Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's books also in an English translation. Gradually you will get it. So our adoration, our worship is to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura today because he may bless us to make peacefully progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. *Ācārya-upāsanā*, simply by the blessings of the *ācāryas* we can make very rapid progress.



ARRIVAL CONVERSATION

Los Angeles, June 20, 1975

“My work is unfinished”

Viṣṇujana: Śrīla Prabhupāda, what did Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura mean when he said, “I am going, my work unfinished”?”

Prabhupāda: Hmm?

Viṣṇujana: When Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura stated that he was leaving this planet with his work unfinished.

Prabhupāda: Then let us finish. We are descendant of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. So he kept unfinished so that we shall get the chance to finish it. That is his mercy. He could have finished immediately. He is Vaiṣṇava, he is all-powerful. But he gave us the chance that “You foolish people, you all also work.” That is his mercy. We should pray to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura that “We are your grandchildren, great-grandchildren, so we have some right to beg some mercy from you. The grandchildren get some indulgence from the grandfather.”

So I pray like that. It is Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s mercy. A Vaiṣṇava can... Kṛṣṇa doesn’t require anyone’s help. Still, He is asking, “Surrender to Me.” He does not require anyone’s surrender. But it is for him good, one who surrenders. Not that Kṛṣṇa is in need of anyone’s service. He is complete. But He comes as if He is in helpless condition and asking for us to surrender. So that is for his good.

One who is surrendered, he’ll get the result. Kṛṣṇa is self-sufficient. Similarly, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is self-sufficient. But if he said that “I (am) keeping unfinished,” that means he gave us the chance, the opportunity. So we should always pray to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura to be merciful upon us so that we can execute his unfinished task. That should be our... .

And never we should think that “What Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura could not finish, I have finished.” Don’t think like that. It is not like that. ☸

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Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura viraha-guṇa-gāna

Glorification in Separation from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

By an unknown Vaiṣṇava

to be sung to the same melody as “Kabe Ha’be Bala Se-dina Āmāra”

(kothā) bhaktivinoda śrī-gaura-svajana!
 kṛṣṇa-prema dite, esechile martye,
 mānavera sāje karuṇā-kāraṇa (1)

kothā – where?; **bhaktivinoda** – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura; **śrī gaura** – Śrī Gaurahari; **sva-jana** – personal associate; **kṛṣṇa** – Kṛṣṇa; **prema** – love; **dite** – to give; **esechile** – you came; **martye** – into the mortal world; **mānavera** – of a human being; **sāje** – in disguise; **karuṇā** – compassion; **kāraṇa** – cause, root.

O Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, personal associate of Śrī Gaurahari, where are you? To bestow divine love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, you came into this mortal world out of your compassion, in the guise of a human being.

(yabe) dharma-viplavera, amāniśā-ghore,
 susupta mānava vyabhicāra kare
 antaryāmī prabhura, hṛdaya vidare,
 jīvera duḥkhetē kariyā krādana (2)

yabe – when; **dharma** – religion; **viplavera** – of a turmoil, uprising; **amāniśā** – the night of the new moon; **ghore** – in the dense darkness; **susupta** – deeply sleeping; **mānava** – humans; **vyabhicāra kare** – behave illicitly; **antaryāmī** – the indwelling Lord; **prabhura** – Lord’s; **hṛdaya** – heart; **vidare** – splits, tears; **jīvera** – of the living entities; **duḥkhetē** – for the suffering; **kariyā krādana** – having wept.

In the dense darkness of the new moon night [a time devoid of proper guidance], when religion was in turmoil, deeply sleeping [ignorant] humans behaved illicitly. The heart of Antaryāmī, the indwelling Lord, broke into pieces as He wept at the suffering of the living entities.

(takhana) gauḍa-gaganera, udaya-girite,
 udile ācārya maṅgala-uṣāte
 gaura-manohbhīṣṭa, sthāpiyā viśvete,
 ajñānāndhakāra karile mocana (3)

takhana – then; **gauḍa** – in the land of Gauḍa; **gaganera** – of the sky; **udaya-girite** – from Udaya-giri (a mountain to the east from which the sun rises); **udile** – rose; **ācārya** – the spiritual authority who teaches by example; **maṅgala** – auspicious; **uṣāte** – at dawn, sunrise; **gaura** – Śrī Gaurahari; **manohbhīṣṭa** –

innermost desire; **sthāpiyā** – having established; **viśvete** – with- in the world; **ajñāna** – ignorance; **andhakāra** – darkness, gloom; **karile mocana** – you removed, dispelled.

At that time you appeared, O Ācārya, like the auspicious dawning of the sun, gracing the skies of the land of Gauḍa, just as the sun rises from the eastern Udaya-giri mountain.

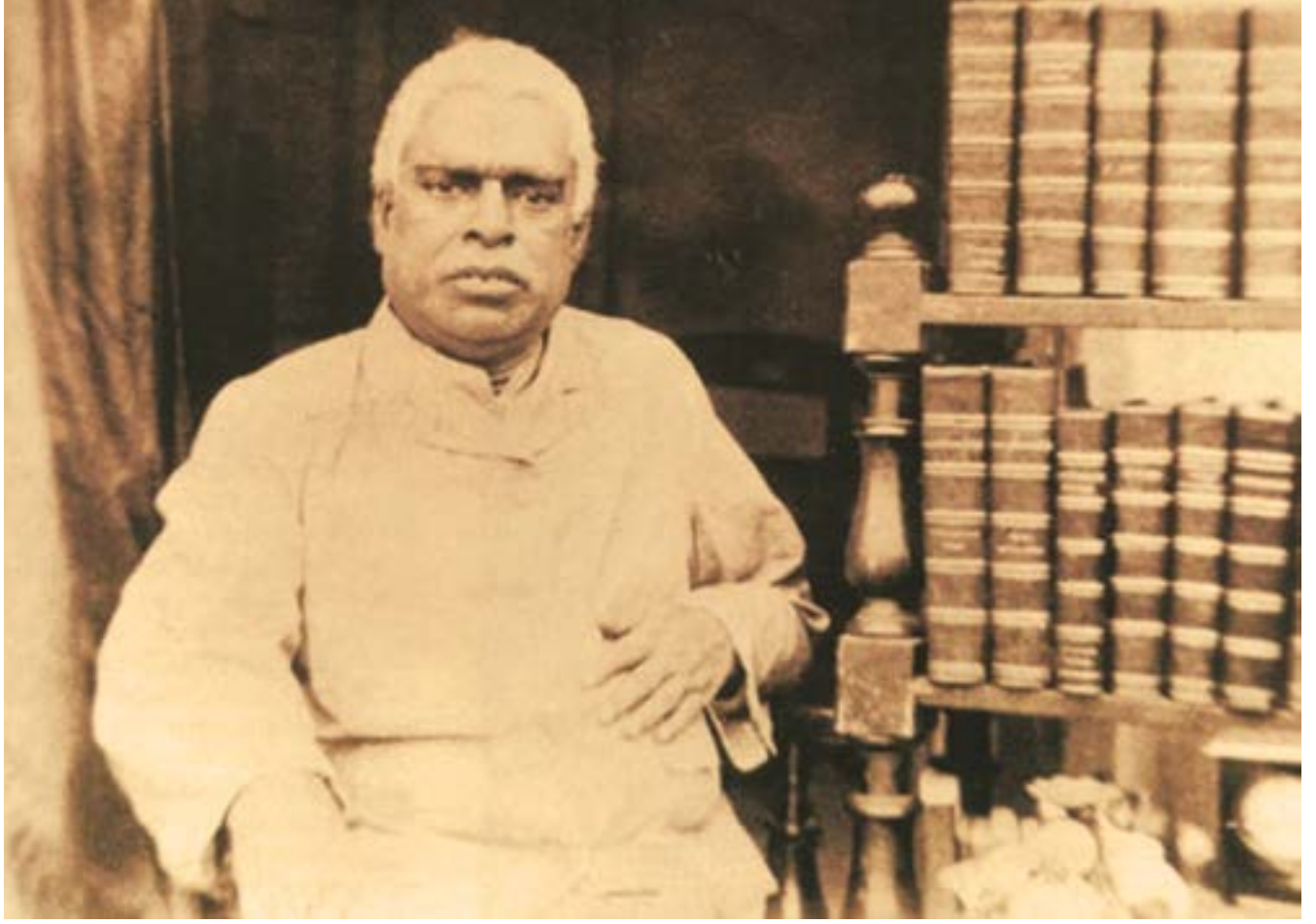
prema-prayojana, vighraha tumi ta’
 mahān pumartha prema-mūla-mantra
 śata granthe, patre – karile vivṛta,
 nāma-i sādhyā-sāra, nāma-i sādhana (4)

prema – divine love; **prayojana** – object of attainment; **vighraha** – embodiment; **tumi** – you; **ta’** – certainly; **mahān** – great, excellent, sublime; **pumartha** – the aim, the goal of human life; **prema** – love; **mūla** – root; **mantra** – hymn; **śata** – hundreds; **granthe** – of scriptures; **patre** – of pages; **karile vivṛta** – you expound; **nāma-i** – the name alone; **sādhyā** – ultimate goal; **sāra** – essence; **nāma-i** – the name alone; **sādhana** – the process to obtain *sādhyā*.

You are indeed the embodiment of the topmost object of attainment, *prema*, because you bestowed the fundamental root *mantra: prema-pumartha-mahān* – divine love constitutes the greatest goal of human life. You expounded within hundreds of scriptures and papers [articles] that *nāma* alone is the *sādhyā* (the essence of all goals) and that *nāma* alone is the *sādhana* (the process to attain the goal).

śuddha-nāma āra, nāma-aparādha,
 viśleṣite āche tava grantha-mājha
 dekhi’ stabdhī-bhūta, sajjana-samāja,
 koṭi-kaṅṭhe kare tava guṇa-gāna (5)

śuddha – pure; **nāma** – holy name; **āra** – and; **nāma** – holy name; **aparādha** – offences; **viśleṣite** – in the analysis; **āche** – there is; **tava** – your; **grantha** – scriptures; **mājha** – within; **dekhi’** – having seen; **stabdhī-bhūta** – stunned, (rendered) motionless; **sajjana** – saints, gentlemen; **samāja** – society, community; **koṭi** – innumerable; **kaṅṭhe** – of voices; **kare** – do; **tava** – your; **guṇa** – qualities; **gāna** – sing, glorification.



Upon seeing within your scriptures an analysis of *śuddha-nāma* (the pure name) and *aparādha* (offences to the holy name), the community of saintly people became stunned. Their innumerable voices sing of your glories.

**sahaja-sarala, amṛta-varṣiṇī,
bhāva-bhāṣā bharā tomāra lekhanī
prati patre chatre, siddhānta-sammani,
śāstra-sindhu chāni' karecha cayana (6)**

sahaja – natural; **sarala** – simple; **amṛta** – nectar; **varṣiṇī** – showering; **bhāva** – [transcendental] emotion; **bhāṣā** – language; **bharā** – filled; **tomāra** – your; **lekhanī** – writing; **prati** – every; **patre** – on page; **chatre** – on line (of writing); **siddhānta** – the consummate truth; **sammani** – beautiful gems; **śāstra** – scripture; **sindhu** – ocean; **chāni'** – reviewing; **karecha cayana** – you have collected.

Your writings, full of transcendental emotion, are in a language that is natural, simple and like a shower of nectar. On every page and on every line, you have gathered exquisite gems of conclusive truth [*bhakti-siddhānta*], having examined the ocean of *śāstra*.

**'śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā', 'sajjana-toṣaṇī',
'śikṣāmṛta', 'harināma-cintāmaṇi',
'śrī-śaraṇāgati', – śrī-kṛṣṇākaraṣaṇi,
'jaiva-dharme' jīver svarūpa-sthāpana (7)**

śrī-kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā – Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā (Sanskrit, published 1880); **sajjana-toṣaṇī** – Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī (a monthly magazine in Bengali, started 1881); **śikṣāmṛta** – Śrī Caitanya Śikṣāmṛta (Bengali prose, 1886); **harināma-cintāmaṇi** – Śrī Harināma-cintāmaṇi (Bengali verse, 1900); **śrī-śaraṇāgati** – Śrī Śaraṇāgati (Bengali songs, 1893) **śrī-kṛṣṇa** – Kṛṣṇa, the all attractive one; **ākaraṣaṇi** – attracting; **jaiva-dharme** – with the Jaiva-dharma (Bengali prose, 1896); **jīvera** – the living entity's; **svaṛūpa** – intrinsic nature; **sthāpana** – establishing.

[Those beautiful gems are contained in Your literary works such as] *Śrī Kṛṣṇa-saṁhitā*, *Śrī Sajjana-toṣaṇī*, *Śrī Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, *Śrī Harināma-cintāmaṇi*. [Among them] *Śrī Śaraṇāgati* attracts even the all-attractive Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and with *Jaiva-dharma*, you established the intrinsic nature (*svaṛūpa*) of the *jīva*.

**'mahāprabhura śikṣā', 'gītāvalī'-gāna,
'gītāmālā', 'prema-pradīpa' ākhyāna**

**'kalpataru'-rāje, virāje kalyāṇa,
apāra ananta tava bhūri-dāna (8)**

mahāprabhura śikṣā – Śrīman Mahāprabhura-śikṣā (Bengali prose, 1892); **gītāvalī** – Gītāvalī (Bengali verse, 1893); **gāna** – songs; **gītāmālā** – Gītāmālā (Bengali song, 1893); **prema-pradīpa** – Prema-pradīpa (Bengali prose, 1886); **ākhyān** – story, narrative; **kalpataru** – Kalyāṇa-kalpataru [the wish fulfilling tree of eternal welfare] (Bengali verse, 1881) **rāje** – shelter; **virāje** – exists; **kalyāṇa** – eternal welfare ; **apāra** – unlimited, immense; **ananta** – everlasting; **tava** – your; **bhūri** – profuse, abundant; **dāna** – gifts.

Śrī Mahāprabhura-śikṣā, the songs of Śrī Gītāvalī and Śrī Gītāmālā, the narration of Śrī Prema-pradīpa, the shelter of [Kalyāṇa-]kalpataru, in which kalyāṇa, eternal auspiciousness, exists – these abundant gifts of yours are unlimited and everlasting.

**śrī-viśva-vaiṣṇava- rāja-sabhā āra,
dhāma-pracāriṇī-saṁsat tomāra
unnata śīraṣe, dhāma-māyāpura,
(tava) apārthiva kīrti kare vighoṣaṇa (9)**

śrī-viśva – worldwide; **vaiṣṇava** – Vaiṣṇava; **rāja** – royal; **sabhā** – assembly [the society named Śrī Viśva-vaiṣṇava Rāja-sabhā founded by Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī]; **āra** – and; **dhāma** – the holy abode; **pracāriṇī** – propagation, preaching; **saṁsat** – an assembly [named Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracariṇī Sabhā founded by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura]; **tomāra** – your; **unnata** – raised; **śīraṣe** – summit, most distinguished place; **dhāma** – the divine abode; **māyāpura** – Māyāpura; **tava** – your; **apārthiva** – unearthly, supra-mundane; **kīrti** – glories; **kare vighoṣaṇa** – proclaims;

The Śrī Viśva-vaiṣṇava Rāja-sabhā and your Śrī Navadvīpa-dhāma Pracariṇī Sabhā raised the magnificence of Śrī Dhāma Māyāpura to the highest summit and thus proclaim your supra-mundane glories.

**āpekṣika haya, pativratā-dharma,
nirapekṣā ha'le veśyāte gaṇana
pātivratya-sāra, – kṛṣṇaika-sevana,
(ei) veda-gopya-vāṇī diyecha sandhāna (10)**

āpekṣika – awaiting, expecting, dependent; **haya** – is; **pativratā** – chastity to one's husband or master (*pati*); **dharma** – nature or religious duty; **nirapekṣā** – indifferent; **ha'le** – if one is; **veśyāte** – as a prostitute; **gaṇana** – considering; **pātivratya** – chastity; **sāra** – essence; **kṛṣṇa** – Kṛṣṇa; **eka** – exclusive, one pointed; **sevana** – service; **ei** – this; **veda** – the Vedas; **gopya** – hidden, confidential; **vāṇī** – message; **diyecha** – you have given; **sandhāna** – discovery, search.

The nature of one who is chaste is to always await the service of his master. If one is indifferent to this, one is considered to be like a prostitute. The essence of chastity [for all living beings] is to engage in one-pointed service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa [the master of all]. You have given this discovery of the hidden message of the Vedas.

**tava sneha-dhārā, samvardhita yā'rā,
bhuloke goloka-nivāsī tā hārā
vitari' śrī-nāma-, sudhāra-su-dhārā,
bhava-dāvānala kare nirvāpaṇa (11)**

tava – your; **sneha** – love, affection; **dhārā** – stream, current; **samvardhita** – nourished; **yā'rā** – those; **bhu-loke** – on earth; **goloka** – Goloka Vṛndāvana; **nivāsī** – residence; **tā hārā** – they; **vitari'** – having given away, distributed; **śrī-nāma** – the holy name; **sudhāra** – of nectar; **su-dhārā** – beautiful current; **bhava** – material existence; **dāvānala** – forest fire; **kare nirvāpaṇa** – extinguishes.

Those who are nourished by the flow of your affection [or the current of your conceptions] are the residents of Goloka Vṛndāvana while on this earth. Distributing the beautiful, nectarean current of *śrī nāma*, they extinguish the forest fire of material existence.

