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IPBYS Prison Program
Newsletter and Vaishnava Calendar – January 2015

Hare Krishna Hare Krishna – Krishna Krishna Hare Hare
Hare Rama Hare Rama – Rama Rama Hare Hare

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IPBYS

INTERNATIONAL PURE BHAKTI
YOGA SOCIETY

·PRISON SEVA·

A Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers,

This month sees the celebration of many festivals in honor of our *acharyas* (Vaishnava saints) including the birthday (also known as appearance day) of our Shrila Gurudeva, Shrila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja. These festival days are our fortune for, whatever the condition of our life, if we are able to meditate upon these saints, even if only briefly, trying to embrace their spiritual moods within our hearts and embody their teachings in our lives, we will surely receive some spiritual benefit. By celebrating these appearance and disappearance days we are praying to these great Vaishnavas for their mercy, so that they might give us a taste of their pure love of God (*prema*).

It is not possible to glorify all of these wonderful personalities in just one newsletter, and in truth, their mercy upon the conditioned souls (*jivas*) of this world is so great that any glorification we aimed to provide would not be enough. But we are fortunate enough to have access to lectures of our Shrila Gurudeva, who was able to understand these personalities with great depth, an understanding which he shared with us and which we hope to share with you.

Just as Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to this world to distribute *prema* to all the *jivas* through the work of his devotees, we also hope that if you have felt warmth in the receipt of these lectures you will also feel inspired to share them with others.

In service,

IPBYS Prison Program

Vasanta Panchami

Part One of a lecture given titled 'Four Holy Days, by Shrila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja in Murwillumbah, Australia, on February 17, 2002

In India, there are many festivals held for the worship of Lord Krishna. There the year is divided into six seasons, each lasting two months. Among the six seasons, the most glorious is Vasanta, Spring. The Vasanta season is very pleasant, for the weather is neither too hot nor too cold at that time. An abundance of fragrant flowers, like *beli*, *cameli*, *jui* and others bloom everywhere, and flowers such as *ratkerani* (night queen) bloom even at night. Rivers like Ganges and Yamuna are especially clean and pure at that time, looking as though they are simply waiting for Shri Shri Radha and Krishna, and the lands in many places look like yellow carpets because they are full with varieties of yellow flowers. Krishna's garments are also yellow, because His most beloved Shrimati Radhika has a yellowish-golden complexion and He wants to be always embraced by Her.

Today is Vasanta-Panchami, the beginning of the Vasanta season, at which time the Rasa Dance of Krishna was performed in Govardhana, in the village of Parasauli, by the lake known as Chandra Sarovara. At that time the *gopis* (cowherd girls) were dancing with Krishna for the duration of a night that became billions of years. It became as long as one entire day of Brahma. On that night the moon stood still, not moving from its best view of the sight of the dancing of Radhika and all Her *sakhis* (friends) with Lord Krishna. Such beautiful pastimes were born from an ocean of *rasas* (sweet, transcendental mellow tastes), saturated with unlimited happiness.

In Saradiya, the autumn season, the Rasa Dance was performed in Vrindavana, under the shade of the Vamsivata tree, in the beginning of

in that Saradiya *rasa-yatra*, whereas in this Govardhana Vasanti-rasa, only the highest class of *gopis* were allowed to participate. In this Spring Rasa Dance, Lord Krishna openly demonstrated the prominence and superiority of Shrimati Radhika.

Krishna disappeared in the midst of this Vasanti Rasa Dance, and all the *gopis* were bitterly crying, "Where is Krishna? Where is Krishna?" The *gopis* searched for Him everywhere, and after some time they saw Him in His four-handed form, standing like a statue. Coming nearer, they said, "Oh, He looks like Krishna, but at the same time He is not Krishna. Our Krishna is not four-handed. Where has His flute, His peacock feather, and all His other apparel gone? He now carries a conch shell, disc, club, and lotus flower – in four hands!" They prayed to him, "We are very attached to Krishna, and we are searching for Him. We will die without Him. If you are Narayana (another name for Lord Vishnu), please be merciful and tell us which way He went. Be merciful so that we may find Him." Then, after praying in this way, they left and went on their way.

When Shrimati Radhika was arriving after the other *gopis* had left that place, the breeze that had just touched Her veil carried so much fragrance from Her body that it entered the nostril of Krishna and He thought, "Oh, My most beloved is near." He forgot that He was supposed to maintain His four-handed form, and He could no longer hide His original form. Two hands disappeared at once, entering His body, and His original two-armed form reappeared – with His flute in His hands and His peacock feather atop His head.

*rasarambha-vidhau niliya vasata kunje mrgaksi-
ganair
drstam gopayitum svam uddhura-dhiya ya susthu
sandarsita
radhayah pranayasya hanta mahima yasya sriya
raksitum
sa sakya prabhavisnunapi harina nasic catur-
bahuta*

["At the beginning of the Rasa Dance, Lord Krishna hid Himself in a grove just to have fun. When the *gopis* came, their eyes resembling

those of deer, by His sharp intelligence He exhibited His beautiful four-armed form to hide Himself. But when Shrimati Radharani came there, He could not maintain His four arms. This is the wonderful glory of Her love." (a quotation from the *Ujjvala-nilamani* by Shrila Rupa Gosvami, as quoted in *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* *Adi* 17.293)]

When Krishna sees Radhika, His most beloved and the embodiment of all love and affection, He forgets everything else. She is no one other than Krishna. She is Krishna Himself, but in the body of Radhika.

In this way, Krishna returned to His own form and quickly embraced Her. This occurred in *vasanti-rasa-lila*.

In the chapter of *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta* called *Raya Ramananda Samvad*, Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu questioned Sri Raya Ramananda Prabhu, "What is our *sadhya* (perfection) and our *sadhana* (the process to achieve that perfection)?" Raya Ramananda replied, beginning from *varnashrama-dharma*. He told Mahaprabhu, "According to the adherents of *varnashrama-dharma*, to be in family life and pursue *varnashrama-dharma* (the execution of the religious duties of the different castes and statuses of life), in order to please Krishna, is the best process to please Him." Mahaprabhu rejected this and said, "In *varnashrama* there is no pure relationship between the soul and Krishna." After that, Raya Ramananda suggested, "One should offer the fruits of all his activities to the lotus feet of Krishna," but Mahaprabhu rejected this also, and said, "This is external; go further."

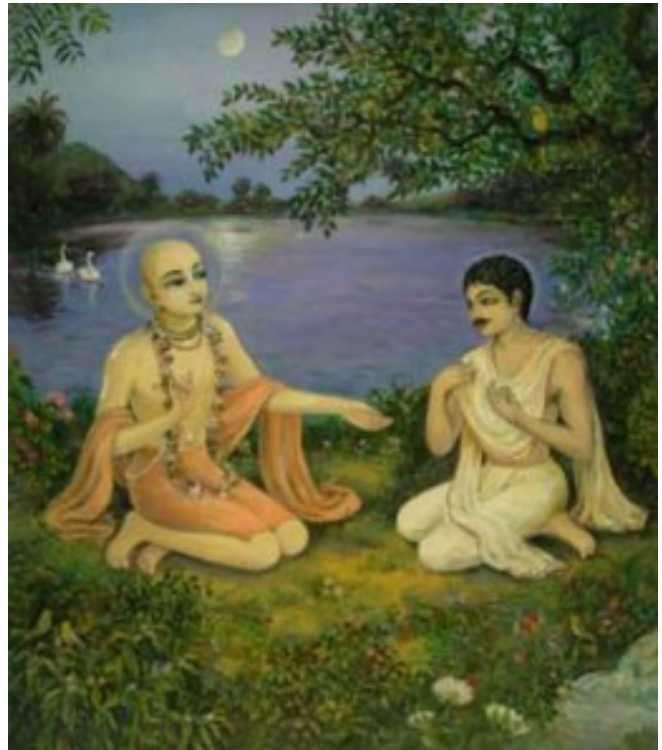
Raya Ramananda then suggested *karma-jnana-mishra-bhakti* (devotion contaminated by mental speculation and the desire to enjoy the fruits of one's actions), and he uttered the verse: "One who is transcendently situated by realizing the impersonal brahma never laments or desires to have anything. He is equally disposed toward every living entity. He has the opportunity to realize the Supreme Brahman and become fully joyful if he attains pure devotional service unto Me." (*Bhagavad-gita* 18.54)

Shriman Mahaprabhu also rejected both concepts – *karma-jnana-mishra-bhakti* and *brahma-bhutah* – because they are devoid of pure devotion, and after that Raya Ramananda gradually came to the topic of *prema-bhakti*. Mahaprabhu replied to this, "This may be the stage of perfection, but please go further." Raya Ramananda then discussed *dasya*, *sakya*, and *vatsalya-prema* (love for Krishna in the moods of servant, friend, and parent) and Mahaprabhu said, "Oh, very good, very good! But please continue further." In *bhakti-rasa* (intimate devotion to Krishna while thinking oneself in a relationship with Him as an ordinary cowherd boy), Krishna is not anyone's father or mother. In the understanding of pure *bhakti*, the Supreme Lord cannot be anyone's father or a mother – He may only be a son. We can serve Krishna in any of four relationships, but if we think that He is our father or mother, we cannot serve Him, because fathers and mothers serve their children.

After hearing about these relationships, *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* told Raya Ramananda, "Please speak further," and Raya Ramananda then said, "*Gopi-prema* (serving Krishna as a beloved) is the highest attainment, and among the *gopis* Shrimati Radhika is the best. When Mahaprabhu asked Raya Ramananda to give an example of a pastime that reveals Radhika's supremacy, Raya Ramananda first gave the example of *Saradiya rasa-lila*. He said, "All the *gopis* were dancing with Krishna, and it appeared that one *gopi* danced between each two Krishna's and one Krishna danced between each two *gopis*. Billions of *gopis* were dancing together with Krishna, but all of a sudden He disappeared. Why did He disappear? He did so to please Radhika. He took Her with Him, and no one knew where He or His beloved had gone."

Mahaprabhu then expressed His doubt: "Because Krishna met with Radhika after His disappearance from the *Rasa Dance*, it seems that He was fearing all the other *gopis*. If He openly gives up all the *gopis*, leaving with Radhika in front of them all, then only it will be shown that the love of Radhika is the highest."

Shri Raya Ramananda then explained about this *vasanti-rasa*. He said, "Krishna was dancing with



The conversation between Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (left) and Raya Ramananda (right)

billions of *gopis*, and meanwhile Radhika thought, 'Krishna always promises: "You are My most beloved." But I see that He is dancing with Me and all the other *gopis* as well; so perhaps we are all equal in His eyes.' At that time Radhika adopted a sulky mood and became somewhat angry. She thus left the *Rasa Dance* in front of all the other *gopis*, and Krishna followed Her.

"Krishna was thinking, 'If Radhika is not here, there can be no *Rasa*. There can be no meaning to the *Rasa*. I am performing *rasa-lila* only for Radhika. She is My half, My whole, My guru and My servant; She is everything to Me. She is My life and soul. In *vasanti-rasa*, Krishna declared this openly."

Mahaprabhu then said, "Oh, this is good!" and He questioned further, "I want to know about *krsna-tattva*, *radha-tattva*, *prema-tattva*, and *rasa-tattva* from you." When Raya Ramananda began to deeply describe these topics, however, Mahaprabhu stopped him and said, "Don't say anymore. These subject matters are so elevated that there is no one in this world qualified to hear them. If you continue to speak about them, I will at once enter the mood of Krishna and I will have to give up this form of *Sachinandana Gaurahari*." Raya Ramananda then stopped

speaking.

For us, today is the observance of the anniversary celebration of that very same *vasanti-rasa*, and for Krishna this *rasa* is going on eternally. All of His pastimes are eternally manifest in Goloka Vrindavana, and He also displays them throughout innumerable universes as He appears in one universe after another. Here in *vasanti-rasa*, Krishna declared openly,

"My super-most beloved is Shrimati Radhika."

There is no difference between Shrimati Radhika and Krishna. Krishna manifested Radhika from His left side. If we can make Radhika happy, then Krishna will be happy and He will be controlled quite easily; and this is the purpose of our observance of *vasanti-rasa*.