**(tumi) kālātīta nitya, cid-vilāsa-tattva,
baddha-jīva-pakṣe agamyā nitānta
kemane varṇiba, o viraha-tattva,
(yena) ai vāñchā paṅgura parvata-laṅghana (12)**

tumi – you; **kāla** – time; **ātīta** – beyond; **nitya** – eternal; **cid** – transcendental; **vilāsa** – sportive, pastimes; **tattva** – truth; **baddha** – bound; **jīva** – souls; **pakṣe** – on the part of; **agamyā** – incomprehensible; **nitānta** – completely; **kemane** – how?;

varṇiba – I will describe; **o** – that; **viraha** – separation; **tattva** – nature; **yena** – like; **ai** – that; **vāñchā** – desire; **paṅgura** – lame man’s; **parvata** – mountain; **laṅghana** – crossing.

You are eternal reality beyond time, sporting in transcendence; thus you are completely incomprehensible to the conditioned souls. How shall I describe the nature of separation from you? The desire to do so is like a lame person’s desire to cross a mountain.

**nāhi karma-bala, nāhi jñāna-bala,
nā jāni bhakati, morā sudurbala
tava pada-reṇu, tava pada-jala,
(hok) sādhana-sambala bhuvana-pāvana (13)**

nāhi – not; **karma** – pious action; **bala** – strength; **nāhi** – not; **jñāna** – knowledge; **bala** – strength; **nā** – not; **jāni** – I know; **bhakti** – devotion; **morā** – my; **sudurbala** – extremely weak; **tava** – your; **pada** – feet; **reṇu** – dust; **tava** – your; **pada** – feet; **jala** – water; **hok** – may it be; **sādhana** – the means; **sambala** – support; **bhuvana** – universe; **pāvana** – deliverer, purifier.

I am extremely weak – devoid of the strength of pious action and devoid of the strength of knowledge; nor do I know what is *bhakti*. May the dust of your lotus feet and the water that has washed your lotus feet – which deliver the universe – be my means and support.

**ke bujhibe tomāra, gambhīra svabhāva,
śrī-rādhāra kṛṣṇe gāḍha anurāga
koṭī koṭī janme, ka’ro dāyabhāk,
tava pada-yuge ei nivedana (14)**

ke – who? **bujhibe** – will understand; **tomāra** – your; **gambhīra** – deep, grave; **svabhāva** – nature; **śrī-rādhāra** – Śrī Rādhā’s; **kṛṣṇe** – to Śrī Kṛṣṇa; **gāḍha** – thick, intense, deep; **anurāga** – attachment; **koṭī koṭī** – millions and millions; **janme** – in births; **ka’ro** – make; **dāyabhāk** – a rightful candidate; **tava** – your; **pada** – feet; **yuge** – at the two; **ei** – this; **nivedana** – humble petition.

Who will understand the gravity of your nature and your intense attachment to that Śrī Kṛṣṇa who belongs only to Śrī Rādhā? Even if it takes millions and millions

of births, please make me a rightful candidate [of this understanding]. This is my petition at your two lotus feet.

**bhaktivinoda, kṛṣṇa-vinodite,
eneche prapañce ‘śrī-rādhā-dayite’
sādha viśva-vāsi! ai pada-prānte,
anukūla-kṛṣṇa-bhajana-vijñāna (15)**

bhaktivinoda – Srīla Bhaktivinoda Thakura; **kṛṣṇa** – Kṛṣṇa; **vinodite** – for giving pleasure; **eneche** – he has brought; **prapañce** – in the material world; **śrī-rādhā-dayite** – Śrī Rādhā’s beloved [Śrī Vārṣabhānavi-dayita dāsa, also known as Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvātī Ṭhākura]; **sādha** –perfect (imperative); **viśva-vāsi** – O inhabitants of the world; **ai** – those alone; **pada** – feet; **prānte** – tips; **anukūla** – conducive, favourable; **kṛṣṇa** – Kṛṣṇa; **bhajana** – loving devotional service; **vijñāna** – the science.

To give pleasure to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura brought Śrī Vārṣabhānavi-dayita dāsa [Śrīla Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvātī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda] to this material world. O inhabitants of the universe, at the tips of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s lotus feet, perfect the science of performing *bhajana* of Śrī Kṛṣṇa in a way that is pleasing to Him.

**(āja) baṅge o bhārate, pāścātya nagare,
pūjārī pūjiche yogya upacāre
ātma-puṣpāñjali – saṅkīrtana-dvāre,
(o) pāda-pūjā kari’ yāce kṛpā-kaṇa (16)**

āja – today; **baṅge** – in Bengal; **o** – and; **bhārate** – in India; **pāścātya** – the Western world; **nagare** – in towns, cities; **pūjārī** – the devout; **pūjiche** – worshipping; **yogya** – proper; **upacāre** – with the articles used in worship; **ātma** – self; **puṣpāñjali** – offering flowers in cupped hands; **saṅkīrtana** – chanting; **dvāre** – by; **o** – those; **pāda** – feet; **pūjā kari’** – having worshipped; **yāce** – begs; **kṛpā** – mercy; **kaṇa** – a particle.

Today in Bengal, throughout all of India, and in the cities in Western countries, the devout are worshipping you with the proper articles for worship. By means of *saṅkīrtana*, I offer you my very soul. Thus worshipping your lotus feet, I beg for a particle of mercy. 🙏

The Disappearance Day of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura



by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta
Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The Vaiṣṇava's appearance and disappearance have the same purpose

The appearance and disappearance pastimes of Vaiṣṇavas are *aprakṛta*, transcendental, and therefore they are identical in meaning. This fact is incomprehensible to souls bound to the mundane. The transcendental word is *śabda-brahma*. He has a form; He is not impersonal. The difference that exists between a mundane word and the entity it describes does not exist in the transcendental realm. The transcendental name (*aprakṛta-nāma*) and the possessor of that name (*nāmī*) are one and the same entity. In order to realize the *tattva*, or reality, of *śrī nāma* and *śrī nāmī*, one



“Nothing can hinder the observance of the appearance and disappearance, or separation, festival of eternally liberated devotees. Indeed, on both *tithis*, discussing their sacred life stories is a support to the *sādhaka-jīva’s bhajana*, or spiritual practice, a reminder of their aspired for goal, a stimulation of good fortune, and in fact a limb of spiritual practice.”

must take shelter of both Śrī Gaura-dhāma and *śrī bhaktisiddhānta-vāṅī*¹, the message of conclusive devotional truth manifested by the embodiment of *gaura-śakti*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. This indeed is the order and teaching of our *śrī guru-varga*.

In this world, parting is the cause of suffering, but the disappearance pastime of the Vaiṣṇava does not cause such misery. Even in their pastime of disappearance, they bestow upon all living entities the opportunity to move toward the eternal abode, the realm of Vaikuṅṭha. It is not possible to know *jagad-guru* Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura through the ascending process, or in other words, by considering him an object comprehensible by the mundane senses. One can only know Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura when one’s divine eyes are unveiled by *śrī guru’s* grace, through the descending process.

Without *sādhu-saṅga*, we cannot understand transcendence

When deprived of *sādhu-saṅga*, mundane knowledge becomes the most pivotal cause of the soul’s

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 1 This refers to teachings of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda.

entanglement. In this regard Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has said, “*jaḍa-vidyā jata, māyara vaibhava, tomāra bhajane bādha moha janmiyā, anitya saṁsare, jīvake karaye gādhā* – 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” (*Śaraṇāgati*, song 3). It therefore follows that without *sat-saṅga*, that is, without accepting the shelter of the lotus feet of *śrī guru*, the *jīva* is forever incapable of attaining proper comprehension of Transcendental Reality (*aprākṛta-tattva*).

Bhakta, bhakti and *Bhagavān* – these three have a mutually inseparable relationship. If one is to hear the direct teachings of these fully liberated personalities, who are *Bhagavān’s* intimate companions, or hear narrations of their sanctimonious lives on the occasion of their appearance day, one’s life is blessed and one can then attain supreme welfare. This is stated in many places in the *sāstras*. A perfect example can be found in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (4.9.10):

*yā nirvṛtis tanu-bhṛtām
 tava pāda-padma
 dhyānād bhavaj-jana-
 kathā-śravaṇena vā syāt*

O Lord, a drop of the bliss received from meditating on Your lotus feet, from hearing about Your pastimes – which flow from the mouths of Your devotees who are expert in relishing *vraja-rasa* – and from hearing descriptions of Your devotees' pastimes, is not available in the bliss of merging into *brahma*.

Nothing can hinder the observance of the appearance and disappearance, or separation, festival of eternally liberated devotees. Indeed, on both *tithis*², discussing their sacred life stories is a support to the *sādhaka-jīva's bhajana*, or spiritual practice, a reminder of their aspired for goal, a stimulation of good fortune, and in fact a limb of spiritual practice.

Śrī Bhagavān propagates vaiṣṇava-dharma

When there is an increase of irreligion (*adharmā*) and a consequent decline of religion (*dharma*), Bhagavān, to subdue irreligion and establish religion, sometimes transmits His potency into the *jīva*, sometimes sends His special associates, sometimes comes as a partial incarnation, and sometimes personally descends Himself. Svayam Bhagavān, the source of all incarnations, is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu. For the purpose of preaching the external reason of His advent, *nāma-prema*, He refuted illogical and opposing philosophies, delineated the true purport of the scriptures, empowered His associates like Śrī Rūpa, Śrī Sanātana, and others, to manifest the deep meanings of the scriptures and write great works of devotional literature, uncovered lost holy sites, personally followed what He preached and did so in turn through His followers. Thus He disseminated the immaculate Vedic truth of simultaneous oneness and difference (*acintya-bheda-bheda-siddhānta*) as supported by all the scriptures, and established *vaiṣṇava-dharma*, thereby bestowing supreme auspiciousness upon the souls of the world.

In the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava world after the time of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, three periods of darkness can be identified. In the first dark period – the disappearance of six Gosvāmīs – Śrī Bhagavān re-propagated

2 Particular days calculated according to the Vedic lunar calendar.

viśuddha-vaiṣṇava-dharma by sending Śrīla Narrotama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, Śrīla Śyāmananda Prabhu and so forth. In the second dark period, He sent Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa and so forth. And finally, in the third dark period, He sent Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī.

The glorious achievements of Śrīla Ṭhākura Bhaktivinoda

In every respect, the present Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community is indebted to Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. If, in this age, he had not come, then an understanding of supremely pure *vaiṣṇava-dharma* would not be a subject of pursuit for today's educated society. Who would have analyzed the purports of the Gosvāmīs' *Sat-Sandarbhās*, which were written in Sanskrit, and presented them in simple, accessible language so that we could become aware of them? Who would have apprised us about the sublime *vaiṣṇava-dharma* by refuting the bogus philosophical conclusions (*apa-siddhānta*) of the *smārtas*, *sahajiyās* and so forth? And who indeed would have shown great concern for the eternal welfare of humans like us, who are blinded by sense enjoyment, by propagating supremely pure *nāma-prema*?

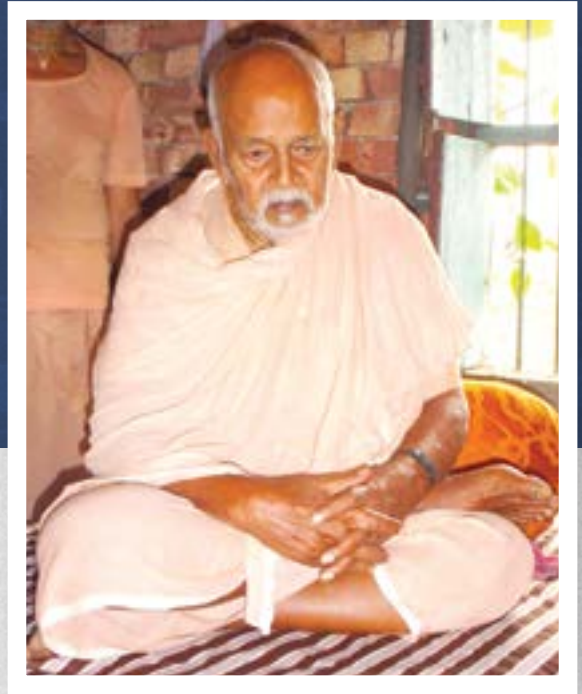
Having discarded the various concocted chants and rhythmic songs antagonistic to proper *siddhānta* and polluted by *rasābhāsa*, he took heed of these words, "*gaura je sikhala nama sei nama gau* – sing the holy name that is taught by Śrī Gaurahari." According to this statement, solely by loudly chanting the *tāraka-brahma mahā-mantra* (the *hare kṛṣṇa mahā-mantra* which delivers one from the nescience of the material energy), consisting of sixteen names [words] and thirty-two syllables, the *jīvas* in the age of Kali can become blessed and make their life successful. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura personally practised this in his life, and he also preached it through his books such as *Śrī Harināma Cintāmaṇī* and through many articles like "Śrī Nāma Haṭṭa". An *ācārya* so fearless and powerful is exceedingly rare in this world.

At the time that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura incarnated, the Āula, Bāula, Kartā-bhājā, Neḍā-Neḍī and numerous other *apa-sampradāyas*, or fabricated schools of thought, were proclaiming and respecting vile, unscrupulous behavior as *dharma*. On the other hand, scholars entrenched in mundane *karma* were proclaiming the insignificant *karma-kāṇḍa* alone as topmost knowledge, thus leading unassuming, simple believers down another wrong path. Priests who were making a business of scriptural ritual and tradition, ignorant family *gurus*, and so-called *ācāryas*, messiah teachers, were smothering the profound message of scripture with fabricated explanations simply to serve their own purposes.

It was with unbreakable will, sense of duty, and truthful resolve that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, though employed in a heavily complicated, demanding, responsible and distinguished position in the administrative system, wrote an endless stream of articles and essays in the countless periodicals of his day, presenting various arguments and conclusions in concordance with scripture. In this way he refuted all the aforementioned schools of thought and established that *vaiṣṇava-dharma* is not just the *dharma* of Neḍā-Neḍī, it is the supreme, unflawed, exclusive eternal function of all beings, the essence of all religions, and he preached these principles by pursuing and practising them in his own life.

He wrote literatures full of conclusive truth in numerous languages, in a simple style accessible to all. By writing these books, he drew from the storehouse of transcendental literature the wish-fulfilling touchstone of Vaikuṅṭha, the spiritual realm. Indeed, it was he who first introduced and inspired those who had received a Western education about the teachings of *vaiṣṇava-dharma*, thus fulfilling his role as Vaiṣṇava *ācārya*, who is *para-dukha-dukhī* (one who feels pain at the suffering of others). On this day, the day of his disappearance, my only hope [for redemption] is to receive a particle of his mercy and a particle of mercy of those close to him. 🙏

Translated from
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja's
Prabandhāvalī



MORNING CLASS

at Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Bhajana-sthālī* – Svānanda-sukhada-kuñja – Godruma

A prayer for his mercy

Although I am very unfortunate, at the same time I am extremely fortunate, because on the strength of the mercy of *śrī guru* and the Vaiṣṇavas, I am participating in this *dhāma-parikramā*. Many of us have no proper understanding or realization of this *dhāma*, this *parikramā* and the *sankīrtana* pastimes that took place here.

Only by the mercy of *śrī guru* is it possible for the heart of the *jīva* to have such realization. The great personality who has mercifully manifested the *svarūpa* of this *dhāma* before us is Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. We have assembled at his *bhajana-sthālī*. Our exclusive prayer to him is that he bestow his mercy upon us. By his mercy we can enter in the realm of *bhakti*. In particular, we will understand the pastimes of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who is the embodiment of magnanimity. It is only by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's kindness that we can understand something of this.

Had he not come, a hellish worm like me would remain forever deprived of his gift. This is certainly

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Mercy is Vital

Excerpts from a speech given by

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja

20 March 1997

during Śrī Nadadvīpa-dhāma Parikramā

true. His immortal writings and message sustain our life and soul. He is eternal. Therefore, we pray that he bestow his mercy upon us, understanding the anguish in our hearts. Since I am bereft of *tattva-jñāna*, I have nothing else to say. I pray that he is merciful so that I can become eligible to realize these subject matters.

EVENING CLASS


at Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Maṭha, Navadvīpa

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura – Gaura-śakti

Who was Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura? He came in a certain year and he left in certain year. If we base our understanding of who he is on such information, we will not understand or realize his actual nature, his *prākṛta-tattva*. But we know that he is non-different from Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita – *gadādhara-abhinna-tattva*. And we know that Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita is the very potency of Śrī Gaura. He [Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura] is *śakti-śaktimatyor abhedah*.¹ It is therefore possible for him only to bestow upon us the complete identity of *śaktimān* and thus make us aware about *śaktimān-tattva*. If *such śakti* – the most intimate *śakti*, the dear most *śakti*, the

most capable *śakti* – of *śaktimān*, the possessor of all potency, did not exist, then we would never be able to understand the reality of *śaktimān*.

It was for this reason that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura came, to inform this world of the intrinsic nature, or *svarūpa*, of the Lord's potency (*śakti*) as well as the intrinsic nature of *śaktimān*. It was not possible for anybody else to reveal this *gaura-dhāma* and *gaura-tattva*. Śrī Bhagavān is non-different from His *śakti*. There are so many *śaktis*: “*parāśya śaktir vividhaiva śrūyate* – there is only one *parā-śakti*, and this *parā-śakti* has various manifestations” (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* 6.8). The capability to attain thorough knowledge of Absolute Reality (*tattva-vastu*) is possible only for *śakti*, which is very close with Bhagavān, united with Him, and absorbed in Him.

From his writings alone, we can somewhat understand his identity. The words emanating from his lips are the transcendental holy name (*nāma-brahma*), or transcendental sound vibration (*śabda-brahma*); they are not mundane sound vibration (*jaḍa-śabda*). As a result of that *śabda-brahma* alone, we see that so many people have assembled here for Navadvīpa-dhāma parikramā. Therefore, we begin our *parikramā* from Godruma by first taking shelter of him. If he is merciful then, only, can we have some understanding and conception about who is our worshipful deity, our *arādhya-tattva*, our *upāśya-tattva*. 

1 *Śakti* and *śaktimān* are non-different. Therefore, since Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is *śakti*, he is non-different from *śaktimān*.

The Essence of the Contribution of Śrīla



Life, Teachings and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Excerpts from two lectures by
Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

ABERYSTWYTH, WALES,
July 1, 2000

Bhaktivinoda – always pleasing Rādhā- Kṛṣṇa Conjugal

Today is the Disappearance Day of Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who is the manifestation, or *prakāśa-vigraha*, of Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita. *Namo bhaktivinodāya saccidānanda nāmine* – again and again I offer my *praṇāma* to Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Bhaktivinodāya. A very advanced stage of *bhakti* is *prema*, and more than that is *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga*, *bhāva*, and *mahābhāva*. One who gives pleasure (*vinoda*) to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa Conjugal, always pleasing [serving] Them with these stages of love, or *bhakti*, is called *bhaktivinoda*.

You may know that in Vṛndāvana one in a male form can also serve Kṛṣṇa, but no one in a male form can render personal service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā. If a female is a *brahmaṇi*, she, also, cannot render service to Her. Even Yaśodā-mātā is not serving Śrī Rādhā directly. She gives Her blessings and so forth in the mood of a mother. Only one in the form of a teenage *gopī* can serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugal, especially one under the guidance of a *gopī* who is under the guidance of Śrī Rūpa Mañjarī. And who is such a *gopī*? Kamala Mañjarī (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in his eternal spiritual form as a maidservant of Śrīmatī



Rādhikā). Who is Kamala Mañjarī? She is one of the manifestations of Śrīmatī Rādhikā or Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita.

Saccidānanda – Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Who is Saccidānanda? Kṛṣṇa Himself, or Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He is *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*. *Sat* means that His existence is transcendental. How is He existing? In His beautiful threefold-bending form of Nandanandana. All His features are like flower-arrows: His smiling, His playing on the flute, His very beautiful cheeks, His eyebrows and His side-long glances. All are so sweet and attractive. This is *sat*.

Cit generally means knowledge, but here it does not just mean knowledge. Here it means the condensed

form of knowledge: mood, or *bhāva*. What kind of *bhāva*? *Mahābhāva*, and more than that, *ruḍha* and *adhiruḍha*; and within *adhiruḍha*, *mohana* and *madana*. Because Kamala Mañjarī is the maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, some part of that will also be in her.

Ānanda means the pleasure of playing with [serving] Śrīmatī Rādhikā and all the *gopīs*. *Saccidānanda* is therefore Kṛṣṇa Himself, and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is always serving Him, along with Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs*, in such a high-class way. Even Lalitā cannot always go where Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are performing Their most confidential pastimes. She will wait, and she will ask from the maidservants of Rūpa Mañjarī, “Can we go now?”

“Oh, yes, you can come,” the maidservants respond. Or they say, “Oh, wait a little and then come.” Kamala Mañjarī (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura) is serving Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa conjugal in this way.

later on he was brought to Kolkata, where he studied. He was brilliant from his boyhood. He began writing poetry when he was very young, and among his early books was *Śrī Prema-pradīpa*.

He was very friendly with the family of Rabindrinatha Tagore. The members of the Tagore family were very learned, but they became *brahmavādīs* and joined the Brahma Samāja. They wanted to establish the philosophy of the Brahma Samāja, which was based on a mixture of beliefs from the world’s major religions. In his book *Prema-pradīpa*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura opposed the philosophical principles of the Brahma Samāja.

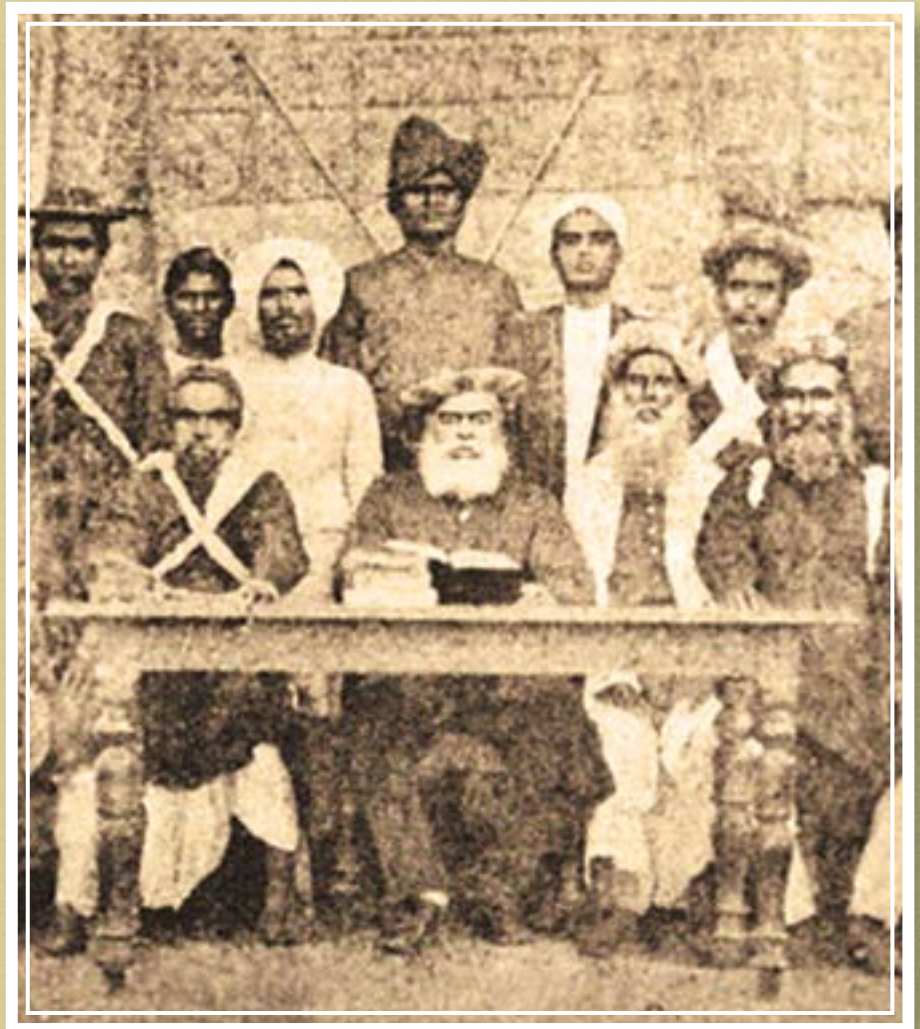
During this time, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura visited different universities in Kolkata, where he lectured and gave classes that were widely appreciated. He also wrote many articles about Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. After some time, he left Kolkata and went to live at his grandfather’s home in Orissa. His grandfather

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Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is considered to be the Saptama (seventh) Gosvāmī. He has written more than one hundred authoritative books in many languages. He has especially given us two very important gifts: he discovered the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, and he gave us Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda.

The Life of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura took birth in Ulāgrāma in the Nadiyā district, very near to Śrī Māyāpura, the birthplace of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. His father passed away when he was very young, and he was raised in his maternal uncle’s house in Ulāgrāma and



was a teacher, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura also became a teacher while living there.

After that he went to Śrī Jagannātha Purī and was appointed deputy magistrate for that district. The government, recognizing Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's abilities and high qualifications, assigned him the additional post of supervisor of the Jagannātha Temple. His management style was very strong and was appreciated by the inhabitants of Jagannātha Purī.

Many significant events took place while Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was there. The members of one group offered him a large bribe and told him, "We want to put a statue of a dog on the top of the Jagannātha Temple." They wanted to prove that there is no difference between Jagannātha, Baladeva, and Subhadrā, and a dog or a cat. These people thought, "All living beings are *brahma* (spirit) and are equal. If Gaṇeśa, Śakti, and Śiva are *brahma* and are worshipped, why not worship a cat, or a dog? They are all the same *brahma*." To show that there is no difference between God and the ordinary *jīva*, this group wanted to put a statue of a dog on the top of the Mandira. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura refused to accept the enormous bribe and he forcefully rejected their request. To prevent the spread of this *māyāvāda* philosophy, he also instructed the residents of Jagannātha Purī about the life and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Meeting with Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja and dispelling the confusion of his disciples

Over time, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was transferred to many other provinces. He was sent to Kṛṣṇa-nagara, Bihāra, and he also served in Vṛndāvana. While in Vṛndāvana, he went to Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Sūrya Kunda. At Rādhā Kunda, he met Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, who was 144 years old at that time. He was so old that the lids of his eyes would droop over his

eyes in heavy folds. In order to see, he would lift the skin from over his eyes. Despite his apparent aged condition, he could dance with great energy when he sang devotional songs, and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura would associate with him whenever he could.

While Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was at Rādhā-kuṇḍa, the disciples of Śrīla Jagannātha dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja complained to him about the instructions they were receiving from their *gurudeva*. They told him, "We have given up our houses, our children, our fathers, mothers, wives, and our positions. We have left everything to do *bhajana* and to remember *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā*. We have left everything, but our *gurudeva* is telling us to grow eggplant and other vegetables and flowers for Ṭhākuraṅgi. We did not come here to grow vegetables, flowers and fruits. Sir, should we return to our homes? We do not know what to do."

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura told them, "You should try to serve your *gurudeva* and follow his orders. You are chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa, but you are full of *anarthas* (unwanted desires), and you cannot chant *suddha-nāma* (the pure holy name). You may chant for thousands and thousands of births and not accomplish anything. It is good and proper that you follow your *gurudeva's* instructions. You cannot remember the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa while you are contaminated by these *anarthas*. If you try to remember the *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* before you are purified, the desire to enjoy with women and other material things will rise in your heart. You will soon give up your *bhajana* to become involved with women and you will return to worldly life. Most Rādhā-kuṇḍa *bābājīs* are doing just that, mixing illicitly with widows and having children with them; they are not doing any real *bhajana*.

"Do not fall down like them. You should follow your *gurudeva's* orders: engage your energy in growing fruits and vegetables to offer to Ṭhākuraṅgi or to a pure Vaiṣṇava. You should also chant the holy name, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa. By this service, you

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will gain real transcendental (*paramārthika*) impressions and spiritual merit (*sukṛti*), and as a result you will be able to truly follow your *guru*. Then, as chanting, remembering, and performing *kīrtana* cleanse these *anarthas*, all the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa will automatically enter your hearts. Do not follow the example of the Rādhā-kuṇḍa *bābājīs*. Many ignorant persons who have left their homes go to Rādhā-kuṇḍa know nothing about *siddhānta*. These *bābājīs* will cheat them, and for only two rupees, give them a false spiritual identity and a false spiritual form (*siddha-deha*). They will say, ‘Now you are a *gopī*, your name is Lalitā or Viśākhā.’ This is abominable.”

Jaiva-dharma – the authentic process to become a paramahaṁsa

In his treatise *Jaiva-dharma*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written everything about the authentic process to become a *paramahaṁsa*. *Jaiva-dharma* is the essence of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and the writings of Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and our *guru-varga*. *Aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā* is described for those who are advanced, but how does one become qualified to understand it? One must systematically study *Jaiva-dharma* from beginning to end, starting with the first part, which describes the material world, and proceed through to a study of *Daśa-mūla* and all other *tattva*.

By following the teachings of *Jaiva-dharma* properly, your *anarthas* will gradually disappear and you will be able to practise *bhakti* as exemplified by Vrajanātha and Vijaya-kumāra. They practised first in Navadvīpa and then in Purī, and they were completely conversant with all the teachings of the important literatures by our *guru-varga*, including *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* and *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. They had realized all the stages of *prema* – *sneha*, *māna*, *praṇaya*, *rāga*, *anurāga* and so forth – and had





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understood *vibhāva*, *anubhāva*, *sāttvika-bhāva* and *vyabhicārī-bhāva* etc. Thus they received real *dīkṣā*, and they were blessed with a vision of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu dancing with Lord Nityānanda and all of Their associates.

Vrajanātha's uncle, Vijaya-kumāra, was a *paramahansa* who had renounced his worldly life and was remembering *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* by the seashore in Purī. Just as unlimited waves appear one after another on the seashore, unlimited waves appear one after another in the ocean of *rasa*. Kṛṣṇa is that ocean of *rasa*, and the innumerable waves are the different *bhāvas* (spiritual emotions) experienced by the devotee, such as *vibhāva* (*uddīpana* and *ālambana*), *anubhāva*, *sāttvika-bhāva*, and *vyabhicārī-bhāva*.

Anyone can become qualified to understand *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* by attentively and respectfully hearing *Jaiiva-dharma*. Without this knowledge, one cannot become qualified – but one must start from the beginning. Hearing with respect will help one to develop strong faith in *śrī guru* and to follow his instructions. We should be eager to do so. Do not jump to the top of the tree of *rasa*. Begin from the root. Follow the process that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has given in *Jaiiva-dharma*. Serve your *gurudeva*; have strong faith in *ṣad-guru* and Vaiṣṇavas; and always be in good Vaiṣṇava association.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has written that the ultimate goal of life is described in the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

*ārādhyo bhagavān vrajeśa-tanayas-
tad-dhāma vṛndāvanam
ramyā kācid-upāsanā vraja-vadhū
vargeṇa yā kalpitā
śrīmad-bhāgavatam pramāṇam amalām
premā pumartho mahān
śrīcaitanya mahāprabhor matam idam
tatrādaro naḥ paraḥ*

Bhagavān Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His transcendental abode Śrī Vṛndāvana-dhāma are my worshipful objects. The most excellent method of worshipping Kṛṣṇa is that adopted by the young wives of Vraja. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* is the flawless and most authoritative scripture, and *kṛṣṇa-prema* is the fifth and highest achievement of human life beyond mundane religiosity (*dharma*), accumulation of wealth (*artha*), sense enjoyment (*kāma*) and liberation (*mokṣa*). It is thus known as *pañcama-puruṣārtha* or *parama-puruṣārtha*. This is the opinion of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We have supreme regard for this conclusion. We have no inclination or respect for any other opinions.

In this verse, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura says that Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is the most complete aspect of Absolute Truth is the topmost object of worship. Here he does not refer to Kṛṣṇa as Vasudeva-nandana or Devakī-nandana. Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Just as He is supreme, His eternal abode Śrī Vṛndāvana is also supreme. Vṛndāvana is not made of earth or clay or any material elements; it is *cinmaya-bhūmi*, a fully transcendental place.

The method and mood of worship (*arādhāna*) of the *gopīs* is extremely high. Among Kṛṣṇa's associates in Vṛndāvana, the *gopīs* gives Kṛṣṇa the highest pleasure. The mood of the *gopīs* is supreme, and supreme amongst the *gopīs* is Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Rādhikā's mood is so high that even Kṛṣṇa cannot experience or understand it. To relish the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and to taste the excellence of *rādhā-praṇaya*, Śrī Rādhā's love for

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He came in the form of Śrī Śacī-nandana Gaurahari.

Śrīmad Bhagavam is the highest *pramāṇa* (evidence) in which the love of the *gopīs* for Kṛṣṇa is explained. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that *kṛṣṇa-prema* is the highest goal. The goal of our life should be to achieve *prema*, transcendental love and affection for Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu taught that the *prema* of the *gopīs* is the highest and that we should aspire to follow in their footsteps.

Daśa-mūla-tattva – an elaboration on the above verse

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written *Daśa-mūla*, which is an elaboration on the above-mentioned verse by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. It contains ten ontological truths in condensed form. By understanding these truths, one can realize the true meaning of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s teachings:

*āmnāyaḥ prāha tattvaṃ harim iha paramaṃ
sarva-śaktim rasābdhim
tad-bhinnāṃśāms ca jīvān prakṛti-kavalitān
tad-vimuktāms ca bhāvād
bhedābheda-prakāśaṃ sakalam api hareḥ
sādhanaṃ śuddha-bhaktim
sādhyam tat-prītim evety upadiśati janān
gauracandraḥ svayam saḥ*

- (1) *Pramāṇa*: The teachings of the Vedas received through *guru-paramparā* are known as *āmnāya*. The infallible evidence of the Vedas, of the *smṛti-śāstras* headed by the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, as well as evidence such as direct sense perception (*pratyakṣa*), that concur with the guidance of the Vedas, are all accepted as *pramāṇa* (evidence). This *pramāṇa* establishes the following *prameyas* (fundamental truths):
- (2) *Parama-tattva*: Śrī Hari alone is the Supreme Absolute Truth.
- (3) *Sarva-śaktimān*: Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the possessor of all potency.
- (4) *Akhila-rasāmṛta-sindhu*: He is the ocean of nectarean mellows.