End of Part One



Shrimati Radhika leaves the Rasa Dance in front of all the gopis and Krishna follows Her.

Shrimati Vishnupriya-devi

Part Two of a lecture titled 'Four Holy Days, given by Shrila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja in Murwillumbah, Australia, on February 17, 2002

Today is also the birthday of Shrimati Vishnupriya devi – the wife – the power – the energy – of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. She is one of the manifestations of Shrimati Radhika, she is especially a manifestation of Satyabhama (one of Krishna's wives in Dwarka). She had great love and affection for Sachinandana Gaurahari and was married to Him for many years; but Mahaprabhu was always absorbed in Radha's mood, calling out, "Alas, Krishna! Alas, Krishna!" and He had no time to talk with her. Though they were in one family, in one house, He was always absorbed in the ecstasies of Shrimati Radhika. Thus, He was sometimes

falling down and rolling on the earth, sometimes crying, and sometimes singing loudly like a mad person.

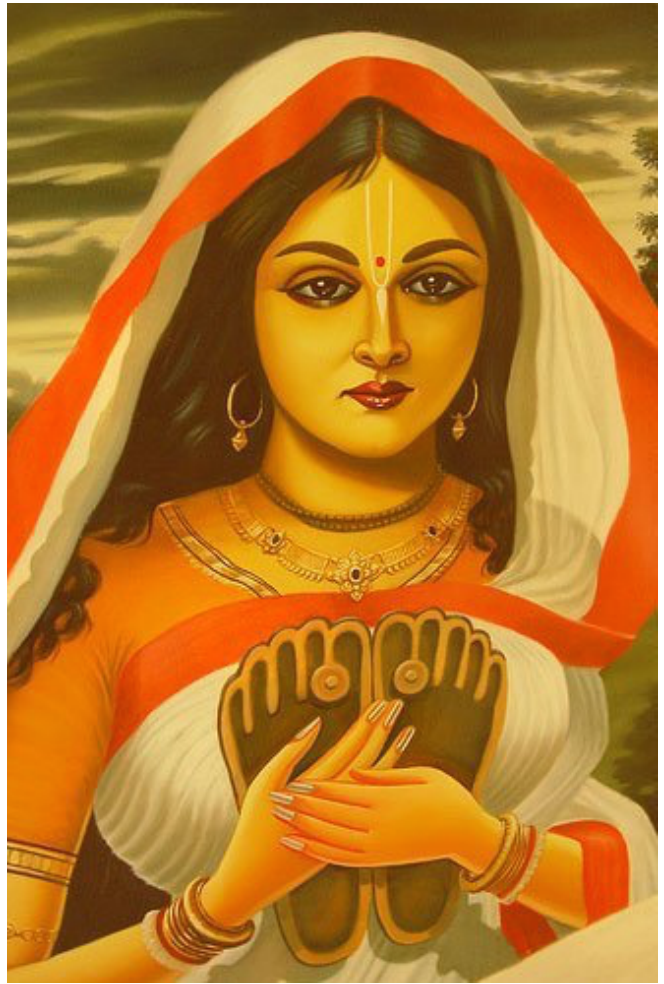
"In the stage of love of Godhead, the devotee is fixed in his vow as an eternal servant of the Lord, and he becomes very much attached to a particular name and form of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. As his heart melts with ecstatic love, he laughs very loudly or cries or shouts. Sometimes he sings and dances like a madman, for he is indifferent to public opinion." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 11.2.40)

Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu was always acting in this way, and continually weeping. If you want to develop love for Krishna, you will have to follow Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and always weep for Krishna. We see that He was weeping throughout His life, from the beginning. This increased further when He took *sannyasa* (the renounced order) and left everything to go to Jagannatha Puri, and it increased still further after He met with Raya Ramananda.

Although Vishnu-priya devi was married to Mahaprabhu in His family life, He hardly ever spoke with her, especially when He returned from Gaya, where He took *harinama* and *diksa* initiation from His Gurudeva, Sri Isvara-puripada. His personality changed at that time. He was no longer known as Nimai Pandita. Now He became known as Bhavuka Nimai, Nimai who is always absorbed in His ecstatic moods of *krishna-prema* (ecstatic transcendental love for Krishna).

At this time, however, some of the inhabitants of Navadvipa, especially the students and His former teachers in the schools, became somewhat unfavorable towards Him and wanted to control Him. Mahaprabhu thought, "I came to give the supreme medicine for everyone's material disease, but these persons quarrel with Me and insult Me. I should take *sannyasa*, the renounced order of life, for then they will weep for Me (In Vedic culture, *sanyassis* are given honor), and thus I will immerse the whole world – including *mayavadis* (followers of impersonalist philosophy, arguing that God has no form or personality, it is all *maya*, illusion) like Sarvabhauma Bhattacharya and Prakasananda Sarasvati – in *krsna-prema*." This is one of the reasons Chaitanya Mahaprabhu took *sannyasa*.

On the day He decided to take *sannyasa*, Vishnu-priya devi went to bathe in the Ganges. While she was on the way there, she accidentally stubbed her toe on a stone, injuring it, and it bled. Then, while she was in the midst of bathing there, the nose-ring she had received on her marriage day and which is very auspicious for a wife, fell in the Ganges. Although she searched for it with great endeavor, She could not find it. She began to weep bitterly, "Why are all



Vishnu-priya devi holding Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's shoes and feeling separation from Him

these things happening today?" Later, when She returned home, Sachi Mata (Mahaprabhu's mother) asked her, "Oh my daughter, why you are weeping so much?" She replied, "Today I went to bathe in the Ganges, where I injured my foot and I lost the nose-ring of my marriage day. I don't know what is to be my fate." Sachi Mata tried to console her.

Although Chaitanya Mahaprabhu had previously paid practically no attention to her, that night, after taking some *prasadam*, He decorated her hair and placed betel nuts in her mouth. That morning He had gone to visit and meet with all His associates. He had procured some milk and He had also received a loki vegetable from Shridhara, with whom He would always jokingly quarrel. When He returned home in the evening He told Sachi Mata, "Mother, please make a lak-laki preparation from these, adding sugar, ghee, camphor and other ingredients, and offer it to Lord Krishna." He later honored that *prasada* (food offered to

Krishna), after which He entered the room of Vishnu-priya devi like a luxurious person, in royal dress, as one would dress for a wedding ceremony. Then, with love and affection He asked her, "O, how are you?" He decorated her, gave her a beautiful garland, placed betel nuts in her mouth, and engaged in loving conversation with her.