- (5) *Vibhinnāṃśa-tattva*: Both the *mukta* (liberated) and *baddha* (conditioned) *jīvas* are His eternally separated parts and parcels.
- (6) *Baddha-jīvas*: Conditioned souls are subject to the control and covering of *māyā*.
- (7) *Mukta-jīvas*: Liberated souls are free from *māyā*.
- (8) *Acintya-bhedābheda-tattva*: The entire universe, consisting of the conscious (*cit*) and unconscious (*acit*), is Śrī Hari’s *acintya-bhedābheda-prakāśa*, that is to say, it is His manifestation which is inconceivably both different and non-different from Him.
- (9) *Śuddha-bhakti*: Pure devotional service is the only practice (*sādhana*) to attain perfection.
- (10) *Kṛṣṇa-prīti*: Transcendental love and affection for Kṛṣṇa is the one and only final object of attainment (*sādhya-vastu*).

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura revealed the potency of the seed of the holy name

I want to tell you about an extraordinary *kīrtana* that he wrote and sang “*Harināma, tuwā aneka svarūpa – O Harināma, You possess unlimited forms.*” Perhaps we have no idea of the very deep meaning of this *kīrtana*. The analogy is given of a mango seed; we do not see that within the mango seed that a tree is there, complete with its branches, leaves and fruits. The entire tree exists within that seed. If you plant that seed in the earth and water it properly, a very beautiful tree will gradually grow from it.

A large tree with many branches, leaves, beautiful sweet fruits and *mañjarīs* will emerge. Cuckoo birds will sit on the branches, singing, “Cuckoo, cuckoo.” Everything is within that seed, but when it is still in seed form, that is not apparent to us. It will take some time for us to see the complete tree.

Similarly, *guru* gives *śabda-brahma* (transcendental sound, or Bhagavān in the form of sound) in the holy name, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, but we have not

realized anything yet. We chant because *gurudeva* has told us to do so. After some days, if we do not see any result, we become disheartened and give up our chanting. We think, “Oh, there is nothing here.” On the other hand, if a bona fide *guru* gives *harināma* (initiation) to any sincere devotee, that devotee will have so many realizations by following the process of *bhakti*. He will see Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in the seed of the holy name and think, “Oh, Kṛṣṇa is taking birth from Yaśodā.” He will think, “Nanda Bābā is supporting and nourishing Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is very restless. He is stealing butter from different *gopīs* and wrestling with Baladeva Prabhu.”

All the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are present in the holy name, and a pure devotee can see them all. If the disciple can realize the meaning of this *kīrtana*, he will develop a real taste and never fall down. But he must develop some taste.

A devotee may receive *harināma* from his *gurudeva* and begin chanting, but if is not becoming free from *anarthas* and is not developing a taste, he will give up chanting and his devotional service as well. There are many examples of persons who have been renounced *sannyāsīs* for twenty or thirty years. Such persons may even have initiated disciples, but after years of service to their *gurudeva*, they may conclude, “I am in a dilemma; I have not realized anything. Everything that I believed to be true is false. I am giving up my *sannyāsa* and my chanting and remembering. I will no longer cheat others. I am going to marry and start a real life.”

Many have fallen because they have no faith in their *gurudeva* or the holy names. Without this faith, one cannot realize that Śrīmatī Rādhikā, Kṛṣṇa, and *rasa* are all present in the seed of this name, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mantra*. All the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa described in this song (*Harināma, tuwā*) are present within it; all the *vraja-līlā*, *mathurā-līlā*, *dvārakā-līlā*, and *goloka-ṁṁndāvana-līlā* are there.

Moreover, new pastimes, which have not been written in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, can be discovered in this song. Our *gosvāmīs* discovered so many pastimes, and other *gosvāmīs*, like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, have come and revealed more and more. You should aspire to follow in the footsteps of our *gosvāmīs*. Have full faith in your *guru* and continue chanting. Do not be satisfied with chanting only sixteen rounds. This

is not sufficient to control your restless mind, which is wandering here and there and thinking of worldly things. Chant sixty-four rounds or 128 rounds with strong faith, and then you will realize all these truths.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written thousands of songs, like *Yaśomatī-nandana vraja-varo-nāgara, gokula-rañjana kāna* and *bolo hari hari, mukunda murāri, rāma kṛṣṇa hayagrīva*. All of the important pastimes of Kṛṣṇa are within these songs, and if you sing them with faith and honour, these pastimes will be revealed to you.

We should try to sincerely follow Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He gave us a treasure chest of realized transcendental literature, and that is why he is called the Seventh Gosvāmī.

The Essence of All Scriptures

In addition to the above, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, in two lines, has given us a practical means to achieve our goal of *kṛṣṇa-prema*. He has encapsulated all the truths of the Vedas, *Bhāgavatam*, Upaniṣads and so forth:

*kṛṣṇera saṁsāra koro chāḍi’ anācār
jīve doyā, kṛṣṇa-nāma—sarva-dharma-sāra*

Nadiyā-Godrume (4)

[Serve the family of Kṛṣṇa, giving up all worldly attachment and improper conduct. The essence of all forms of religion is to show compassion to all living beings and to chant the holy names of Kṛṣṇa.]

What is the meaning of this verse? This verse is meant for both *tyāgīs* (renunciants) and *gṛhastas* (householders). *Kṛṣṇera saṁsāra koro* – whatever you do, do it to please Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa manifests as *dikṣā-guru, śikṣā-guru*, Vaiṣṇava, and all of the associates of Kṛṣṇa and Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We must not neglect all these aspects while serving Kṛṣṇa. If you have honour for Kṛṣṇa but not for Baladeva, not for your *dikṣā-guru* or your *śikṣā-guru*, your *bhakti* will diminish.

So the word Kṛṣṇa in this verse has so many deep meanings. It means Kṛṣṇa and all of His associates, *tadiya-vastu* (those persons and things that have

relation to Him), like Tulasī-devī, *hari-nāma* and *mahā-prasāda*.

*mahāprasāde govinde nāma-brahmaṇi vaiṣṇave
svalpa-puṇyavatām rājan viśvāso naiva jāyate
Skanda Purāṇa (Utkala-khaṇḍa)*

[Those who have very few pious activities to their credit can never develop faith in *mahā-prasāda*, in Śrī Govinda, in the holy name of the Lord, or in the Vaiṣṇavas.]

All of these are Kṛṣṇa, but some are *viśaya-kṛṣṇa* (Kṛṣṇa as the object of love), and some are *āśraya-kṛṣṇa* (the abode of that love). We offer more honour to *āśraya-kṛṣṇa* than *viśaya-kṛṣṇa*. If we serve Mother Yaśodā and the *gopīs* more than Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa will be pleased.

*yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo
yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto'pi
dhyāyaṁ stuvāms tasya yaśas tri-sandhyam
vande guroḥ śrī caranāravindam
Śrī Gurvāṣṭakam (8)*

[Solely by the mercy of *śrī gurudeva* can one receive the mercy of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and without *śrī gurudeva*'s being pleased, one cannot make any advancement. Meditating and singing his glories three times a day (in the transitional periods of sunrise, noon and sunset), I adore the lotus feet of that *śrī gurudeva*, which are the abode of grace and auspiciousness.]

You should worship your *guru*, but the *guru* should be a genuine *guru*, not a *gauru* (an animal, meaning a so-called *guru*). A *guru* should follow all the rules and regulations of Vaiṣṇavism. He should chant the holy name and have affection for his disciples. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states that to please Kṛṣṇa, one must behave like a Vaiṣṇava. All advancement in *bhakti* depends on pleasing Kṛṣṇa and his associates. This means to serve *guru*, Vaiṣṇava, the *dhāma*, the holy name, and all that is related to Kṛṣṇa.

Kṛṣṇera saṁsāra koro chāḍi' anācār. This means that one will have to renounce *anācāra*, that which

is unfavourable to Vaiṣṇavism, and follow *vaiṣṇava-ācāra* (proper conduct).

Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī has elaborately delineated the principles of proper conduct in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also written about the ten kinds of *nāma-aparādha*, and sixty-four kinds of other *aparādhas*, including *dhāma-aparādha* and *sevā-aparādha*. These *aparādhas* must be avoided.

True Mercy to the Jīvas and chanting Kṛṣṇa's name

And in the above verse Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is also saying *jīve doyā, kṛṣṇa-nāma—sarva-dharma-sāra*. *Jīve dayā* means to have mercy upon the living entities. Tell the living entities that they are spirit souls; they are not this physical body. They are part and parcel of the Supreme Lord, but they have forgotten this. Now they should engage in the process of *bhakti-yoga* and be happy. To turn anyone's interest, or tendency, toward Kṛṣṇa, is more valuable than establishing thousands of schools, hospitals, public gardens and performing charitable works. We should try to help others in this way, which is the highest type of compassion to the *jīva*.

Kṛṣṇa-nāma means chanting the name of Kṛṣṇa in the process delineated by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī in *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta* (8):

*tan-nāma-rūpa-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi-janānugāmī
kālaṁ nayed akhīlam ity upadeśa-sāram*

[While living in Vraja as a follower of those who are attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one should utilize all his time by gradually transferring the absorption of his tongue and mind from matters other than Kṛṣṇa to the chanting and remembering of narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities and pastimes. This is the essence of all instruction.]

This is the essence of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's life and teachings. 🙏

Courtesy of the Harikathā team



Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka:

The Bona Fide Process of Siddha-praṇālī

A lecture given in Holland 1997
 on the Disappearance Day of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura
 by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

The Seventh Gosvāmī

The glories of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura are so great that even Lord Brahmā with his four mouths cannot completely describe them. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was a transcendental personality and we are not transcendental, so how then can we touch his glories? Only a transcendental person can describe them.

We have heard from our *gurudeva* and other Vaiṣṇavas, and we have also read in authentic books,

that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was given the title 'Seventh Gosvāmī'. From the time of the six Gosvāmīs till now, no one else has received this designation, which was given by learned persons and devotees who saw his glorious activities during his manifest stay in this world (1838–1914). It was he who once again illuminated the true principles of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. Had he not appeared when he did, all the teachings of pure Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism would have been forever drowned in an ocean of oblivion.

A dark period for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism

That time [when Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura appeared] was a dark period for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism. The *sahajiyās*¹ used to give to anyone and everyone what they called *siddha-praṇālī*, the process, or system, that awards perfection, and even *siddha-deha*, a description of one's perfected spiritual body fit for direct service to Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They were not even sure whether or not their so-called followers were devotees.

Their followers did not know the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava philosophy nor did they follow any proper etiquette (*sadācāra*), yet their *sahajiyā-bābājī gurus* pretended to give them their *siddha-deha*.

The *bābājīs* had misunderstood Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings. According to their conception of *siddha-deha*, Gauḍīya *bhajana* meant traveling to Vṛndāvana, living there, and having children with others' wives. They considered that by doing this they had become *gopīs*. "Come on, come on," their *gurus* would say to them. "I am giving you *siddha-praṇālī* and *siddha-deha*."

To whom did they give so called *siddha-deha*? To disciples who identified with their material body and did not even know the abc's of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's teachings. Such persons did not even

.....
1 *Sahajiyās*. *Prākṛta-sahajiyās* are those who understand the transcendental pastimes (*aprākṛta-līlā*) of the transcendental Supreme Personality of Godhead to be *prākṛta*, or mundane, like the affairs of ordinary men and women, and who think that the *aprākṛta-tattva* (transcendental truth) is attained by a material *sādhana* (*Ācārya Kesari Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī – His Life and Teachings*, Part Six).

The *jīva* is spiritual, and its only natural *dharma* is spiritual service to Kṛṣṇa. The word *sahaja* means that which arises along with the *ātmā*. For the pure *ātmā*, transcendental service to Kṛṣṇa is *sahaja*, or natural, because it is intrinsic to the *jīvātmā's* constitution. However, it is not natural for one in the state of being bound by inert matter. *Sahajiyās* cheat others and are themselves cheated or deprived of their pure and natural love for Kṛṣṇa by saying that the mundane union of man and woman is a natural [*sahaja*] and spiritual *dharma*. [*Ācārya-kesari Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī, His Life and Teachings*, part 6 section g, which quotes Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's essay *The Depravity of the Sahajiyā Doctrine*]

have a clear understanding that they are eternally part and parcel and servants of Kṛṣṇa. In reality, instead of being given *gopī-bhāva* they were given 'goopi' *bhāva*.

What are goopis? Goopis are the lovers and beloveds of this world. They think that they should find a lady, live with her, and enjoy sex life. They think this bogus *prema* to be Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's philosophy.

In the name of Gauḍīya Vaisnavism, these *sahajiyās* would perform Hare Kṛṣṇa *kīrtana* in a funeral procession, and then take a large payment from the deceased person's rich relatives. In their so-called *kīrtanas* the word 'Kṛṣṇa' did not clearly manifest. It was difficult for the listeners to find the word "Kṛṣṇa." The chanters sang, "Hare Kṛ-ṣṇa-a-a-a-a-a," in a very fancy melody, then the audience applauded, calling out, "Oh, very good, very good," and paid them some rupees. Although those chanters drank wine and ate meat and fish, they imagined themselves to be acting in the realm of proper behaviour, and they were called Vaiṣṇavas by unintelligent people. Because of such disgraceful displays of behaviour, learned and educated persons became ashamed and did not want to associate themselves with the words 'Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava'.

Preaching the factual mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu

In his time, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was the first person to preach the factual philosophy of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to the learned society. By his preaching, people came to know about true transcendental love, *prema-bhakti*. It is also for this reason that he was given the title Seventh Gosvāmī.

Just as King Bhagīratha brought the Ganges River to the Earth, to India, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura brought the *bhakti-gaṅgā* (the flowing Ganges River of *bhakti*) to this world. Because of him, so many people became inspired to follow pure Gauḍīya Vaisnavism. If he had not appeared, we would not have joined this mission. If Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja had not come to the West, if he had not gone to Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, and if Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura had not come from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, what would have

“The entire tree is there in its seed,
but only when air, water, and
sunlight touch it do all its features
sprout. Similarly, the full potency
of our eternal love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa
is dormant in our souls, but it
manifests only by adopting the pure
and proper process of *bhakti*.”



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been your fate? Your good fortune is coming from Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who preached the very pure doctrines of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

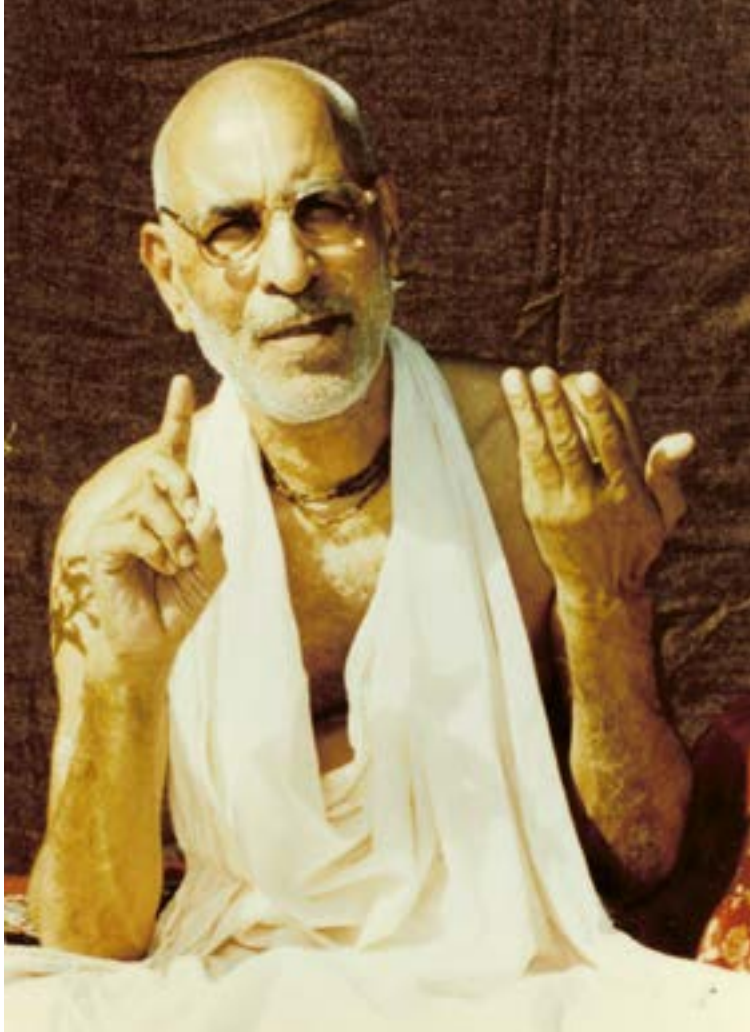
It is due to lack of intelligence and ignorance that these so-called *bābājīs* speak the way they do. In order to help them, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura clearly explained the entire process for achieving spiritual perfection in his final literary work, *Jaiva-dharma*. In that book, he clearly elucidated the qualifications for receiving *siddha-deha*, explaining how the bona fide *guru* reveals *siddha-deha* to a qualified disciple. And previously, in *Bhajana-rahasya*, he clarified many deep *siddhāntas* on the same subject. Those who actually want to enter into the realm of *bhakti* may try to understand and follow *Bhajana-rahasya*, *Jaiva-dharma* and all his other books.