Vishnu-priya began thinking, "What am I seeing? A hurricane light, which burns with kerosene oil, burns brightly when it is just about to be extinguished. It makes the sounds 'buk buk', then 'tuk', and then it becomes dark; it's finished. I see now that my fate may be like this. Considering what happened this morning, and seeing how He is decorating me so lavishly, giving me betel nuts and saying with flattering words, 'My dear-most beloved', I wonder what is my fate. Why is He doing this?"

In the meantime, Yogamaya came and entered Vishnu-priya's eyes in the form of sleepiness. She did not want to fall asleep, but by the power of Yogamaya she was forced to do so. Chaitanya Mahaprabhu glanced at her once, and then stood up to leave home and take *sannyasa*.



Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu after taking sanyasa

Without giving up everything in this world, how can one love Lord Krishna totally? If your love and affection is divided between many persons, situations and objects, how can you love Krishna? We have seen that in India, exalted devotees like Shрила Raghunatha dasa Gosvami and Shрила Rupa Gosvami, and also Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself, quickly gave up their positions, wealth, reputation, father, mother, wife and children. Weeping for Krishna, they left their homes and took *sannyasa*, not remembering their homes or families at all, and always remembering, "Krishna! Krishna! Krishna!"

When Mahaprabhu was coming out of His home, He saw His mother standing like a dried-up statue, with no tears in her eyes. She couldn't even think of what to do. Air was coming and going from her nostrils, but she had no external consciousness at all – for Mahaprabhu, by His power of Yogamaya, was controlling her. Mahaprabhu did *parikrama* [circumambulation] of His mother three or four times, touched her lotus feet [both of these are signs of great respect], and told her, "Mother I am going to search for My beloved Krishna." Then, in the middle of that cold and dark night, He jumped in the Ganges, calling out "Oh Krishna!" He came out on the other side of the river, in Kantaka Nagari, and there He went to see Kesava Bharati to take *sannyasa* from him.

After accepting the *sannyasa* order, Mahaprabhu went to Jagannatha Puri, and from Puri He returned to Navadvipa on the way to Vrindavana. While He was in Navadvipa, all the residents came by boat and other conveyances to see Sachinandana Gaurahari (Mahaprabhu's name in his householder *asrama*). Even dogs and blind persons came, and Sachi Mata also came.

Everyone was present except Vishnu-priya. Why was she not allowed to come? This is the symptom of love and affection for Krishna. If you will give up your dear-most object for Krishna, this is the symptom that you have some love and affection for Him. Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu taught this by His own example, and for this reason Vishnu-priya was not there. Everyone else was allowed to come, but she was not.

What was she doing? She was weeping continuously. She was more attached to Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu than anyone else was, and she was more detached from worldly things than even Chaitanya Mahaprabhu Himself. She maintained her life by taking some grains of rice, one by one, and using them as counting beads as she continually chanted, "Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krsna Hare Hare, Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare." Every time she completed the utterance of these sixteen words, she picked up one grain of rice and placed it on a pile. She would wash the rice grains, one by one, with the water of her tears as she chanted until midday, and then she would cook that rice with some vegetables. She would then give the bhoga to Mother Sachi, who would offer it to her Deity, Narayana. After that she would eat very little of it, remembering the pastimes of Sachinandana. Her life was totally absorbed in Lord Krishna and Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, and she chanted Hare Krishna day and night. After some time Mahaprabhu somehow gave her a Deity of Himself, made from neem wood, and that Deity is being worshiped in Navadvipa up to the present day. Vishnu-priya used to worship that Deity, weeping bitterly and talking with

Caitanya Mahaprabhu, and He would also speak to her in the form of that Deity.

Sachi Mata also remembered Chaitanya Mahaprabhu always. She used to offer Him *prasadam*, and He used to come to her house and eat it – although she thought His presence was only her imagination or only a vision. Actually He was bound to come – bound by the love and affection of Sachi Mata and Vishnu-priya devi.

If one wants to serve Mahaprabhu or Radha-Krishna, he must be like Vishnu-priya. She was much more renounced than anyone else, including Mahaprabhu. He was renounced, but not like her. Also, He was always surrounded by so many *bhaktas* [devotees] who consoled Him, but she had none to console her.

Today is the birthday of Vishnu-priya, who is the embodiment of *prema-bhakti*. She is *prema-bhakti* itself.

Vishnu-priya devi *ki jaya!* (All glories to Vishnu-priya devi!)

- The End -

Shrila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

Part Three of a lecture titled 'Four Holy Days, given by Shrila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja in Murwillumbah, Australia, on February 17, 2002

Today is also the birthday of Shrila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. If you want to become pure devotees, you will have to follow Shrila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. You want to follow, but you are weak – as Shrila Gour Govinda Maharaja says, "Mr. Dog, Mr. Hog, Mr. Pig" – and some are like camels, tigers or bears. We must try to follow Shrila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. He was wealthy and he was situated in a high position, but he left everything for Krishna and continually cried, "O Krishna, O Sachinandana Gaurahari." By the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu he quickly received the shelter of Mahaprabhu. Eating hardly anything but somehow maintaining his life, He went to Vrindavana after Mahaprabhu departed, and he lived at Radha-kunda.

Without the mercy of the guru you cannot have love and affection for Krishna or Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. *Guru-kripa* (guru's mercy) is essential, and *guru-nistha* (faith in guru) is the backbone of all kinds of bhakti. When Shrila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami received the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu, all his problems and obstacles quickly disappeared, and he was able to leave home to be with Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. Performance of *bhajana* (deep spiritual practice) in one's house, while still living with one's father, mother, wife, and husband, is one kind of *bhajana*, but that kind of *bhajana* cannot give the fruit of love and affection for Krishna. One day you will have to thoroughly give this up.

The first symptom of real *bhakti* (pure love of God), achieved by the austerities of chanting



Shрила Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

and remembering Krishna, is causeless knowledge and detachment from this world. You will surely become renounced, whether you are in worldly life or in the renounced order. If you are chanting seriously and perfectly, renunciation is bound to come. We have heard that when Guru Nanak (the saint in India who founded the Sikh religion) was young, his father told him, "Go to the market and bring back the ingredients we need to sell at our shop." On the way to the market he came upon many Vaishnavas and sadhus. Seeing that there was no management of *prasadam* for them, he quickly went to the market and bought all the paraphernalia needed to make a festival for them, and for that purpose he spent all of his father's money. He later returned home empty-handed, and his father asked, "Where are the ingredients I told you to buy – the rice, *dahl* (lentils), *ghee* (clarified butter) and other things?"

Guru Nanak replied, "I did the shopping, but I

have given all the goods for the service of Vaishnavas. In this way I have done some very good shopping for my future life and for the benefit of my whole dynasty." He had so much strong belief in Krishna; he knew that if one serves Krishna, Krishna will give him everything he needs. We do not have this same belief, and therefore it is very hard for us to give even a penny. Some persons can give some of their wealth, but he gave everything.

Because Shрила Raghunatha dasa Gosvami was chanting and remembering Krishna, having been spiritually brought up by Shрила Haridasa Thakura and initiated by Shri Yadunandana Acharya, some good effect was bound to come. He became detached from the world, and he considered Krishna to be his father, his mother, and his everything. All *tattvas* (established philosophical truths) came in his heart, and he quickly left his home and beautiful wife. He was the only son of his father, who was as wealthy as a king, and his wife was as beautiful as Miss Universe. It would have been very hard for an ordinary person to give up such luxuries.

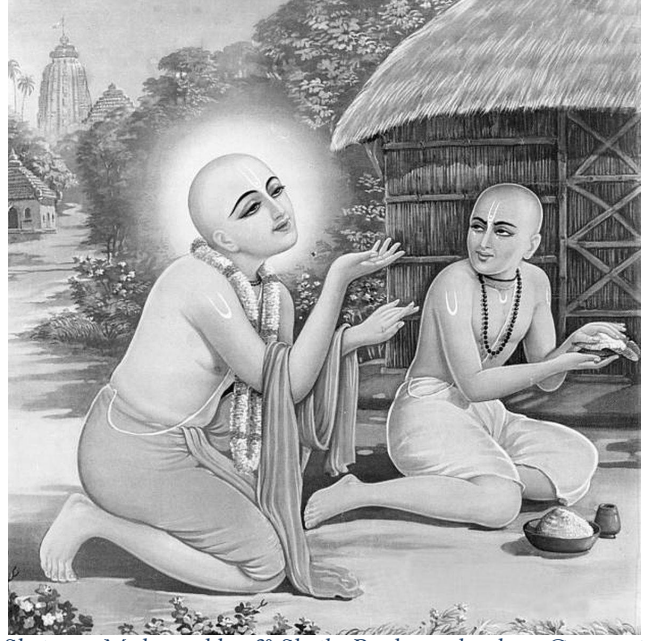
After leaving home, Raghunatha dasa did not travel on the main road. Hiding, he went on the village route, not eating anything except some puffed rice and some milk, and a journey of one month passed quickly in 12 days. At that time there were no trains or cars, but he ran quickly, without taking any time to bathe.

When he arrived in Jagannatha Puri he did not go to see Jagannatha, Baladeva, and Subhadra. He came directly to the assembly of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, who was surrounded by many associates like Svarupa Damodara and Raya Ramananda. Someone told Mahaprabhu, "Raghunatha has come," and Mahaprabhu quickly embraced him and said, "O Raghunatha, you have just come from the ditch of stool." Some time before, Mahaprabhu had told him to return home, but now He said, "All worldly life is like stool, and Krishna is so merciful that He delivered you and you have come out from that house." Mahaprabhu then placed him in the hands of Shri Svarupa Damodara, and Shрила Raghunatha dasa Gosvami thus began a transcendental life; always hearing from Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Shri Svarupa

Damodara, Shrila Rupa Gosvami, Shri Pundarika Vidyanidhi, Shri Vakresvara Pandita, Shri Gopal Guru, and Shrila Haridasa Thakura.

The life history of Shrila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami is one of the jewels in *Sri Caitanya-caritamrta*, and moreover, much of what Shrila Krishnadasa Kaviraja wrote in *Caitanya-caritamrta* he had heard from the lotus mouth of Raghunatha dasa Gosvami. Try to remember his life and character. If you do, a power will enter within you and you will be able to become a devotee like him – whether you are in worldly life or renounced life. Try to be like him. We cannot be like him without help, and therefore we pray to Nityananda Prabhu to help us.

- The End -



Shriman Mahaprabhu & Shrila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami

Vaishnava Song: Hari Hari! Kabe Mora Habe Heno Dina

In this bhajan (also meaning prayer), Shrila Bhaktivinode Thakura shows humility by praying to the pure Vaishnavas, glorifying their renounced and pure-hearted nature, and hoping that one day, he might also possess the same transcendental love that they have for Krishna.

hari hari! kabe more habe heno dina

bimala caishnave, rati upajibe, vasana hoibe kshina (1)

O Hari! When will such a day be mine? I shall develop attachment to pure-hearted Vaishnavas, by which my material desires will be subdued.

antare-bahire, sama vyavahara, mani manada ha'bo

krishna-sankirtane, shri-krishna-smarane, satata majiya ra'bo (2)

No disparity shall remain between my internal and external behavior. I shall not desire honor for myself and shall instead offer respect to others. I shall remain constantly absorbed in chanting Krishna's names and remembering Him.

e dehera kriya, abhyase koribo, jivana japana lagi

shri-krishna-bhajane, anukula jaha, tahe ha'bo anuragi (3)

I shall perform my bodily activities out of habit, just to maintain my life. I shall become attached only to that which is favorable to *bhajan* of Shri Krishna.

bhajanera jaha, pratikula taha, dridha-bhave teyagibo

bhajite bhajite, samaya asile, e deha chadiya dibo (4)

I shall firmly reject whatever is unfavorable for *bhajan*. Absorbed in *bhajan*, when the time comes, I shall readily give up this body.

bhaktivinoda, ei asha kori, bosiya godruma-vane

prabhu-kripa lagi, vyakul antare, sada kade sangopane (5)

With these aspirations, Bhaktivinode resides in the forest of Godruma. He always weeps in a solitary place, anxious at heart to receive the mercy of the Lord.

Vaishnava Calendar

The Gaudiya Vaishnava tradition celebrates many festival days throughout the year, following the Vedic lunar calendar, and as such the dates on which the festivals fall differ each year. Listed below are the dates on which we fast (*Ekadasi* and others, indicated in italics) and the break fast times, spanning three months for five US time-zones (EST, CST, MST, PST, HST). Also included are several other significant festival dates, including the appearance days (birthdays) and disappearance days (when a saint leaves their body) of prominent pure Vaishnava saints, as well as the birthdays of Krishna's incarnations (also known as appearance days).

The Vedas describe several reasons for fasting on *Ekadasi* (the 11th day after the full or new moon). Shрила Bhaktivinoda Thakura's song, *Shuddha-Bhakata*, describes the day of *Ekadasi* as "mother of devotion", because *Ekadasi* is Krishna's merciful manifestation as a day. By fasting from grains and beans, consuming only what we need for our sustenance and making the focus of the day our devotional practice, we are directly serving Krishna. By offering all of our actions to Krishna and honouring the rituals of the day we will come to know Him. As such we also fast in the style of *Ekadasi* on His appearance days.

Rules of Following Ekadasi

The essence is to eat simply, once or twice, so that one can spend as much time as possible hearing, chanting and remembering Shri Shri Radha-Krishna. Never eat meat, fish, eggs, onions, garlic, carrots, red lentils, green flat lentils, mushrooms or products thereof.

Restricted foods on *Ekadasi*:

- ~ Tomatoes, eggplants, cauliflower, broccoli, bell peppers, beets, bitter melon, ladies' fingers and banana flowers
- ~ Peas, chickpeas and all types of beans, including products made from beans (e.g., papadams, tofu, tempeh)
- ~ All leafy vegetables (e.g., spinach, salads, cabbages) and leafy herbs like parsley, coriander leaves, celery and curry leaves
- ~ Grains (e.g., millet, barley, farina, pasta, rice, corn) and all types of flour made from grains and beans (e.g., rice flour, chickpea flour, urad dahl flour)
- ~ Starches from corn or grains, and products made from or mixed with these starches like baking soda, baking powder, certain soft drinks with corn syrup, custard, certain yogurts and puddings, certain varieties of cream and cottage cheese, certain sweets and candies, and tapioca balls
- ~ Oils made from grains (e.g., corn oil, mustard oil, sesame oil) and products fried in these oils (e.g., fried nuts, potato chips and other fried snack foods)
- ~ Honey, and sweets made with starches

Spices used on *Ekadasi*: black pepper, fresh ginger, pure salt and fresh turmeric, all taken from a new and clean package

Spices not used on *Ekadasi*: hing (asofetida), sesame seeds, cumin, fenugreek, mustard, tamarind, fennel, cardamom and nutmeg

Foods that can be taken all days of the year, including *Ekadasi*:

- ~ All fruits (fresh and dried), all nuts and all oils made from nuts
- ~ Potatoes, pumpkin, cucumber, radish, squash, lemon, avocado, olives, coconut, buckwheat, all sugar
- ~ All pure milk products

Festival Days, Fasting Dates and Break Fast Times (Daylight-savings time not considered)

January 2015

Thursday 1st break fast 07:20-10:26 [EST], 07:19-10:23 [CST], 07:23-10:30 [MST], 07:57-10:12 [PST], 07:10-10:34 [HST]

Wednesday 7th Appearance day (birthday) of Shrila Gopala Bhatta Goswami (an associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)

Saturday 10th Disappearance day of Shri Bhakti Vaibhava Puri Gosvami Maharaja (Swami Prabhupada's godbrother)

Sunday 11th Disappearance of Shri Jayadeva Gosvami (an associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)

Monday 12th Disappearance of Shri Locana dasa Thakura (Vaishnava saint and composer)

Friday 16th *Ekadasi*

Saturday 17th break fast 07:17-10:30 [EST], 07:17-10:26 [CST], 07:20-10:34 [MST], 07:51-10:16 [PST], 07:12-10:39 [HST]

Appearance day (birthday) of Shri Shrimad Bhaktivedanta Trivikrama Maharaja (Shrila Gurudeva's god-brother)

Tuesday 20th Appearance day (birthday) of Shri Shrimad Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvami Maharaja (our Shrila Gurudeva)

Saturday 24th Vasanta Panchami (first day of Spring celebration)

Appearance day (birthday) of Shrimati Vishnupriya-devi (wife of Nityananda Prabhu)

Appearance day (birthday) of Shrila Raghunatha dasa Gosvami (an associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)

Disappearance day of Shrila Vishvanatha Chakravarti Thakura (an associate of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu and Vaishnava author)

Monday 26th Appearance day of Maha-vishnu-avatara Shri Advaita Acharya – *Fast till noon then Ekadasi preparations only*

Tuesday 27th 07:10-10:29 [EST], 07:14-10:25 [CST], 07:14-10:34 [MST], 07:42-10:16 [PST], 07:11-10:41 [HST]

Wednesday 28th Disappearance day Shri Madhavacharya

Thursday 29th Disappearance day Shri Ramanujacharya

Friday 30th *Ekadasi*

Appearance day (birthday) of Lord Varahadeva [HST *only*]

Saturday 31st Appearance day (birthday) of Lord Varahadeva [EST, CST, MST and PST *only*] (incarnation of Krishna, but *no fasting* on this day)

break fast 07:07-10:29 [EST], 07:12-10:25 [CST], 07:10-10:33 [MST], 07:37-09:49 [PST], 07:10-07:49 [HST]

February 2015

Sunday 1st Nityananda Trayodasi – Appearance day (birthday) of Shri Nityananda Prabhu (Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's closest associate and an incarnation of Krishna's brother, Shri Baladeva Prabhu) – *Fast till noon and then Ekadasi preparations only*

Monday 2nd break fast 07:05-10:28 [EST], 07:11-10:24 [CST], 07:05-10:33 [MST], 07:34-10:16 [PST], 07:09-10:41 [HST]

Tuesday 3rd Appearance day (birthday) of Shrila Narottama dasa Thakura (Vaishnava poet and associate of the Goswamis)

Friday 6th Appearance day (birthday) of Shrila Bhakti Prajnana Krshava Gosvami Maharaja (Shrila Gurudeva's guru, our *param-gurudeva*)

Sunday 8th Appearance day (birthday) of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura Prabhupada (our spiritual great-grandfather and Shrila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada's guru)

Saturday 14th Ekadasi [HST only]

Sunday 15th Ekadasi [EST, CST, MST and PST only]

break fast 08:15-10:39 [HST only]

Monday 16th break fast 06:56-10:23 [EST], 07:00-10:19 [CST], 06:52-10:28 [MST], 07:13-10:12 [PST]

Tuesday 17th Shiva-ratri – Appearance day (birthday) or Lord Shiva (*fast – Ekadasi preparations only*)

Wednesday 18th break fast 06:54-10:22 [EST], 06:58-10:18 [CST], 06:50-10:27 [MST], 07:10-10:11 [PST],
07:01-10:39 [HST]

Wednesday 19th Disappearance day of Shrila Jagannatha dasa Babaji Maharaja (Shrila Bhaktivinode Thakura's guru)

Disappearance day of Shrimad Bhakti Dayita Madhava Gosvami Maharaja (disciple of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura)

Tuesday 24th Disappearance day of Shrila Bhakti Vaibhava Puri Gosvami Maharaja (disciple of Shrila Bhaktisiddhanta Sarasvati Thakura)

Friday 27th Shri Navadvipa-dhama parikrama (pilgrimage) begins

Saturday 28th Ekadasi [EST, CST, MST & PST only]

March 2015

Sunday 1st Ekadasi [HST only – see previous month for other time zones]

Disappearance day of Shri Madhavendra Puri

break fast 10:05-10:16 [EST], 09:05-10:11 [CST], 08:05-10:46 [MST], 07:05-10:06 [PST]

Monday 2nd break fast 06:52-10:35 [HST only]

Wednesday 4th [HST only] Shri Gaura Purnima – Appearance day (birthday) of Shri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – *Fast till moonrise, then Ekadasi preparations only*)

Thursday 5th [EST, CST, MST & PST only] Shri Gaura Purnima – Appearance day (birthday) of Shri Krishna Chaitanya Mahaprabhu – *Fast till moonrise, then Ekadasi preparations only*)

Festival of Jagannatha Mishra [HST only]

break fast 06:49-10:33 [HST only]

Friday 6th Festival of Jagannatha Mishra [EST, CST, MST & PST only]

break fast 06:40-10:12 [EST], 06:21-10:08 [CST], 07:13-10:43 [MST], 06:40-10:03 [PST],

Friday 13th Appearance day of Shri Shrivasa Pandita (an associate of Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu)

Monday 16th Ekadasi

Tuesday 17th break fast 06:28-10:04 [EST], 06:08-10:00 [CST], 06:54-10:37 [MST], 06:18-09:57 [PST],
06:39-10:27 [HST]

Saturday 28th Shri Rama-navami – Appearance day (birthday) of Lord Shri Ramachandra (an incarnation of Shri Krishna) – *Fast till noon, then Ekadasi preparations only*

Sunday 29th break fast 06:16-09:55 [EST], 05:54-09:51 [CST], 06:32-10:29 [MST], 05:54-09:49 [PST],
06:28-10:22 [HST]

Monday 30th Ekadasi [MST, PST & HST only]

Tuesday 31st Ekadasi [EST & CST only]

break fast 06:29-10:38 [MST], 05:50-09:48 [PST], 06:26-10:21 [HST]

Dear Devotee...

NOTE: We have received some really fantastic questions from you, which we are in the process of answering, however, we are asking that you hold your letters with questions from 15th January to 2nd March. The devotees that handle the answering of letters will be out of the country during this time. If you do send letters, they won't be answered until after 2nd March. If you have a request for books, you can request books at:

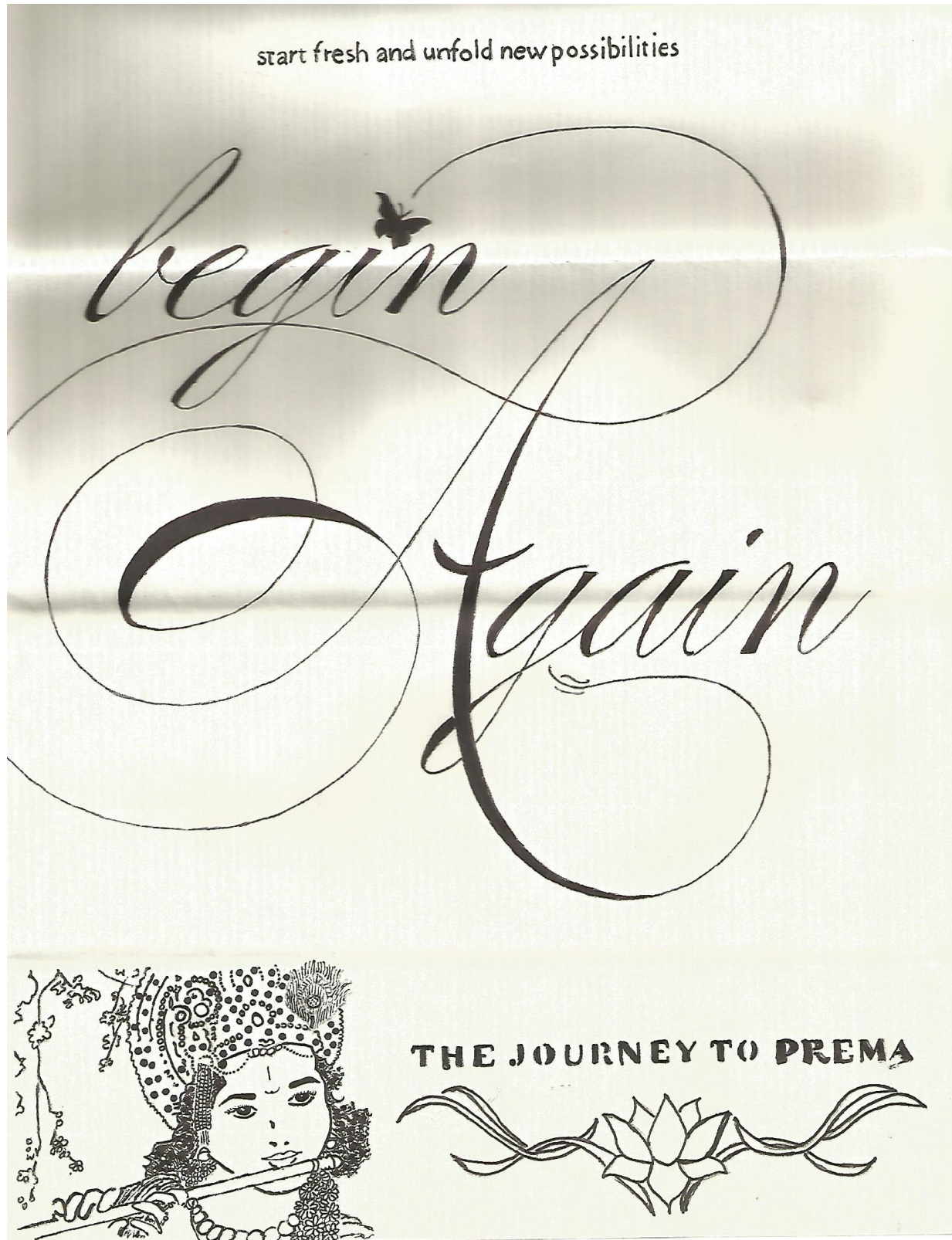
IPBYS Prison Seva, P O Box 52724, Durham, NC 27717

Hare Krishna!

Reader Contributions

We're so excited to share with you this month's reader contribution, which comes from Kieron in Florida. He's sent us three of his beautiful drawings, which we are so happy to receive. We love them all Kieron, how inspiring, thank you!

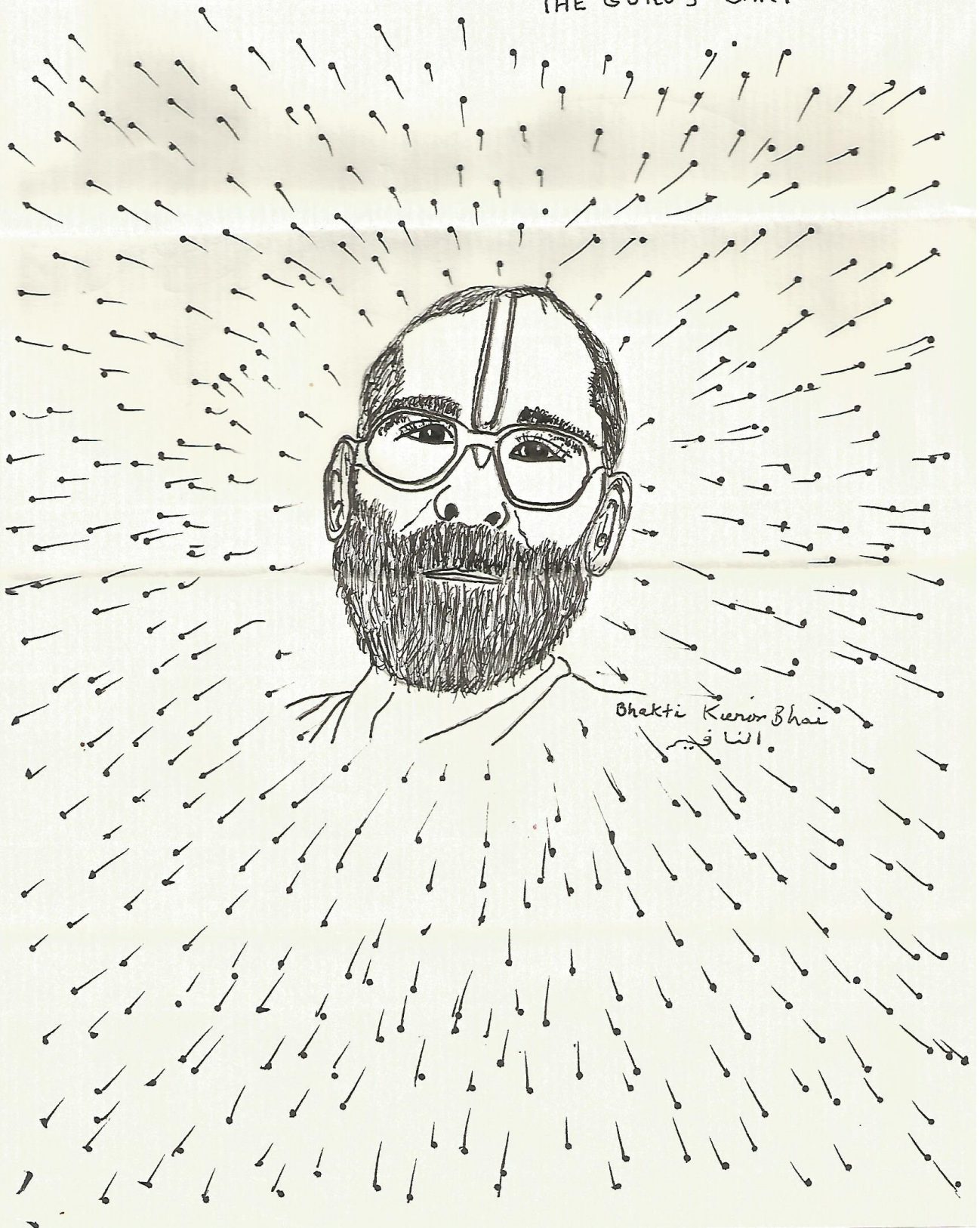
Don't forget to send us your poetry, artwork, letters and any other contributions! You can send all contributions to: IPBYS Prison Program, 13400 NW 140th St. Apartment #1502, Alachua, FL, 32615.





- Bhakti Kieron Bhai
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THE GURU'S ŚAKTI



Bhakti Kevan Bhai
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