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam – the sequence of bhajana

In *Bhajana-rahasya*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote that our *bhakti* begins by our trying to serve and realize the first verse of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam*, *ceto-darpaṇa-mārjanam bhavamahā-dāvāgni-nirvāpaṇam* [the holy name cleanses the mirror of the heart and completely extinguishes the blazing forest fire of material existence]. We then understand and practise

the second verse, *nāmnām akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis* [O Lord, You have invested Your names with all the potencies of Their respective forms]. And then the third, *trṇad api sunīcena taror iva sahiṣṇuna* [thinking oneself to be even lower and more worthless than insignificant grass that has been trampled beneath everyone’s feet, being more tolerant than a tree...] . If we factually adopt the qualities described in these verses, we may enter the fourth, *na dhanam na janam na sundarim* [I do not desire wealth, nor followers, nor do I desire beautiful poetry (knowledge)]. We will then become detached from worldly desires and tastes, and when we become still more pure, always chanting and remembering Kṛṣṇa without being disturbed by any obstacle, we can enter the fifth, *ayi nanda-tanuja kinīkaram* [O son of Nanda, I am Your eternal servant].

Entrance into this fifth verse is the beginning of *siddha-deha*, at which time we realize ourselves as eternal servants of Kṛṣṇa in a specific relationship. A seed contains the potency of becoming a fully grown tree. With water, air, and light the seed sprouts, and gradually, leaves, branches, flowers, *mañjarīs*, and fruits also manifest. The entire tree is there in its seed, but only when air, water, and sunlight touch it do all its features sprout. Similarly, the full potency of our eternal love for Śrī Kṛṣṇa is dormant in our souls, but



“In order to follow the third verse, beginning with *ṭṛṇād api sunīcena*, one requires this awareness:
I am the eternal servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.”

it manifests only by adopting the pure and proper process of *bhakti*. In this fifth verse, the intrinsic form and nature of the soul (*jīva-svarūpa*) is revealed.

Real qualification for siddha-deha

The sixth verse of *Śrī Śikṣāṣṭakam* states,

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

[O Prabhu! When will my eyes be filled with a stream of tears? When will my voice choke up? And when will the hairs of my body stand erect in ecstasy as I chant Your holy name.]

When a devotee realizes his soul (*ātmā*) and understands that he is an eternal servant of Kṛṣṇa, he has no worldly attachments. It is then that the *svarūpa-sakti*, as *hlādinī* (the pleasure potency) and *samvit*

(the cognizance potency), mercifully manifests in his heart. He then begins to weep, and, while chanting the holy name of Kṛṣṇa, he rolls on the earth and sings, “O Agha-damana (Kṛṣṇa, the killer of the Agha demon), O Yaśodānandana (son of Yaśodā), O Nanda-sūnoḥ (son of Nanda Mahārāja), where are You?”

The devotee may sometimes get a glimpse of Kṛṣṇa and immediately run toward Him. And then, when Kṛṣṇa goes out of sight, that devotee rolls on the ground in separation. If a person does not feel this type of separation from Kṛṣṇa, his constitutional form, *siddha-deha*, does not manifest. Those who artificially exhibit emotions of separation will go to hell, like the thousands of *sahajiyā-bābājīs* in Vṛndāvana and Rādhā-kunḍa who are simply illicitly giving birth to children and engaging in other malpractices.

One of the brothers of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura used to think that his father, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, was his physical body. In fact, he thought of himself as the son of Kedarnātha Daṭṭa (Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's

civil name), not Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. On the other hand, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura considered his father to be an associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. He never considered him his material father, a person made of blood and flesh. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura actually followed the path of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Whatever his father spoke, he totally accepted and followed.

Genuine *siddha-praṇālī*

Our goal is *siddha-deha*, but what is *siddha-deha*? What is *siddha-praṇālī*? Who started the *bābājī* version of *siddha-deha*, in what year did it begin, and from where did it originate? Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī are called Gosvāmīs, not Bābājīs. No one has given them the title Rupa Bābājī, Sanātana Bābājī, or Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Bābājī. At the time of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, no one addressed him as Viśvanātha Cakravartī Bābājī. During his time the process of giving someone this bogus version of *gopī-bhāva* was not practised. No one gave this *siddha-praṇālī* to them.

What is *siddha-praṇālī*? *Siddha-praṇālī* is *Śikṣāṣṭakam* – from the first verse. In order to follow the third verse, beginning with *tṛṇād api sunīcena*, one requires this awareness: “I am the eternal servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu.” Upon this platform of understanding, the devotee becomes detached from worldly attractions and chants and remembers Kṛṣṇa twenty-four hours a day under the guidance of a very qualified Vaiṣṇava.

*tan-nāma-rupe-caritādi-sukīrtanānu-
smṛtyoḥ krameṇa rasanā-manasī niyojya
tiṣṭhan vraje tad-anurāgi janānugāmī
kālaṁ nayed akhilam ity upadeśa-sāram*

Śrī Upadeśāmṛta (8)

[While living in Vraja as a follower of those who are attached to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, one should utilize all his time by gradually transferring the absorption of his tongue and mind from matters other than Kṛṣṇa to the chanting and

remembering of narrations of Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s name, form, qualities and pastimes. This is the essence of all instruction.]

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī has explained this *siddha-praṇālī* in his prayer *Manaḥ-śikṣā*. All the verses of his prayer are *praṇālī* [process or methodology]. They are not artificial imaginings.

From where and from whom has this artificial *siddha-deha* come? There is no history. It is not in our culture, nor is it the teaching of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Real *siddha-praṇālī* and *siddha-deha* manifest when we follow the correct process, beginning with accepting shelter of *guru* (*guru-karana*), serving under his direction (*guru-sevā*) and then *bhajana-kriyā*. It comes by adopting, with purity, the process of *śravaṇam* (hearing), *kīrtanam* (chanting), *viṣṇoḥ-smaraṇam* (remembering the Lord), *pāda-sevanam* (serving the Lord’s lotus feet), *arcanam* (worshipping), *vandanam* (offering prayers), *dāsyam* (becoming a servant), *sakyam* (becoming a friend), *ātma-nivedanam* (surrendering everything). It comes by

*sadhu-sanga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavata-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (*Madhya-līlā* 22.128)

[In the association of devotees one should chant the holy name of the Lord, hear Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam, reside in Mathura, and worship the Deity with faith and veneration.]

By following these processes, Śrī Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhikā will mercifully give us our perfected form, our *siddha-deha*, which is fit to serve Them.

How Śrī Narada Muni received his *siddha-deha*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam states that Nārada Muni received his *mantra* from Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanātana and Sanat-kumūra. Later, as soon as his mother died, he left for the dense forest. There he bathed in a river, sat down silently under the shade of a banyan tree, chanted

his *mantra*, and meditated upon the Supersoul within his heart. After practising for many years, Lord Viṣṇu momentarily manifested in his heart and then vanished.

Nārada Muni wept bitterly in separation from Lord Viṣṇu, and then a voice from the sky called to him, “Nārada, I will not give you *darśana* again as long as you are in this material body. Continue chanting My name, remembering Me, and glorifying My pastimes all over the world. At the appropriate time, when death comes, you will put your feet on the head of death² and be liberated.”

Following Lord Viṣṇu’s instruction, Nārada Muni constantly chanted and remembered the Lord, and while playing on his *vīṇā* he sang songs and poems glorifying the pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, such as *Rādhā-ramaṇa haribol*.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura wrote about many pastimes of Kṛṣṇa and His devotees in his own poetry and songs. He wrote “*Nārada muni bājāya vīṇā rādhikā-ramaṇa nāme*” [Nārada Muni plays his *vīṇā* while chanting the glories of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa].

He also wrote,

*yaśomatī-nandana, braja-baro-nāgara,
gokula-rañjana kāna
gopī-parāṇa-dhana, madana-manohara,
kālīya-damana-vidhāna*

[Kṛṣṇa is the beloved son of Mother Yaśodā, the topmost hero of Vraja, the delight of Gokula, and Kāna (an affectionate nickname for Kṛṣṇa). He is the treasure of the lives of the *gopīs*, the enchanter of Cupid, and the punisher of the serpent Kālīya.]

After many years, death came to Nārada Muni. At that same moment, his *siddha-deha* (transcendental body) manifested, and in that *siddha-deha* he became so strong that he could travel anywhere in the universe or beyond. Unlike Dhruva Mahārāja, Nārada did not require the help of an airplane to transport him to Vaikuṅṭha.

.....

2 This means that death will be accepted as a stepping stone to a higher destination – attaining one’s eternal spiritual form and service to the Lord.

We should try to know all of the processes taught by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura: *śravaṇa-daśā* (the stage of hearing), *varaṇa-daśā* (the stage of thirsting for spiritual emotions), *smaraṇa-daśā* (the stage of remembrance of the Lord and His intimate associates), *bhāvapana-daśā* (the stage of uninterrupted remembrance and ecstatic spiritual sentiments in *bhāva-bhakti*, or *svarūpa-siddhi*), and finally *prema-sampatti-daśā*, in which one’s *siddha-deha* (also known as *vastu-siddhi*, the spiritual body that receives direct *darśana* of and service to the Lord and His associates) will manifest.

In *śravaṇa-daśā* (the stage of hearing), one hears from his bona fide *guru* about *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Jaiva-dharma* and the entire philosophy of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. In *śravaṇa-daśā* there are many things to learn, such as one’s name and identity, not the name of one’s material body but of one’s transcendental body.

The true *guru* knows all this. A false *guru* does not know it, but uses his imagination to give this type of information. The bona fide *guru* knows everything: your eternal name, your relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the *gopīs*, your place of residence – whether it is at Rādhā-kuṇḍa or Jāvata or Nandagaon or Varṣāna – the name of your father and mother, your service, and the nature of your beautiful form. He reveals to you your particular service to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugal and your nature as a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā (*pālyā-dāsī-bhāva*). There are eleven items in all.

Taste in the name and mercy to all

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s main objective was to teach the actual process of *bhakti*. His teachings can be summarized in two lines: *jīva-dayā kṛṣṇa-nāma, sarva dharma sāra* – the sum and substance of all religious principles is to show mercy to all living entities due seeing them as Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s and completely surrendering to the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. This is also the sum and substance of the teachings of all the Vedas, Vedānta, Upaniṣads, *Bhagavad-gītā*, the Purāṇas, Śrutis, Smṛtis, *Pañcarātra*, etc.

In essence, there are two principles: *jīva-dayā* and *kṛṣṇa-nāma*. The meaning of *jīva-dayā* is ‘mercy to conditioned souls’. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has elaborately explained that the best *dayā*, or mercy, is turning conditioned souls from their worldly moods to the mood of serving Kṛṣṇa. It is more valuable than opening hundreds of thousands of hospitals and universities, or donating hundreds of thousands of dollars in charity. *Jīva-dayā* is the most special gift, and it can be given only by a realized soul.

harer nāma harer nāma

harer nāmaiva kevalam

*kalau nāsty eva nāsty eva nasty eva
gatir anyatha*

Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta (Ādi-līlā 17.21)

[In this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the only means of deliverance is the chanting of the holy name of the Lord. There is no other way. There is no other way. There is no other way.]

Jīva-dayā is attained only by chanting Kṛṣṇa’s holy name. Kṛṣṇa’s name is Kṛṣṇa Himself, but only when we are in the association of the bona fide *guru* and bona fide Vaiṣṇavas can we chant *śuddha-nāma*, the pure name devoid of offences and misconceptions. Without this association we can neither chant the pure name nor engage in *śuddha-bhakti* (pure devotion).

What is *śuddha-bhakti*?³ We may think that *vaidhi-bhakti* (devotion prompted by the regulations of the scriptures) is *śuddha-bhakti*, but it is not, nor will it ever become so. *Śuddha-bhakti* is *rāgānuga-bhakti*, or devotion impelled by a greed to follow in the footsteps

3 The more you are engaged in devotional service, the more your senses become pure or uncovered. And when it is completely uncovered, without any designation, then you are capable to serve Kṛṣṇa. This is apprenticeship. *Vaidhi-bhakti*, that is apprenticeship. Real *bhakti*, *parā-bhakti*, that is *rāgānuga-bhakti*. [Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja (lecture in Vṛndāvana, Nov.12, 1972)]

“Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has elaborately explained that the best *dayā*, or mercy, is turning conditioned souls from their worldly moods to the mood of serving Kṛṣṇa. It is more valuable than opening hundreds of thousands of hospitals and universities, or donating hundreds of thousands of dollars in charity. *Jīva-dayā* is the most special gift, and it can be given only by a realized soul.”

of the personal associates of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. When the practice of *rāgānuga-bhakti* fully matures, it is then called *rāgātmika-prema*, the loving moods of Kṛṣṇa’s associates in Vṛndāvana. In other words, when the sincere devotee desires *rāgātmika-prema* and cultivates attaining it with all of his senses, it is called *rāgānuga*, or devotion performed in the wake of the *rāgātmika-bhaktas*. When our hearts accept the same mood that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī possesses, the mood of a *pālya-dāsī* (maidservant) of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, it is called *rūpānuga-bhakti*.

We conditioned souls are eligible to become *pālya-dāsīs*. We cannot become like Lalitā or Viśakha, whose position as direct beloveds of Kṛṣṇa is beyond the limit of our attainment. We can follow only Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī or Rūpa Mañjarī, Rati Mañjarī, Lavaṅga Mañjarī, and all the other *mañjarīs*. The *sahajiyā-bābājis*’ utterance of “Oh, you are Lalitā,

I am Lalitā” is nothing but *māyāvāda* philosophy (the doctrine of illusion in which one identifies oneself with the object of worship), or monism, artificial imitation.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura foretold that in the near future many hundreds of thousands of Western devotees with *śikha* and *tulasī-mālā* will meet with Indian devotees, and they will all chant together, “*Haribol, haribol,*” “*Gaura premānande hari haribol,*” and “*Hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare, hare rama hare rama rama hare hare.*” Thus, all over the world, this pure mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu will spread. This idea was started by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. He is the root of all our preaching, and therefore we are truly indebted to him. 🙏

Courtesy of the Harikathā team

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Discerning the True Sentiments of the Soul

by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

A drop from the ocean



RELINQUISHING THE *Pratiṣṭhāśā Parivarjana* Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

In the depths of jñāna, vairāgya and so on, and behind all religion, lies the desire for honour and distinction

To the degree that we endeavour to develop ourselves spiritually, to become religious, to maintain a renounced life, and to deliberate on and discuss *jñāna*, we desire our own honour and distinction (*pratiṣṭhā*). This desire contaminates our hearts and pollutes our characters. Although we make a great effort to control lust, anger, greed, illusion and envy, and although we perform severe austerities to control the senses, concealed within our hearts the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*, in the form of a wild infant animal, continues to grow.

I learn *aṣṭāṅga-yoga* with a desire to become a famous *yogī*. If anyone one tells me that my *yoga* lessons are merely a show, I burn in anger. I discuss and deliberate upon many *śāstras* in my endeavour to merge into *brahma*. If I hear someone say that this process is fruitless, my mind becomes disturbed and I condemn the accuser. We learn ten kinds of *dharma*, such as control of the mind and the external senses, austerity and truthfulness, and in carrying out our worldly activities we perform daily obligatory religious duties (*nitya-karma*) and occasional religious duties (*naimittika-karma*). If someone says that *karma-*

kāṇḍa is simply useless labour, my mind suffers; I become unhappy because my *pratiṣṭhā* is being made to appear insignificant.

Those who desire sense enjoyment (*bhukti*) and liberation (*mukti*) are restless and slaves of the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*.

When the *karmī*, *jñāni*, *yogī* and so on search in hope of attaining the fruit of enjoyment and liberation, how can they have any peace? They cannot relinquish the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*. This desire is very insignificant, however, in those Vaiṣṇavas who have no thirst at all for *bhukti* and *mukti*.

Present-day Vaiṣṇava ācāryas desire *pratiṣṭhā* and are intolerant

Nowadays, the *ācāryas* of *vaiṣṇava-dharma* cannot tolerate the slightest disrespect. From the outset, they endeavour to enhance their dignity by placing their feet on the heads of all. It is not unreasonable for an *ācārya* to receive respect from others. But if he courts that respect for himself, where is his real value? Furthermore, he becomes angry with someone who does not offer him full prostrated obeisances (*sāṣṭāṅga-daṇḍavat praṇāmas*). Such anger is abominable. Well-mannered people respect an *ācārya* by offering him a separate seat. This is correct and in accordance with

of his transcendental writings

DESIRE FOR PRATIṢṬHĀ

sāstra, but if the *ācārya* is angered by someone else sitting on that seat, it is most unfortunate. All such behaviour solely arises from the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*.

It is extremely difficult to give up the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*

Many Vaiṣṇavas have given up their homes and accepted the dress of a renunciant. Peace-loving people who consider that householders have the greatest desire for *pratiṣṭhā* leave their homes and accept the dress of renunciants. In that renounced situation, however, *pratiṣṭhā* arises with an even greater intensity than before! If one who has accepted the dress of a renunciant is not offered respect, he becomes particularly angry. If the desire for *pratiṣṭhā* is present in householder Vaiṣṇavas and Vaiṣṇavas in the renounced order, what can be said of others?

The desire for *pratiṣṭhā* is not removed without *kṛṣṇa-sevā*

When we collect and contemplate the instructions of great people, we understand that as long as we cannot give up the desire for *pratiṣṭhā*, we cannot consider ourselves Vaiṣṇavas. Real humility is not found in mere words. I say that I am not worthy of being the

servant of a servant of the Vaiṣṇavas, but all the while within my mind I think that anyone hearing me say this will glorify me, thinking me a pure Vaiṣṇava. Alas! The desire for *pratiṣṭhā* does not want to abandon us. For this reason the best of Vaiṣṇavas, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, says:

*pratiṣṭhāsā dhṛṣṭā śvapaca-ramaṇī me hṛdi naṭet
kathaṃ sādhuḥ-premā sprṣati śucir etan nanu manaḥ
sadā tvaṃ sevasva prabhu-dayita-sāmantam atulaṃ
yathā tāṃ niškāśya tvaritam iha taṃ veśayati saḥ*

Śrī Manaḥ-śikṣā (7)

How will my heart touch this pure *sādhu-prema* as long as the shameless dog-eating lady in the form of *pratiṣṭhā* dances there? O mind! You should therefore serve those pure Vaiṣṇavas who are the incomparable commanders of the army of your master, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. They will then remove that dog-eating lady from the temple of your heart and allow *prema* to enter.

Extinction of the desire for *pratiṣṭhā* in the association of *viśuddha Vaiṣṇavas*

What can we gather from the words of this *mahājana* Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī? We understand

that the desire for *pratiṣṭhā* can never be removed by studying and discussing *śāstra*, by hearing instructions from those who have not attained *prema*, or by practising various bodily processes of *yoga*. It can only be removed by associating with and serving *viśuddha* Vaiṣṇavas. Having searched for and found such Vaiṣṇavas, it is our ultimate goal to associate with and serve them.

To accept sat-saṅga is non-different from giving up asat-saṅga

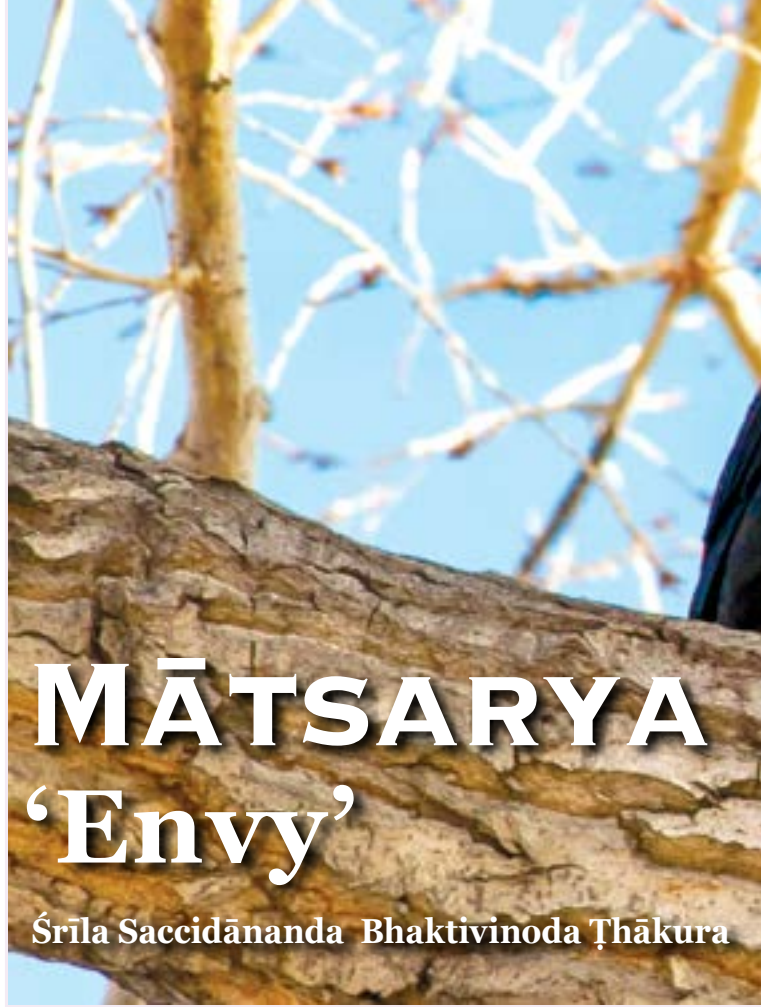
By associating with Vaiṣṇavas, saintliness (*sādhutā*) will manifest in our hearts and sinfulness will be completely removed. When our hearts are clean, a ray from the sun of *prema* will enter. This ray, which enriches our hearts with *prema*, comes from the heart of a saintly Vaiṣṇava. This is the only way to attain *prema* and give up *pratiṣṭhā*. It is the natural method to become a *sādhū*. All other approaches are fruitless labour. In conclusion, attaining one's eternal transcendental nature is non-different from removing one's temporary material nature.

By the influence of sādhu-saṅga, kṛṣṇa-prema is obtained and the desire for pratiṣṭhā is removed

The nature of *kṛṣṇa-prema* is such that it is only entrusted into the heart of *viśuddhabhaktas* of Kṛṣṇa and it has no other dwelling place. It is passed from one soul (*ātmā*) to another, just as lightning passes from one cloud to another. Gradually, by associating with Vaiṣṇavas, the *prema* in the Vaiṣṇava's heart is naturally transmitted to the heart of the *jīva*. At that time wicked tendencies are removed from the heart of that *jīva* and a saintly nature manifests in him. All the exalted qualities that purify the heart and that accompany *prema* become manifest. It is therefore our duty to remove the desire for *pratiṣṭhā* by taking *sādhu-saṅga*. 🙏

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MĀTSARYA 'Envy'

Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

The meaning of the word 'mātsarya' & who is fit for the non-envious religion of love?

The word *mātsarya* is used with different meanings in different contexts. Among its various meanings we find 'enviousness of others' good-fortune', 'distressed because of their success', 'malice' and 'jealousy'. Wherever the word *mātsarya* has been used in the Vaiṣṇava scriptures, it refers to that mood which is adverse to *prema* (pure love).

*dharmah projjhita-kaitavo 'tra
paramo nirmatsarāṇām satām
vedyaṁ vāstavam atra vastu śivadaṁ
tāpa-trayonmūlanam
śrīmad-bhāgavate mahā-muni-kṛte
kiṁ vā parair īśvaraḥ
sadyo hṛdy avarudhyate 'tra kṛtibhiḥ
śuśrūsubhis tat-kṣaṇāt*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (1.1.2)



In this *Bhāgavata Purāṇa*, where fraudulent religiosity and all other mundane goals of humankind have been utterly forsaken, the supreme spiritual duty (*parama-dharma*) has been expounded. That *parama-dharma* is pure *bhakti-yoga*, exemplified by those saints who are absolutely free from envy and full of compassion for all living beings. The Supreme Truth within uproots the three forms of misery and grants the highest form of bliss. When those with ample spiritual merit desire to listen to the message of this beautiful *Bhāgavatam*, which was authored by Mahāmuni Śrī Nārāyaṇa Himself, then the Supreme Lord Śrī Hari is immediately and permanently captured within their hearts. What is the need of any other message?

This statement defines who is fit to practise *parama-dharma* – that supreme spiritual duty propounded by *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. And to relish the liquid humours of pure love (*prema-rasa*) is truly the

supreme spiritual duty that this gospel enjoins. Those who are without envy (*nirmatsara*) are the only ones fit to practise this *parama-dharma*. *Nirmatsaratā* means ‘the quality of being free from *mātsarya* (envy)’. Within the context of this verse, commentators have explained *matsaratā* as feeling happiness upon seeing the misery of others and misery upon seeing their happiness, but if the meaning of the word *matsaratā* is not illuminated in detail, it will not be understood by common people.

The gang of six foes & the cause of their combined appearance

The *jīvas*, confined by ignorance, have been entrapped in mundanity by the rope of the six foes (*ṣaḍ-varga*). Lust (*kāma*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), delusion (*moha*), pride (*mada*) and envy (*mātsarya*) – these six are called *ṣaḍ-varga*, and they are nothing but other forms of the five types of misery, namely ignorance (*avidya*), egotism (*asmitā*), infatuation (*abhiniveśa*), vehemence (*rāga*) and hatred (*dveṣa*).

Extreme absorption in gross material objects gives rise to lust. In *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, lust is described as follows:

*dhyāyato viṣayān puṁsaḥ saṅgas teṣūpajāyate
saṅgāt sañjāyate kāmaḥ kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate
krodhād bhavati sammohaḥ sammohāt smr̥ti-vibhramah
smr̥ti-bhramśād buddhi-nāśo buddhi-nāśāt praṇaśyati*
Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā (2.62–63)

The meaning of these verses is as follows: [By meditating on the sense objects, one inwardly mingles with them. As such] association with the sense objects, in the form of acute absorption in them, gives rise to lust (*kāma*), which inevitably leads to anger (*krodha*). Anger gives rise to (*sammoha*) – that is, greed (*lobha*) to enjoy the sense objects even by unfair means. Greed for sense objects leads to loss of memory (*moha*) which in turn destroys the intelligence, or in other words it leads to pride (*mada*), wherein one fails to distinguish between virtue and evil. That pride leads to utter ruination – *mātsarya*, which severely distorts the living entity's natural, loving tendency.

The means to conquer the enemy

Bhagavad-gītā instructs us:

*evam buddheḥ param buddhvā
saṁstabhyātmānam ātmanā
jahi śatrum mahā-bāho
kāma-rūpaṁ durāsadam*
Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā (3.43)

The meaning is as follows: Realize that the soul, who belongs to the spiritual domain, transcends the intelligence. Controlling the mind through the principle of resolute determination, conquer that inextinguishable enemy known as *kāma*.

All the foes are within mātsarya

From all these instructions it is clearly understood that by misunderstanding the nature of our true self – in other words, due to *sva-rūpa-bhrama* – the seed of lust sprouts in our hearts and gradually grows into the tree of envy, thus sending *prema*, which is *jaiva-dharma*, or the true nature of all living entities, far away. Lust (*kāma*), anger (*krodha*), greed (*lobha*), delusion (*moha*) and pride (*mada*) are all included in envy (*mātsarya*).

Lust is included in anger. Lust and anger are both included in greed. Lust, anger and greed are within delusion. And lust, anger, greed and delusion are found within pride, which refers to all kinds of pride, including pride in one's wealth, in one's beauty, in one's bodily prowess, in one's high caste and in one's erudition. But envy (*mātsarya*) encompasses all of this: lust, anger,

greed, delusion and all kinds of pride.

**“But envy (*mātsarya*)
encompasses all
of this: lust, anger,
greed, delusion and
all kinds of pride.”**

All sorts of miseries are included in envy and a man prone to envy is devoid of compassion for other living beings

All the miseries of the living beings are truly embodied in envy. Two types of ignorance, namely, unrighteous ignorance and righteous ignorance; wicked acts and the desire to act wickedly (*pāpa* and *pāpa-vāsanā*); and commendable acts and the desire to act commendably (*puṇya* and *puṇya-vāsanā*), are all included within envy. The principles of Vaiṣṇavism (*vaiṣṇava-dharma*) – namely compassion for all living entities (*jīve-dayā*), the loving inclination to chant the holy name (*nāme-ruci*), and service to the Vaiṣṇavas (*vaiṣṇava-sevā*) – stand directly opposed to the condition of envy. Those who feel distress upon seeing the happiness of others can never feel compassion for the living entities, and their hearts can never be suffused with the nectar of love of God. They maintain hatred and jealousy towards Vaiṣṇavas, a hatred that arises from the long standing distortion of their constitutional nature.

Only those who are free from envy can embrace the import of ‘even humbler than grass’

Only those who are free from envy have imbibed the true meaning of the verse beginning *trṇād api*. Śrīman Mahāprabhu has said:

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

Śrī Śikṣāṣṭaka (3)

Only he who feels lower than a blade of grass and who is more tolerant than a tree; who expects no honour for himself but who is able to give due respect to all others is qualified to perpetually chant the holy names of Hari.

A person who is free from envy possesses no false pride for wealth, beauty, high caste, education or mundane physical strength, and therefore regards himself as even more insignificant (*sunīcena*) than a blade of grass. Such a person is also free from anger, aggressiveness and violence. On account of that he is even more tolerant (*sahiṣṇunā*) than a tree. That is, he is exceedingly compassionate. A person such as this, who is free from envy and false pride in his caste, education and so on, despite being blessed with all virtue, never craves recognition or adoration from others. Thus he is *amānī*, one who does not expect honour from anyone. That person, being free from envy, always feels happiness in the happiness of others, and pain in their sorrow. And so, he treats all living beings with due honour (*mānadā*).

In general, by being compassionate toward all living beings, he shows respect to them all. By offering great honour to noble souls like *brāhmaṇas* (priests) and *vaiṣṇava-praya* (unperfected Vaiṣṇavas), he pleases them. And while devoting himself to the lotus feet of perfected Vaiṣṇavas, he serves them.

The ten symptoms of the non-jealous

(1) He who is free from envy, by his very nature, never criticizes *sādhus* (saints).

- (2) He does not consider demigods to be independent lords, for his intelligence is absorbed only in Śrī Kṛṣṇa, yet he does not disregard them.
- (3) He has faith (*śraddhā*) in *śrī guru* and all other superior devotees as befits each of them.
- (4) He offers respect to the *bhakti* scriptures like Śruti¹.
- (5) Abandoning meaningless arguments, he apprehends how the holy name is the topmost, meaningful attainment (*paramārtha*), a perception rooted in perfect conviction that the holy name (*nāma*) and its owner (*nāmī*) are one and the same.
- (6) He never engages in wickedness while depending on the protection of the holy name.
- (7) He does not consider the auspiciousness of ordinary piety – such as societal *dharma*, religious vows (*vrata*) or renunciation – to be comparable in any way to chanting the holy names.
- (8) He tries to inculcate faith in the faithless, but never grants them the holy name until that faith has awakened.
- (9) He believes completely in the glories of the holy name as described in the scriptures.
- (10) And he is devoid of any sense of ‘I’ and ‘mine’ in relation to mundanity.

O readers! Non-jealousness alone is liberation for the living being, and envy his only bondage. In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* it has therefore been said:

*caitanya-carita śuna śraddhā-bhakti kari’
mātsarya chāḍiyā mukhe bala ‘hari’ ‘hari’*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 9.361)

Endowed with full faith and devotion, listen to the lifework of Śrī Caitanya... Cast aside envy and let your mouth sing, “Hari, Hari!” 🌸

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.....
1 Which includes *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and the Upaniṣads.

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*:

*nindām kurvanti ye mūdhā vaiṣṇavānām mahātmanām
patanti pīṭrbhiḥ sārdaṁ mahā-raurava-saṁjñite
hanti nindāti vai dveṣṭi vaiṣṇavān nābhinandati
krudhyate yāti no harṣaṁ 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):

*nindām bhagavataḥ śṛṇvaṁs
tat-parasya janasya vā
tato nāpaiti 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 prākṛtaḥ 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

-NINDĀ
a Vaiṣṇava

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-kṛpopekṣā 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.

.....
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*.



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 *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.

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

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.

One who is *vaiṣṇava* –

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

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.

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.

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,—“yānra 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



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

of devotional service (*navadhā-bhakti*) attains completeness only through *nāma*.

*dikṣā-puraścaryā-vidhi apekṣā nā kare
jihvā-sparṣe 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 saṁsāreṇa 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.

*“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 *sāstriya-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 (*mukti*), the Vaiṣṇava only chants *suddha-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 chāḍī’ 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 tāñre 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

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



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.

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



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
daiivotpannaśca bhaktānām naivālocyaḥ kadācana
saduddeśyamṛte yastu mṛṣapavādameva 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 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-bhāk
sādhur eva sa mantavyaḥ samyag vyavasīto hi saḥ
kṣīpram bhavati dharmātmā śaśvac-chāntim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijānīhi na me bhaktaḥ pranaśyati*

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.

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-mūlaṁ bhajataḥ priyasya
tyaktāny abhāvasya hariḥ pareśaḥ
vikarma yac cotpatitaṁ 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 (*sādhunindā*) 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 utsrjya
satsu sajjeta buddhimān
santa evāsya 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):

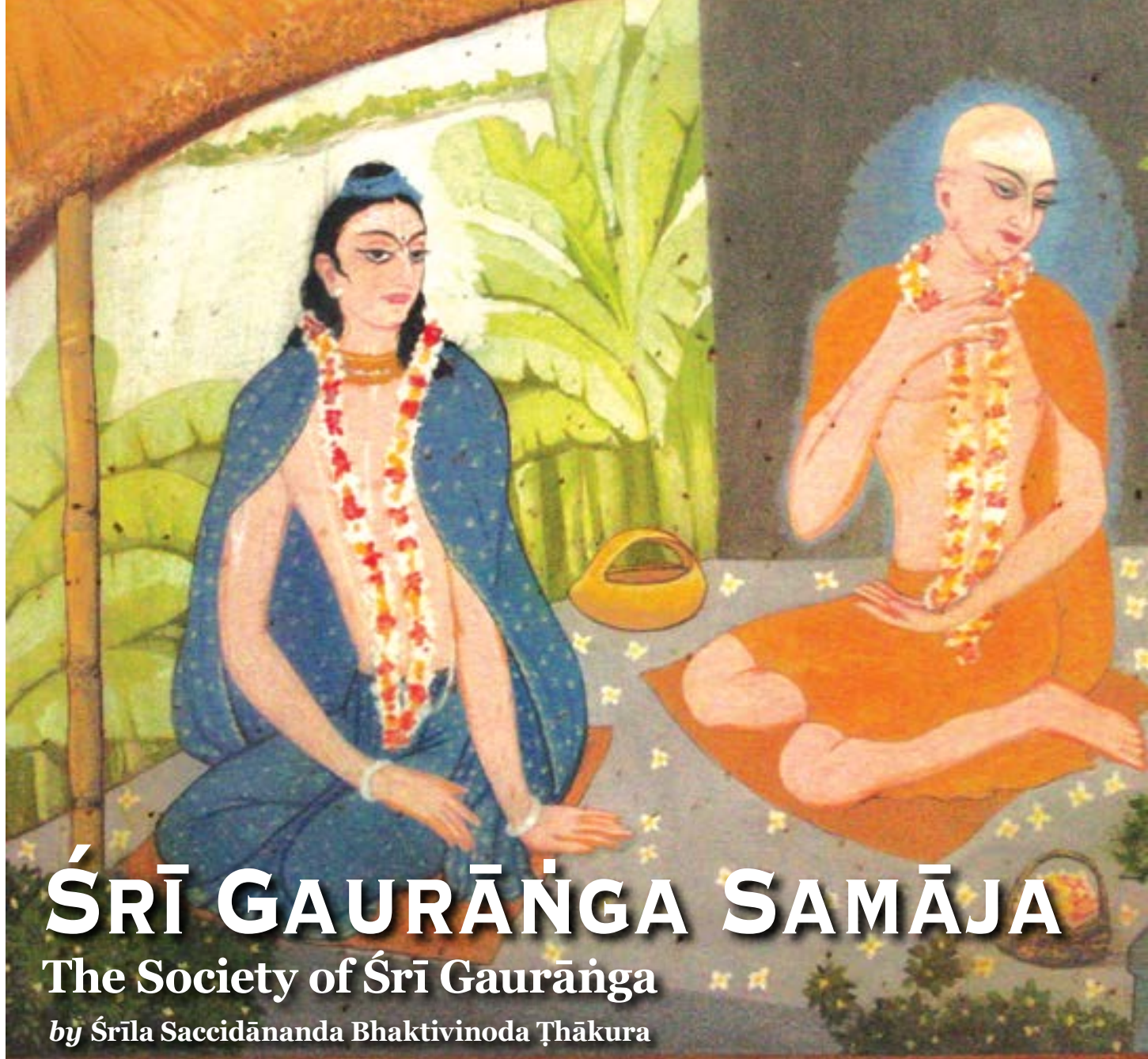
*saṅgo yaḥ saṁsrter hetur
asatsu viḥito'dhiyā
sa eva sādhuṣu kṛto
niḥsaṅgatvāya kalpate*

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 *Bhaktamāla* 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 *suddha-bhaktas* mercifully deem our discussion of all these subjects to have been properly motivated. 🙏

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ŚRĪ GAURĀṄGA SAMĀJA

The Society of Śrī Gaurāṅga

by Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

Only those who have faith in Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu are part of His society

After thorough deliberation we have concluded that mankind will greatly benefit through Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja, the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga. Śrīla Vṛndāvana dāsa Ṭhākura has said “*ye vā māne, ye nā māne, saba tāṅra dāsa* – Everyone is a servant of Śrī Caitanya, even if some accept Him as Bhagavān and others do not.”¹ Indeed, every Gauḍīya

¹ A similar verse appears in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (Ādi-līlā 6.85): “*keha māne, keha nā māne, saba tāṅra dāsa* – Everyone is a servant of Śrī Caitanya, even if some accept Him as Bhagavān and others do not.”

Vaiṣṇava accepts that Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself, the Absolute Truth.

Constitutionally, every living being is a servant of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. However, many do not accept this because they are afflicted by offences. Such people will certainly neglect this Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja, so what will the society do but remain indifferent to them? Those who hold Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu in high regard will participate in this society with one-pointed focus. What doubt can there be in this?

Three types of people have faith in Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu: (1) those who have faith that He is the Supreme Lord, (2) those who have faith that He is the topmost devotee, and (3) those who categorize Him as



a great personality. However, as all three types respect Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, they can be included within His society.

It is necessary to include in the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga the three types of people who have faith in Him

Those who perform *bhajana* of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, knowing Him to be the Supreme Lord, are His one-pointed devotees who are counted among His intimate associates. This category is further divided because even though some people know Śrī Gaurāṅga to be the Supreme Lord, they may not consider Him the

object of their *bhajana*. Nonetheless, there is no doubt that everyone in this particular category demonstrates love for Śrī Gaurāṅga.

Those who consider Śrī Gaurāṅga to be the topmost devotee will certainly propagate love for Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu (*gaura-prema*) from time to time, even if they belong to another *sampradāya*. Persons in this category can never become disinclined to the promotion of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja.

And those who consider Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu to be an ordinary devotee and a native social reformer also belong to His community. If the second and third categories are not included in the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga, then this society cannot be said to benefit the public at large. Taking care to bring them within the community of Śrī Gaurāṅga is thus an intelligent act.

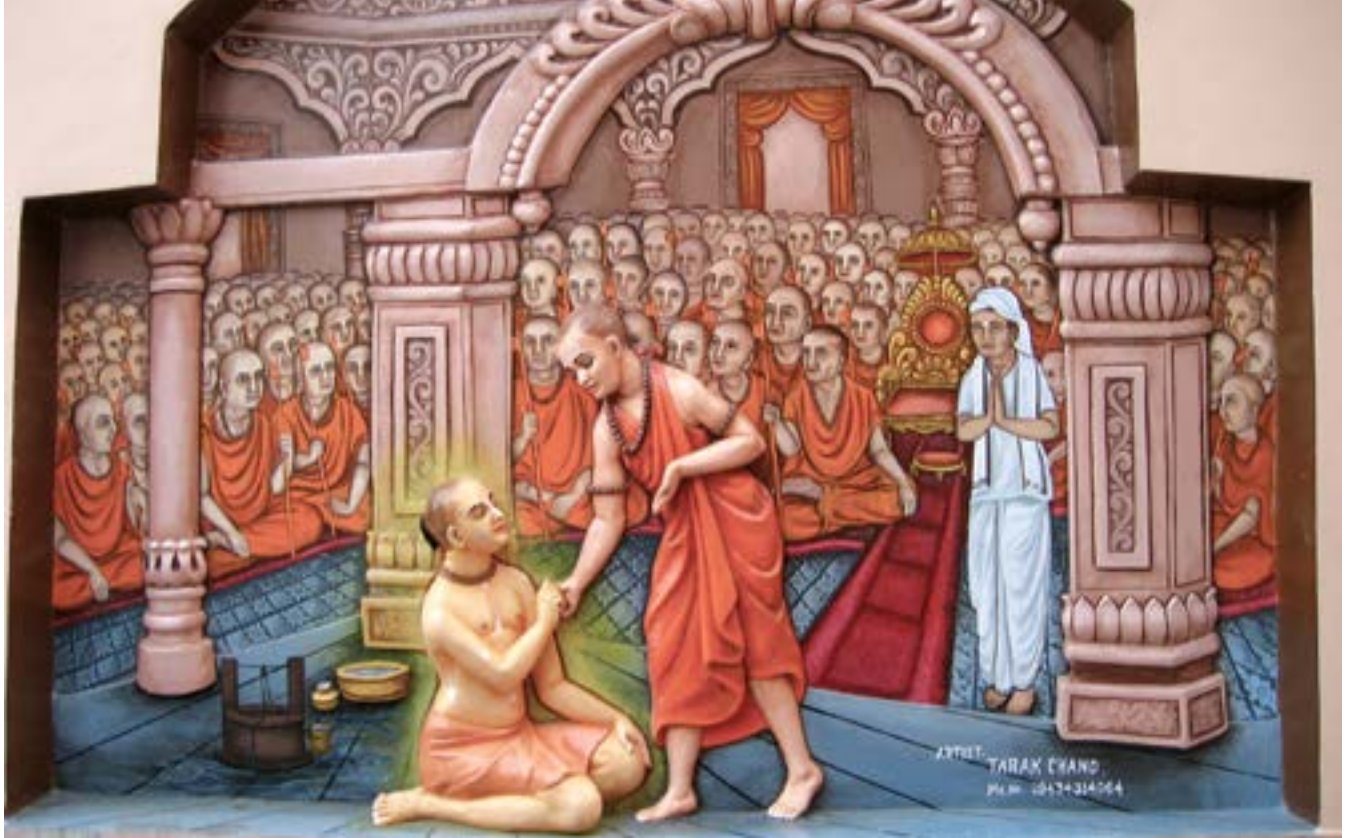
Accordingly, the conclusion is that the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga comprises those great souls who hold Śrī Gaurāṅga as an ideal.

The members summoned to the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga, and the grand assembly of Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī of Kāśī (Vārāṇasī)

One question must be considered here: Does Śrī Gaurāṅga approve of such a society or not? If we examine the *sāstras* pertaining to *bhakti* we will observe that Śrī Gaurāṅga personally established the foundation of such a society during His *prakaṭa-līlā*, or manifest presence.

O reader, do you remember that in the holy place of Vārāṇasī a grand assembly was held in honour of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu? It was organized by the *brāhmaṇa* from Mahārāṣṭra, who was an exceptional devotee and an associate of Mahāprabhu. He invited all the Śāṅkarite *sannyāsīs* and other *paramahāṁsas* of Kāśī and specifically requested Śrīman Mahāprabhu to join that assembly so that Mahāprabhu would bestow His mercy upon them all, as well as manifest some of His opulence. Astonished upon beholding Śrīman Mahāprabhu's grandeur, those *sannyāsīs* rose from their seats and offered Him – the Lord of our hearts – the most elevated sitting place.

In that assembly Śrīman Mahāprabhu preached *suddha-svabhakti*, or pure devotional service to



Himself, and thus became worshipful by all of those present there. The *sannyāsīs*, their eyes brimming with tears, took shelter of His lotus feet. All varieties of people participated in that grand assembly, which was made more glorious by the presence of *paramahaṁsa sannyāsīs*, a multitude of *brāhmaṇas* who were engaged in fruitive activities, countless worldly minded people, devotees from every *sampradāya*, and the most elevated pure devotees such as Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Candraśekhara Ācārya, Śrī Tapana Miśra and Śrī Paramānanda Kīrtaniyā. This is described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta*:

*āra dine gelā prabhu se vipra-bhavane
dekhilena, vasiyāchena sannyāsīra gaṇe*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.58)

The next day Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu went to that *brāhmaṇa's* residence and saw the *sannyāsīs* of Vārāṇasī sitting there.

*vasiyā karilā kichu aiśvarya prakāśa
mahātejomaya vapu koṭi-sūryābhāsa*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.60)

Sitting on the ground, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu revealed His mystic power by manifesting

extremely effulgent bodily lustre as bright as millions of suns.

*prabhāve ākarṣila saba sannyāsīra mana
uṭhila sannyāsī saba chāḍiyā āsana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.61)

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's brilliant bodily effulgence attracted the minds of the *sannyāsīs*, and they respectfully rose, giving up their sitting places.

*āpane prakāśānanda hātete dhariyā
vasāilā sabhā-madhye sammāna kariyā*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.65)

Prakāśānanda Sarasvatī, however, personally caught Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu by the hand and with much honour seated Him in the midst of the assembly.

*prabhura miṣṭa-vākya śuni' sannyāsīra gaṇa
citta phiri' gela, kahe madhura vacana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.99)

After hearing the sweet words of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, the minds of the Māyāvādī

sannyāsīs were moved, and thus they spoke pleasing words.

*ye kichu kahile tumi, saba satya haya
kṛṣṇa-premā sei pāya, yāra bhāgyodaya*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Ādi-līlā 7.100)

“Dear Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, all You have said is completely true. Only one whose good fortune has awakened attains *kṛṣṇa-prema*.”

The founding of the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga and its success in preaching

By reading this narration, we can certainly understand that the original Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja in the house of the *brāhmaṇa* from Mahārāṣṭra was manifested by the desire of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu. If He bestows His mercy upon us, the present society of Śrī Gaurāṅga will achieve similar success. If those who honour Śrī Gaurāṅga constantly cultivate an understanding of His glories they will become supremely pure Vaiṣṇavas within no time. Moreover, even if those who do not honour Him at all attend the society’s assemblies and thereby regularly hear sweet narrations about Him, they will also become gentle at heart. Moreover, they will eventually relinquish the impurity of their adherence to other *sampradāyas* and become wholly pure *bhaktas* of Gaurāṅga. As Śrīla Kavirāja Gosvāmī says in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Madhya-līlā 2.87)*:

*yebā nāhi bujhe keha, śunite śunite seha,
ki adbhuta caitanya-carita
kṛṣṇe upajibe prīti, jānibe rasera rīti,
śunilei baḍa haya hita*

If one does not understand Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s wonderful life and pastimes but nonetheless continues to hear about them again and again, love for Kṛṣṇa will be aroused. Gradually one will come to understand the tradition of *rasa*, the loving affairs between Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* and other associates of Vṛndāvana. Thus, simply hearing about Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu awards the highest benefit.

Only Vaiṣṇavas in the topmost class do not belong to any society

According to the scriptures, there are three categories of Vaiṣṇavas: *uttama*, *madhyama* and *kaniṣṭha*. Among them, the *uttama-vaiṣṇava*, or topmost devotee, does not belong to any society. Nonetheless, his merciful presence in Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja will bring it much benefit. He inherently sees all beings in relation to Bhagavān and therefore he does not differentiate between what belongs to him and what belongs to someone else. Because he sees every living entity as situated within the Supreme Absolute Truth, He does not distinguish between friend and enemy, or devotee and non-devotee.

Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura, the topmost Vaiṣṇava, possesses all these *bhāvas*, or moods. Nonetheless, he has particular affection for the *bhakta-goṣṭhī*, the community of *bhaktas*, and He is devoted to the preaching of *bhakti*. As stated by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 4.100—3)*:

*avatāra-kārya prabhura – nāma-pracāre
sei nija-kārya prabhu karena tomāra dvāre*

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu descended with the mission to propagate the importance of chanting the holy name. Now He is accomplishing His own mission through you [Śrī Haridāsa Ṭhākura].

*pratyaha kara tina-lakṣa nāma-saṅkīrtana
sabāra āge kara nāmera mahimā kathana*

Daily you are chanting 300,000 holy names and speaking the glories of the holy name before all.

*āpane ācare keha, nā kare pracāra
pracāra karena keha, nā karena ācāra*

Some persons behave properly but do not preach the glories of chanting *śrī nāma*, whereas others preach but do not behave according to the principles.

*‘ācāra’, ‘pracāra’, – nāmera karaha ‘dui’ kārya
tumi – sarva-guru, tumi jagatera ārya*



In relation to the holy name you both behave in an exemplary way (*ācāra*) and preach to others (*pracāra*). You are the *guru* of all, for you are the topmost devotee in this world.

The duty of an intermediate Vaiṣṇava in Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja

The Vaiṣṇavas on the *madhyama*, or intermediate, level remain under the guidance of *uttama-vaiṣṇavas*, and are the benefactors of *kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas*, neophyte devotees. Therefore, *uttama-* and *madhyama-bhaktas* are qualified for the *bhajana* section of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja.² Although they may occasionally participate in the activities of the working section, they do not manifest their competence in such work like the *kaniṣṭha* devotees, who are fond of it. However, with the assistance of the *kaniṣṭha-vaiṣṇavas* they accomplish whatever work needs to be done.

Vaiṣṇavas in the *bhajana* section of Śrī Gaurāṅga's society commonly take pleasure in *nirjana-bhajana*, or solitary absorption in the holy name, and in *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* (a gathering of like-minded devotees in which they discuss their *iṣṭa*, worshipful Lord, and thus attain

2 According to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga has two divisions: the *bhajana* section and the section that focuses on external work. The division a person belongs to depends on his *adhikāra*, or qualification.

much satisfaction and pleasure). There are two types of *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*: personal practice (*ācāra*) and missionary work (*pracāra*). To maintain their practices, such Vaiṣṇavas remain engaged in reciting and hearing scriptures like *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and in performing *harināma-kīrtana*. At the time of preaching, they impart knowledge of *bhāgavat-tattva*, *jīva-tattva*, *rasa-tattva* and the glories of the holy name of Śrī Hari, according to the qualification of the listener.

“Iṣṭagoṣṭhī” and “Vaiṣṇava society” are other ways of referring to Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja

The general society of Gaurāṅga was founded during the Lord's manifest pastimes in Vārāṇasī, and the *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* process was also established at that time. Vaiṣṇavas participated in some form of *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* even before the advent of Śrī Gaurāṅga. At Mahāprabhu's time also those *iṣṭagoṣṭhīs* were known as the “Assembly of Gaurāṅga” or the “Vaiṣṇava assembly”. Once, while in an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* with all His associates at Siddha-bakula (in Purī-dhāma), Mahāprabhu spoke to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī:

*prabhu kahe,—“kaha, kene kara saṅkoca-lāje?
granthera phala śunāibā vaiṣṇava-samāje?”*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 1.130)

Mahāprabhu encouraged Rūpa Gosvāmī, saying, “Why are you hesitating out of shyness? You should recite the good fruit of your writing to the Vaiṣṇava assembly.”

Iṣṭagoṣṭhī also means kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī

Without the association of *suddha-bhaktas*³, or pure devotees, there is no question of holding an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. The word *iṣṭa* means “desired subject”, and *goṣṭhī* means “assembly”. These two words combine to form the term *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*, which refers to an assembly of *sādhus* who are devoted to *suddha-bhakti*, or the practice of pure devotion. *Śuddha-bhaktas* are rare in this world, and therefore only a few *suddha-bhaktas* can be found in any single *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. Even a gathering of just three Vaiṣṇavas constitutes an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī*. This is described in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 4.52):

*prabhu āsi’ prati-dina milena dui-jane
iṣṭa-goṣṭhī, kṛṣṇa-kathā kahe kata-kṣaṇe*

Every day Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu would come to meet them both (Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and Śrī Rāya Rāmānanda) and in their *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* they would discuss *kṛṣṇa-kathā* for some time.

A meeting of only two Vaiṣṇavas is called a *kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī*. This is stated in *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*Antya-līlā* 4.136):

*dui-jana vasi’ kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī kailā
paṇḍitere sanātana duḥkha nivedilā*

When Jagadānanda Paṇḍita and Sanātana Gosvāmī sat together for a *kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī* to discuss Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes, Sanātana Gosvāmī submitted to Jagadānanda Paṇḍita the cause of his sorrow.

3 One of the definitions of *suddha-bhakta* given by Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda is one who is free from the desire for wealth, women and fame.

Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja is universal

The purport is that when all types of people congregate in assemblies organized by devotees or faithful people, a general assembly of Gaurāṅga is formed. A congregation consisting solely of devotees is called a Vaiṣṇava assembly, or an *iṣṭagoṣṭhī* of Vaiṣṇavas. When two *suddha-bhaktas* meet, a *kṛṣṇa-kathā-goṣṭhī* takes place. And when a single *suddha-bhakta* resides somewhere to exclusively chant the holy name, it is a place of *nirjana-bhajana*, or solitary devotional practice. The people in all these categories are included in Gaurāṅga’s society. It can therefore be concluded that the purpose of Śrī Gaurāṅga’s congregation is to cultivate activities related to the eternal, constitutional occupation of the living entity (*jaiva-dharma*) throughout the universe.

The founding of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja in Kalikata and an instruction for the society’s leaders

By the inspiration of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja has been established in the vast city of Kalikata (Kolkata). This is a matter of extreme good fortune for the public. Now it is the responsibility of every noble-hearted, genuine seeker of the Truth to work on promoting and preserving it. This society will not remain undisturbed unless its members vigilantly avoid selfishness, hypocrisy and the desire for honour and prestige.

In the land of Bengal, these three faults pollute whatever grand mission is inaugurated, and consequently that mission is eventually ruined. With folded hands we humbly beg the big-hearted leaders of this society to remain ever conscious of this. If the members of this society can follow all the ancient rules and regulations of *sat-dharma*, or true religion, while remaining unaffected by the three improprieties mentioned above, the society will flourish. Unity alone is the life of any community. The introduction of a new opinion or the divergence of opinion will destroy the unity of its members and eventually ruin the very life of the society. We, however, will perform *kīrtana* of Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu’s glories and never be envious of the opinions and activities of the other



sampradāyas. The most venerable Haridāsa Ṭhākura has said:

*śuna, bāpa, sabārai ekai īśvara
nāma-matra bheda kare hinduye yavane
paramārthe 'eka' kahe korāṇe purāṇe
eka śuddha nitya-vastu akhaṇḍa avyaya
paripūrṇa haiā vaise sabāra hṛdaya
se prabhura nāma-guṇa sakala jagate
balena sakale mātra nija-śāstra mate
ye īśvara, se punaḥ sabāra bhāva laya
himsā karilei se, tāhān himsā haya*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.76–8, 80–1)

Dear father, the Supreme Lord is one for all living entities. The difference between the Muslim God and the Hindu God is in name only. All scriptures, whether the Koran or the Purāṇas, state that there is only one Supreme Lord. He is the non-dual, eternal, transcendental Absolute Truth, infallible and perfectly complete, and in that capacity He resides in everyone's heart. The Supreme Lord's transcendental name and qualities are glorified throughout the world by various scriptures.

The Lord accepts each individual's mood of surrender. When you are violent to others, you are being violent to the Lord Himself.

*khaṇḍa khaṇḍa hai' deha yāya yadi prāṇa
tabu āmi vadane nā chāḍi hari-nāma*

Śrī Caitanya-bhāgavata (Ādi-khaṇḍa 16.94)

My body may be cut into pieces or I may lose my life, but I will never abandon uttering the holy name.

Delineating the behaviour of the members of the Vaiṣṇava society

The society of Gaurāṅga is certain to develop if its noble-hearted members adhere to the above guidelines. It is essential that they follow certain time-tested principles. In the general meetings of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja,⁴ recitations, explanations, scriptural discourses and *nāma-saṅkīrtana* can be performed, but it will be offensive to hold discourses

⁴ When all types of people congregate in assemblies organized by devotees or faithful people, a general assembly of Gaurāṅga is formed.



imbued with *rasa* or to sing *rasa-kīrtana* in such assemblies. This can take place only in an *iṣtagoṣṭhī*. It is essential to observe certain principles, as witnessed in the character of Mahāprabhu:

*dīne nṛtya-kīrtana, īśvara-daraśana
rātrye rāya-svarūpa-sane rasa-āsvādana*

Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta (Antya-līlā 11.12)

During the day, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu performed *nṛtya-kīrtana*, dancing and chanting, and He also took *darśana* of Lord Jagannātha. At night, along with Rāya Rāmānanda and Svarūpa Dāmodara Gosvāmī, He tasted the nectar of *rasa*.

This implies that there is no pleasure in discussing *rasa* in the association of general people, and that such discussions will substantially impede one from relishing *rasa*. This hindrance does not appear in an *iṣtagoṣṭhī*.

It is necessary to preserve the etiquette of *kīrtana* when *nāma-kīrtana* is performed. In this regard it is also necessary to decide what is most effective. If the members of the Vaiṣṇava society themselves perform *kīrtana*, that *kīrtana* will bear the most fruit. Listening

to the *kīrtana* of hired musicians who perform for remuneration is both offensive and fruitless.

Caution to preachers regarding their qualification

It is vital that Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja exercises great care in its preaching. Discourses and instructions should be strictly in accordance with the teachings Śrī Gaurācandra, bestowed upon the *jīvas* of Kali-yuga out of His boundless compassion.

The responsibility to preach is best given to the members of the *bhajana* section. Mere eloquence cannot make one a preacher of Śrī Gaurāṅga's teachings. If some young, learned great souls attend *iṣtagoṣṭhīs* of the *bhajana* section and therein discuss in a simple-hearted way the teachings of Śrī Gaurāṅga, they will quickly become adept preachers.

If the society of Gaurāṅga consists of preachers who do not have the understanding that the Lord's name (*nāma*) and the Lord Himself (*nāmī*) are non-different, and if they do not have faith that this non-different reality is the Supreme Absolute Truth, *parama brahma-tattva*, they will not confer any welfare to others. Rather, their preaching will only have a negative effect. This is most vital. The only qualified preachers are those who have acquired knowledge about the intrinsic nature of *śuddha-bhakti*, and who relish *nāma-rasa*, the nectar of the holy name, being completely free from offences.

It is essential for all preachers to be fully acquainted with *nāma-aparādha*, offences to the holy name of the Lord. Those who are aware of these offences are qualified to preach the glories of the holy name. In disseminating the glories of the holy name, one must also give instructions about the necessity of consciously avoiding *nāma-aparādha*. Preachers who do not do so will themselves become offenders to the holy name.

The genuine society of Gaurāṅga is the society that includes from its inception viśuddha-vaiṣṇavas, or devotees on the transcendental platform

Previously, we explained that a society of Śrī Gaurāṅga that does not accommodate all types of

Vaiṣṇavas will be short lived. That said, the fact is that a society founded with *viśuddha-vaiṣṇavas*, or pure devotees on the transcendental platform, as members is to be regarded as the true Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja. Among the various Vaiṣṇavas in such a congregation, the *viśuddha-vaiṣṇavas* are immersed in the bliss of *bhajana*, and are mostly inactive in developing their worldly life. Until those who have an inclination for *bhajana* become specifically immersed in the bliss of *bhajana* they can engage in activities to advance their worldly life. However, if they do not get the association of Vaiṣṇavas who are immersed in the bliss of *bhajana*, they will become completely materialistic within no time. For such people, it is nothing but self-deception to establish and promote themselves as representing the society of Śrī Gaurāṅga, without associating with *śuddha-vaiṣṇavas*.

Progress in bhajana is not possible without the association of an elevated Vaiṣṇava

One may certainly be engaged in spreading the holy name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya while living with extremely materialistic people. But without having the association of Vaiṣṇavas who are deeply absorbed in the bliss of *bhajana*, one's life will go in vain and gradually one may fall down. Those in the society of Gaurāṅga may see this happening to certain members. However, if they still do not seek the association of those devotees who are deeply absorbed in the bliss of *bhajana* and include them within their society, what will become of their society? We cannot say.

The preachers of bhakti-dharma always reject the policy of conciliation, which is opposed to the teachings of Śrī Gaurāṅga

Nowadays it is seen that the members of Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja are not performing any special activities beyond celebrating the festival of Mahāprabhu's appearance. It does not seem that by holding assemblies in the homes of two or three materialistic people anything significant will be accomplished. If they simply try to satisfy the materialists, *anarthas* will gradually arise

in them. By agreeing with the opinion of materialistic people they will continue to float on the unending wave of impersonalism.

To propagate *bhakti* to Śrī Gaurāṅga, it is essential that in taking the help of materialistic people, one is not obliged to agree with their understanding. To accept conceptions that oppose the teachings of Śrī Gaurāṅga in order to satisfy the minds of materialistic people is utterly inappropriate. Respect all beings in this world. Try to remove the suffering of every living entity. While living with others, try to act for their welfare. Never forget, however, to follow the supremely ideal character and absolutely essential instructions of Śrī Gaurāṅga. In every city, perform *śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅkīrtana* and propagate Śrī Gaurāṅga's teachings.

An instruction of benevolence to Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja: Travel and spread the teachings of Śrī Gaurāṅga

O devotees in Śrī Gaurāṅga Samāja, go from door to door with the scripture *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* in your hands and spread the name and teachings of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Just as Śrī Mahāprabhu ordered Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu and Śrī Haridāsa to travel everywhere and preach, you also become the servant of Śrī Gaurāṅga and go to every country, engaging honest people in circulating Śrī Gaurāṅga's message.

This preaching mission cannot be accomplished by dishonest people. Immediately establish a Vaiṣṇava school for this purpose. Educate some selfless people of good character and give them the responsibility of itinerant preaching in every town and village. Most blessed indeed are they who can do this. Those who do not follow such a formula will simply be imitating the supremely pure character of Śrī Mahāprabhu. 🙏

Translated from *Śrī Gauḍīya Patrikā*,

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The Living Entity's Ultimate Aspiration

(SIDDHI-LĀLASĀ)

Vṛṣabhānu-sutā

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura

vṛṣabhānu-sutā- caraṇa-sevane,
haiba ye pālya-dāsī
śrī rādhāra sukha, satata sādhanē,
rahiba āmi prayāsī (1)

vṛṣabhānu-sutā – the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja; **caraṇa** – the lotus feet; **sevane** – to serve; **haiba** – I shall become; **ye** – that; **pālya** – affectionately sheltered; **dāsī** – maidservant; **śrī rādhāra** – Śrī Rādhā's; **sukha** – happiness; **satata** – constantly; **sādhanē** – in accomplishing; **rahiba** – shall remain; **āmi** – I; **prayāsī** – endeavoring.

To serve the lotus feet of the daughter of King Vṛṣabhānu, I shall become Her *pālya-dāsī* (affectionately sheltered maidservant) and strive to constantly bring Her all happiness.

śrī rādhāra sukhe, kṛṣṇera ye sukha,
jāniba manete āmi
rādhā-pada chāḍī', śrī kṛṣṇa-saṅgame,
kabhu nā haiba kāmī (2)

śrī rādhāra – Śrī Rādhā's; **sukhe** – in happiness; **kṛṣṇera** – Kṛṣṇa's; **ye** – that; **sukha** – happiness; **jāniba** – shall know; **manete** – in heart; **āmi** – I; **rādhā** – Śrī Rādhā; **pada** – lotus feet; **chāḍī'** – having abandoned; **śrī kṛṣṇa** – Śrī Kṛṣṇa; **saṅgame** – to meet; **kabhu nā** – never; **haiba** – I shall be; **kāmī** – desirous.

I shall know within my heart that Śrī Kṛṣṇa takes pleasure in Śrī Rādhā's happiness, so I shall never desire to abandon Her lotus feet to enjoy separately with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

sakhī-gaṇa mama, parama suhṛt,
yugala-premera guru
tad-anugā ha'ye, seviba rādhāra,
caraṇa-kalapa-taru (3)

sakhī-gaṇa – the *sakhīs*; **mama** – my; **parama** – supreme; **suhṛt** – well-wishers; **yugala** – the Divine Couple; **premera** – of the love; **guru** – teachers; **tad** – their; **anugā** – under guidance, following; **ha'ye** – having remained; **seviba** – I shall serve; **rādhāra** – Śrī Rādhā's; **caraṇa** – lotus feet; **kalapa-taru** – wish-fulfilling trees.

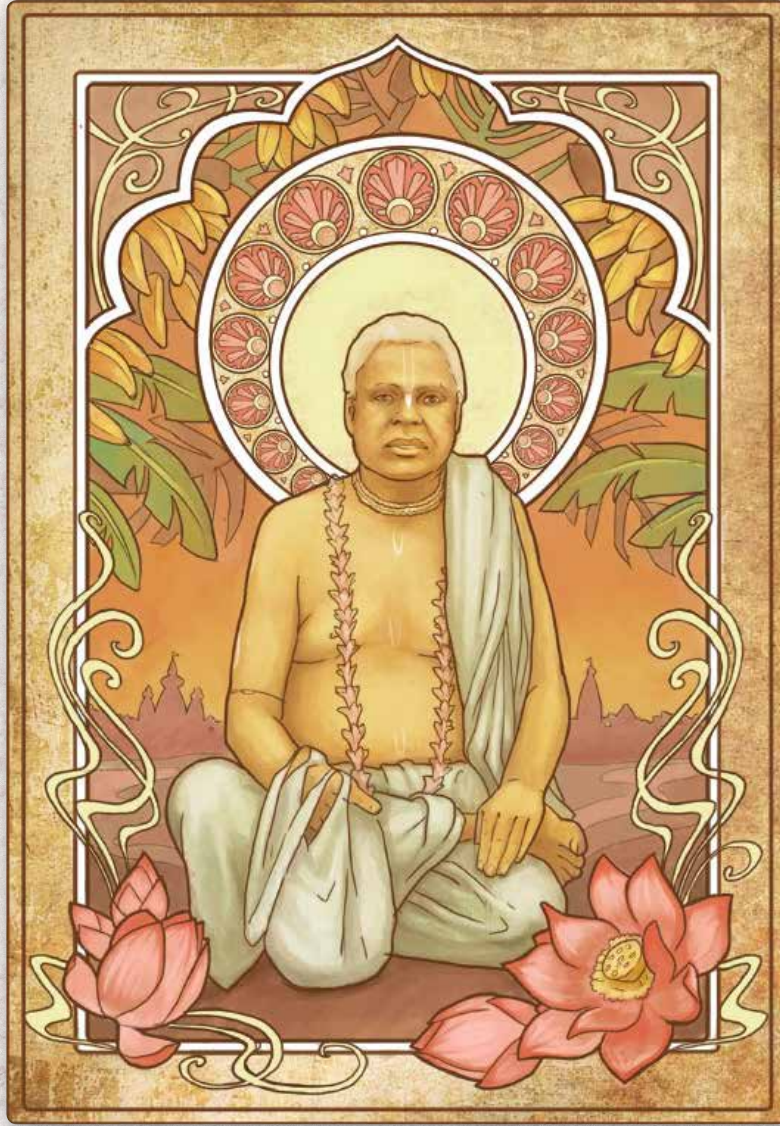
The *sakhīs* are my supreme well-wishers and my *gurus* regarding the loving affairs of the Divine Couple. Remaining faithfully under their guidance, I shall serve Śrī Rādhā's lotus feet, which are like wish-fulfilling trees.

rādhā-pakṣa chāḍī', ye-jana se-jana,
ye-bhāve se-bhāve thāke
āmi ta' rādhikā-pakṣa-pātī sadā,
kabhu nāhi heri tā'ke (4)

rādhā – Śrī Rādhā; **pakṣa** – party, side; **chāḍī'** – excluding; **ye** – which; **jana** – person; **se** – that; **jana** – person; (whoever) **ye** – which; **bhāve** – in way; **se** – that; **bhāve** – in way; (however) **thāke** – let them remain; **āmi** – I; **ta'** – indeed; **rādhikā** – to Śrīmatī Rādhikā; **pakṣa-pātī** – partial; **sadā** – always; **kabhu nāhi** – never; **heri** – I see; **tā'ke** – to them [those who are not in Rādhā's party].

Let anyone aside from Śrī Rādhā's party be as they are. I am indeed always partial to Śrīmatī Rādhikā and never look upon those who are not. 🌸





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*He reasons ill who tells that Vaiṣṇavas die
When thou art living still in sound.
The Vaiṣṇavas die to live, and living try
To spread the holy name around.*

– Śrīla Saccidānanda Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura