

श्रीश्रीगुरुगौराङ्गे जयतः

श्रीभक्तिरक्षकदिव्यावाणी

Śrī Bhakti Rakṣak Divya-vāṇī

Sermons

of the

Guardian of Devotion

*

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math, Nabadwip

শ্রীশ্রীগুরুগৌরাঙ্গৌ জয়তঃ

All Glory to the Divine Master
and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya

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Sermons
of the
Guardian of Devotion

VOLUME TWO

From informal talks by
His Divine Grace

Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

Compiled and Edited on the Divine Instructions of

His Holiness Swami B.S. Govinda

Successor President-Āchārya of the

Sri Chaitanya Saraswat Math

Nabadwip, India, with centres internationally

SRI CHAITANYA SARASWAT MATH

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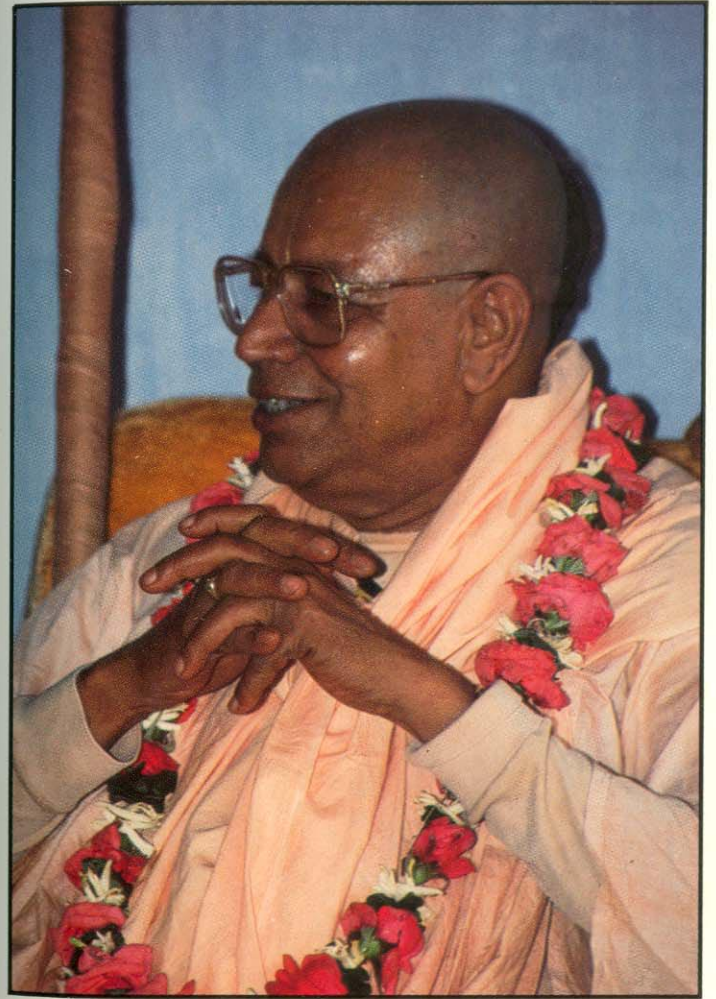
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28th February, 1991

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second volume in the series of *Śrī-Bhakti-rakṣa-divya-vāṇī*—Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion. Also, Śrī Devāśiṣ Prabhu, Śrīmatī Gurbanugā and Śrīmatī Bhakti Simā Devī Dāsis assisted with the proofreading. May Śrīla Guru Mahārāj shower his blessings upon them all. With this prayer I beg to offer my humble obeisances unto His Lotus Feet and unto all the Vaiṣṇavas.

Humbly,
Swāmī Bhakti Sundar Govinda
[*Śrī Gaura-pūrṇimā*,
28th February, 1991]



Oṃ Viṣṇupād
Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

All Glory to the Divine Master
and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya

Foreword

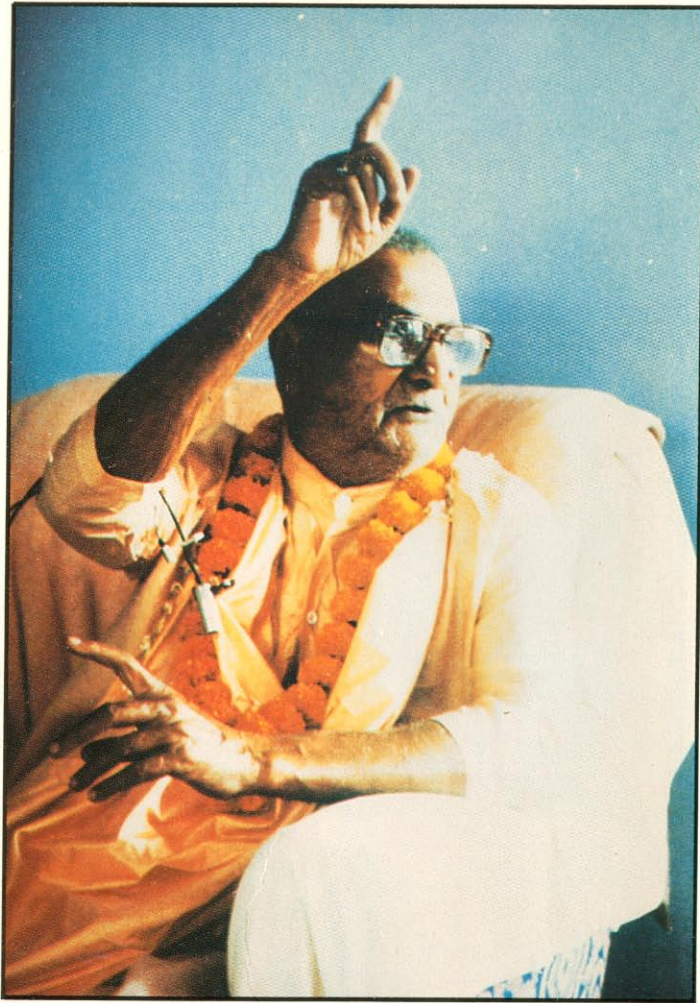
The Holy Vibration of Divine Talks of the Supreme Lord and His Associates (*Harikathā*) is an eternal benediction. Descending through the Divine Succession of the Great Divine Masters down to this plane of the mundane world, the Holy Talks of the Lord that emanate from the Lotus Mouth of the pure saint are a manifestation of the Lord Himself. No one can estimate the oceanic Grace of the Lord upon the fallen conditioned souls when He personally descends in this form of Holy Talks of Him.

My most worshipful and beloved Divine Master, Om̐ Viṣṇupād Paramahansa Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, always loved to deliver such Holy Talks, especially in the Supreme Line of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu. Whoever was fortunate to hear those talks, whether hailing from East or West—their hearts would bloom with happiness and transcendental prospect. When Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in his advanced age was barely able to muster up the

physical strength to come and take his seat and speak to the devotees, I would still request him to try to speak for at least only five or ten minutes—and often, after he began, he would continue for one or even two hours or more, showing all the youthful exuberance of a young man or boy. How the great souls love to eternally sing the Infinite Glories of the Lord!

Today it is our great fortune that those Holy Words that came down to us in such a simple and charming way are being brought out in book form, for the benefit of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's world-wide mission and new sincere spiritual seekers as well. Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's words are an eternal Divine ecstatic flow. They are food for the hearts of the true devotees of the Supreme Lord and His Associates; they are the real life of the sincere souls hankering for the Godly life of Divine Dedication.

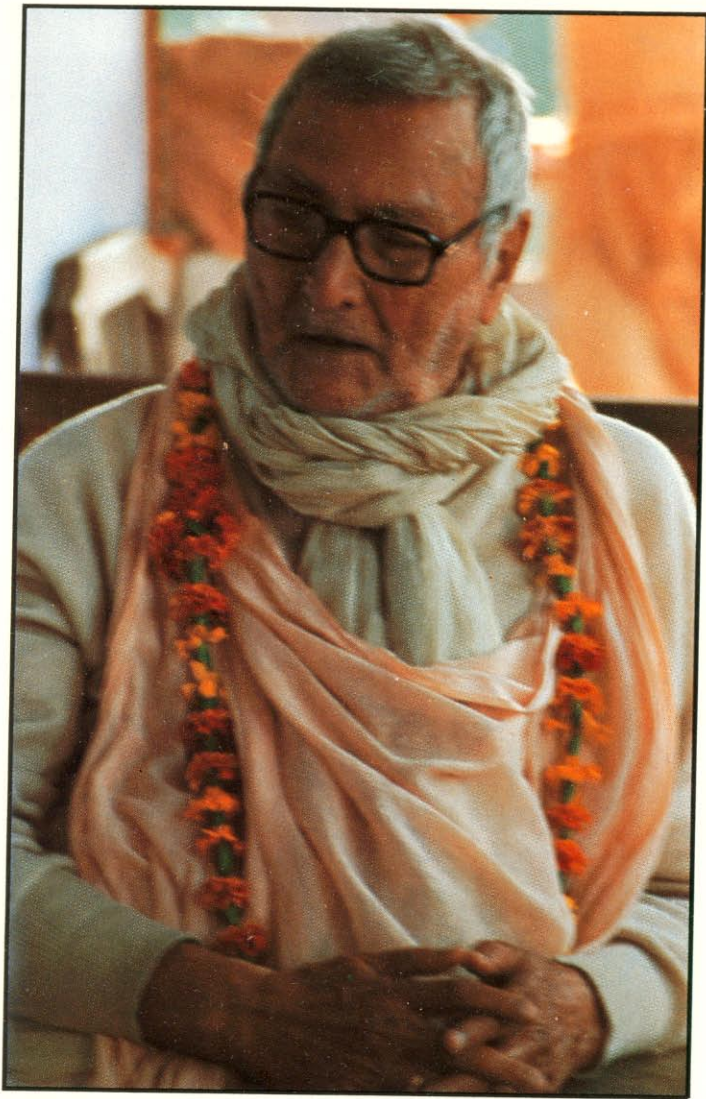
So we are very satisfied and pleased with the efforts of Tridaṇḍi Swāmī Śrīpād Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar Mahārāj and the sincere devotees, especially—Śrī Jaya Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, Śrī Dayānidhi Prabhu, Śrī Nabadwīp Chandra Prabhu, Śrī Jagamohan Prabhu, Śrī Rṣabhadev Prabhu, Śrī Śrī Govinda Prabhu, Śrī Jagadānanda Prabhu, and many other good souls who have assisted him by providing the necessary funds required for bringing out this



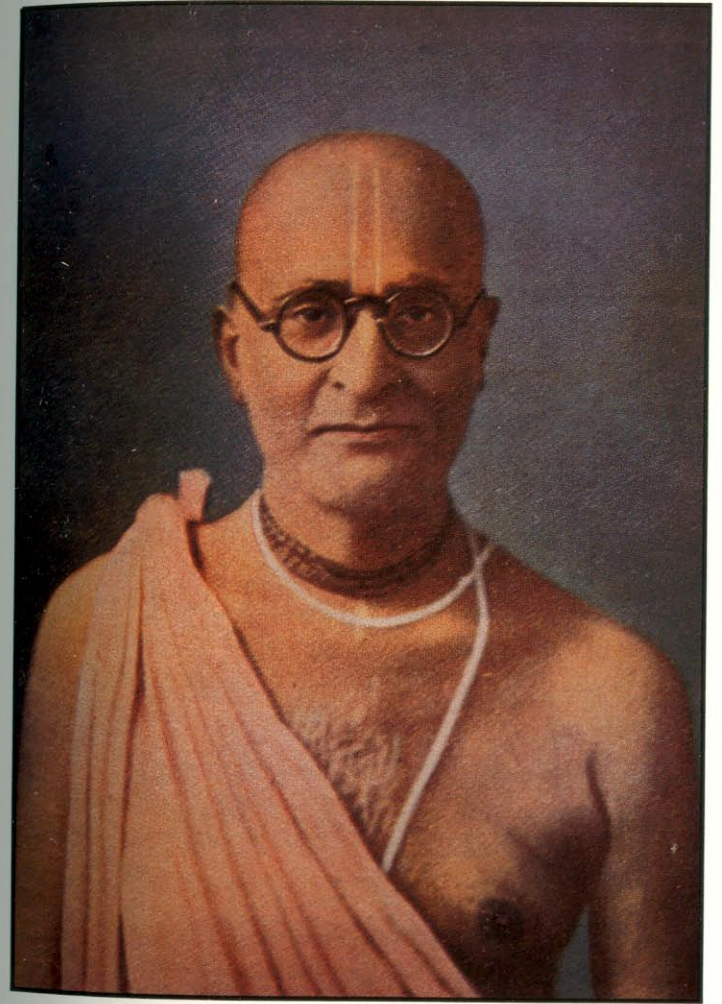
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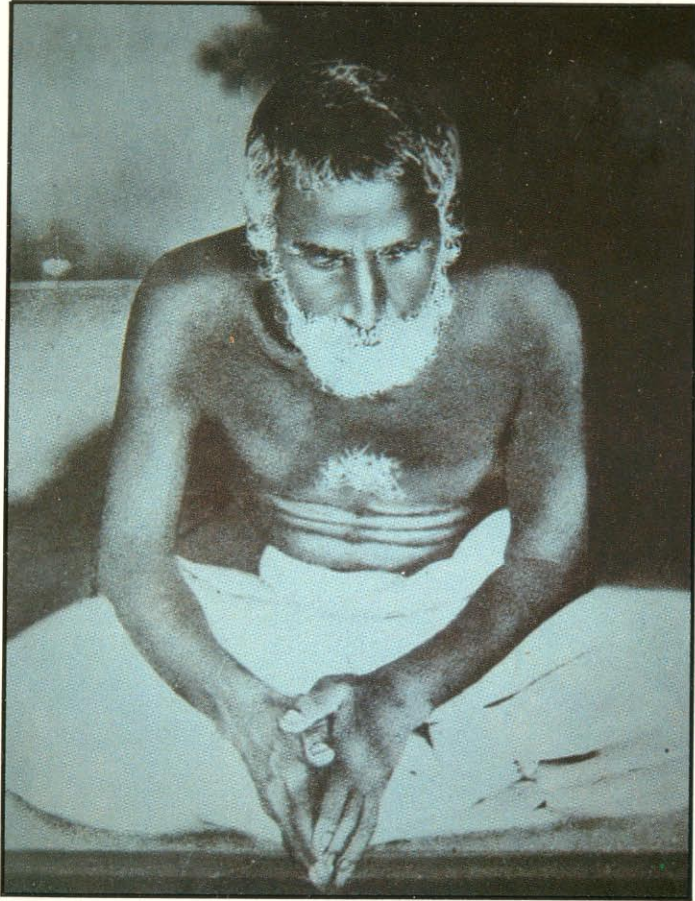
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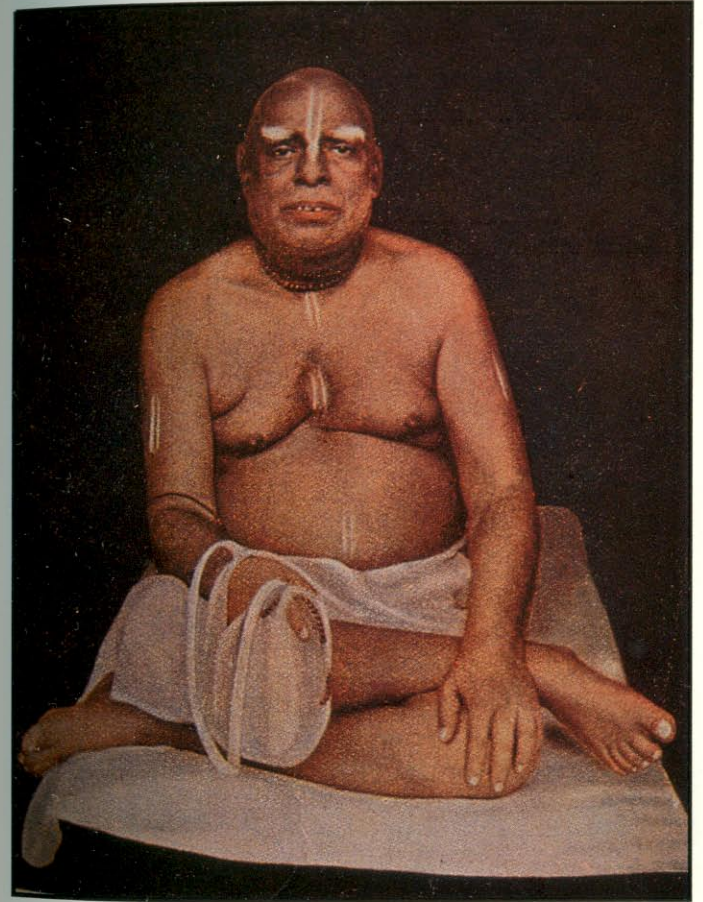
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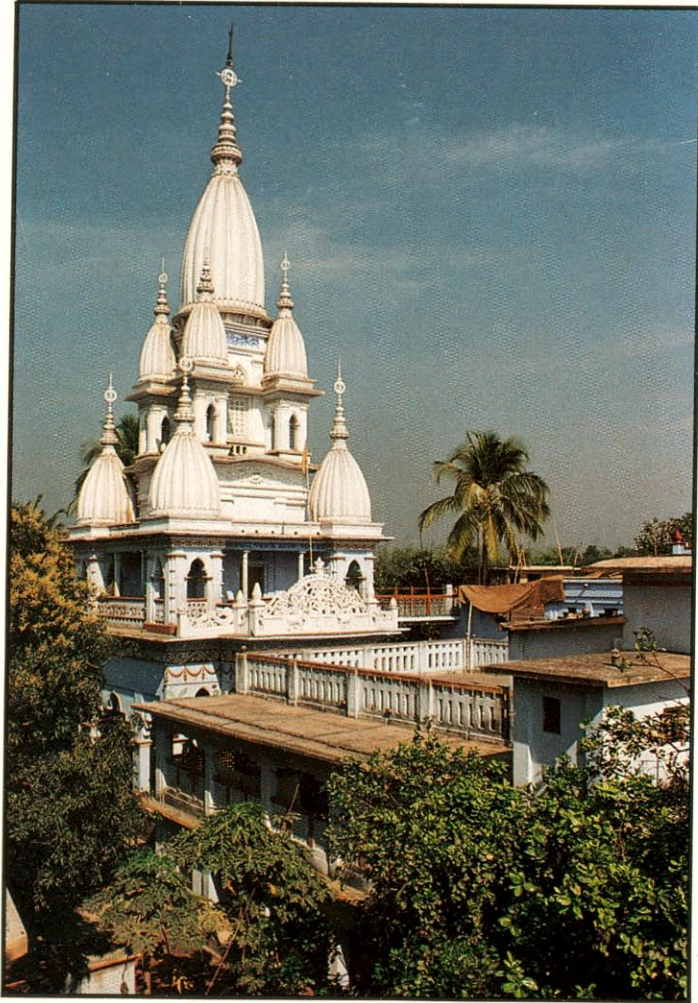
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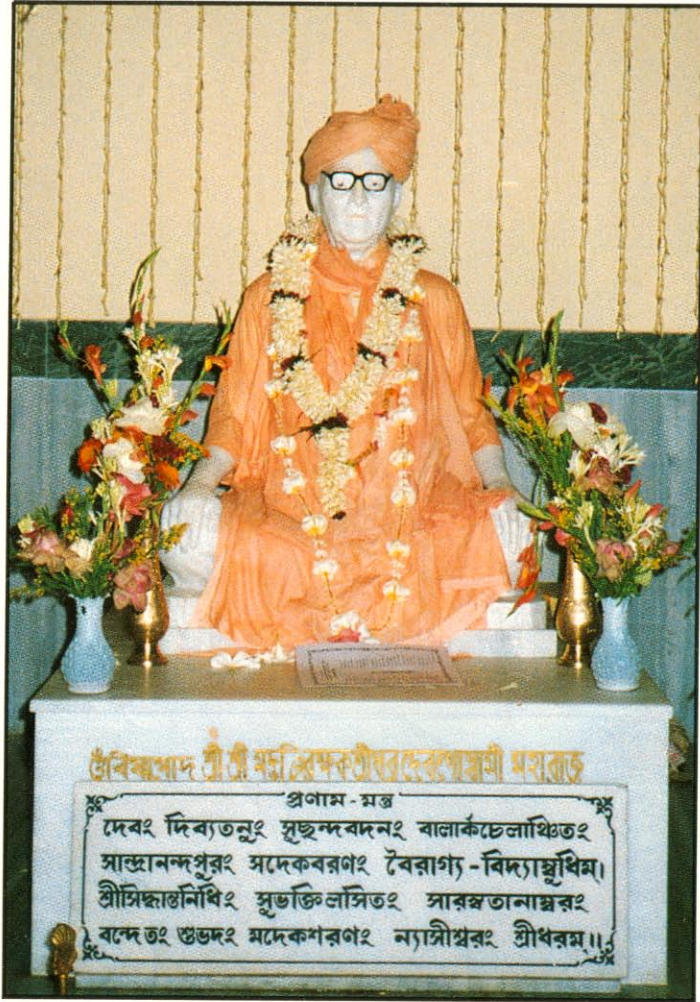
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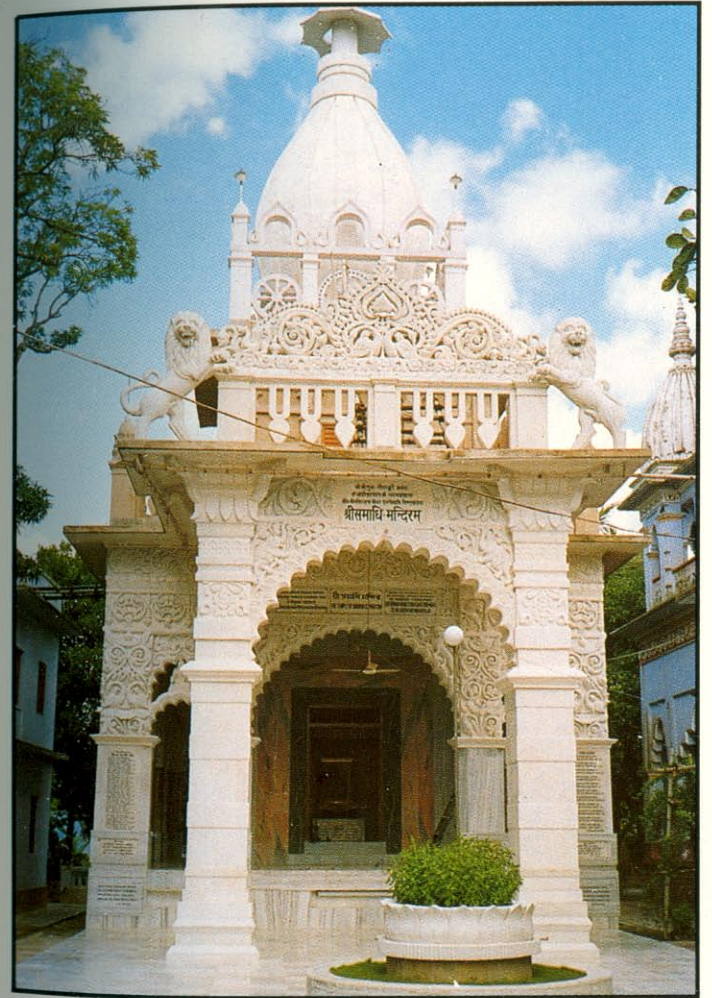
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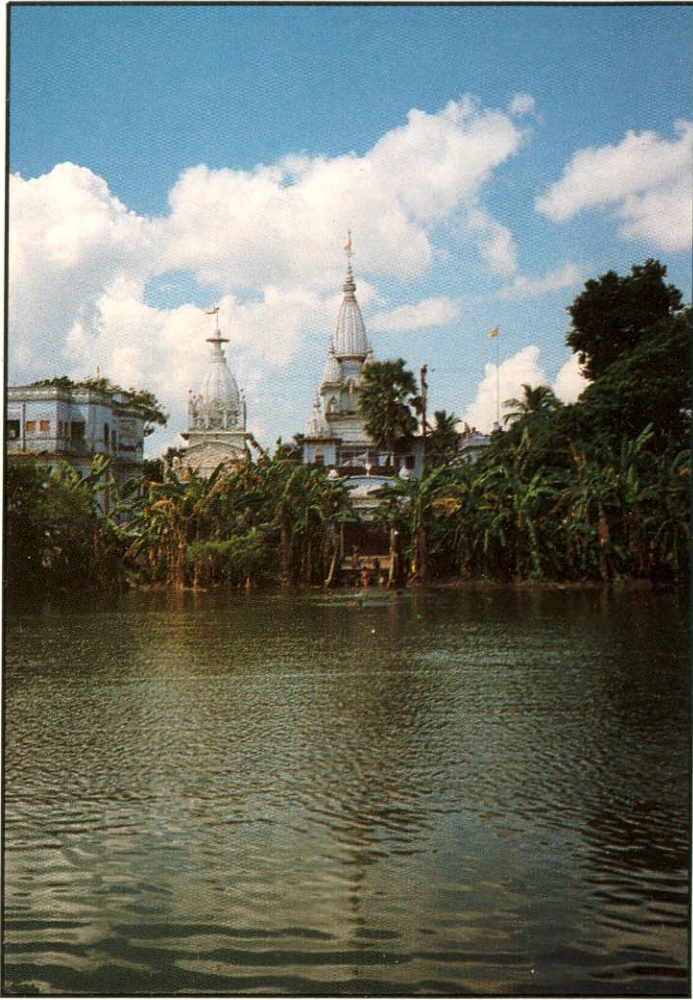
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Nabadwip Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh



Om Viṣṇupād
 Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj



Temple of Union in Separation of
 Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj



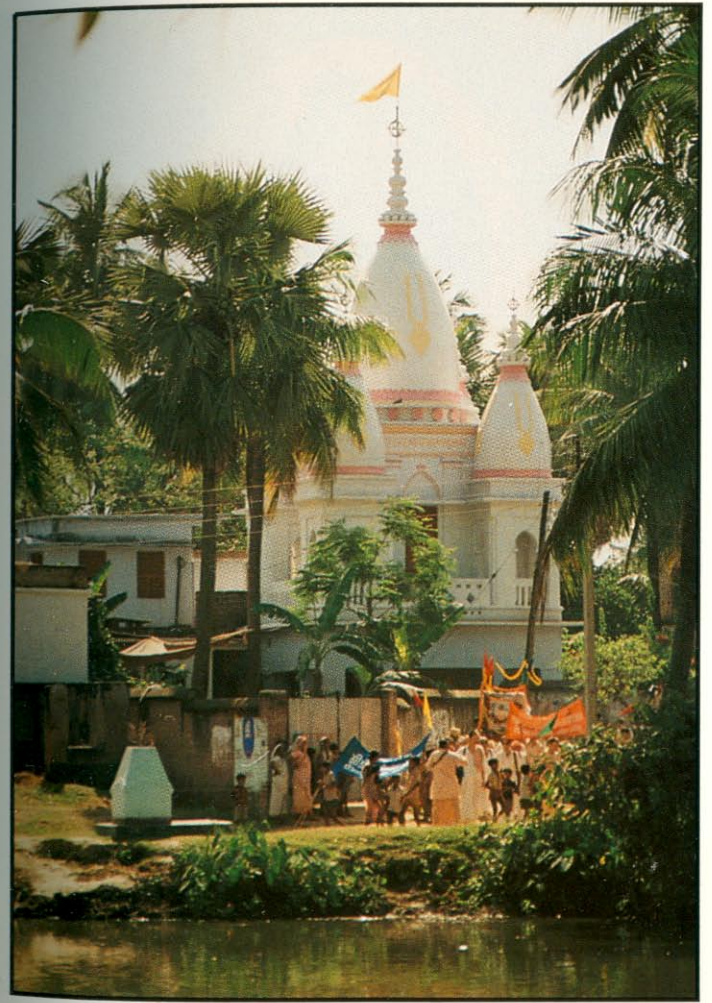
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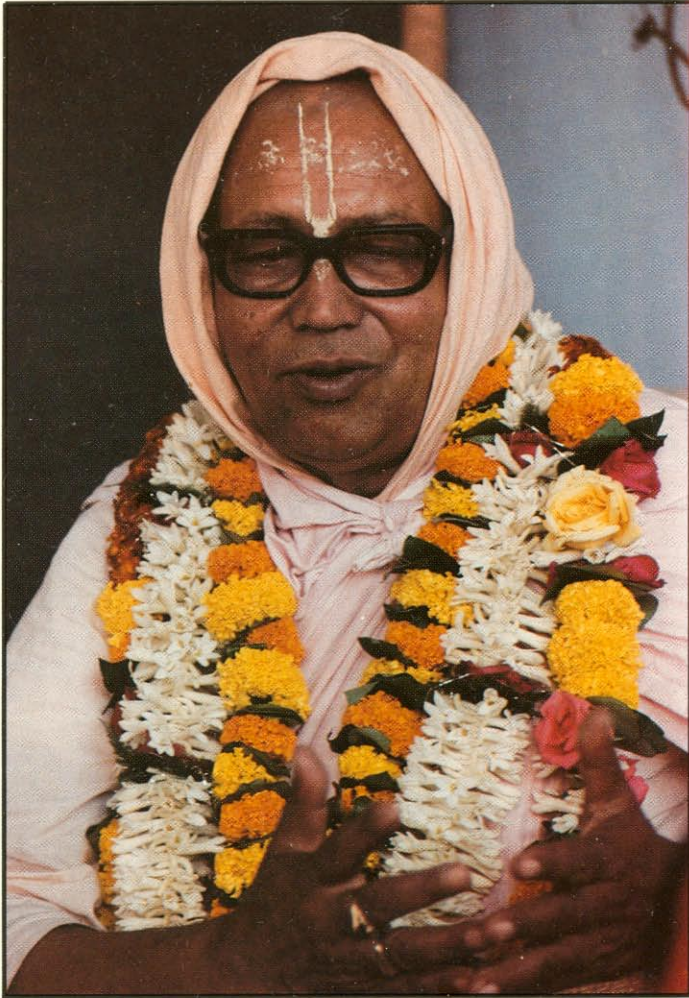
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Hāpāniyā Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Āshram



Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Āshram
Śrī Hāpāniyā Dhām



Om Viṣṇupād
Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

PART ONE

শ্রীশ্রীগুরুগৌরাসৌ জয়তঃ

All Glory to the Divine Master
and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya

Chapter One

Invite Vāsudeva to the Throne of Your Heart

Devotee: What should a devotee do when he is continually being attacked by lust, anger and greed?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: One should cry for the help of the *sādhu*; the *sādhus* are posted from above. There are many who are progressing from the mundane world to the spiritual world, and special *sādhus* are given charge to protect those travellers. So the devotee will cry aloud: "I am going to be plundered! Give me protection!" With fervour, he will move all his nerve to the extreme: "I must not allow myself to be plundered by you! All my previous tendencies have shaped my fate, and now they have appeared; I am prey to all those nasty plunderers—please protect me! *Kāma*, *krodha* and *lobha* (lust, anger and greed) are jumping at me!"

There are also so many artificial methods:

यमादिभिर्योगपथैः कामलोभहतो मुहुः ।

मुकुन्दसेवया यद्वत् तथाद्धात्मा न शाम्यतिः ॥

(भा: १/६/३६)

*yamādibhir yogapathaiḥ kāma-lobha-hato muhuḥ
mukunda-sevayā yadvat tathāddhātmā na śāmyati*

(Bhā: 1.6.36)

The practices of sitting postures (*āsanas*), breath control (*prāṇāyāma*), etc., may help us to a slight degree, but only superficially. The deep seed can be eliminated only by taking Mukunda on the throne of our heart. (*Mukunda sevayā yadvat tathāddhātmā na śāmyati*). If one goes on with the artificial means of *prāṇāyāma* and so on, lust and anger may seem to be a little reduced in power for the time being, but this is not a permanent cure. When the practices are slackened, they arise again. The relief from lust, anger and greed is only temporary.

The meditators and renouncers (*yogīs, jñānīs*) think these practices will quench their inner thirst, and they go on with constant deep meditation (*nidhidhyāsanam*) while keeping guard outwardly with some external practices. But the devotees do not have any faith in this method. They consider the whole thing artificial. They only want to invite Vāsudeva in all phases of their lives, and in this way they permanently do away with those

enemies.

Devotee: Mahārāj, in the beginning we're taught to follow. But it seems there is a point where we imitate, and then follow later. Because we have no qualification, when we try to follow we are actually imitating somehow. So what's the difference between the two? When does imitation or *anukaraṇa* become following or *anusaraṇa*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: In *anusaraṇa*, following, there is sincerity; and *anukaraṇa*, imitation, is only for name and fame, or *pratiṣṭhā*. To only imitate devotion outwardly without inner purity is more or less done to get the glory of a *sādhu*. And *anusaraṇa* means to attain from the heart, sincerely. So true following is sincere progress, and imitation is artificiality.

It has been practically experienced that *responsible services* can help us from falling prey to lust, anger, etc. Foremost is faith (*śraddhā*), next is the association of pure devotees (*sādhu-saṅga*) and deep engagement with the duties prescribed by the Divine Master (*bhajana-kriyā*). Deep engagement is necessary, especially for the mind, not merely the body. And mental engagement can be attained only by responsibility. Some responsible service is given to the disciple. He feels weight and it occupies his brain; he cannot but think about it—the mind is engaged there, surely. So the mind gets no

chance to dwell on lower things. This is the beauty of deep engagement in responsible Service. In the practical sense, that helps us a great deal. Then association and Scriptures will really be of substantial help to us: as Service (*paripraśna, sevayā*). As much as we are able to engage ourselves in deep, responsible services, the enemies' effect on us will be minimized. They will come and peep, and will step back saying, "No—no time. He is deeply engaged. He has no time to give attention to us. He may not be enticed." In this way, they will have to retreat. Then if they return once, twice, thrice or more—"Oh, no time. He has no attention to spare for us. He is very deeply engaged—for *Sevā*."

Sevā, Service, should not be merely physical; there is mental *Sevā*, and only responsibility can capture the mind. In responsibility, the mind is compelled to think on the matter; otherwise, the mind may be free to wander hither and thither even while the body is apparently engaged. So engage the mind in deep Service, responsible Service.

* * *

Chapter Two

The Eye to See the *Dhāma*

The Eye of Faith

In an ordinary country there is a capital. The capital is where the existence and position of the king is more intense than in the general section of the country. Similarly, the Lord is everywhere, and His concentrated existence is found in the *Dhāma* or the Holy Abode. With fully developed vision, we can feel the special characteristic of the *Dhāma*. We shall find His presence everywhere, but with particular intensity in the *Dhāma*. With the awakening of our real eye, we should be able to feel and appreciate according to this criterion. There is no question of a *Dhāma* for those who have no eye to see. There is also a hierarchy in the *Dhāma*. All are in serving attitude whether birds, beasts, worms, insects—everything—all are contributing to the Reality. Their feeling of heart, their gesture, posture or movement—everything contributes exclusively to the Pastimes of the Lord.

Dhāmera svarūpa, sphuribe nayane: in one song, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura aspires for that pure vision of the

Dhāma. Otherwise, it may appear quite ordinary to us, like a jungle. The purity of Ganges water is only perceived by those who have proper faith or *śraddhā*. Otherwise to others eyes it is ordinary water. The same applies to the Deity, or *Śrī-Mūrti*. One may think that the *Śrī-Mūrti* of Lord Jagannāth in Purī appears to be a somewhat awkward figure. His arms seem incomplete, His feet are not visible, His eyes are enormous. Yet Mahāprabhu stood before Him for hours, shedding tears. No one could move Him from that place. What did Mahāprabhu see in that Figure, and what is He to our eyes? So according to the depth of vision of our inner eye we can come to that plane of the *Dhāma*, the Deity, and the purifying Ganges water. *Śraddhāmāyo 'yaṁ puruṣaḥ* (Bg. 17.3): "The nature of a person is modelled on faith." Of what value is a mirror without an eye? In a looking-glass we should find the reflection, but if the eye is absent, what will the subject see in the glass? So the eye to see—faith—is necessary. According to the *śraddhā*, the specific character of the *Dhāma* as distinct from all other places will come into view, disclosing its real form. Everything depends on *śraddhā*, faith.

Faith is the only effective link. If we wish to have any link with the sun or the moon, ordinary instruments won't do, but some plenary medium like electricity, etc.,

can help to connect us. We must approach via a plane similar to the object. Similarly, we can approach the infinite only with the help of *śraddhā*. We cannot hope to have any connection with that finest plane of fundamental existence of this world with the help of the eye, nose or ear, or even by intelligence or reason. If we want to have any connection with the finest plane that is underlying this creation, it is possible only through faith (*śraddhāmāyo 'yaṁ puruṣaḥ*).

Then, the question of credibility arises: faith may be blind. But as long as the qualification of 'blind' faith exists, 'seeing' faith must also be possible! Blind faith is diseased faith, but we must connect by real or healthy faith. Then again, our experience must be confined to our own limitations; so how much faith can we accumulate?

Infinite faith in the Infinite

When we try to establish a connection with the infinite, there are infinite possibilities. But how much faith can finite things like us have? How much can we imagine? Imagination must also have a limit, yet the infinite exists, beyond even the limit of any imagination. The infinite is so spacious and broad that even our imagination fails. How much can we imagine? We are born and bred in

a cell; our experience is limited and our imagination is also limited. So imagination cannot be extended to take on an infinite character. We must be conscious that we are going to establish our relationship with the infinite, where the greatest imagination is only a point. Imagination cannot devour the infinite, so imagination must not be allowed to obstruct us. How much can we imagine? Something very meagre in comparison with the infinite. We must not allow ourselves to be slaves to our imagination. The infinite is so broad, we cannot have any conception of it, we cannot imagine it. It is beyond. So we must not cower under blind faith—there may exist infinitely more than we can imagine. Only genuine faith can help us in that direction, toward the infinite. And even when we have some conception, it is said that the key to make Himself known to us is in His hand. When He opens the door, we can enter. The key is not within our hand. We can see only as much as He likes us to. He is *Adhokṣaja*—Transcendental. We first have to accept this before we can approach Him or even expect to know Him. We must prepare ourselves with this attitude of accepting Him as *Adhokṣaja*.

If He does not allow us to enter into His Domain, should we deny His existence? He is free to do as He pleases; what can He lose? It is we who are the losers.

So we should submissively acknowledge the *Adhokṣaja* Realm above us. Superceding Śaṅkarācāryya's philosophy, Śrī Rāmānuja introduced this *Adhokṣaja* principle.

The Supersubjective Realm

Because we cannot enter that realm as a subject or making it an object of our investigation, we deny the existence of such a thing. What does this mean? Fools may be satisfied with such an imaginary tendency, but really there is such a Domain, and when He wants to take us within His jurisdiction we can have some experience of it. This is *Adhokṣaja*. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* warns us with this expression, *Adhokṣaja*. He is *Adhokṣaja*—Transcendental, Supramental. We cannot enter that domain as a subject. Even if we approach Him as investigators, we can know Him only as much as He allows us to. Still, we have to admit that there is such a realm, the Supersubjective Realm. We are subject, and that is Supersubject. The *jīva-caitanya*, the soul, is not the final existence. Socrates said that the soul is immortal, and can live independent of matter. He realized that the soul is a unit independent of matter—it is not a product of matter. Yet, the soul is not the final substance. Compared to matter, the soul is spiritual, but at the same time he may be considered like matter in comparison to his

Knower, the *Supersoul*, *Paramātman*, and so on. The subjective realm progresses onward, more and more. There, all are our masters. We cannot be master there, we can only be servants. If we want to enter into the highest position, we shall accept the position of the slave of the slave. Only then can we get the chance of entering into that Domain. It is not unreasonable.

Some may think that matter, gas, sky, and finally ether is the limit of existence; or, beyond ether, electricity is the limit. But beyond that is the soul, as Socrates said. There, soul is existence, transcending matter in all its phases. So, also, that soul is only a particle on the gross side of the Absolute. There is finer existence as Super-soul, and onwards. Just as in the material creation there are so many stages such as earth or stone, wood, gold, etc., there is similarly a gradation in spiritual substance. Generally, two—in the lower part *Vaikuṅṭha*, and the highest sphere is *Goloka* or the Land of Love.

The Play of the Sweet Absolute

The spiritual existence may also be divided into three basic classes: *sat*, *cit*, *ānandam*. Above the subjective existence of *cetana* or *cit*, the *jīva*-soul, there is a higher fundamental, categorically different element of *ānandam*, or happiness, ecstasy. That is not only *cit*, not only

subjective, but fulfillment of the subject as *ānandam*, full in itself, or more specifically in *Himself*. And this is the main element to be found in *Goloka*. Knowledge is rather subservient there. Knowledge—*jñāna*, *anubhūti*—perception, experience, even of the transcendental, is subservient, subdued, and the automatic flow of *ānandam*—beauty and harmony—is the real characteristic of the *Goloka* section. *Jñāna* does not play any part there (*jñāna-śūnyā-bhakti*). It is something like intuition.

The movement there is intuitive, and full of ecstasy. There is no movement by calculation; it is all by intuition (*sambandha-jñāna*). How and wherefrom the direction comes, they do not care to know. They are but instruments in the hands of that *Ānandamaya-vilāsa* or Ecstatic Play. This is *Goloka*, and we are told that if we have faith, we shall take the trouble of making a journey toward that plane. Faith should be the guide, impelled by our intense desire (*lobha, laulyam*). Our attraction and feeling of necessity for it takes precedence: "Yes, I want that." Then, we begin. Just as Hegel said, 'the idea precedes the action.' So, in *śraddhā*, we feel, "Yes, I want that thing." Then we shall take the trouble of approaching it. So we are told that the highest position is such, that is, intuitive labour of Love in the Divine Pastimes (*Vilāsa*). And that is the conception of the highest quarter,

where one can find the best happiness, or ecstasy. One who has attraction for that will take the trouble of accepting it and going to that place; that is given by *Bhāgavatam* and Mahāprabhu.

The Land of Beauty

Satyam is the land of the conception of existence; *śivam* is the land of good; and *sundaram* is the land of beauty. *Śivam* means *maṅgalam*, that is, that which is safe from mortality—unassailable existence. There is existence in mortality—the material energy also exists. But there is a land where there is no death, and that is considered to be *śivam* or *maṅgalam*. And *sundaram* is the positive life of attraction. One aspires to live such a life. *Sundaram* is a life worth living. There is such a land in the highest quarter. Mahāprabhu and *Bhāgavatam* called us for that: “Here is a soil, and you are a child of that soil. If you analyze yourself deeply, you will find that you are a child of that soil. You are not created for this land where you are always suffering from uncertainty and apprehension. Apprehension and uncertainty are always troubling you; you must cross beyond them, go up, and you will find *śivam*—no apprehension, but the positive life. If you really like to have it, you will have to enter into the area of Goloka, the land of beauty and

love. No consideration of calculation, no necessity of calculation or anything else. There, no fraud or deception can ever be dreamed of, so calculation and reasoning have no place at all. Automatically, all is good, all is fulfillment. It is the general conception.

Then, for satisfaction’s sake, *Yogamāyā* has designed things in such a way that Kṛṣṇa’s Associates are afraid of losing Him, and Kṛṣṇa also misses Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, or Mother Yaśodā, etc. This is designed to maintain the Pastimes there, and not out of necessity. It is not out of necessity, but it is the way of life: as a fashion it is maintained, and not for want.

अहेरिव गतिः प्रेम्णः स्वभावकुटिला भवेत् ।

अतो हेतोरहेतोश्च यूनोर्मान उदञ्चति ॥

(चैःचः मध्य ८/११०)

*aher iva gatiḥ premṇaḥ svabhāva-kuṭilā bhavet
ato hetor ahetoś ca, yūnor māna udañcati*

(C.c. Madhya 8.110)

“The nature of Love is curved like a snake; therefore two kinds of quarrelsome pride arise between Lover and Beloved: justified and groundless.”

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī gives this example. By nature, the serpent goes by a zigzag or curved movement. So,

in the land of *Prema* (Divine Love), *māna*, *abhimāna* (lover's quarrel, ego) and so on, are all in the nature of dealings there, but not out of necessity or want. That is the way of *Vilāsa*, or Pastimes.

Devotee: On Śrīmatī Lalitā Devī's Appearance Day, you were saying how Lalitā Devī goes out to the streets of Vṛndāvana, with a pen and paper—

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: —canvassing right and left, “Come and join my camp! I shall give you Engagement in the Service of Rādhā and Govinda.” And that is infinite.

Devotee: So Mahārāj, can one who is aspiring for Devotional Service identify himself with the thought of becoming enrolled in that particular camp?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Of course, otherwise why does that exist? That is the Infinite. There's no rule of limitation that says all the vacancies are filled. It is not finite.

Devotee: But whether it is audacity—

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Audacity, impertinence—

Devotee: Yes—to go and ask to be engaged in *Madhura-līlā*, Divine Pastimes in Consorhood?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: It will be unavoidable. Necessity does not care for anything. There is no loss in necessity. When anyone finds the aspiration in himself, he will helplessly or unconsciously appeal, “Please enlist my name.” He can't resist.

Devotee: This question was troubling me very much. It is inconceivable how the great Associates of the Lord actually want to take others to such Engagement.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: There's no dearth of facility on that side. Mahāprabhu says,

তুয়া দয়া ঐছেন পরম উদারা
অতিশয় মন্দ নাথ ভাগ হামারা ॥

tuyā dayā aichena parama udārā
atiśaya manda nātha bhāga hāmārā

“Whatever may be lacking is on my part. There is no defect on Your side.” The Ācāryya Ṭhākura Bhakti-vinoda has given us this interpretation.

नाम्रामकारि बहुधा निजसर्वशक्तिस्तत्रार्पिता नियमितः स्मरणे न कालः ।
एतादृशी तव कृपा भगवन् ममापि दुर्दैवमीदृशमिहाजनि नानुरागः ॥

nāmnām-akāri bahudhā nija-sarva-śaktis
tatrārpitā niyamitaḥ smaraṇe na kālaḥ
etādṛśī tava kṛpā bhagavan mamāpi
durddaivam idṛśam ihājani nānurāgaḥ

“O Lord, Your Holy Name bestows all good fortune unto the soul, and thus you have extended into the world Your many Names—Kṛṣṇa, Govinda, etc. You

have offered all Your Transcendental Potency in Your Holy Name, without enjoining any (scriptural or philosophical) hard and fast rules and regulations concerning time, place or circumstance to be observed in chanting it. Dear Lord, You have so graciously made Your Holy Name available to the ordinary souls, and yet my misfortune, my offensiveness, does not allow Love for that gracious Name to be born in my heart.”

Therefore Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, “I don’t find any taste for You in my heart—it is hard like rock. There is unlimited grace on Your side, but I am so mean, so low, and You are so High.”

Overwhelming Grace—the birth of fortune

But this feeling cannot arise without being in the relativity of that Superior World. Without that, such thoughts cannot arise. When really in the relativity of that world, the thought of overwhelming grace also arises. One feels that grace, although he feels unqualified in himself. And that is the beginning. Fortune begins there. Necessity is the mother of invention. Śraddhā has come, showing such a great prospect to the devotee, and he is very eager to attain that prospect—but he fails. That failure is also in one sense participating in a particular position. He’s already in the relativity of the

Infinite, otherwise he could not have made such a statement. It is infinite! Whatever degree of attainment he may reach, he’ll still be unsatisfied—because that is infinite. *Na prema-gandho ’sti darāpi me harau:* “Is there such an attainment in me? No. I do not possess it, because it is impossible to possess Him.” Yet, possession is there in the negative sense: “I am so negative.”

This is the nature of the Negative’s possession of the Positive, and so, She can attract the Positive. The more the negative characteristic is found in a particular place, the more the positive is attracted there. That is the underlying truth.

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī says, “*I am in the highest need of Kṛṣṇa.*” So much feeling of necessity in Kṛṣṇa’s absence is not to be found anywhere as in Her heart. And that satisfies Kṛṣṇa. Setting aside all other demands, He wants to come and satisfy the demand of that heart where want for Him is of the highest degree. Is it not natural? Dedication. We are units or aspects of the Moiety of Dedication, and not of fulfillment. Fulfillment is a stagnant thing. It is a qualification in the limited world. But in the unlimited, such an attitude can’t stand. This is the nature there. *Kṣudhā.*

Devotee: *Kṣudhā* means unquenchable thirst?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes; unquenchable thirst, so the

tinest drop of nectar will be tasted as very, very sweet. Inundating.

Once in Madras, one gentleman put a question to me: “Your highest ideal is Chaitanyadev? Isn’t His conception dangerous? Always mad with want of something, crying and rubbing His face against the wall, such intense madness for want of Kṛṣṇa—that is a dangerous thing to us! We would be rather afraid to make that the ideal for our life.”

বাহ্যে বিষজ্বালা হয়, ভিতরে আনন্দময়,
কৃষ্ণপ্রেমের অদ্ভুত চরিত ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ মধ্য ২/৫০)

bāhye viṣa-jvālā haya, bhītare ānandamaya
kṛṣṇa-premera adbhuta carita

(C.c. Madhya 2.50)

“The amazing characteristic of Love for Kṛṣṇa is found in the symptoms of burning anguish without, and ecstasy within.”

The Joy of hankering for the Truth

Extreme hankering for the truth is in itself *ānandam*. “I want only the truth, nothing else”—that is *ānandam*. It is unpossessed by any unessential thing. And by

nature, the highest fulfillment is found in the negative aspect; the intense feeling of negativity is the highest attainment in its fullest position. Fulfillment of life is in the necessity of the Negative Potency.

Devotee: Mahārāj, does that negativity mean humility?
Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes, it begins from humility. As Śrī Chaitanyadev has taught us, one should consider himself lower than a straw and be more tolerant than a tree, and never expect honour for oneself, but always offer it to others.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has explained that we are actually lower than a straw because in our present existence we are *vikṛta*, or deranged. But a straw is at least passive and maintaining its natural position. We have lost our proper function and become of negative value; we are lacking the positive value of a straw because we are adverse.

We are going against our own interest with our intelligence. We have intelligence, but it is misguided, opposed to the proper order of things. The straw is poised, it cannot move, but we can move in a wrong way. So we are actually in a more heinous position than a straw. We use our assets willingly to misguide ourselves, but the straw maintains its fixed position without deviation.

In the worldly sense we may hold a position superior to that of grass or a tree, but what of that? All our credits are being misused for our selfishness. So we are lower than straw. We are armed, but armed for suicide. A madman should not possess a dagger. He is dangerous. He could stab himself at any moment—he's mad.

The tolerance of the tree may also be seen in the same light. The tree must forbear his former actions, but we must be alert not only to the former but also to the present actions. In the present time also we may commit some wrong, so our position is more dangerous than a tree's. The tree is only reaping the result of its previous action, but our need is to guard ourselves against our present malactivity, so we require more forbearance than that of a tree. We should think, "I must be more cautious than the tree in my attitude of forbearance. My position is more dangerous because my special attainment is going against me."

* * *

Chapter Three

Bhajana—Real and Apparent

Devotee: I have heard that some *Ācāryyas* hold that *smaraṇa*, internal remembrance, is of prime importance as a devotional service to the Lord, above even *kīrttana* or chanting; or is it subservient to *kīrttana*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: There are some who are of that opinion because *smaraṇa* is exclusively connected with consciousness, or more concerned with the subtle part of our existence; so that should be the most effective form of *sādhana*, or means to the end. But our Guru Mahārāj, and Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī, and also Kavirāj Goswāmī Prabhu, laid stress on *kīrttana*—especially for the beginners. Guru Mahārāj says in his song *Vaiṣṇava ke?* ('Who is a Vaiṣṇava?'):

কীর্তন প্রভাবে, স্মরণ হইবে,

সে কালে ভজন নির্জনে সম্ভব

kīrttana prabhāve, smaraṇa haibe,

se kāle bhajana nirjjana sambhava

“Internal remembrance can occur by the power of *kīrttana*, and only then is solitary Service possible.” *Nirjjana-bhajana* or *smaraṇa*, exclusive solitary Devotion unconscious of the environment is not at all possible for beginners. And Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī says (*Bhakti-sandarbha*, *saṅkhyā* 273):

यद्यप्यन्या भक्तिः कलौ कर्तव्या तदा कीर्तनाख्य-भक्ति-संयोगेनैव

yadyapy anyā bhaktiḥ kalau kartavyā, tadā kīrttan-ākhyā-bhakti-saṁyogenaiva.

“In this Kali-yuga, of the nine basic forms of Devotional Practices, the forms other than *kīrttana* certainly should be practised, but they must be conducted subserviently to *kīrttana*.” And this is the principle of Mahāprabhu’s preaching. *Kīrttana* has its own special characteristic, particularly in Kali-yuga.

कलेर्दोषनिधे राजत्रसि ह्येको महान् गुणः ।

कीर्तनादेव कृष्णस्य मुक्तसङ्गः परं व्रजेत् ॥

(भा: १२/३/५१)

*kaler doṣa-nidhe rājann asti hy eko mahān guṇaḥ
kīrttanād eva kṛṣṇasya mukta-saṅgaḥ paraṁ vrajet*

(*Bhā:* 12.3.51)

(Śrī Śukadeva Goswāmī said) “O King, the age of Kali,

the repository of all evils, has but one glorious characteristic: in this age, those who simply chant the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa are liberated and reach the Supreme Lord.”

Also, Śrīla Madhvācāryya has written in his commentary on *Muṇḍakopaniṣad*:

द्वापरीयैर्जनैर्विष्णुः पञ्चरात्रैश्च केवलम् ।

कलौ तु नाममात्रेण पूज्यते भगवान् हरिः ॥

*dvāparīyair janair viṣṇuḥ pañcarātrais ca kevalam
kalau tu nāma-mātreṇa pūjyate bhagavān hariḥ*

“In Dvāpara-yuga, Lord Viṣṇu is exclusively worshipped by the people according to the principles of Deity worship delineated in the *Pañcarātra* Scripture, but in Kali-yuga, the Supreme Lord Hari is worshipped only by the chanting of His Holy Name.”

In the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, when the incarnation of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is mentioned (*Bhā:* 11.5.32), the method by which the people will worship Him is also given:

यज्ञैः सङ्कीर्तनप्रायैर्यजन्ति हि सुमेधसः ॥

yajñaiḥ saṅkīrtana-prāyair yajanti hi sumedhasaḥ

Here, *yajñaiḥ* means sacrifice, dedication, which is

saṅkīrtana-prāya, or *saṅkīrtana-pradhāna*, which means 'predominated by *saṅkīrtana*, the congregational chanting of the Holy Name'; and this is performed by those endowed with sufficient piety. So, in this age of Iron, *kīrtana* has its own special privilege, granted by the Supreme Lord—Mahāprabhu's speciality is preaching, *kīrtana*. He inaugurated and conducted *Hari-kīrtana*.

So *kīrtana* has been accepted by our Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī, and others. To write about the Lord is also within the jurisdiction of *kīrtana*. To preach is assertion—to take the message to others.

So also, to be engaged in answering the questions of the environment automatically demands concentration, which is very rare in this age. When one is doing *kīrtana*, he automatically cannot but give all concentration and attention. He cannot speak independently; intuitively, he must be all-attentive. For this reason, *kīrtana* has been recommended to be the highest form of *bhajana*, especially in the age of Kali.

ভজনের মধ্যে শ্রেষ্ঠ নববিধা ভক্তি ।
 'কৃষ্ণপ্রেম,' 'কৃষ্ণ' দিতে ধরে মহাশক্তি ॥
 তার মধ্যে সর্বশ্রেষ্ঠ নাম-সংকীৰ্তন ।
 নিরপরাধে নাম লৈলে পায় প্রেমধন ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ অঙ্ক ৪/৭০,৭১)

bhajanera madhye śreṣṭha nava-vidhā bhakti
 'kṛṣṇa-prema,' 'kṛṣṇa' dite dhare mahā-śakti
 tāra madhye sarvva-śreṣṭha nāma-saṅkīrtana
 niraparādhe nāma laile pāya prema-dhana

(C.c. Antya 4.70,71)

"Of all forms of Divine Service, nine forms are superior, which with great potency bestow upon the devotees Love for Kṛṣṇa, and their personal relationship with Him; and of the nine, the best is *Nāma-saṅkīrtana*. By offencelessly taking the Holy Name, the treasure of Love for the Lord is attained."

Mahāprabhu also accepted five principal limbs from the nine that are mentioned in the *Bhāgavatam* as *śravaṇam kīrtanam*, etc.:

সাধুসঙ্গ, নামকীৰ্তন, ভাগবৎ শ্রবণ ।
 মথুরাবাস, শ্রীমূৰ্তির শ্রদ্ধায় সেবন ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ মধ্য ২২/১২৪)

sādhu-saṅga, nāma-kīrtana, bhāgavat-śravaṇa
mathurā-vāsa, śrī-mūrtira śraddhāya sevana

(C.c. Madhya 22.124)

"Association with the pure devotee, chanting the Holy Name, hearing the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, residing in

Mathurā Dhāma, and faithfully worshipping the Deity.”

So of these five, Mahāprabhu has given *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* the highest position. *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* has been considered best of all. It has been delineated by the *Ācāryyas*. That was especially given by our Guru Mahārāj, and the basis is supported by the *śāstra*, Scriptures. But if other *Ācāryyas* have shown preference for *smaraṇa* in any instance, that will be in the sense that *kīrtana* may be in the relativity of the material environment, whereas *smaraṇa* is independent of the material consideration. From that point of view, *smaraṇa* may be recommended as the highest, but that is not accepted in a general way. It may be a special opinion.

In *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has clarified that there are two types of devotees in the stage just prior to attaining the highest plane of *Paramahansa* or *uttamādhikāra*. The devotees who cross the middle stage (*madhyamādhikāra*) and reach towards occupying the highest position are called devotees in the stage of *premāruruṅṅsu*. They are classified in two sections—*goṣṭhyānandī* and *viviktānandī* (or *bhajanānandī*). The first are always engaged in preaching, and the second take to *smaraṇa* or *nirjjana-bhajana*—a solitary life of worship, without mixing with the environment. It does not prove that one is superior to the other. The *vivikt-*

ānandī generally like secluded life and go on with *smaraṇa*; and those who are of the *goṣṭhyānandī* type go on with *kīrtana*, preaching, and also attain the highest position without coming to the school of exclusive *smaraṇa*. Those who have attained the highest plane are known as *premārūḍha*.

Imaginary perfection—self-deception

Guru Mahārāj clearly said that when we are in a lower position, *smaraṇa* is injurious. Rather, we should take to *kīrtana*. *Kīrtana prabhāve, smaraṇa haibe, se kāle bhajana nirjjana sambhava*. The Sahajiyā school (imitationists) are more fond of *smaraṇa* than *kīrtana*. They are ‘followers’ of *smaraṇa*. They lead a secluded life, and mentally they go on identifying themselves with a particular *sakhī* of their own age, her duty, her place of attendance in a particular place of Vṛndāvana, in a particular *līlā*, under the guidance of a particular *sakhī*, and so on. They are required to go on meditating on all these things by their so-called *guru*. That is the process amongst the Sahajiyā school, but we do not admit that. We consider it all false and imaginary. They are not fit for the plane. They do not have real *sambandha-jñāna*, knowledge of what is what. They only go on with the habitual repetition of a particular mental speculation,

but *anartha-nivṛtti* (purging of evils) or any other process based on it cannot be effected thereby. Their imagined achievement is sheer concoction. They are not aware of the facts—the ontological gradation from Virajā to Brahmaloaka, Vaikuṅṭha and Goloka. They are *pukura-curiwāle*—‘pond thieves.’ To think one can steal a pond is self-deception. We think that kind of ‘*smaraṇa*’ to be something like self-deception.

For example, Śrīla Gaura Kiśora Bābājī Mahārāj went on with *smaraṇa*. Once, there was another Bābājī who constructed a *kuṭīr* nearby, a small hut, and he went on imitating Gaura Kiśora Bābājī, doing *mādhukarī* (subsisting on alms), sitting and meditating, and wearing similar cloth. Then once Bābājī remarked, “If a lady enters into a maternity ward, she cannot produce a child only by imitating the sounds and symptoms of labour. Many things are necessary before that!” So only by imitating the *Paramahansa Bābājī*, *bhajana* cannot be effected. One must have connection with *śuddha-sattva*, the real plane, and then all the higher symptoms may appear. Otherwise, all those speculative antics will manifest.

না উঠিয়া বৃক্ষোপরি, টানাটানি ফল ধরি’
দুষ্টফল করিলে অর্জন ॥

(কল্যাণকল্পতরু, উপদেশ ১৮)

nā uṭhiyā vṛkṣopari, tānātāni phala dhari’
duṣṭa-phala karile arjjana

(Kalyāṇa-kalpataru, Upadeśa 18)

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says that if one wants fruits without taking the trouble to climb the tree, what sort of fruits can he expect? The fruits will be ruined, or rotten. Without proper progression, it is all imagination—a madman’s feat. One must gradually reach the plane of truth, *śuddha-sattva*. There are so many planes to cross—Bhūr-, Bhuvar-, Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, Satya-loka, Virajā, Brahmaloaka. Mahāprabhu says that the creeper of *Bhakti* grows and rises up to Goloka, and she has to cross all these planes.

উপজিয়া বাড়ে লতা ‘ব্রহ্মাণ্ড’ ভেদি’ যায় ।
‘বিরজা,’ ‘ব্রহ্মলোক’ ভেদি’ ‘পরব্যোম’ পায় ॥
তবে যায় তদুপরি ‘গোলোক-বন্দাবন’ ।
‘কৃষ্ণচরণ’-কল্পবৃক্ষে করে আরোহন ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ মধ্য ১৯/১৫৩,৪)

upajiyā bāḍe latā ‘brahmāṇḍa’ bhedi’ yāya
‘virajā,’ ‘brahmaloaka,’ bhedi’ ‘paravyoma’ pāya
tabe yāya tad upari ‘goloka-vṛndāvana’
‘kṛṣṇa-carāṇa’-kalpavṛkṣe kare ārohana

(C.c. Madhya 19.153,4)

“The creeper of Devotion is born, and grows to pierce the wall of the universe. It crosses the Virajā river and the *Brahman* plane, and reaches to the Vaikuṅṭha plane. Then it grows further up to Goloka Vṛndāvana, finally reaching to embrace the wish-yielding tree of Kṛṣṇa’s Lotus Feet.”

But the pseudo-devotees do not care to know what is Paravyoma, what is Brahmaloaka, what is Virajā, what is the *Brahmāṇḍa*. Without caring to know about these things, they approach any *guru*, receive some *mantram*, and go on meditating. But in such a stage, if one goes on meditating upon *Rādhā-Govinda-līlā*, instead of entering *Rādhā-Govinda-līlā*, he will rather entangle with the ladies and gents of this world. He will become entangled in the domain of lust and he will have to go to hell instead of going up to Goloka.

Carma-māṁsamaya—kāma, prema—cidānanda-dhāma. The carnal appetite is lust, whereas Love is the Abode of Divine Ecstasy. So imitation is not success. It rather degrades. Imitation degrades. Imagination is only a mental exercise.

Devotee: What if that mental exercise is done with faith?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Mind is separate. *Śraddhā* is connected with soul, *ātmā*, and mind is matter. Mind is material: a part of material potency. This is also clarified in *Gītā*:

भूमिरापोऽनलो वायुः खं मनो बुद्धिरेव च ।
अहङ्कार इतीयं मे भिन्ना प्रकृतिरष्टधा ॥

(गीता ७/४)

*bhūmir āpo ’nalo vāyuh kham mano buddhir eva ca
ahaṅkāra itīyaṁ me bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā*

(Bg. 7.4)

Mind is a product of the material potency, and the *jīva* is a product of *parāśakti*, the principal potency; and *Śvarūpa-śakti*, the Lord’s Personal Potency, is higher than the *jīva*. The nature of the mind is mental speculation (*manodharma*). That has nothing to do with truth. That is drawn from the material world, the world of misconception. The mind is full of misconception (*avān-manaso gocaraḥ*). Mind cannot reach the stage of feeling or perceiving truth proper. It is only related to mundane things or exploitation.

Devotee: But isn’t pure mind a product of *śraddhā*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Mind cannot be pure, just as a fossil cannot produce life. Similarly, mind cannot produce *śraddhā*. *Śraddhā* is original and fundamental. When the Supreme Lord appears in the heart, mind vanishes. Reality is just the opposite. Darkness cannot produce light: light comes, darkness vanishes. So truth appears when real pure consciousness appears, and

mental speculation vanishes. The mind is concerned with misconception. It is an element of the *aparāśakti*, the inferior potency. That potency is both subtle and gross. Earth, water, fire, air and ether are gross; mind, intelligence and ego are subtle; but they're all material. Soul is transcendental. And *Svarūpa-śakti* or the Lord's Personal Potency, *bhajana* or Divine Service, and Goloka-Vaikuṅṭha are all Supra-mundane and Transcendental—on the other side of the soul, not on the lower side where the mind is located. Mind emerges from the ego, that is, the false ego, and it is made of the exploiting tendency. But Mahāprabhu says, *mora mana—vṛndāvana*: “My speculation is on the other side—Vṛndāvana.” That is not an element of this mundane plane.

Devotee: So there is a pure mind?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Properly speaking, the word ‘mind’ does not deserve to be used in this context at all, otherwise everything will be wrongly equated. The residents of Goloka also possess senses, etc., but the affairs of the mundane world are never one with that. The mundane mentality is a product of exploitation, sense-exploitation.

We need relief from this mind. We are surrounded by poisonous thought. In the narration of the *Tridaṇḍi-sannyāsīn* in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, all the disciplines are common in that the mind should be checked.

दानं स्वधर्मो नियमो यमश्च श्रुतञ्च कर्माणि च सद्गतानि ।
सर्व्वे मनोनिग्रहलक्षणान्तः परो हि योगो मनसः समाधिः ॥

(भा: ११/२३/४५)

*dānaṁ svadharmmo niyamo yamaś ca
śrutañ ca karmmaṇi ca sad-vratāni
sarvve mano-nigraha-lakṣaṇāntaḥ
paro hi yogo manasaḥ samādhīḥ*

(Bhā: 11.23.45)

“Charity, constant and conditional prescribed duties, mental and sensual control, hearing the Scriptures, holy vows and duties—all these are observed to gain subjugation of the mind. Mental control is known as the supreme yoga.”

Devotee: You were talking about *kīrttana*; I have read that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākūr says that *japa* (private chanting) is also related to *kīrttana* (congregational chanting, or preaching), and also that Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī says there are three types of *japa*, namely *mānasika* or mental, *vācika* or vocal, and *upāṁśu* or whispered. Which is proper for us, and which is the most effective?
Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: In *upāṁśu* there is no sound, only movement of the lips; and in *mānasika* there is no lip movement. You ask which is superior of the three types?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Whatever is internally real will be superior. *Japa* must be genuine, not imitative. Our attention should always be towards the negative side. If we can practice that in a real way, our promotion cannot be checked. But without qualification, if we are very eager to go upward, there will be a tendency to fall down. *Dāsyāya te mama raso 'stu raso 'stu satyam:* "May I have the aspiration for servitude." For *bhajana* or internal Service, such a temperament should always be followed. *Tad dāsa-dāsa-dāsānām dāsatvaṁ dehi me prabho.*

Promotion is inevitable if we always try to adhere to the lower duty. Eagerness for promotion is the enemy. That is for *pratiṣṭhā* (renown), and that will undermine everything. Śrīla Prabhupāda said that imitation arises from the attraction for *pratiṣṭhā* or desire to hold the superior position and acquire a name for oneself. That is the great enemy. Don't fall prey to that *pratiṣṭhā*, eagerness to hold the higher position. Rather, *dainyam*—humility, is the healthy sign of a devotee.

Devotee: Mahārāj, we see in the *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* that sometimes the glories of silent chanting are mentioned, and then in other places we see that the glories of chanting very loudly, as in the case of Haridāsa Ṭhākura, are extolled. So, what is the adjustment?

Tangible Depth in Divinity

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Only a theoretical understanding won't help you much. Try to catch the spirit of the thing. When backed by the *sādhu*, the *Guru* of very high type, you can do anything. By the grace of his support, whatever *kīrtana*, etc., you may do, will be effective. Meditating may have been praised as more efficient in a particular context, but if you venture to superficially try and chant in that way, the opposition will be so great you'll be nowhere—you will turn to be an atheist. It can happen if you don't have sufficient support to fight against the odds. Don't venture to attack the enemy when your position is weak. But when backed by the great generals and many munitions, you must march on. That will help us to engage in real *kīrtana*.

The real factor is *sādhu-saṅga*. It has association with the higher power. Otherwise, nothing has any value. The stand must be taken on the real plane—*sādhu* and *śāstra*. We must cultivate the real thing. That is the all-important factor always—to keep up the reality of the *bhajana*. For the weaker devotee, the *sādhaka* or aspirant, the greatest necessity is *sādhu-saṅga*, and the Scriptures are necessary for knowledge. *Sādhu-śāstra-kṛpā*. Then *kīrtana* will be best.

Ṛndāvana Dās Ṭhākur says that one feeds himself, another feeds thousands and feeds himself. Who's the greater? *Kīrttana* is to cultivate oneself and help many others to cultivate at the same time. But when you have no capital of your own, if you go to preach you will meet such opposition, *asat-saṅga*, that the *aṅkura*, the bud, will be nipped. In that case, if you are *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*, neophyte, don't go to attack others without vigorous backing. *Kīrttana* means to preach, or to attack others in a sense. Don't venture, as *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*. You'll be turned into an atheist. Only after passing through the proper stages—*śravaṇa-daśā*, *varaṇa-daśā*, *sādhana-daśā* and *prāpana-daśā* (the phases of hearing, acceptance, practice, and attainment)—then you can preach independently (*āpana-daśā*). Otherwise, only with the help of someone in *prāpana-daśā* can you go to preach.

We should have an immovable connection with reality, an absolute conception of reality. Such a stable position is necessary. Invulnerable. A sure position, what is what—*sambandha-jñāna*. Then we shall be able to understand and harmonize the differences that we find in the writings of the *Ācāryyas*; what applies where—under what circumstances a particular line has been advised to be taken up, and under what circumstances another has

been advised. Practical knowledge.

* * *

Humility

Devotee: Mahārāj, this morning we were talking about humility. What is the perfection of humility for the *kaniṣṭha-adhikārī*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: It may vary for different persons. So one has to think out his own way. Humility means 'to not encroach on the rights of others.' And also, it should not be such as to kill one's own self. It must be natural.

At the time of entering the present Bagh Bazaar Maṭh (of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh in Calcutta), there was a festival. From a rented house, the Deities were brought on a chariot in procession. There was chanting and dancing, and the Deities were installed in the new Temple. *Mahā-prasādam* was distributed. At twelve or one o'clock that night we went to bed. My bed was just nearby the bed of one of my Godbrothers, a learned professor. He was very humble. In the morning, the professor said to me, speaking very slowly, "Last night, I felt so much weakness that I thought I was dying. I thought that I would arouse

you, but then again I thought, 'No, why should I disturb the Vaiṣṇava? He's so tired tonight, and having his rest, so let me wait'; and after waiting a little I gained some strength, so I did not have to disturb you. But I'm still very weak now." Very slowly, and soberly, he told these things. He was *dying*, and he did not arouse me, only for fear of disturbing my rest.

When I heard these things from his lips that morning, although of course he put it very gently, it struck me like thunder! I at once went to Prabhupāda and informed him that such was the case: "A gentleman was almost dying last night—but he was too meek to disturb me." Prabhupāda and the devotees also knew of our professor Godbrother's nature. They took the matter seriously and immediately called for a doctor.

Sometimes I think such humility to be dangerous. The disciple's life is a valuable property of his Guru Maharaj's, not merely his own. He's not to be concerned with only *his* interest, but he should live in the interest of his *Gurudeva*. I could not appreciate such humility.

Everything must be of a real characteristic—connected with reality. I am thirsty—perhaps I won't request any Vaiṣṇava, "Please help me with a glass of water." Then my disease may continue, for the sake of pennywise pound-foolishness. Common sense should be utilized

always.

Devotee: Just before Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj left the world, he was in Vṛndāvana. He was lying on the bed, unable to eat anything; his condition was so bad he could barely take even a glass of water. But I marked that when anyone visited him, he would, even in that condition, always say to the devotees, "Give them *Prasādam*." He himself could not eat anything—

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes, he wanted to travel through the whole of Vṛndāvana and circumambulate Govardhana by bullock-cart. But Kṛṣṇadās Bābājī Mahārāj's help was sought, and he came and was somehow able to dissuade him from that plan. Despite his serious condition of health, Swāmī Mahārāj wanted to go to all the places of *Līlā* like Rādhā-kuṇḍa and Govardhana, offer obeisances, and return.

So the fact is that anything in connection with God—all types of *bhajana*—all are good. We are not against anything of that type. But we must consider what will be most effective according to our capacity. At the same time we must not commit any offence by omission. If we say that *smaraṇa* is superior and that the other types of *bhajana* like *pāda-sevana*, etc., are of a lower order, how can we be so audacious as to condemn them in such a way? Still, we may distinguish very

cautiously, but not merely to satisfy our curiosity. Only when the necessity arises shall we venture to establish the superiority of Lakṣmī over Śukadeva, or Ambariṣa, and so on. But we must not venture to make light of such matters. These are all serious points.

To consider one Vaiṣṇava over another is not a game: the points are very subtle. They are devotees, and we must not venture to place one above the other according to our crude necessity. It is not an academic exercise that as a professor we shall amass some theoretical knowledge to quote to the students. It should not be accepted in that line. We shall always be conscious of the practical side: "They are so great, and where am I? Who am I passing judgement over?" There should be some limit to our adventurous audacity.

Devotee: My friend was relating last night that you once said 'humility is accepting no position.'

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes. 'No position' because a servant has no independent position—his position is always on the command of the master. He's always situated within infinite possibility. But he's humble to his master, not to the *goondās* (rogues). His humility must be chiefly towards whom? "I am humble, the lowest of the low, to whom? Towards my master. I am humble towards the Lord's own, the Vaiṣṇava. I am humble there." When

it is necessary for Hanumānjī to burn the golden city of Laṅkā, his humility is not disturbed. He is as humble as anyone can be in carrying out the order of Lord Rāmacandra. He is fully given, wholly surrendered.

Humility, in other words, is surrendering. Humility means no opposition to the command of the master who is related to Vaikuṅṭha, the upper section; not to the ordinary street zone, or tiger, or serpent. Humility does not drag them into the relativity of the serpent, tiger or jackal. Their real relationship is with the Vaiṣṇava. That is the plane where the devotee takes his stand. He's concerned with the Vaiṣṇava. And 'humble' means that he does not resist his master's instruction. Without opposition, he carries out whatever order comes to him. He is humble. He possesses humility, *sunīcatā*. He is not sitting on a seat of prejudice. Generally we think of humility as pertaining to the outside world, but this is not the meaning. To the standard-thinking person, the members of the outside world are deluded—they are mad. Humility is not in the standard of madness, or catering to the mad people. A madman has no standard of his own. So humility means to have a standard from the standard world. Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Prabhupāda has defined humility

as 'that which is absent where there is a spirit of enjoyment.' Enjoying spirit, or exploitation, means aggression. There, there cannot be humility. Humility is only cent-per-cent Service. There is no humility in exploitation, or renunciation either. These two are opposed to the normal nature of the world. They are totally misconceived. They are enemies. They are the challenging element to the normal reality. Do you understand?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: The spirit of exploitation and the spirit of renunciation—both are a revolt against the proper smooth working of the truth. So they are totally misconceived. And real humility must be in the relativity of the full aspect of the truth, not with the misconceived world. The standard is not of the misconceived, the madman.

Devotee: Yes. What about spiritual aggression? Like competition. There's a competitive spirit between two persons who are doing the same thing. Then where's the place for humility there?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: There will be humility if it is really Service, because its object is the Centre. The devotee feels his inspiration and direction from there, and cooperates accordingly. He is connected with the Absolute Centre, so competition may be arranged by *Yogamāyā*.

He is not responsible because his necessity is only for the Centre. As we discussed, the Absolute is designed that way, but not out of necessity. *Aher iva gatiḥ premṇaḥ, svabhāva-kuṭilā bhavet*. It seems to be crooked, but it is not; it is the very nature of absolute dealings. It is necessary only for the variegatedness of the Service of Kṛṣṇa. It is designed from the upper quarter. The devotees are not responsible for that.

Devotee: So we must not infringe on the property of others. There may be competition, but we should not infringe on the property of others?

Our Duty

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Our duty will always be to dedicate ourselves more and more intensely—and we shall do that according to how we may be interfered with by the higher agency. We must always keep ourselves ready for that. Cent-per-cent we shall obey the handling from the upper house, without any hesitation. That is our duty. Whatever will be asked of us, we shall do.

On the battlefield, if the general asks a particular battalion to fight in the first battle, and they say, "Why shouldn't the second battalion be commanded to go? Why should we go first? We shall die, and they will rejoice the victory in the last battle? Why should we go

first?" What do you say?

Devotee: That is not dedication.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Of course. The military will shoot you then and there! "That is our consideration from above; it is not left to you whether Battalion 1, 2, 3 or 4 will go." Only the highest brains have command. Complaint against that high command means to die—to be done away with immediately.

Devotee: So, Mahārāj, Arjuna followed the instructions of Kṛṣṇa without question—whenever Kṛṣṇa ordered him to shoot, he did so. He faithfully followed whatever instructions he received. In one incident, Yudhiṣṭhira did not follow the instructions of Lord Kṛṣṇa; but when the five Pāṇḍavas were on the *mahāprasthāna* or voluntary journey to court death, Arjuna fell prior to Yudhiṣṭhira. Why did Arjuna have to fall?

Devotion—relative and Absolute

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: That is not the criterion of the highest devotion. Yudhiṣṭhira's achievement was a separate thing. Devotion proper is not connected there. That is some worldly affair of *sattva-guṇa*. Yamarāja, in the form of a dog, went on—but Arjuna had to fall, Bhīma had to fall. The test was something else, connected with the mundane world. And they went to Svarga, Heaven.

That is not the highest attainment, but only a show of the outer case of the Pāṇḍavas. Really, the Pāṇḍavas are *sakhās* or friends of Kṛṣṇa, but their going to Svarga is a separate outward affair. When the Pāṇḍavas reached Svarga, they saw that Duryyodhana and others had already arrived there. Although the position of Duryyodhana and company was much lower—they were the enemy camp—nonetheless, after death they all achieved their good and honoured position in Svarga.

Yudhiṣṭhira went with his old body of *sattva-guṇa*, worldly goodness. A *kṣatriya* who dies on the battlefield is rewarded with life in Heaven. Yudhiṣṭhira went there, keeping his mortal body, although the others had to die first in order to take appropriate forms for that plane. But the plane was only that of *sattva-guṇa*, Svarga, and not the *aprākṛta* or Transcendental Planes of Vaikuṅṭha, Dvārakā, Mathurā or Goloka.

Similarly, it is also mentioned in the story of the *Keśāvatāra* (Incarnations from hair) that Lord Viṣṇu gave a boon that a black and a white hair from his head would go and save the Earth from the horrors of the burden of sins she was suffering from. Those hairs are said to have taken the forms of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. They took up those two robes, but in that instance They are only *Bhū-bhāra-haraṇakārī Avatāras*, or Descents

appearing to relieve the Earth of its burden, and not *Svayaṁ Bhagavān* or the Supreme Lord in Person. The Lord as He is in *Vṛndāvana* is entirely distinct.

So also it has been seen in many instances that the outer case is one thing, the inner man is another. The lower personality is absorbed. Just as when the prime minister comes to the city, the state governor's function is absorbed in him, if he wishes. When the king comes to visit the colony, all the officers' powers really vanish in him. Whatever he does must automatically be done by them, their own respective personalities dead. So when the higher descends into the lower case, the lower case loses its value. Then, when it retires, the lower case remains and the higher case ascends.

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Nitāi Gaurahari bol! We pray to Nityānanda Prabhu. We want to come to an adjusted, former position: "If I have committed any offence, *aparādha*, when dealing with so many subtle things about the great personages, please, Nityānanda Prabhu, absolve me of that offence and restore me to my normal humble position."

সর্ব-বৈষ্ণবের পায়ে করি নমস্কার ।

ইথে অপরাধ কিছু নহুক আমার ॥

sarva-vaiṣṇavera pā'ye kari namaskāra,
ithe aparādha kichu nahuka āmāra

Vṛndāvana Dās Ṭhākur says, "I bow at the feet of the *Vaiṣṇavas*; may there be no offence in my attempt to serve them."

When we deal with so many great things, such as trying to speak about great personalities of the highest order, we should beg Nityānanda Prabhu to pardon us for our audacity. He is *patita-pāvana*, saviour of the fallen souls. He is *adoṣa-darśī*—He generally does not take any offence.

Fools rush in where angels fear to tread—where angels fear to tread, fools rush in. Like fools, we rush into the subtlest realm of sentiments of the high order; so we must beg to be excused by the High Personalities. *Apasiddhānta* or philosophical adulteration strikes very harshly. It was *Svarūpa Dāmodara's* Service to first examine any poems or writings for purity before they were taken to Mahāprabhu. If writings with *apasiddhānta* were offered to Mahāprabhu, He would be disturbed in a very cruel way. *Apasiddhānta* cruelly attacks the ideal of the higher-thinking persons.

There is a narration by *Kālidās* about a king who required a palanquin carrier. At random he selected a

man from the crowd, not knowing that the man was a learned man, a *paṇḍit*. When bearing a corner of the palanquin, the man did not carry it steadily, due to his avoiding the ants on the road.

The king enquired,

“*Skandam kim bādhati?*” (Literally, “Do you shoulder [sic] hurt?”).

The *paṇḍit* replied,

“*Na tathā bādhate skandam yathā bādhati bādhate*”—“My shoulder doesn’t pain me as much as your ‘pain’ (your grammatical misuse of *bādhati* for *bādhate*)!”

So, subtle beating is there in the higher sphere, in the higher sentiment. They may be offended. We shall, not with curiosity but with all humility and all respects to Them, try to enter into that garden without disturbing any plant or person roaming in that sphere. Otherwise our talks will be pure intellectualism, and not *Harikathā*.

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Chapter Four

Heralding the Twilight

A Pioneer of Exclusive Devotion

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura appeared (in 1838) in a very famous Kāyastha family, bearing the title Dutta. In Calcutta there is a place called Hāṭ-khola Dutta which was named after the family. Near Birnagar there was a big village named Ulā, and the family of the title Mustauphi were landowners there. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura’s mother came from this line. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was born and brought up at Ulā, and he studied at Krishnanagar college. Of course, he had exceptional talent. He came into contact with the then educated society. Especially, there was a Mr. Duff, a Christian missionary who established the Scottish Church College. Duff was encouraging and attracting many of the young Bengalis of the time to take up Christianity. Gradually, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura had close association with the Brahma Society, the so-called culturally advanced followers of Rām Mohan Rāy. Maharṣi Devendranāth Ṭhākura’s elder brother, Dvijendranāth, was his very intimate

friend.

For his livelihood he accepted government service. He was posted at Orissa in the position of subdivisional officer. He was also posted as inspector of the Jagannāth Purī Temple, where his duty was to guard against corruption. At that time he came into contact with the *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, and he tried to read it. He was gradually charmed by *Bhāgavatam*, *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* and the life of Śrī Chaitanyadev. The Brahmo Association had expected much of him because of his scholarly nature; he could write and debate well. But after coming into contact with the *Bhāgavatam*, he dissociated himself from them. When he was serving in Dinājpur he gave his speech on *Bhāgavatam*, and it was then that he completely separated himself from the Brahmo school, and he was seen to side with the Vaiṣṇava school of thought in the line of Mahāprabhu. And gradually he also read the *śāstras* and wrote many books on Vaiṣṇavism.

After his retirement, he wanted to go to Vṛndāvana and pass the rest of his life there. But he repeatedly had a dream that he must discover the actual Birthplace of Śrī Chaitanyadev. He could not neglect that dream. He again entered into service at Krishnanagar, and there, he consulted the records of the locality. With the help of

those records, and by his divine inspiration, he discovered the Birthplace at Yogapiṭha, Māyāpur. Then, with deepened interest, he visited the entire Nabadwipmaṇḍal; and with reference to the Scriptures he gave a description of both the ancient and contemporary holy places in the *Dhāma* of Mahāprabhu. He established a committee to ensure that the Service of Mahāprabhu's place of Advent continue. Lastly, he handed it over to our Prabhupāda.

From the beginning, the fourth son of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, Śrī Bimalā Prasād (the family name of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī) was naturally inclined to the Service of Mahāprabhu. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur finally entrusted him with the Direct Service of Māyāpur. He accepted that, a little hesitantly at first, but to his last moment he conducted the Service faithfully. In that matter, from the practical standpoint Kuñjabihārī Vidyābhūṣaṇa, later Śrīmad Tīrtha Mahārāj, assisted Prabhupāda a great deal. Gradually many scholars also gathered around him. With their help, he started the movement of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh. He was inspired to preach, and he did so up to the last moment of his life.

When Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur passed away, Śrīla Prabhupāda arranged a condolence meeting in a public

hall and invited many respectable gentlemen. Amongst them were the leading scholars of the time, including Bipin Pāl, the then principal of the Metropolitan School; and Satish Sarkār, Pāñchkari Bandopādhyāy, and others.

New Thought to the world

They all spoke very highly about Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, recognizing that he gave *new thought* to the society at large; his writings were of original character, not stereotyped. His investigations into Vaiṣṇavism excelled that of all the modern Ācāryyas. Shishir Ghosh also once said, “We have heard of the Six Goswāmīs of the time of Mahāprabhu, but Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur’s writings prove that he holds the seventh position amongst the Goswāmīs. He has left us such extensive and original writing about the teachings of Śrī Chaitanya-dev.” In this way, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur left the world his literature—he is in his literature, present forever. He has delivered his writings about the Teachings of Mahāprabhu and *Bhāgavatam* in a systematic and scientific way, suitable to the modern age. Our debt unto his Holy Feet has no end.

The Predominant *Guru* of Śrīla Prabhupāda

Although Prabhupāda, as suggested by Bhaktivinoda

Ṭhākur, took initiation from Gaura Kiśora Bābājī Mahārāj, he still held Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur as his *Guru*, substantially. Formally, by the order of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, he took Gaura Kiśora Bābājī Mahārāj as *Gurudeva*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur selected Śrīla Gaura Kiśora for him, but from what we have found in him, he knew Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur as his *Guru* from the internal consideration. We find his outside and inside was filled with Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur not in the physical sense, but in the spiritual sense. Prabhupāda inaugurated many Maṭhs (Āshrams and Temples), and we find that he named the Deities “Vinoda-Vilāsa,” “Vinoda-Rāma,” “Vinodānanda,” “Vinoda-Prāṇa,” and so on.

He saw everything through his *Gurudeva*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur. His attempt to approach Śrī Śrī Rādhā Govinda or Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu is inconceivable without Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur’s intervention in him. I attempted to write something about Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur, and I thought that this was the key to Prabhupāda’s affection towards me. His attention was drawn to me because I tried to give the greatness of Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur’s character to the public in a systematic way. It is my own feeling. He can give everything to one who is a little attached to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur.

That was his spirit. He thought himself indebted to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's holy life, so much so, that he saw Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī and Gadādhara Paṇḍit in him. This is the highest ideal of *Guru-tattva*: Gadādhara Paṇḍit in *Gaura-līlā*, and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*, in *Madhura-rasa*. He also once said, "If we raise our vision and observe, we shall find Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī in *Gurudeva*." If we raise our head a little and search, then we shall find that it is Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself who is behind the function of *Gurudeva*; all others are channels or instrumentals, but the real source of Grace as *Guru* springs from the Original Source of Service, of Love. He saw Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura in that light.

साक्षाद्भक्तिवेन समस्तशास्त्रैरुक्तस्तथा भाव्यत एव सद्भिः ।
किंतु प्रभोर्यः प्रिय एव तस्य वन्दे गुरोः श्रीचरणारविन्दम् ॥

*sākṣādd-haritvena samasta-śāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhiḥ
kiṁ tu prabhor yaḥ priya eva tasya
vande guroḥ śrī-araṇāravindam*

"According to all the Scriptures, *Gurudeva* is directly the Lord Himself, and the pure devotees also realize the same. He is actually a simultaneously one and different Manifestation of the Lord, different in the sense that he

is the Lord's dearest servitor. I offer my obeisances unto the Lotus Feet of that Divine Master, *Śrī Gurudeva*."

We are asked to see *Gurudeva* not opaque, but transparent—transparent to such a degree that through him the highest end, the highest conception of Service, can be seen and attained. We can attain it there. If we are earnest, we shall find the highest link, from the very Source. So we are requested not to see *Guru* as limited in his ordinary personification, but as the Transparent Mediator of the highest function in his line. We can see this only if our vision is deep. According to the disciple's depth of *śraddhā*, he will see the Lord present in his *Gurudeva*. The *Guru* Principle, *Guru-tattva*, is very special, very noble, very broad and very deep.

So we are warned against thinking that our *Gurudeva* is in mortal relativity. Prabhupāda showed us by his ideal conduct how much earnestness one may have for *Gurudeva*. We have witnessed this in his practices and teachings. *Guruvaiḥa-ṇiṣṭhā*—exclusive adherence to the Service of *Śrī Guru*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura was his very being. Everything was Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

Indomitable Loyalty to Mahāprabhu:

Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda

Devotee: Is it true that Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī

Goswāmī would openly criticize Īśvarachandra Vidyāsāgar (a famous Sanskrit scholar of the time)?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Once Vidyāsāgar wrote in a book '*īśvara-nirākāra-caitanya-svarūpa*' ('The Lord is without any figure, and He is a mass of consciousness'). As but a young boy, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda went to him and challenged, "What have you written here? You say *Īśvara*, Lord, and then you say *nirākāra*, formless! Where have you found this? *Īśvara*, the Creator, the Master—He is *nirākāra*, formless?! Where have you found that *Īśvara* is *nirākāra*? He has a type of *ākāra*, form, and that is *Cidākāra*, a Transcendental Form. But you say He is only a mass of consciousness and without any figure, and He is the Creator? Where have you found this?" In this way he challenged Vidyāsāgar. But he was very young, and Vidyāsāgar may not have cared for the challenge. Nonetheless, he did his duty. That was his temperament—he would always challenge. He had to challenge whatever was against the line of Mahāprabhu, otherwise he could have the satisfaction of having done his duty.

Devotee: No compromise.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: No compromise. Protest. Once Rabindranāth Tagore wrote articles in some book under a pen-name, and Prabhupāda also wrote protesting

against those writings, also under a pen-name.

Devotee: Mahārāj, did you personally spend some time with Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes. In my later years with the mission I got chances to live with him quite often. Many persons used to come and visit him, and perhaps he liked to keep me with him to talk with them in a respectable way and to authoritatively explain his teachings to them. In his later years his memory faded, so when he spoke, some appropriate *ślokas* from the Scriptures were required to be supplied, to indicate and support his line of thought. Very few of us could do that. When he was trying to recollect a certain *śloka* in support of his speech, I could generally supply it immediately, and sometimes in advance as well. Of course, we originally heard all those *ślokas* and their proper representation from him only.

Infinite courage of the Pioneer

When Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura began the Service of the *Dhāma* and Mahāprabhu, he had to do many things to attract the public to accept his discovery of the *Dhāma* as authentic. At that time, the place was uninhabited. Gradually a brick building was made, and the worship of the Deity of Mahāprabhu was begun.

The Temple came later. Generally the *Brāhmaṇa* cooks he required would not stay there very long because it was an isolated place and there were violent elements nearby. To ensure that the Service continued, he had to undergo many undesirable things. For example, sometimes he had to prepare *gañjīkā* (hemp) by his own hand, for the cook! Otherwise, the cook would have left. At times, when 'respectable' persons came, he had to make arrangements for tobacco. There were many other trials.

Our Guru Mahārāj, Prabhupāda, also did similar things, to the extreme. When Anderson, the Governor, was invited to Māyāpur, at that time it was arranged with a Calcutta hotel to bring appropriate food for the function, including even meats. The hotelier was arranged to cater for the Governor and his entourage. And when Prabhupāda suggested some similar approach in foreign preaching also, I modestly protested that if the meat dishes, non-vegetarian dishes, were served in the *Maṭh* area it would bring criticism to the mission; to which he replied, "No, no! I decided all these things *thousands of births ago*. We have to do anything and everything for the Service of Mahāprabhu." That was his answer. *Vaikuṇṭha-vṛtti*—no *kuṅṭha*, no limitation: 'I am prepared to do anything for the Service of Mahāprabhu, for the propagation of His Mission. The Grace

of Mahāprabhu should be distributed throughout the length and breadth of the whole world. And for that, anything should be done. No stone unturned. Physical connection is no connection. We shall try to save our internal purity, that is all.' And to save so many souls from impure habits and diet, Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Śwāmī Mahārāj also took the risk of external contamination by filthy things. He had to go to the place of that anti-atmosphere to save them. If the house is on fire, one must run the risk of burns to his body if he really wants to save the inhabitants.

The Ṭhākur's Divine Vision and Foresight

Devotee: Śrīla Ṭhākur Bhaktivinoda also had a great vision for the world.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes. He saw in his divine eye that *Prema-dharma*, the Religion based on Divine Love, is so self-evident in character that the intelligent could never avoid embracing such a conception of Pure Religion as the highest. *Love—Prema*—the fine intellect cannot but detect the purity in the Love in religion, in its highest conception. His idea was: 'With an unbiased mind, the Western thinkers cannot but appreciate the doctrine of Divine Love, as given out by Śrī Chaitanya-dev. So I am sure that in the future many of the Western

scholars will come under the flag of Śrī Chaitanyadev.' This was his conviction, and he mentioned this in lectures that he delivered throughout Bengal.

When Śrīpād Bhakti Sāraṅga Goswāmī Mahārāj returned from preaching in England, he brought one Mr. Burchett back with him. A meeting was held at the Bagh Bazaar Maṭh. That meeting was presided over by a gentleman of the name Hiran Dutta, a good scholar and a Theosophist. In his talk he said, "When we were students at City College, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur delivered a lecture there to the effect that in the near future Western scholars would come and join the *Saṅkīrtana* under the banner of Mahāprabhu. Now, clearly, I can bear witness to the fact that his prediction is beginning to come true. I heard the lecture in my young days, and now in my old age I see the evidence—it is going to be true. I am very glad for that."

Devotee: Did Your Grace ever have the *darśana* of Ṭhākur Bhaktivinoda?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: No. He left the world in 1914, and I joined the mission in 1926, twelve years later.

Devotee: Perhaps you met other persons who had his contact?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: There was one Parvvat Mahārāj who lived next door to Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur when he

passed his old age in Godrum.

"To spread the Holy Name around..."

Parvvat Mahārāj said that there was only a partition wall between his house and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur's. That was at Surabhī Kuñja. From about three o'clock in the morning, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur would rise and take the Name of Kṛṣṇa, the *Mahāmantra*, at the top of his voice. Parvvat Mahārāj described it like this. As though calling someone from afar—with this spirit Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur would chant the Holy Name. That Mahārāj was astonished to see such behaviour. There was a cement chair, and when Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur felt tired he took his seat and rested there awhile. And then after some time he would again wander in the garden, chanting at the top of his voice, "*Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa!*" With such animation in his voice he was calling—calling a person; with this spirit, and not in a formal way, but with a material hankering, he was calling for the Lord.

There was another thing I also heard about him from another source, Rām Gopāl Vidyābhūṣaṇa, an M.A. and Barrister-at-law.

Rām Gopāl Vidyābhūṣaṇa told me,

"Once we went to visit him. We had heard that a Government officer, an educated man, had become a

Vaiṣṇava Bābājī. So we went to see him, and someone amongst us asked him, 'Please speak something about Kṛṣṇa and Kṛṣṇa-nāma (the Holy Name of Kṛṣṇa).'

"After a moment, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura then said, 'Oh, you want to hear something about Kṛṣṇa, you want? You want Kṛṣṇa-nāma?' In this way he continued for some time: 'Kṛṣṇa? You are so fortunate? You have come to hear Kṛṣṇa-nāma?'

"Then the consequence of that enquiry had such an influence on his body and mind, that as it is written by him personally in his own poem, *Śrī-Nāma-Māhātmya*:

কৃষ্ণনাম ধরে কত বল
বিষয়বাসনানলে মোর চিত্ত সদা জ্বলে
রবিতপ্ত মরুভূমি সম ।
কর্ণরঞ্জ পথ দিয়া হৃদি মাঝে প্রবেশিয়া
বরিষয় সুধা অনুপম ॥১॥

হৃদয় হইতে বলে জিহ্বার অগ্রেতে চলে
শব্দরূপে নাচে অনুক্ষণ ।
কণ্ঠে মোরে ভঙ্গে স্বর অঙ্গ কাঁপে থর থর
স্থির হইতে না পারে চরণ ॥২॥

চক্ষে ধারা দেহে ঘর্ষ্ম পুলকিত সব চর্ম্ম
বিবর্ণ হইল কলেবর ।
মূর্চ্ছিত হইল মন প্রলয়ের আগমন
ভাবে সর্বদেহ জর জর ॥৩॥

করি' এত উপদ্রব চিত্তে বর্ষে সুধাদ্রব
মোরে ডারে প্রেমের সাগরে ।
কিছু না বুঝিতে দিল মোরে ত' বাতুল কৈল
মোর চিত্ত-বিন্ত সব হরে ॥৪॥

লইনু আশ্রয় যা'র হেন ব্যবহার তা'র
বলিতে না পারি এ সকল ।
কৃষ্ণনাম ইচ্ছাময় যাহে যাহে সুখী হয়
সেই মোর সুখের সম্বল ॥৫॥

প্রেমের কলিকা নাম আদ্ভুত রসের ধাম
হেন বল করয়ে প্রকাশ ।
ঈষৎ বিকশি' পুনঃ দেখায় নিজ-রূপগুণ
চিত্ত হরি' লয় কৃষ্ণপাশ ॥৬॥

পূর্ণ বিকশিত হএণ ব্রজে মোরে যায় লএণ
দেখায় মোরে স্বরূপ-বিলাস ।
মোরে সিদ্ধ দেহ দিয়া কৃষ্ণপাশে রাখে গিয়া
এ দেহের করে সর্বনাশ ॥৭॥

কৃষ্ণনাম চিন্তামণি অখিলরসের খনি
নিত্যমুক্ত শুদ্ধরসময় ।
নামের বলাই যত সব ল'য়ে হই হত
তবে মোর সুখের উদয় ॥৮॥

*kṛṣṇa-nāma dhare kata bala
viṣaya-vāsanānale, mora citta sadā jvale,
ravi-tapta marubhūmi sama;*

karṇa-randhra patha diyā, hṛdi māṅhe praveśiyā
variṣaya sudhā anupama [1]

hṛdaya haite bale, jihvāra agrete cale,
śabda-rūpe nāce anukṣaṇa;
kaṅṭhe more bhaṅge svāra, aṅga kṛāpe thara thara,
sthira haite nā pāre caraṇa [2]

caḅṣe dhārā, dehe gharṇma, pulakita saba carṇma,
vivarṇa haila kalevara;
mūrcchita haila mana, pralayera āgamana,
bhāve sarvva-deha jara jara [3]

kari' eta upadrava, citte varṣe sudhādrava,
more ḍāre premera sāgare;
kichu nā bujhite dila, more ta' bātula kaila,
mora citta-vitta saba hare [4]

lainu āśraya yā'ra, hena vyavahāra tā'ra
balite nā pāri e sakala;
kṛṣṇa-nāma icchāmaya, yāhe yāhe sukhī haya,
sei mora sukhera sambala [5]

premera kalikā nāma, adbhuta rasera dhāma,
hena bala karaye prakāśa;
īṣat vikaśi' punaḥ, dekhāya nija-rūpa-guṇa,
citta hari' laya kṛṣṇa-pāśa [6]

pūrṇa vikaśita hañyā, vraje more yāya lañyā,
dekhāya more svarūpa-vilāsa;
more siddha deha diyā, kṛṣṇa-pāśe rākke giyā,
e dehera kare sarvva-nāśa [7]

kṛṣṇa-nāma cintāmaṇi, akhila-rasera khani,
nitya-mukta śuddha-rasamaya;
nāmera balāi yata, saba lay'e hai hata,
tabe mora sukhera udaya [8]

Caḅṣe dhārā—From my eyes tears flowed; *dehe gharṇma*—my body perspired; *mūrcchita haila mana*—I fell into a faint; *kari' eta upadrava*—the Holy Name created a great turmoil in me; *citte varṣe sudhā-drava*—causing a rain of nectarine current in my heart; *more ḍāre premera sāgare*—and casting me into the ocean of ecstasy, of Love; *kichu nā bujhite dila, more ta' bātula kaila*—I could not feel the environment around me, and became as though mad; *mora citta-vitta saba hare*—I lost myself in that thought.*

That gentleman, Rām Gopāl Vidyābhūṣaṇa said, "I saw with my own eyes that all these symptoms were displayed in his body and mind, simply upon hearing

*For an illuminating full translation extracted from Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's informal talks, see p.126-129, *Search for Śrī Kṛṣṇa: Reality the Beautiful*, published by Guardian of Devotion Press. —Ed.

our enquiry. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura said, 'You are so fortunate, you have come to hear *Kṛṣṇa-nāma* from me? *Kṛṣṇa—! Kṛṣṇa—!*' In this way, he entered into another domain, and so many symptoms and expressions appeared in his body and mind—convulsions, tears, all these things." I heard this from an eye-witness.

Devotee: Is it true that prior to Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's appearance the Vaiṣṇava tradition had become very much neglected?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Very few *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavas were to be found, just before the appearance of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. But he adjusted religion in a modern garb, and so it was easy for many regardful students to come forward and accept *śuddha* Vaiṣṇavism. It had been much molested by pseudo-followers. The real ideal had become eclipsed, and so for the inquisitive it was difficult to have real entrance and real attachment for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavism.

The so-called *Bābājīs* were especially responsible for disturbing the ideal. They hailed from any caste, they could marry, and they simply went on taking the name with no proper practice or feeling of real earnestness for the truth. They dragged on their lives with no pure practices or pure habits, and worst of all, in the name of religion they freely mixed with women. That brought

in return a hatred for them in society. Similarly, those '*Goswāmīs*' who took up initiating disciples as their trade also lost their honour in the general respectful society, because they had some low association. The *Bābājīs* and *Goswāmīs* lost their prestige in society because of their imitative character. But *Gauḍīya Maṭh* came out with the real spirit of religion, and pure practices subsequently followed. So the attention of the educated enquirers after truth was drawn to Gauḍīya Maṭh and they flocked together.

Devotee: After hearing about great personalities like Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, we feel ourselves to be very insignificant.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes. We can but do our might, contribute our might as much as possible for the Service of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

* * *

Chapter Five

The Kṛṣṇa Sun

If we want our shelter, it must come from overhead. *Āśraya* or shelter is not under our feet—shelter should be over the head. The principal Vedic *mantra* says,

तद्विष्णोः परमं पदं सदा पश्यन्ति सूरयः । दिवीव चक्षुराततम्

*tad viṣṇoḥ paramam padam sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ
divīva cakṣur ātatam*

The Holy Feet of Viṣṇu who is pervading everywhere (*yaḥ idam vyāpnotīti viṣṇuḥ*)—His feet, His lowest portion, is towards us. *Paramam* means 'very highly qualified, from all standpoints.' That is not to be neglected. From the standpoint of fine existence—knowledge as well as sweetness, the Absolute is *paramam padam*. *Sadā paśyanti sūrayaḥ*—the scholars are always conscious of the fact; this is the real basis of their life.

Man is not an animal, wandering over the earth, mountain or jungle, but the real man is in his consciousness, and he is always conscious of a higher entity. He is

always seeing or conscious of that ideal. *Divīva cakṣur ātatam*—vaguely or in a mystic way? No. As conspicuous, as clear and as real as the sun we see in the sky. *Tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam*. So we should really live and move in that consciousness. We are children of that conscious world.

Animal consciousness—the world of death

Tvaṁ tu rājan mariṣyeti, paśu-buddhim imāṁ jahi (Bhā: 12.5.2). At the conclusion of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*, Śrī Śukadeva Goswāmī gives a warning to Parīkṣit Mahārāj to be conscious of the firm basis of his teachings. Deception is like a serpent that stealthily comes to bite and kill. Ignorance comes stealthily and takes the soul down to the world of animal consciousness, and we are all moving under the deception of this heavy flesh and blood; therefore heavier ‘earth’ is necessary to lift us above, up onto its lap.

Divīva cakṣur ātatam. . . mariṣyeti, paśu-buddhim imāṁ jahi: “So do away with your animal consciousness that you are flesh and blood. No! You are not limited to flesh and blood, but you are a conscious unit, and you won’t die. You are not a member of this dying world, where everything is sure to die on account of its malidentification. This is forced upon you—you must die, you

must become infirm, you must be born, you must suffer from disease’—but all these are misidentification of your self with your body. This is animal consciousness: consciousness that you are an animal. But you are not so. You are a conscious unit, you are spirit, you are soul.”

Not only is the soul immortal, not only does God exist, not only is He the Absolute Dispenser of good and bad—but we, ourselves, are units of the conscious world. So *paśu-buddhim imāṁ jahi*—separate yourself eternally from that mania, from that misconception and false identification with this material aspect which is the result of your degraded life. Be reinstated in your glorious position as soul. And how is this possible? You are *taṭastha* (marginal) by constitution, so you cannot stand on your own two feet. You must have some shelter—either mundane within your mundane identification, or above that, you must have some shelter above your head. O *taṭastha-jīva*, you must have shelter in the *Śvarūpa-śakti* land, the final land.

The light of light

Paramaṁ padam, the Divine Feet of Viṣṇu, of Nārāyaṇa, of Kṛṣṇa, are like the sun to you, in the material comparison. That is, *cakṣuḥ*, or ‘seer,’ or that which makes feeling or seeing possible. If He is with-

drawn, everything is dark. If Viṣṇu's Supreme Plane is withdrawn, everything will be dark. That is the light of light, and you must be eternally conscious that above you is another soil, and your shelter is there, and you are a soul unit. You must bring about this radical change in you. That plane is your shelter. This world is not your shelter. It is a prison-house to you. This broad and graphic comprehensive consideration must be the basis of spiritual understanding, otherwise there is danger of Sahajiyāism or imitationism. *Tad viṣṇoḥ paramaṁ padam.* We have to cross this 'Hindenburg Line.'*

The Land of Service

Basically, this is the advice of *R̥g-veda*, the first *Veda* that descends from the upper world to this world: "The primary requirement for you all is to conceive that there is a world above, and 'above' means in the line of consciousness. Your highest identity is that of consciousness, and you must adopt that conscious world above you as your shelter. You will live and move there. This is the

*According to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* Paul von Hindenburg, 1847–1934, was a German field marshal during World War I. Noted for its immense strength, the 'Hindenburg Line,' also known as 'Siegfriedstellung,' was a defensive barrier improvised by the German Army on the Western Front, extending between Soissons and Laon.

radical change. Here, you are in the atmosphere of exploitation, but that is the land of service. There, you have to think in terms of service. That is on your head. That region is superior to the stuff you are made of. So do you want that connection? Or do you prefer to reign in hell than to serve in heaven? What do you like? Consider, and then come forward. You can have a prospect of attaining everything up to Kṛṣṇa, the Absolute. Otherwise you will have to revolve here in this world of 8,400,000 species":

जलजा नवलक्षाणि स्थावरा लक्षविंशतिः ।
कृमयो रुद्रसङ्घाकाः पक्षिणां दशलक्षकम् ।
त्रिंशल्लक्षाणि पशवः चतुर्लक्षाणि मानुषाः ॥

(विष्णुपुराण)

jalajā navalakṣāṇi sthāvarā lakṣa-vimśatiḥ
kṛmayo rudra-saṅkhyakāḥ pakṣiṇāṁ daśa-lakṣakam
triṁśal-lakṣāṇi paśavaḥ catur lakṣāṇi mānuṣāḥ

(Viṣṇu-purāṇa)

"There are 900,000 aquatic, 2,000,000 immobile, 1,100,000 worm-cum-insect, 1,000,000 bird, 3,000,000 animal and 400,000 human species."

"These are the 8,400,000 classifications of species throughout which you will have to wander, in the world

of action and reaction. You need to select your path. Do you want to be a member of the land of immortality? Do you want *janma-mṛtyu-jarā-vyādhi* (birth, death, old age and infirmity)—or immortality? If you want immortality, you will have to pay for the ticket. You will have to take the visa. You will have to prepare for such a categorical beginning. And the bond you have to sign is slavery—to Kṛṣṇa. *Jīvera svarūpa haya kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa*. If you want to go to that mystic land, the land of infinite hope, prosperity and prospect, you will have to go as a slave—because that plane is made of a higher stuff than you yourselves are.”

বৈকুণ্ঠের পৃথিব্যাদি সকল চিন্ময় ।

মায়িক ভূতের তথি জন্ম নাহি হয় ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ আদি ৫/৫৩)

vaikuṅṭhēra pṛthivy ādi sakala cinmaya

māyika bhūtera tathi janma nāhi haya

(C.c. Ādi 5.53)

There, earth, water, etc.—everything is made of consciousness, spirit. And above that, there is *ānandam* or ecstasy, not only a matter of consciousness. Although medicine seems bitter in the beginning, in a healthy state one may taste its sweetness. Our approach to the

Divine Realm may also be experienced in this way. So, in *Rāga-mārga*, the path of Divine Love, and in Kṛṣṇa-loka, there is not only consciousness, but beauty is the prevailing element there.

Ideal: a ship without a rudder drifts aimlessly in the ocean. But if I have taken to heart the particular ideal of Kṛṣṇa, Mahāprabhu and *Bhāgavatam*, then I am captured. My tuft of hair (*śikhā*) is tied with the feet of Guru Mahārāj and the Divine Grace. The tuft of hair is captured. The head is captured there, and everything will be done through the head, the part of the body which is most revered in this material world.

One who has a good ideal is in possession of the most valuable wealth. On the other hand, one will only hanker for *kanaka-kāminī-pratiṣṭhā*—popularity, materials of sense pleasure, and money—all these things; but they are all animal consciousness. They are all properties in the land of animal consciousness. A radical change must be effected in us if we really want a life worth living. Such is the importance of our ideal.

A man should be judged by his ideal. The greatness of the ideal he is trying to realize is to be marked. The man of the future, the man of tomorrow, should be judged by his ideal. If his ideal is great, he is great, because if he is sincere, tomorrow or very soon he will

reach it. So our ideal is the all-important factor. We may not attain our high ideal very easily. It is not inferior 'merchandise' to be disposed of cheaply in the market; it is most valuable. But whatever the cost, no matter.

We should feel within, "I want no less than that highest thing, that *Advaya-jñāna*, that Autocrat. That Goodness Autocrat, the Supermost Commander of everything. I want Him, and nothing less, and I should live and move, and feel in myself that whatever I shall do, at every second, I am meant for that. I am meant for my ideal. I have no time to waste, or to hesitate for anything.

If every moment I move in every way with the ideal in my heart, I shall always make some progress towards it. If I can just stay in touch with my ideal, that will guide and inspire me. In any and every action, whatever I shall do or undo, eat, rest, etc., my ideal will be overhead. And that will gradually take me out of all these entanglements and enticements, and one day or other I shall be able to reach it."

Divine attraction reveals the ideal

जातश्रद्धो मत्कथासु निर्व्विण्णः सर्व्वकर्मसु ।
वेद दुःखात्मकान् कामान् परित्यागेऽप्यनीश्वरः ॥

(भा: ११/२०/२७)

*jāta-śraddho mat-kathāsu nirvviṅṅaḥ sarva-karmmasu
veda duḥkhātmakān kāmān parityāge 'py anīśvaraḥ*

(Bhā: 11.20.27)

"For one who has had the chance to acquire a taste and become attracted to talks of Me, My activity and My movement, no other temptation can any longer hold him under its power. He becomes indifferent to all other activity. The outcome is that he can understand within that all other things bear some unpleasant reaction. Yet, although he can conceive that they are all pain-producing, he is helpless to immediately free himself from their clutches. The debt is already incurred, and his debtors won't allow him to escape: 'I am in the midst of so many acquisitions. It is not very easy to leave them at once by my sweet will. Previously, I consciously incurred some obligations, and I cannot abruptly cut off their connection; they won't let me free.'"

ततो भजेत मां प्रीतः श्रद्धालुर्दृढनिश्चयः ।

जुषमाणश्च तान् कामान् दुःखोदकांश्च गर्हयन् ॥

(भा: ११/२०/२८)

*tato bhajeta mām prītaḥ śraddhānur dṛḍha-niścayaḥ
juṣamāṅś ca tān kāmān duḥkhodarkāmś ca garhayan*

(Bhā: 11.20.28)

“But the *śraddhā* or pure attraction he has acquired for Me is of eternal nature. It cannot be subdued or cut off by any mundane or ordinary attempt. Despite undergoing so many sufferings, he goes on remembering Me. His thinking, aspiration and earnestness is for Me, and the more he is compelled to suffer from the pressure of the environment, a firmness in Me becomes more and more sure, and finally, invulnerable. And by standing the test of all these trials, he will stand—stand and grow beyond the jurisdiction of these mundane forces. The more pressure comes from outside, the more firmness he feels in the necessity of My help to him.

“At that time, he turns his back to all the pains of the world, and he keeps Me in front. He begins to move onward: ‘Whatever happens to me, I can’t complain. It is in my Master’s jurisdiction whether He sees fit for me to undergo these trials or not. But I won’t leave my new ideal—I can’t. Whatever may come, it may happen, never mind.’

“Still, he abuses himself: ‘What have I done? What have I done? It is rather justice that I should be tormented and troubled in such a way! It is not wrong! Really, just dealings have come to be exercised over me. Why should I have committed this wrong? I entered this wrong alliance, entered into the tribe of the *goondās* for exploi-

tation. The reaction that is coming to me is well and good.’ He blames himself. He does not blame the environment for troubling him, but he sees a concentration camp within. He blames his own self, his own free will and fate. That becomes the nature of his temperament at that time. He does not look to place the fault on the shoulders of others, but he takes the whole burden: ‘Yes, the environment is doing justice to me, the traitor, the ambitious, the oppressor of the environment.’ When he’s in such consciousness, his *Bhakti-yoga* or Devotional Engagement becomes more and more intense. The intensity of his progress accelerates.”

प्रोक्तेन भक्तियोगेन भजतो माऽसकृन्मुनेः ।

कामा हृदय्या नश्यन्ति सर्व्वे मयि हृदि स्थिते ॥

(भा: ११/२०/२९)

*proktena bhaktiyogena bhajato mā 'sakṛṇ muneh
kā mā hṛdayyā naśyanti sarvve mayi hṛdi sthite*

(Bhā: 11.20.29)

“With accelerated motion, his intensity towards Me grows. Then, by My appearance, all his internal and external discrepancies are gradually destroyed and evaporated. When by such an approach he reaches My Domain, or rather, I come down, extending My existence

to his heart—then everything else disappears.”

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छिद्यन्ते सर्व्वसंशयाः ।
क्षीयन्ते चास्य कर्माणि मयि दृष्टेऽखिलात्मनि ॥

(भा: ११/२०/३०)

bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiś chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ
kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi mayi dṛṣṭe 'kḥilātmani

(Bhā: 11.20.30)

Then *bhidyate hṛdaya-granthiḥ*: all the ties and entanglements, corners and angles, vanish. Crookedness vanishes. He finds himself in the midst of a straight, plain, graphic, spacious and all-embracing temperament. His atmosphere changes. All the ties of so many attractions to various achievements are at once dissolved. They have no necessity in this land.

Hṛdayenābhyanujñāto (Manu 2.1): internal approval comes to assure you that you have arrived in your own land. *Chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ*: there is no room for any doubt. You find that all your hankerings are more than fulfilled here: “I was searching; my whole body was searching.”

In *Vaiṣṇava-padāvali* (Anthology of Vaiṣṇava Songs) there is an expression: *prati aṅga lāge kānde prati aṅga mora*. In the acme of Divinity, *Madhura-rasa*, where

Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is *Śakti* (the Divine Potency of the Lord), She says, “My every limb is crying for the respective limb of My Lord; not only My Self, but every part of My Body earnestly aspires for the corresponding part of My Master’s.”

Chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ—Every part bears witness: “Yes, we have reached the destination we were striving for, this is our full-fledged satisfaction. This is my soil, this is my home!” Every atom of the body will say it. No trace of any doubt will be found, for there is no longer any room for that. But every atom will find its fulfillment: “This is my home, this is my home! I am in home comfort, I find.”

Our Cherished Goal

Kṣīyante cāsyā karmāṇi: (The Lord says about His devotee) “And the force of reaction won’t come to trouble him, to drag him down or attract him backwards. That, too, is severed.” *Mayi dṛṣṭe 'kḥilātmani*: “I am the fullest of the full perfection. He will be able to trace My friendship.”

This should be the course of our life, our cherished goal. *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* tells us this. Home, sweet, sweet home. You are a child of that soil. In one word, that is the goal.

Why is that the highest goal? Because that is your home. *Svarūpe sabāra haya, golokete sthiti*. This one word 'home' is sufficient to attract you. You are wandering in a foreign land, but here is your home. You'll get home comfort here, and you won't be able to deny that. So, back to God, back to home, back to Godhead.

God and Godhead

To avoid the Christian conception of 'God' our Guru Mahārāj, Prabhupāda, used the the word 'Godhead.' 'God' is a particular conception of the Absolute, but 'Godhead' represents *Bhagavattā* or the background of the conception of God, which is *Svayam Bhagavān*—the Supreme Lord *Himself*. This is the highest conception of God. This is the meaning. So more than 'back to God' is 'back to Godhead.' Śrīmad Swāmī Mahārāj named his spiritual magazine from this consideration.

Back to Godhead—there is home. Unsettled, we are running hither and thither with no principle of life, so our position is very sad. But this is a troublesome life. To think, 'I can't put my faith anywhere,' means that I can't find a friend anywhere. I am friendless, moving amongst foreigners or maybe enemies. But I must have a friend or some friendly atmosphere. I must come into such company in which I can put full faith, in which I

can believe and trust, otherwise my life will be miserable. If wherever I cast my glance I think, "I can't trust, I can't trust, all are enemies"—to live in such an atmosphere is to live in a particular prison-house; all uncertainty, all untrustworthiness; that is a very deplorable position. So, by God's grace *śraddhā* should come to us: "I can not only trust and believe, but I cannot but show my regard to a personality of the higher position." *Gurum evābhigacchet*.

Guru—the reliable source

When we suffer from uncertainty to the extreme, we shall hanker for connection with *Guru*, the reliable source. I can not only put an enquiry to him with faith and trust, but *Guru* is a guardian who is my well-wisher more than I am to my own self. 'Guardian' means a friend who thinks more of me than I think of myself. He knows more about my welfare than I do. Such is the position to have a guardian, a friend, a *Guru*.

আশ্রয় লইয়া ভজে তাঁরে কৃষ্ণ নাহি ত্যজে
আর সব মরে অকারণ

Narottama Ṭhākura says, *āśraya laiya bhaje tānre kṛṣṇa nāhi tyaje*: "If one can get a bona fide guardian, his future is ensured." Kṛṣṇa cannot very easily dismiss the guard-

ian, because the guardian has a solid position in the Lord's relationship; so if I enter into the domain of my guardian's care, my position will be ensured.

Āra saba mare akāraṇa. Others, who have not yet been able to tie themselves with the Holy Feet of their guardian or *Guru* are in an uncertain position, and they may be deviated by any agent. Their future is deplorable.

If through our *śraddhā* we can have a real ideal in life and acquire a real guardian, then certainly our future is ensured practically. Our only duty will be towards our guardian, our *Gurudeva*, and all other duties will be automatically accomplished.

So, to run throughout the length and breadth of this wide world, this land where nothing but various types of exploitation of various planes are existing, is to run as a ship without a rudder that can be swept away by seastorm this side and that, endlessly, without purpose. It is through *śraddhā* that we can connect with our highest goal of achievement and fulfillment. This matter must be solved. Then, real life begins. Any questions?
Devotee: Mahārāj, you mentioned that the material world is like a prison-house. Are the demigods such as Brahmā and Indra also prisoners?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: They are also prisoners, but as officers. Even prisoners may become officers on the

sanction of the jail government. In the prison government, senior and qualified prisoners are also given a chance for a post. Is it not a fact?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: So their position is like that. They are also imprisoned, but their position is a little higher. A duty is deputed to them, but they are nonetheless prisoners.

Devotee: The *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* says that there are fourteen planetary systems, and yet when we see the sky at night we see so many stars and planets, it seems that the number is unlimited.

Planes beyond planets

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Those fourteen worlds are not only of this physical type, but range from physical to subtle. Creation stems from consciousness, towards matter. The gradation from matter up to consciousness is progressively finer and finer—the gap between matter and soul.

To fill the gap from gross to subtle, there is a progression of more and more subtle planes that finally vanish in the conscious area. The gradation from *jaḍa* to *cetana*, from matter to spirit, or from unconsciousness to consciousness, occurs in so many steps, fine, finer, finest. It is to be conceived of in this way. Bhūr-, Bhuvar-,

Svar-, Mahar-, Janar-, Tapar-, Satya-loka, then Virajā, then Brahmaloaka or *Brahman*. In *Brahman*, we find the real existence of the soul. From Virajā downwards is the area of this material consciousness.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* we find:

इन्द्रियाणि पराण्याहुरिन्द्रियेभ्यः परं मनः ।

मनसस्तु परा बुद्धिर्बुद्धेयः परतस्तु सः ॥

(३/४२)

*indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur indriyebhyaḥ param manah
manasas tu parā buddhir buddher yaḥ paratas tu saḥ*

(3.42)

In brief, four stages of mundane elements in the middle are given here. First is matter, second is the senses, third is mind and fourth is judiciousness or reason. Finally, there is the soul. But in more elaborate detail, there are also seven subdivisions of Bhūr, etc., up to Satya-loka. In this line, the soul is found in *Brahman*. *Paratas tu saḥ*. The word *saḥ* refers to *Brahman*. Matter may also be subdivided as stone, water, heat, gas, ether, etc. In one word it is matter, but one will also find subdivision of matter from gross to subtle. In stone one will find earth, coal, wood, maybe gold or silver. But all these elements are felt by the senses, and thus the senses are

superior to all the gradations of matter.

Then there is the faculty of thinking or impulse: 'I want this, I don't want that.' But further, the faculty of judiciousness, reason or intelligence is superior: 'No, don't want that, it will produce a certain bad effect in you'; and so on. Even more subtle than the intelligence is *citta* (consciousness), which is not mentioned in *Gītā*; further is *ahankāra* (ego), and finally the realm of soul.

* * *

Chapter Six

Perspectives on the Absolute

Devotee: The conditioned soul has some attraction to Lord Śiva in Maheśa Dhāma. What is Lord Śiva's position?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: His position is as a master of this Māyā, Illusory Potency. He is not a slave of misunderstanding, although he remains in the relativity of misunderstanding. He remains in a masterly position. In his *Bṛhad-Bhāgavatāmṛtam*, Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī has explained that when one becomes liberated, Māyādevī comes to him, saying, "Why do you leave me? I would like to serve you, don't forsake me!" In this way, she again comes to offer her service to Śiva, that is, the liberated soul. If he is enticed by that charm, he may again enter the mundane world, but if he has the attitude and *śraddhā* within himself to deal indifferently, he neglects it and goes upwards: "No, I have my engagement, my duty. I have no time to satisfy anyone by accepting their service. I have my Lord, I must serve

Him.”

स्वधर्मनिष्ठः शतजन्मभिः पुमान् विरिञ्चतामेति ततः परं हि माम् ।
अव्याकृतं भागवतोऽथ वैष्णवं पदं यथाहं विबुधाः कलात्यये ॥

(भा: ४/२४/२९)

*svadharmma-niṣṭhaḥ śata-janmabhiḥ pumān
viriñcatām eti tataḥ param hi mām
avyākṛtaṁ bhāgavato 'tha vaiṣṇavaṁ
padaṁ yathāhaṁ vibudhāḥ kalātyaye*

(Bhā: 4.24.29)

Here, Mahādeva (Lord Śiva) says that if one can perform his duty in *Varṇāśrama-dharmma* (Godly socio-religious function) for one hundred consecutive births, he attains to the position of Lord Brahmā. *Svadharmma* means prescribed duties according to the *Varṇāśrama-dharmma* as sanctioned in the *Vedas*.

यतः प्रवृत्तिर्भूतानां येन सर्व्वमिदं ततम् ।
स्वकर्मणा तमभ्यर्च्य सिद्धिं विन्दति मानवः ॥

(गीता १८/४६)

*yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānām yena sarvaṁ idaṁ tatam
svakarmaṇā tam abhyarccya siddhiṁ vindati mānavaḥ*

(Bg. 18.46)

Also, in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*:

एतावान् साङ्ख्ययोगाभ्यां स्वधर्मपरिनिष्ठया ।
जन्मलाभः परः पुंसामन्ते नारायणस्मृतिः ॥

(२/१/६)

*etāvān sāṅkhya-yogābhyāṁ svadharmma-pariniṣṭhayā
janma-lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*

(2.1.6)

Sāṅkhya means *jñāna* (enlightenment by knowledge and renunciation, up to *Brahman*); *yoga* means *aṣṭāṅgādi yoga* (yoga meditation on *Paramātman*, headed by the eightfold system); and *svadharmma-niṣṭhā* means *niṣkāma-karma-yoga* (unselfish duty) in *Varṇāśrama*. *Etāvān* means, ‘they can lead us so far,’ that is, up to liberation. Then, *janma-lābhaḥ paraḥ puṁsām ante nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*: we must attain the fulfillment of our life in the Service of *Nārāyaṇa*, through *śraddhā*, from a *Guru*. This is the positive attainment, like a visa; and the first three classes are comparable to a passport: the *yoga* system, progressing towards the conception of *Paramātman*; *Varṇāśrama-dharmma*, or executing our duties in this world because the *Vedas* have recommended this for our good, but at the same time we must not want anything in return (*niṣkāma*); and also, *sāṅkhya—jñāna*, the process of *neti, neti, neti*, or ‘this is not, this is not, this is not,’ (*na iti*)—this is all gross, this is all gross, this is all gross. I am soul, I am consciousness, I

am spirit—the process of elimination. Perfection in one of these three methods may be compared to gaining a passport. But *janma-lābhaḥ*, the real fulfillment of life, is *ante-nārāyaṇa-smṛtiḥ*—the memory or consciousness of Nārāyaṇa, after death. Nārāyaṇa consciousness, Kṛṣṇa consciousness, can give us proper fulfillment, and that is the visa to the *Svarūpa-śakti* Realm (the Plane of Kṛṣṇa's Divine Potency). Is this clear?

Devotee: Yes. But sometimes it is said that Maheśa Dhāma is spiritual; it seems to be more like a marginal plane.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: It is spiritual. Maheśa Dhāma is of two kinds: first in the relativity of Māyā, and secondly, Śiva exists as Sadāśiva, the devotee Śiva. He may be entangled as a *grhastha*, but he can conceive that he has his superior position in a superior realm, and he holds the lowest position in that sphere. So, as I quoted, one who can successfully discharge his duty in the *Varṇāśrama* system for a hundred lifetimes attains to the position of Lord Brahmā, who is the leader of the whole *Varṇāśrama* system in this world. Then, Mahādeva says *tataḥ param hi mām*: “After this, if he can continue in this way, he progresses even further: he comes to my position.”

In the relativity of this universe, Lord Brahmā is the

creator and manager. His position is somewhat like a prime minister, but Lord Śiva's position is like that of a king. He can even dismiss the prime minister and dissolve the parliament. His position is higher, but he describes himself as *avyākṛtam*: “I have some limitation; I am a little indifferent.” *A-vi-ākṛtam* means ‘not well-specified,’ or ‘sometimes non-differentiated, with *tyāga* or *vairāgya*.’ Thus, he says, “Renunciation and abnegation are found to be predominant in me.”

“Then, above me there is another realm which is inhabited by the *Bhāgavata*, the followers of *Bhagavān*: it is they who attain to *Vaiṣṇava-pada* or the Plane of *Vaikuṅṭha*.” *Yathāham vibudhāḥ kalātyaye*: “And when the universal dissolution is ordered, at that time I and other ruling demigods can also get release and join them. Everyone may have that chance if they move properly. O gods, this is the situation.” Mahādeva said this, as mentioned in the *Bhāgavatam*.

A clear perspective of reality

We must reach an ontological conception of what is what. The measure of exploitation, renunciation and devotion. Devotion is divided into Scriptural Devotion and Loving Devotion. In this world, exploitation may be regulated work, *karma*, and uncivilized or non-

regulated work, *vikarma*. Then there is *jñāna*, *yoga*, *sāṅkhya*, *vedānta*, and so on. Brahmā has his peculiar position, then there is Śiva as the master of Māyā, and Śiva as the servant of Viṣṇu, Nārāyaṇa. Above that is Vaikuṅṭha, and then Goloka.

One should have some conception, as with consulting a map. 'Here is America, here is Australia, here is Japan, east, west, etc.' If travelling by ship, a map and so many references show the path. Also, practical knowledge is more reliable than theoretical emblems: 'Yes, this beacon and landmark verify that we have reached the Indian Ocean.' Practical application is superior to mere theory. *Śābde pare ca niṣṇātam*: a *Guru* of theoretical knowledge cannot help us. One who has practical experience of the way is reliable, and able to save us and give us the real position.

Devotee: Does a *jīva* attain the position of Śiva?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes, he can be 'Śiva,' when he is out of the clutches of Māyā; and the Vaikuṅṭha devotee is more than Śiva. When a spiritual molecule is free from the clutches of the exploitation tendency, he is known as 'Śiva.' *Pāśa-baddho bhavej jīvaḥ pāśa-muktaḥ sadāśivaḥ*: When he is entangled, he is 'jīva,' and when he is free, he is 'Śiva' (*Śivo 'ham*). But Kṛṣṇa said, when giving His blessings to Uddhava (*Bhā*: 11.14.15):

न तथा मे प्रियतम आत्मयोनिर्नशङ्करः ।

न च सङ्कर्षणो न श्रीनैवात्मा च यथा भवान् ॥

na tathā me priyatama ātmayonir na śaṅkaraḥ

na ca saṅkarṣaṇo na śrīr naivātmā ca yathā bhavān

"Neither Brahmā nor Śiva are as dear to Me as you; My elder brother Saṅkarṣaṇa is not as dear to Me as you, nor even Lakṣmī Devī. Even My own Self is not as dear to Me as you."

Such is the position of a devotee, a *bhakta*. He's above Brahmā, he's above Śiva, he's above Saṅkarṣaṇa, he's above Lakṣmī—he's above Kṛṣṇa Himself, by the free, sweet will of Kṛṣṇa. *Aham bhakta-parādhīnaḥ*. This is running in the current of love, not of justice: through affection.

As in India, in the physical sense or in the sense of law, we find that the husband is master of the wife. But it may be that through affection the wife is the guide of the husband. Through affection, it is possible. This is another line of love, and no matter of right. So when the Lord says, "You are more than My own life", it is not a false statement. "My devotee is dearer to Me than Myself. If any danger comes to him, I must stand in front. First finish Me, and then try to touch My son,

My devotee!" This is the attitude of the Lord. If any danger comes to the son, the father will come forth. "Oh no, first finish me, then try to harm my son!" It is the way of affection, and that is our solace.

Take the Road of Divine Aspiration

So Mahāprabhu says, "O *jīva*, take that direction. Try to purchase a ticket to that department. Go through *śraddhā*, faith and devotion, and you will be a real gainer.

Further, Uddhava says about the Gopīs, "I aspire to be a creeper or a shrub in *Vṛndāvana*, so that I can have the feet-dust of these Divine Damsels on my head." In His magnanimity, Mahāprabhu offered such great things to us. He is none other than Kṛṣṇa, because no one can give such a right to anyone and everyone without being Kṛṣṇa Himself. Therefore the devotees say that He is none other than Kṛṣṇa Himself, and more—Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa combined, because He gives the highest wealth of both. Only both combined as Dayāl Gaurāṅga are entitled to give this chance to the ordinary soul.

This is inconceivable. *Anārpita-carīm cirāt karuṇa-yāvatīṃhaḥ kalau*: Śrī Gaurāṅgadev descended in this Kali-yuga to give what had never been given before. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says, "What a great loss I am incurring, neglecting this chance! To whom should I

tell it, and who will believe that I am consciously missing such a great chance? Who should I tell about my disastrous misfortune?

দুর্লভ মানব জন্ম লভিয়া সংসারে ।

কৃষ্ণ না ভজিনু দুঃখ কহিব কাহারে ?

*durllabha mānava janma labhiyā saṁsāre
kṛṣṇa nā bhajinu duḥkha kahiba kāhāre?*

To whom should I divulge my heart? Who will care to give me audience? Such a great chance I am trampling under my feet—I have attained this human birth, and I have just come into the vicinity of the greatest fortune, and I neglect it?"

Nine petals of the Lotus

Devotee: We have heard that the nine islands of Nabadwip represent the nine fundamental processes of Devotional Service.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: The Holy Śrī Nabadwip Dhāma (*lit.* Navadvīpa) is envisaged as a lotus flower. The centre of the lotus is the Birthplace of Mahāprabhu and it represents *ātma-nivedanam* or self-surrender. One has to first surrender, and then all the practices of Devotion follow. The petals of the lotus represent *śravaṇam*,

kīrttanam, smaraṇam, pādasevanam, arccanam, vandanam, and *dāsyam* (hearing, chanting, remembering, serving the Lord's Feet, worship, prayer, and servitorship). *Sakhyam* (friendship) is situated half on one side of the Ganges and half on the other. In this way, the nine islands of Nabadwip are represented as a lotus flower embodying the Nine Standard Practices of Devotion.

Devotee: It is said that Kṛṣṇa appears once in a day of Brahmā. How often does Mahāprabhu appear?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Although every Kali-yuga He appears to spread *Nāma-saṅkīrtana*, and every Dvāpara-yuga Kṛṣṇa also comes, those are partial representations and not *Svayaṁ Bhagavān* (the Supreme Lord in Person). The *Yugāvātāras* or Descents for certain ages, are not *Svayaṁ Bhagavān*. *Svayaṁ Bhagavān* comes only once in the day of Brahmā, and so Mahāprabhu as Rādhā and Govinda combined (*Rādhā-Govinda-milita-tanu*) also appears only once in a day of Brahmā, in Nabadwip. In all other Dvāpara- and Kali-yugas ordinary *Kṛṣṇāvātāras* and *Gaurāvātāras* appear, only to preach general worship (*paricaryya*) and general *Nāma-saṅkīrtana*, as mentioned in the *Bhāgavatam* (*dvāpare paricaryyāyām kalau tadd hari-kīrttanāt*).

Devotee: Mahārāj, I have a question: in the *Navadvīpa-bhāva-taraṅga* by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, he seems to

to be having actual visions of Pastimes of the Lord on the various islands of Nabadwip; yet he writes in such a way that he also seems to be aspiring for those visions. Is he actually having those visions?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes, of course. His vision is inspired. The *Dhāma* has inspired these two perspectives in him. The *Dhāma* allows us to see it, according to the degree of our devotion. A doctor sees a patient according to his capacity. Higher intelligence can see deeper. Such is the case always. A higher politician can see a higher strategy, and so on.

या निशा सर्वभूतानां तस्यां जागर्ति संयमी ।

यस्यां जाग्रति भूतानि सा निशा पश्यतो मुनेः ॥

(गीता २/६९)

*yā niśā sarvva-bhūtānām tasyām jāgartti saṁyamī
yasyām jāgrati bhūtāni sā niśā paśyato muneh*

(Bg. 2.69)

“The detached, self-realized soul remains awake in the night of all beings, and the world of exploitation that all beings awaken in is similarly his night.”

A detector can see the depth afforded by its capacity. The X-ray can detect to a certain depth, the microscope has another dimension of utility. There is revelation

according to one's capacity. Deserve—and have.

मल्लनामशनिर्नृणां नरवरः स्त्रीणां स्मरो मूर्तिमान्
गोपानां स्वजनोऽसतां क्षितिभुजां शास्ता स्वपित्रो शिशुः ।
मृत्युर्भोजपतेर्विराडविदुषां तत्त्वं परं योगिनां
वृष्णीनां परदेवतेति विदितो रङ्गं गतः साग्रजः ॥

(भा: १०/४३/१७)

mallānām aśanir nṛṇām naravaraḥ
strīṇām smaro mūrttimān
gopānām svajano 'satām kṣitibhujām
śāstā svapitro śiśuḥ
mṛtyur bhojapater virāḍ aviduṣān
tattvaṁ paraṁ yoginām
vṛṣṇinām paradevateti
vidito raṅgaṁ gataḥ sāgrajāḥ
(Bhā: 10.43.17)

“O King, Śrī Kṛṣṇa then appeared as a thunderbolt to the wrestlers, as the supreme male to the men; as Cupid incarnate to the ladies, as a friend to the cowherds-men; as an emperor to the wicked kings, as a child to His father and mother; as death to Kāmsa, as the universal form of the world to the ignorant; as the Supreme Truth to the yogīs, as the Supreme Worshipful Lord to the Vṛṣṇis—and along with Baladev He entered the

arena.”

When Kṛṣṇa entered the arena, all the different categories of persons had different perspectives of Him, according to their inner eye. Experience of the truth must vary according to different attitudes or degrees of consciousness, and this is applicable everywhere.

Divine Sound

Devotee: Sometimes when travelling, we keep *japa-mālā* beads with us and chant quietly. Is this proper?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: You may do so, there's no fault. Others may enquire, “Why are you doing this? What makes you chant this Name?” But if you are afraid that you won't be able to give them a proper explanation [laughter], you may chant within.

Still, of course, you may say, “I have such faith, and so I am doing this. Through the medium of sound I can go to the truth. Sound is the medium utilized every where for every case, and here also, why shouldn't sound be the medium? Through the medium of sound, my mind wants to reach the place of origin of the sound vibration.

“The one who must reach the origin is more subtle than sound. Sound in the ordinary sense is a very gross thing compared to the *ātmā*, the soul. But this sound is

Vaikunṭha-śabda, which is far more subtle than ordinary sound. It possesses more efficacy, and my sound is a gross thing in comparison to it. When it touches my ear, I can find that it is very subtle, and I am gross, considering myself a bundle of material things around the spiritual existence.

“When this body will no longer exist, that sound will continue. It is undying. Its origin is Goloka, Vṛndāvana, the finest plane ever known to the world. The finest of the finest planes ever known.

“We know of an electrical plane, an ethereal plane, but there is finer and finer. So the finest element ever known to the world is the layer of beauty and sweetness and love. That is the most original conception of existence ever known to any consciousness. That is universal.”

The perspective of Love

Love means sacrifice. If they know the real meaning of love, none can say, ‘I don’t want love.’ Anyone may say, ‘I don’t want power; I may misuse it.’ To be in possession of power is a great responsibility. Love is also a responsibility, but it is unavoidable. We want love, from the higher—shelter in the loving lap, in the loving consideration. We want to enter a domain where everyone will love us. A home.

Home is sweet. Why? Because everyone there has some attraction and love, some blessing over us. Home is so sweet. All-favourable, all-loving, all-trustworthy. So we want to go back to home; home, sweet, sweet home.

Svarūpe sabāra haya, golokete sthiti. Muktir hitvān-yathā-rūpaṁ svarūpeṇa vyavasthitih. Mukti is self-determination; the stage of self-determination, as much as our self can determine; our utmost interest. That is home, that is Goloka, that is the Plane of Kṛṣṇa.

The most attractive sound is the sound of His flute. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has given a description:

रुन्धन्नम्बुभृतश्चमत्कृतिपरं कुर्वन्मुहुस्तुबुरं
ध्यानादन्तरयन् सनन्दनमुखान् विस्मापयन् वेधसम् ।
औसुक्यावलिभिर्बलिं चटुलयन् भोगीन्द्रमाघूर्णयन्
भिन्द्रण्डकटाहभित्तिमभितो बभ्राम वंशीध्वनिः ॥

rundhann ambubhṛtaś camatkṛti-param
kurvan muhus tumburam
dhyānād antarayan sanandana-mukhān
vismāpayan vedhasam
autsukyāvalibhir balim caṭulayan
bhogīndram āghūrṇayan
bhindann aṇḍa-kaṭāha-bhittim abhito
babhrāma vaṁśī-dhvaniḥ

“Arresting the movement of the clouds, astonishing the Gandharvas headed by Tumburu and breaking the meditation of the sages headed by Sanandana; astonishing the heart of Lord Brahmā, distracting the mind of the indomitable Balirāja with intense ecstasies, reeling the head of Ananta, the Serpent King who supports the earth planet, and piercing the covering of the universe—the vibration of Kṛṣṇa’s flute wandered all around.”

The sound of Kṛṣṇa’s flute began to reverberate. When that sound entered the ear of Brahmā, he became bewildered: “Oh, what can this mean, and from where is it coming? What is this? It’s puzzling me!” Then the Infinite Anantadev who keeps unlimited universes on His lap—His head began to reel. The Total Force who supports all these *Brahmāṇḍas*, so many lustrous masses—the intense vibration causes even His head to reel. It attacks the heart of Rādhārāṇī and the *sakhās* (friends); and the cows are also with their ears perked up, enquiring, “In which direction are we wanted to go?”

* * *

Chapter Seven

A Holy Day

1. The Appearance of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī

Today is the Holy Day of *Vasanta-pañcamī* (the fifth day of the light fortnight of the moon, month of Māgh, when Kṛṣṇa is worshipped with the new flowers of spring. On this day, the holy advent of Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī occurred. Her father was Śrī Sanātana Mīśra of Nabadwip, who was a *Brāhmaṇa* and great devotee of Lord Viṣṇu. Śrīmatī Viṣṇupriyā Devī is the Eternal Consort of Śrī Gaurasundar in His feature of Gaurā-Nārāyaṇa, and according to *Śrī-Gauragaṇoddeśa-dīpikā* she is directly Satyabhāmā in Kṛṣṇa’s *Dvārakā-līlā*.

She was the second wife of Śrīman Mahāprabhu in the householder period of His Pastimes. From childhood, she was devout in the Divine Service of the Supreme Lord. Kāśīnātha Paṇḍit was the intermediary in Her marriage to Mahāprabhu.

She was the ideal of Divine Self-surrender at the Lotus Feet of Mahāprabhu. When she was only fourteen, Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*, and after that she lived the

rest of Her life in penance. From early morning she would take the Holy Name the whole day, and for every *Mahāmantra* that she chanted, she would put one grain of rice into a clay pot. After chanting her quota, she would take that rice and cook it and offer it to the Lord. That was all she would take for her subsistence, so gradually she became emaciated. She passed her days in this way.

Her brother was her guardian after Śacīdevī departed, and ultimately she had a *Śrī-Mūrtti* (Deity) of Mahāprabhu, and she would worship Him in that Form. And since the time of Viṣṇupriyā, that worship is being continued up to the present in the Temple here in Nabadwip known as 'Mahāprabhura Bāḍī' (the Home of Mahāprabhu). So this day of the year is connected with her holy memory, and we may achieve her Grace if we honour this time in her name, discussing her Pastimes. She will be propitiated and Śrī Chaitanyadev will also be pleased with us, giving us a step forward in our transcendental march towards Him.

2. The Appearance of Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi

Today is also the appearance day of Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. He is considered to be Vṛṣabhānurāja of Varsānā, Vṛndāvana, the father of Śrīmatī Rādhā-

rāṇī. Śrī Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi was born in a *Brāhmaṇa* family at Chaṭṭagrām, and he bore the title 'Vidyānidhi' on account of his scholarship. Apparently he was a man of luxurious habits. In those days, people who could afford it would have a house in Nabadwip on the banks of the holy Ganges river; they would from time to time visit Nabadwip to regularly bathe in the Ganges and remain for some time in this Holy Place, and then return to their homes to continue their livelihood. So, Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi also had a house in Nabadwip.

Here, in *Gaura-līlā*, Gadādhara Paṇḍit was the Representation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī Herself. At that time, Gadādhara Paṇḍit was a young boy. He was younger than Mahāprabhu. Mukunda Datta was a follower and admirer of Mahāprabhu Śrī Chaitanyadev, and he also came from Chaṭṭagrām, the village of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. He knew Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi to be a man of higher religious type, that is, a *Bhāgavata* type or *Kṛṣṇa-bhakta*. But outwardly Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi lived a life of luxury. He was a well-to-do man, a general *zāmindār* (state landowner). Mukunda Datta naturally knew him when he came to Nabadwip, since he hailed from the same place. Mukunda Datta went to Gadādhara Paṇḍit and asked him, "Would you like to have the

darśana of a Vaiṣṇava?”

From childhood Gadādhara Paṇḍit was very fond of Vaiṣṇavas and *Kṛṣṇa-nāma*. He had much fondness for Nimāi Paṇḍit, when the Lord returned from Gayā. Previously he was very much afraid of Nimāi Paṇḍit, because whenever They met, Nimāi Paṇḍit would always tackle him with some apparent quarrel about etymology or something of that nature. So, after returning from Gayā, when Śrī Chaitanyadev expressed His Devotional Aspect, He said one day, “Gadādhara, from your very childhood you are a devotee of Kṛṣṇa, and My days have been wasted discussing grammar and mundane literature. But you, Gadādhara, My friend—your life is very successful. You have fulfillment of life. From the beginning you are fond of *Kṛṣṇa-nāma*.” So, from the beginning Gadādhara Paṇḍit’s heart was towards Kṛṣṇa. Therefore when Mukunda Datta asked him, “Would you like to see a Vaiṣṇava who has come from afar?” the reply came, “Yes, yes, I shall go; take me there.”

So Mukunda Datta took Gadādhara Paṇḍit to Pundarīka Vidyānidhi. And what kind of Vaiṣṇava was Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi? He was sitting on a luxurious bedstead, smoking a very ornate and valuable pipe. His head was adorned with beautiful oiled curly locks, and many valuable pastes were anointed on his body. Two attendants

fanned him on either side.

Gadādhara Paṇḍit thought, “Mukunda has brought me to this luxury-loving man sitting on the bedstead and smoking? What type of Vaiṣṇava has he brought me to see?” He was disappointed at heart, and Mukunda could guess it. Mukunda Datta was a very good singer, and in a very sweet tone he sang this *śloka* of *Bhāgavatam*:

अहो बकी यं स्तनकालकूटं जिघांसयापाययदप्यसाध्वी ।
लेभे गतिं धात्र्युचितां ततोऽन्यं कं वा दयालुं शरणं व्रजेम ॥

aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭam
jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatim dhātry ucitām tato 'nyam
kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇam vrajema

This *śloka* was chanted by Mukunda in a very sweet tone, and this created a wonderful effect in Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. The *Bhāgavatam* says, “Who else but Kṛṣṇa should we approach? Who can be so kind, so gracious? There is limitless Grace in Him. Why? Bakī—Pūtānā, came to kill Him in a treacherous way, taking the garb of *dhātrī*, a motherly garb. In this way she came to try and kill Him; yet Kṛṣṇa gave her a position as a nursemaid in His group of assisting mothers. So gracious is the Lord. Who else can we approach for our good?”

This is the meaning of the verse. “She painted deadly poison on her breast, and came to suckle the boy Kṛṣṇa. So treacherous was her action. In the garb of motherly affection she tried to murder the boy, and she was given such a high position as an attendant of His mother. She was elevated to the motherly group. Such Grace, such Mercy He showed, without considering or passing judgment on the worth of that action. So other than that kindhearted and gracious Kṛṣṇa, where else should we go for shelter?”

This entered the heart of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi and began to vibrate, and produced such force that he was stunned; then shivering began, and madly gesticulating, he began to pull his hair and tear his silken dress, kicking over the tobacco and pipe. His rich bedding and dress were ruined, and he began to roll on the ground and cry, *kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajema*—“In whom shall we take shelter other than Him?”

Then Gadādhara Paṇḍit thought, “Oh, I have committed a great offence in my mind, thinking that he was not a Vaiṣṇava, because of his fashionable dress and style. Really, how great a Vaiṣṇava he is—what a wonderful effect the memory of Kṛṣṇa caused in him!”

Then Gadādhara Paṇḍit revealed his mind.

“Mukunda, I have committed offence against this great

Vaiṣṇava. What will be my fate? When I first saw him, I shunned him; I committed offence. I think that if I take *mantra* from him—become his disciple—then he may forgive all my offences. There is no other way to be absolved from this *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. I shall have to inform my Lord Gaurachandra, Nimāi Paṇḍit, about this.”

So they left the place of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi, and Gadādhara went to take Nimāi Paṇḍit’s permission to become the disciple of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi.

Before anyone knew that Puṇḍarīka had come from Chāttagrām to Nabadwip, and even before Mahāprabhu had met him, Mahāprabhu was seen to suddenly cry, “*Bāp Puṇḍarīk! Bāp Puṇḍarīk!*” In the mood of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, Nimāi was taking his name. *Bāp* means ‘father.’ So He was calling, “Father, Puṇḍarīka! Father, Puṇḍarīka!” Nimāi Paṇḍit was chanting like this, in the mood of Rādhārāṇī.

When Gadādhara made his proposal to Mahāprabhu, the Lord immediately replied, “Yes, very good proposal. Go and accept him at once.” Gadādhara Paṇḍit represents Rādhārāṇī in *Gaura-līlā*, and Puṇḍarīka is Rādhārāṇī’s father in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*: the *Guru* is like the father, and the disciple is like the child. So Mahāprabhu at once approved and Gadādhara took initiation from Puṇḍarīka

Vidyānidhi. He was none other than Vṛṣabhānūrāja, and Gadādhara was the incarnation of Rādhārāṇī in *Gaurā-līlā*.

Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi would not take bath in the Ganges because he could not tolerate that his feet would touch the holy Ganges river. Before daybreak, he would go to the Ganges and take some of the water on his head. He did not go to the Ganges by day, because he could not tolerate to see persons who would dive into the water or spit there and contaminate the pure, holy water by misusing it. Before worship, prayer, etc., the general *paṇḍit* section may bathe in the Ganges and fast to purify their bodies of sin. But Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi would rather drink some Ganges water prior to his daily worship and duties, thereby teaching us the proper worshipful respect due to the Gaṅgā.

In Purī, his dearest friend and associate was Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara. When he went to Purī, he felt some pain in his heart that the priestly servants of Lord Jagannāth dressed the Lord in starched cloth, which is generally considered impure. When cloth is manufactured by handloom, the thread is soaked in boiled rice water which acts as a paste to hold it firm in the loom. That cloth is considered impure, and must first be rinsed in water before offering it to the Deity. But in Purī, that was

not the practice. They directly used starched cloth for dressing Lord Jagannāth, and Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi could not accommodate this.

That night, he dreamt that both Jagannāth and Balarām came to him and dealt slaps to his cheeks, saying, "You have come here to point out the defects in My servitors? What is this!"

They both began to slap him, and the dream was so intense that when he rose in the morning he found that both his cheeks were inflamed. He expressed to his most intimate friend, Svarūpa Dāmodara: "My dear friend, Svarūpa Dāmodara, such is my position. I had this objectionable feeling my heart towards these servitors, so Jagannāth and Balarām have punished me in this way. See the swelling on both cheeks!"

Such was the nature of Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. In essence, we are told that he is the father of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, incarnated here as Puṇḍarīka Vidyānidhi. A slight holy association of this day, his appearance day, will help us a great deal in our advancement of spiritual life.

3. The Appearance of Śrī Raghunandana Ṭhākura

Thirdly, this is also the birthday of Raghunandana Ṭhākura. He was born in a place named Śrīkhaṇḍa, near

Kātwā, in a Kavirāj family, a lineage of Ayurvedic doctors. Raghunandana was the son of Mukunda Kavirāj, who was such a notable doctor that even kings called for him for treatment. Raghunandana was a bachelor his whole life. His figure was extraordinarily beautiful, and he was very fond of dancing. From the beginning he was, of course, a natural devotee.

The family of Mukunda Ṭhākur worshipped their ancestral Deity at home. Once, when Raghunandana was a growing boy, who had perhaps only recently received the sacred thread and admission to worship, his father asked him, "I'm going out and won't return in time. You please worship the Deity and feed Him—offer *bhogam* for His food." His expression was, "Please try to feed my Deity."

When he was away, Raghunandana's mother cooked many items and brought them to the temple, and asked Raghunandana to offer them to the Deity. Generally the doors are kept closed during worship, so behind the closed doors Raghunandana offered and prayed to the Lord,

"Please take these dishes I am offering You—please eat."

But the *Śrī-Mūrtti* did not answer or come forward to eat. Raghunandana began to cry.

"My father will rebuke me! He has requested me to feed You, and You are not eating. I'll be punished. You have to take this food!"

The sincere boy began to cry in such a way that Kṛṣṇa had to eat. Raghunandana was satisfied, and came out from the Deity room.

His mother came to remove the *Prasādam*.

"What is this? All the plates are empty!"

Raghunandana replied,

"You asked me to feed the Deity. He has taken."

His mother said angrily,

"You, boy, you have eaten it! The Deity doesn't eat. We offer, everything remains, and afterwards we take the *Prasādam*. You wicked boy, you have turned out to be such a rogue—you have eaten everything."

"No, no, I did not eat, the Deity ate everything."

"This is impossible, you foolish boy! Do you want to make a fool of me? This can never happen!"

He began to cry.

"No, I'm speaking the truth."

"Alright, let your father come, and I shall ask him to punish you."

Mukunda returned, and Raghunandana's mother complained,

"Your boy has grown to be such a rogue! He says the

Deity has eaten.”

Raghunandana also petitioned his father,

“Yes, the Deity has eaten. He would not take in the beginning, but I began to cry, and then He ate.”

“Is this true?”

“Yes, it is true my father, I am not lying.”

“Can you show me?”

“I shall try.”

So he was given another chance to worship, and from a hidden place his father could see that the Deity had actually taken the food.

Such a devotee was Raghunandana Ṭhākura. When he danced in *Saṅkīrtana*, it was such a charming scene that even Mahāprabhu was attracted. During the Jagannāth *Rathayātrā* seven special groups would chant and dance, and in the party from Śrikhaṇḍa we find that Raghunandana was the dancer.

So today is the day connected with the memory of Śrī Raghunandana Ṭhākura, who is considered to be Pradyumna *Avatāra*. Many more incidents occur in his pastimes—I have only touched on them. It is also said that near the banks of the lake Madhu-puṣkariṇī there is a Jambu tree, and according to his wish two Kadamba flowers bloom on that tree every day for the worship of his Deity. Many miracles are found in his pastimes.

4. The Appearance of Śrī Raghunātha Dās Goswāmī

Then, the fourth personality is Śrī Raghunātha Dās Goswāmī. He was born nearly five hundred years ago in Kṛṣṇapur village, Hooghly District. He came in the Kāyastha caste. His father, Hiraṇya Majumdār, was a very rich man. His father had one brother, Govardhana, but Raghunātha was the only child. His father and uncle were state landowners. At that time, they collected 20 lakhs (2,000,000) rupees in taxes. 12 lakhs was to be paid to the king, and their net income was 8 lakhs.

Raghunātha heard about Mahāprabhu after His *sannyāsa*. Hiraṇya and Govardhana had association with Advaita Ācāryya, and they used to make an annual contribution to all the superior Sanskrit scholars and their schools, in Bengal, of the time.

When Mahāprabhu went back to Śrī Advaita Ācāryya's house (Advaita-bhavan) after His *sannyāsa*, Raghunātha Dās came and saw Him, and became mad with Love of Kṛṣṇa. His heart was completely melted by Mahāprabhu's beauty and charming Personality, His Devotion and His Teachings of Devotion for Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu Himself was also aware of this. Raghunātha would not leave Mahāprabhu, but the Lord told him, “Go home. Don't be over-enthusiastic; control yourself.

Keep your Divine Love for Kṛṣṇa within your heart, and don't express it outwardly. Don't advertise it. Very soon the time will come when Kṛṣṇa will guide you. He will make a way for you. Don't allow any external show but keep it within your heart."

স্থির হঞা ঘরে যাও, না হও বাতুল ।
ক্রমে ক্রমে পায় লোক ভবসিন্দুকুল ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ মধ্য ১৬/২৩৭)

sthira hañyā ghare yāo, nā hao bātula
krame krame pāya loka bhava-sindhu-kūla

(C.c. Madhya 16.237)

"Compose yourself and go home—don't be a madman. One reaches the shore of the material ocean gradually."

Then, he later came into the association of Nityānanda Prabhu in Pāṇihāṭi. Nityānanda Prabhu said to him, "Give a feast here for My followers. You are the son of a rich man, so manage to give a feast here for My followers."

Raghunātha did so, and Nityānanda Prabhu was very satisfied. He also blessed him, saying, "Very soon your bright day will come." And He addressed His devotees, "See this young boy—he has immense wealth; in abundance he has everything required for a young man's

enjoyment, but he does not care for it. Kṛṣṇa's Grace has come down into his heart, so he does not care for anything of this world; but he's mad to leave his home of material grandeur and become a street beggar. He has become mad for Kṛṣṇa. Just see this high ideal—devotion, attraction. Love of Kṛṣṇa has made him mad. He is very, very fortunate. This royal dignity and prosperity cannot please him."

Anyway, he returned home. But one day Hiraṇya and the others noticed that he no longer entered the inner section of the house. He began to stay in the outer section only. His father and other guardians thought that his condition had become very grave, so ten men were engaged to keep guard that he may not leave.

One day in the early morning before sunrise, the family Guru, Yadunandana Ācāryya, suddenly entered the house. Finding Raghunātha in the outer section of the house, he met him and requested him, "I am going out for some important business, but there is no one to worship my Deity. So please ask one *Brāhmaṇa* disciple in my name to serve the Deity for a day or two during my absence." As Yadunandana Ācāryya left, Raghunātha went with him. The guards saw him going with the family Guru, so they did not interfere. On the way, Raghunātha requested the Guru, "You may go ahead

with your business, and I shall request the gentleman to do the worship in your absence.”

The Guru left. Raghunātha took advantage of the situation. Perhaps he requested that man to do the service, but he started off in the direction away from Purī. He knew that as soon as they realized at home that he wasn't returning, they would send men to search for him on the way to Purī. So for the whole day he walked in the opposite direction. In the evening he stopped at a cowherdsman's house, took a little milk from him and passed the night in the cowshed. Then in the morning he started for Purī.

When his guardians found that Raghunātha had not returned home, they heard from the guards that he had gone with the family Guru. They went to the Guru's house, but Raghunātha was not to be found. Then they thought that he must have left for Purī, and they sent ten men to that side. They returned without finding him. In this way, Raghunātha cleverly managed to escape. For twelve days he walked to Purī, taking food here and there for only three of those days. On the other days no food was necessary. He was helped by Divine Love, surcharged.

He had already heard that Mahāprabhu was at the Gambhirā, the Kāśī Mīśra Bhavan. He went there, and

in the courtyard fell flat in obeisance unto Mahāprabhu.

Mukunda Datta announced to the Lord,

“Raghunātha has come.”

Mahāprabhu said,

“Yes, look after him. He has come with great difficulty, walking and walking without food. Take care of him for a few days. Then, he will manage for himself.”

That was the direction of Mahāprabhu. For a few days Raghunātha took *Prasādam* there. After that he began to beg at the gate of the Jagannāth Temple.

The parents now thought it was impossible to bring him back, and they did not make any further attempt. But they sent some money with one *Brāhmaṇa* and two servants, instructing them to hire a house and offer Raghunātha a place to stay, and see that their son may not die without food. They tried their best, but Raghunātha continued to subsist on alms. Over a period of two years, Raghunātha invited Mahāprabhu to take *Prasādam* at that house, and the Lord did so for his satisfaction. After that, Raghunātha left that idea, thinking, “This is only to produce some name and fame for me. Mahāprabhu is not pleased with such *Prasādam*.”

Svarūpa Dāmodara was the dearest Attendant of Mahāprabhu, and a very good scholar as well. Raghunātha was also a scholar—we find that later he left the

world beautiful poetry in Sanskrit. Mahāprabhu gave Raghunātha over to the charge of Svarūpa Dāmodara, saying, “I request Svarūpa Dāmodara to take your charge, and he will advise you what will be necessary for your devotional life.”

But suddenly one day, Raghunātha approached Mahāprabhu:

“Why have You managed to take me out of my house, and what is my best benefit? If You please tell me in Your own words, my heart will be satisfied.”

Mahāprabhu said,

“I have given you over to the charge of Svarūpa Dāmodara. He is more qualified than even Myself. Still, if you want to hear something directly from Me, then I say in brief:

গ্রাম্যকথা না শুনিলে, গ্রাম্যবার্তা না কহিলে ।

ভাল না খাইবে আর ভাল না পরিবে ॥

অমানি মানদ হঞা কৃষ্ণনাম সদা ল'বে ।

ব্রজে রাধাকৃষ্ণ সেবা মানসে করিলে ॥

grāmya-kathā nā śunibe, grāmya-vārtā nā kahibe

bhāla nā khāibe āra bhāla nā paribe

amāni mānada hañyā kṛṣṇa-nāma sadā la'be

vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa sevā mānase karibe

“Don't indulge in worldly talk, don't hear worldly talk. Try your best to avoid mundane matters. Don't eat delicious dishes, but take whatever ordinary food may come of its own accord; and don't dress luxuriously. Always try to take the Name of Kṛṣṇa with the attitude of giving respect to others, without expecting respect from anyone. Be humble, but never aspire after respectful dealings from others. In this way, try to take the Name of Kṛṣṇa constantly. And within, try to serve Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in Vṛndāvana. Mentally, be in Vṛndāvana rendering Service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa-līlā.”

Mahāprabhu told Raghunātha that this was the essence of His advice to him. Then, He again took Raghunātha's hand and offered it to the hand of Svarūpa Dāmodara. He said, “I am giving you to the charge of Svarūpa Dāmodara. He is the best Spiritual Teacher. He will take care of you.”

After Raghunātha's arrival in Purī, Mahāprabhu stayed there continuously for sixteen years. After that, Mahāprabhu departed from the world. Raghunātha left Purī and went to Vṛndāvana, thinking, “I have what is to be had; now I only want to see Vṛndāvana Dhāma once, and then I shall leave this body by jumping from the highest peak of Govardhana.” With this idea he went to Vṛndāvana, but there he came into contact with

Sanātana Goswāmī and Rūpa Goswāmī—he found the beginning of a new life. He thought, “What is this? Mahāprabhu has not departed—He is living in them.”

Mahāprabhu delegated Rūpa and Sanātana with the power to preserve the Devotional Current they had received from Him, and to present it in a new light. They were asked to prove by drawing upon different Scriptures that Mahāprabhu’s Teachings are the very gist and purpose of all the Scriptures. As in *Bhagavad-gītā*, *vedaiś ca sarvair aham eva vedyah*: “The attempt of every Revealed Scripture is to show Me as the Highest Centre—I am the Absolute.” So Mahāprabhu said, “Kṛṣṇa is the Absolute. With the help of the different Scriptures and historical reference—by all means possible—try to prove that Kṛṣṇa is *Svayaṁ Bhagavān*, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, and that *Vraja-līlā*, *Vṛndāvana-līlā*, is the highest achievement.”

The two brothers had already begun that work when Raghunātha came into their association, and he found, “Oh! Mahāprabhu is here.” He abandoned the idea of leaving this world, and joined Rūpa and Sanātana as their disciple. Mahāprabhu had already ordered Sanātana Goswāmī, “My followers are very poor and helpless. You’ll have to look after them whenever they come to Vṛndāvana. You’ll have to be the caretaker of all my

disciples that come to Vṛndāvana.” So Raghunātha came to Sanātana Goswāmī, and Sanātana took care of him.

Raghunātha was so self-forgetful that one day as he was sitting on the banks of Rādhā-kuṇḍa and taking the Name, a tiger came just beside him to drink water, but Raghunātha paid no attention. Suddenly, Sanātana Goswāmī came upon the scene. He was astonished. Up until then Raghunātha had lived under the shade of a tree, but Sanātana said, “Please construct a hut to live in. Don’t disregard my request—I entreat you to do this.” Then from that time he managed to construct a small dwelling and stay there. His abnegation, *vairāgya*, was incomparable. Sanātana, Rūpa, and all the Goswāmīs’ indifference to worldly enjoyment was extreme, but Raghunātha’s abnegation surpassed all.

When he was in Purī, sometimes he would beg *Prasādam* at the gate of the Jagannāth Temple, and sometimes he would take *Prasādam* at a *chatram* or free kitchen where rich men distribute *Prasādam* for beggars. But then he thought, “I am taking what is due to others’ *karma*.”

The unsold Jagannātha *Prasādam* is given to the cows of Jagannāth Purī. But when it becomes so stale that it emits a bad odour, even the cows cannot eat it. So now Raghunātha would wash that *Prasādam* with sufficient

water, and adding a little salt he would eat that. Mahāprabhu heard about this, and one day when Raghunātha was taking that *Prasādam* Mahāprabhu approached and suddenly took some and ate it. He said, "Oh! I have tasted many times the *Prasādam* of Jagannāth, but such sweet *Prasādam* I have never taken anywhere!"

So, what is the taste in *Prasādam*? It is not mundane. Raghunātha had such intense faith in *Prasādam* that he lived on apparently rotten things with a little salt—and he was the son of a family of kingly opulence. So much indifference was in him. And in his last days in Vṛndāvana, he would pass each day taking only a pot of *ghol*, buttermilk. This is not possible for a man of flesh and blood. Great souls like the Goswāmīs are really personalities come down from the other world, and so it was possible for them to show the ideal of abnegation. It is not possible for ordinary humans of flesh and blood to observe such a degree of abnegation without dying. But the Goswāmīs created the standard and ideal by such *vairāgya*. At the same time, Raghunātha studied Rūpa Goswāmī's presentation of the highest type of *Rasa* or Devotional Sentiment—*Madhura-rasa*.

The Acme of Divine Service

Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī appreciated the

acme of Divine Service, the culminating point of Divine Service—*Rādhā-dāsyā*, which is Servitude unto Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. Therefore he is called the *Prayojanācāryya*. Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī is generally conceived of by his successors as the *Ācāryya* of *Sambandha-jñāna*. *Sambandha* refers to 'what is what'—'what is my position in the spiritual heirarchy.' That was explained most clearly by Śrīla Sanātana Goswāmī. And *Abhidheya*—what we should cultivate in order to attain to our objective—was mainly given by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. He taught us how we can attain fulfillment of our life in the Domain of Love. And what is particularly the highest point of our attainment, or *Prayojana*, was very vividly shown by Śrīla Raghunātha Dāsa Goswāmī. In his famous *śloka* he says:

आशाभैरैमृतसिन्धुमयैः कथञ्चित् कालो मयातिगमितः किल साम्प्रतं हि ।
त्वञ्चेत् कृपां मयि विधास्यसि नैव किं मे प्राणैर्व्रजे न च बरोरु बकारिणापि ॥

*āśābharair amṛta-sindhumayaiḥ kathañcit
kālo mayātigamitaḥ kila sāmpratam hi
tvañ cet kṛpām mayi vidhāsyasi naiva kiṁ me
prāṇair vraje na ca baroru bakāriṇāpi*

This *śloka* has given us the highest conception of our attainment in the school of Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu.

What is that? Śrīla Raghunātha Goswāmī is addressing Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī: “O Queen of my heart, for a long, long time I am waiting with great patience to have Your Mercy, which is so sweet to me that I cannot avoid it. It is heart-melting, heart-attracting, heart-crushing. It is so deeply touching me—I can’t avoid Your Service Connection. Somehow I have managed to come such a long way, to endure such a long time, but I am impatient now. Be gracious; if You are not gracious upon me, I have got no hope. I will come to the end of my patience.

“My life will end here. So much so, that, what shall I do with this Vṛndāvana? Vṛndāvana is of no use to me! What is the utility of living my life? It is useless—it will end with no utility. I can’t love even Vṛndāvana, which is associated with the *Līlā* of Kṛṣṇa. To say nothing of Vṛndāvana, I can’t relish the company of even Kṛṣṇa, without You. Without You, even Kṛṣṇa is meaningless to me. I can’t tolerate, I can’t relish either my own life, or this environment, or even Kṛṣṇa—if He Himself comes to grace me I can’t relish that, without Your connection.

“So please be gracious upon me. You are all-in-all. Without You, Kṛṣṇa consciousness is not Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Your position is so great, so beautiful in *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*—You are the centre of all the *Līlā* of Kṛṣṇa. Without You I can’t conceive of any life worth living. I utterly

surrender unto You, my Queen.”

This is *Rādhā-dāśya*. Our best fulfillment is in the Service of Śrī Rādhā, because only She can fully attract the Grace of Kṛṣṇa. She is the other Half who can draw the maximum *Rasa*, Ecstasy, from Kṛṣṇa—in quantity as well as in quality. So those who are serving Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī get the highest type of qualitative *Rasa* from Kṛṣṇa in reciprocation for their Service. That cannot be had through any other channel. Service that comes through Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī is of the highest quality, so Her Service should be our summum bonum of life.

This was announced clearly by Śrīla Raghunātha Dās Goswāmī who is considered to be *Prayojanācāryya*, the Guide to show us our highest fulfillment of life. By our association with this day and by our humble attempt to discuss all these matters, we may be benefitted in the achievement of our goal. This is the day of the advent of such great personalities.

5. Departure of Śrī Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākur

Today is also the day that Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākur departed from this world. Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākur appeared about 180 years after the Advent of Śrī Gaurāṅgadev. He composed a commentary on *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* and many other books to help

the devotees coming later in the *Sampradāya*. He was such a great *Ācāryya*. In his own special way, he has dealt elaborately with many spiritual matters, giving the proper approach. He was the *śāstric* or Scriptural dispensation of Śrī Rūpa-Sanātana, etc. By his grace, Śrī Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa composed the Śrī Gauḍiya Vaiṣṇava commentary on *Vedānta-sūtra*, *Śrī Govinda-bhāṣya*. From such great Masters there is much to be read.

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī was born in a *Brāhmaṇa* family in Devagrām of Murshidabad district. He was a great scholar of Sanskrit. He came in the line of Śrī Narottama Ṭhākura. He gave us extensive Scriptural writings to help us very precisely and elaborately to know about the Pastimes of Mahāprabhu and Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Vṛndāvana, Nabadwip, and the *Guru-paramparā*. The *Guruvāṣṭakam* we chant daily was written by him, as well as many other important works. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī wrote *Śrī-Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, 'The Nectarine Ocean of Devotional Joy,' and Śrīla Viśvanātha wrote *Śrī-Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu-bindu* or a drop of that Ocean. And from Śrī Rūpa's *Śrī-Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, 'The Brilliant Jewel of the Supernatural World,' or Kṛṣṇa in *Madhura-rasa*, he gave *Ujjvala-nīlamanī-kiraṇa* or a ray of that Jewel. In this way, he has given volumes of books

and poems. As Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī gave the *Aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā* of Kṛṣṇa, or twenty-four hour Service engagement with Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Govinda, he has similarly given in *Caitanya-līlā* twenty-four hour engagement in the Service of Śrīman Mahāprabhu. So he has done great Service to the *Sampradāya* and profusely bestowed his mercy upon us.

5.6. Departure of Tridaṇḍi Swāmīs

Śrīmad Bhāratī Mahārāj and Śrīmad Parvvat Mahārāj

Today is also the disappearance day of two of our senior Godbrothers, *sannyāsī* disciples of our Guru Mahārāj, Tridaṇḍi Swāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Viveka Bhāratī Mahārāj and Tridaṇḍi Swāmī Śrīmad Bhakti Svarūpa Parvvat Mahārāj. They both preached extensively on the order of Śrīla Prabhupāda. Śrī Bhāratī Mahārāj was very popular; his preaching style was very charming and engaging. In the beginning we appreciated his preaching very much.

Śrī Parvvat Mahārāj was also among the earliest disciples of our Guru Mahārāj. He was born at Svarūpa Gañja, on the other side of the Ganges from here (Nabadwip). He was born in the house directly next to Surabhī Kuñja where Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura lived for some time. During his childhood, he told me, he saw Śrīla

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura chanting the Name. In the early morning Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura would chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *Mahāmantra* just as one calling someone from a distance. A living thing—like one man calling another. In this way, in a living way, he was calling Kṛṣṇa. He was in his old age, and his body was somewhat attacked with rheumatism. There was a cement chair constructed there; he would stroll about at his sweet will, and when he felt fatigued he would take his seat on that chair. That chair is still there today.

So, at a very early age, Śrīmad Parvata Mahārāja came to Śrīla Prabhupāda and accepted his shelter. For a long period he was posted as the caretaker at Bhakti Kuṭīra, the then 'head office,' a small seaside house in Purī owned by Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. Then, when Prabhupāda began his preaching life, Parvata Mahārāja became a *sannyāsī*. During the lifetime of Prabhupāda he preached throughout the whole of Bengal and beyond as well. He established a Maṭha in Orissa.

I remember, once, when I was a newcomer in the Maṭha, he was telling one gentleman about how he preached on the East side of Bengal. At that place, some people challenged him,

"Why have you come to preach here? Don't you know that just nearby on the bank of the river there is a

siddha-mahātmā? He has attained the highest end of life. Have you seen him?"

He replied to them, "I have seen many *siddha*, like *āloo-siddha*, etc.!"

Siddha may mean 'perfected soul,' but another meaning of *siddha* is 'boiled.' So he was saying,

"I've seen many *siddha*—boiled things. Boiled potatoes, boiled cabbage, etc. We already have so many boiled things!"

They said,

"What are you saying? You are insulting him."

He replied,

"This is no insult. Those who are full of all those *siddhas*—they know nothing. What Mahāprabhu has brought us is the highest. All other proposals are trash and nasty things. We have come from a great *Mahātmā* to carry to you the highest objective, the summum bonum of life—accept Mahāprabhu and *Bhāgavatam*. We hate all those '*siddha*' imposters who are deceiving the people in the garb of religion."

Such was the great preaching of Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭha in those days.

To my best capacity I have tried my best to represent to you my humble knowledge of these *Mahātmās*, and I pray that they may be propitiated and give us their

favour. With this prayer, I end here: *vāñchā-kalpa-
tarubhyaś ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca, patitānām pāvane-
bhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ.*

* * *

Chapter Eight

Approaching the Higher World

PART TWO

Devotee Gopi Nakhi, who had the means the Balla-
ranta of Jagannātha, was a devotee who entered the Temple

of the Lord. He was a devotee of the physical
form. They strictly observe the rules of the Temple. They
follow the rules of the Temple. They follow the rules of the Temple.

... who had a peculiar religious conception, whatever he
was, he always kept the eyes of his mind on the
... the Temple of the Lord. The devotee who
... the Temple of the Lord. The devotee who
... the Temple of the Lord. The devotee who

... the Temple of the Lord. The devotee who

Chapter Eight

Approaching the Higher World

Devotee: Guru Mahārāj, what is the reason the *Brāhmaṇas* of Jagannāth Purī don't allow Westerners to enter the Temple?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: This is rather a case of physical purity. They strictly observe the physical purity. They don't allow even the *Mṛdaṅga* into the Temple. According to them, if it is analyzed it is impure since it is made from the skin of a cow.

Also, there was a *paṇḍit* of the *Smārta Sampradāya*, who had a peculiar religious conception; wherever he went, he always kept the wooden sandals of his *guru* tied about his chest. Once he wanted to enter the Temple at Pāṇḍārapur, but he was refused. The *Brāhmaṇas* there told him, "They may be your *guru's* sandals; no doubt, they may be pure to you in your relationship, but we nonetheless consider them sandals, so you must leave them outside."

Such *Brāhmaṇas* strictly reject the physical impurity,

with some mental modification. That is their custom. So both the mental and physical habits of the *Mleccha* and *Yavana* (non-Vedic races and sects) are impure, that is, closely connected with *himsā* or animal-killing, etc., and generally their lifestyles are uncontrolled and boisterous in many other ways. They are not regulated according to the Vedic Scriptures. Considering all this, those *Brāhmaṇas* won't allow them entry to the Temple.

Even Gāndhī wanted to enter the Purī Temple with some of his outcaste or lower caste followers, but they were prohibited. Gāndhī also stayed out. He wanted to enter along with the outcastes of society. Despite his great influence over the country, he was refused entrance. Without his knowledge, Gāndhī's wife entered to have the *darśana* of Lord Jagannāth. When he came to know of it, he severely chastized her for entering without him.

So Gāndhī was more of a patriot than a devotee. He thought his lordship over his wife was permanent and absolute, not to be modified even by devotion for Lord Jagannāth. But according to us, his wife did right. How permanent is the relationship between husband and wife? For the main part it is only a bodily relationship. And what is the relationship with the Lord—the Husband of husbands, the Master of the whole world? What is the nasty husband in this world in comparison with the

Lord of the whole universe? For a national cause, or the cause of his political creed, Gāndhī wanted to check his wife's going to the Temple, as though God were within the jurisdiction of politics.

Haridās Ṭhākur never entered the Jagannāth Temple, nor did Rūpa and Sanātana. Not only that, but Sanātana Goswāmī even avoided the main streets where the servants of the Jagannāth Temple would usually pass. He did not walk there, giving respect to the current laws and by-laws (of the *Pāṇḍās*, the *Brāhmaṇas*, whose edicts were above the jurisdiction of the king). Furthermore, Sanātana Goswāmī wrote in *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa* that the devotees should try to follow all the rules and regulations he had listed therein, and any further practices that were not mentioned should be ascertained by noting the current practices in the Temple of Jagannāth. He was so catholic in his faith in Mahāprabhu. In other words, whatever transpired there in the presence of Mahāprabhu should be taken by us as approved by Him, so we won't dare to interfere with that. He is above law. His Will is law—law comes from His Sweet Will. This principle we must not forget.

Designed and Destined by the Absolute

Everything is not only designed, but also destined by

Him. The whole universe is designed and destined according to His Sweet Will. His position is so high and unchallengable; and it is Absolute Good. Rules and regulations are created only to take us to the Absolute Good, but the Absolute Good is not under those rules or any law. The Absolute is independent, above everything. *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* is the nearest approach to the Absolute Good Himself. He is whimsical. If we realize that much, that is the best conception. To place any restriction over the Absolute Good is to commit suicide. Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes—

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: —because it is not only good, but Absolute Good. Our intellect cannot comprehend it.

Once Swāmī Mahārāj and myself had a talk here. Then after going from here to that blue house where Swāmī Mahārāj stayed for three weeks, his disciple Acyutānanda asked him, “What sort of talk did you have with Śrīdhara Mahārāj?” Swāmī Mahārāj replied to him, “If you hear that, you will faint.” What does it mean, ‘faint’? It means, “It is beyond the reach of your consciousness—unintelligable to you in your present stage of realization.”

Once Rāmānujācāryya wanted to modify the rules and regulations that are practised in the Jagannāth Temple. While contemplating in this way, he slept on

a bedstead, and when he awoke he found that his body along with the bedstead was cast to Śrī Kūrmam of Gañjām District, in South India, some hundreds of miles away from the Jagannāth Temple.

He suddenly awoke. “Where am I?” He thought, “You gave me inspiration by instructing me in a dream to modify the existing rules and regulations that are being practised in the Temples, and now why do You oppose me? I wanted to modify the current practices of rules and regulations at the Jagannāth Temple.” Then he again dreamt of the Lord telling him, “No, don’t modify here! Go elsewhere. You got the dream for the sake of other Temples, not here. Go and preach your regulations in all other Temples save and except this Temple.”

Puṇḍarika Vidyānidhi is considered to be the incarnation of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s father, here in *Gaurā-līlā*. He thought, “What are these *Pāṇḍās*? They are awkward people—they do not know what is pure or impure. Indiscriminately they use starched cloth for dressing the Jagannāth Deity.” At night he found that Jagannāth and Balarām, two Brothers, had come to his bedside and were slapping him on both cheeks. In the morning he found that his cheeks were swollen. Others asked him, “Why are your cheeks so swollen?” He had to recount the incident. In effect, the Lord was saying,

“This is not the place to suggest any change in the regulation that is going on under My direction—don’t interfere!”

So there is some special grant and there are some special rules for that place. He is Absolute, unquestionable. Our enquiries need only be for the purpose of understanding something of the inevitability of how everything enters into the Absolute Good. Any law ever conceived of ultimately enters into the Absolute Goodness. Mostly, this is a matter beyond our conceptions.

Patita-pāvana Jagannātha Sarveśvara, Vṛndāvanacandra Sarva-rasera Ākara. When enumerating one hundred and twenty Names of Kṛṣṇa (*Śrī-Kṛṣṇa-Vimśottara-śata-Nāma*), Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura mentions at the end, *Patita-pāvana*: Jagannāth has come to save the fallen; and Kṛṣṇa’s special quality is that He is the Emporium of all *Rasas*: *Vṛndāvanacandra Sarva-rasera Ākara*—the very Source of all types of ecstasy, Personified. That is Kṛṣṇa. Mahāprabhu is also *Patita-pāvana*. He passed the major portion of His life there in Jagannātha Purī. *Patita-pāvana* means ‘Saviour of the fallen.’ Everything has its speciality. As a doctor may prescribe medicine with a free diet except for restrictions on only two or three items, similarly in the case of the Temple of Lord Jagannāth we also see great liberality,

with the exception of a few items.

When I first began to appreciate Mahāprabhu and came to this line, I thought that if Mahāprabhu is the Incarnation of God, then why didn’t He overthrow the non-Vedic rule? Why did he tolerate the non-Vedic rule here in India? He could have overthrown it easily. That was a question. But gradually I came to realize that this was a very trifling matter. The ruling power or political life has nothing to do with spiritual life.

Queen Kuntī rather welcomed adversity. She prayed, “Keep me always in a dangerous position. That will be convenient for me to pray for Your Grace. And ordinary worldly favourable circumstances will encourage me to ignore Your valuable Grace. So always keep me in adversity.” That was her prayer. So the political environment, social environment—all other campaigns have no value. According to the result of our *karma* we shall be placed in a particular environment, and we must start our spiritual life from wherever we are placed; we must begin our work of conquering all those *samskāras* that comprise the mental encasement we are living in.

Crossing the walls of misunderstanding

Tat te ’nukampām susamīkṣamāṇaḥ. We should not only live in our present position without complaint, but

moreover, we shall have to consider it as really necessary for our upliftment. In this way, we have to accept whatever adversities that come to us as the Grace of the Lord. We must cope, with this positive angle of vision of goodness:

“This is my real necessity. There is no error in the calculation of the Lord. This test has been extended to me for my benefit. To stand, to face and cross this opposition is my chance to have my progress in life. This test has been given by Kṛṣṇa to facilitate my progressive life.” In the *Bhāgavatam* we are advised to face all adverse circumstances in such an optimistic way. Then very easily and swiftly we shall cross these walls of misunderstanding, this Māyā, and we will be liberated, and more—we will have participation in Kṛṣṇa consciousness, the life of dedication.

Distinguishing Form and Substance

Devotee: Mahārāj, I have a question. I have heard two things. One, that Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa* is the devotional line; and I have also heard that it is a formality of *Varṇāśrama-dharmma*. What is it really?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: The outer touch of *sannyāsa* is within the *Varṇāśrama-dharmma* (socio-religious system), but it also has its positive side. Both negative and

positive sides are to be considered. *Daṇḍa* means ‘punishment,’ as well as ‘staff.’ The three *daṇḍas* represent thought, word and deed. On the negative side, the three *daṇḍas* of the symbolic triple staff or *tridaṇḍa* that the Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsi* accepts indicate that he should not use his thought, word and deed for any mundane or exploitative aim and object. But the positive side is that he will punish his thought, word and deed—to engage them in the Service of Kṛṣṇa, Nārāyaṇa.

Then the function becomes Vaiṣṇavism. Those who do not believe in the positive side of life may accept *sannyāsa* only as abstinence from using their thought, word and deed for any mundane purpose. They will prefer *mauna*, silence. But the Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsi* will prefer *Kṛṣṇa-kīrtana*, singing the Glories of the Lord. They have the positive side.

So, to check these three aspects of life from mingling with the incidents of this mundane world is only one side. But the other side is to use them for the spiritual object. That is Vaiṣṇava *sannyāsa*.

Devotee: Doesn’t a *brahmacārī* or a *gṛhastha* also utilize his thought, word and deed for the spiritual objective?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Of course; but the renounced order or order of *sannyāsa* is a special emblem, a reminder. It doesn’t follow that one who has not taken *sannyāsa* will

not engage his faculties in Spiritual Service. A *grhastha Paramahansa* who is a *Pārṣada-bhakta* (Associate-servitor) is also possible, without *sannyāsa*. He may not necessarily have a sacred thread either.

The necessity is only to remind us of that life. That is healthy. The sacred thread, the red cloth, the *daṇḍa*—they always caution us: “Think that you have dedicated your life for the spiritual objective; you are meant only for *this*, so be alert. Don’t misuse your red cloth, your sacred thread, the *Tulasī-mālā*, etc.” They will remind us always. They have their utility.

A *siddha-mahātmā* (perfected great soul) may not have red cloth. Sanātana Goswāmī and others wore ordinary white cloth. They accepted the minimum necessity of garments. No red cloth, no *daṇḍa*, no sacred thread. Pure life is possible without those things. But for the beginners these things will be helpful, so they are introduced into the society of the Vaiṣṇava school, in the lower plane. And sometimes the higher also come to accept these lower emblems, as, for example, Mahāprabhu took *sannyāsa*.

Such an emblem or the dress of a world *Ācāryya* is also there to help the public to give proper respect to the wearer. If he is in ordinary dress the people won’t show any respect or give any attention to his words and

teachings. If a policeman or soldier is in his uniform, people will show some respect to the police or the military. But a military man or policeman may patrol in plain dress also, and do even higher service. Still, the uniform is necessary to regulate the society.

So this is something like a uniform. The society should learn to take them as the Teachers, the holy men, and feel, “We should deal with them very gently, for our future benefit.” The society will also reap that benefit; and that holy man will also gain some instruction: “Oh, I should not mix with anyone and everyone. It should be seen that my practices keep up the standard, the model of the Teachers.” Otherwise, independent of such symbols a man can culture his spiritual life, without taking the role of a *brahmacārī*, *grhastha*, *vānaprastha* or *sannyāsī*. Internally, he can improve his heart.

Devotee: Mahārāj, how does one understand, or deal with, the falldown of a *sannyāsī* or *brahmacārī*? What is the correct understanding?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Generally we shall take it that there was some offence for which he could not keep the standard of life that was expected of him by his Guru Mahārāj. That should be the general way of thinking about them. Some previous offence is taking its course and not allowing him to go on smoothly in the way of his

realization. It suddenly appeared and checked him. In particular cases it may be *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* or offence against a Vaiṣṇava, and sometimes in general cases previous bad *kamma* may have come and stood in the way of his progress.

The Vigilant Eye of the Guardian

We must always be cautious with our free choice. A minor requires the vigilant eye of the major guardian; in our immature stage our free will is surrounded by many deviations. Thus, in our lower stage it will be safe to be constantly under the guidance of a bona fide guardian until we attain promotion to the major stage. This is necessary.

Initiation and *kamma*

Devotee: So, Guru Mahārāj, if one has initiation and his *kamma* has been removed, how is it possible for his previous *kamma* to check him?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Do you think that by initiation all *kamma* is finished at once? That is not claimed anywhere. The disciples are given a chance—admission. When a doctor has accepted a patient, it does not mean that he is immediately cured; he must follow the direction of the doctor—take proper diet and medicine—then

he may expect that he will be cured shortly. To call the doctor and have his prescription does not mean that the patient is fully cured. This is not practical thinking. Why hover in the theoretical, imaginary world?

Devotee: I was told in a religious mission I joined that at the time of initiation all previous *kamma* is taken away. It's not like that?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Such a statement is only meant in the context that when you have called for a good doctor and accepted his treatment, your cure is guaranteed. Otherwise, we see that so many veterans are going down. If the *Guru* is so great as to be able to create a great revolution in the world, and he has given *mantra* to the disciples he has accepted, yet many of them are also falling back—why?

The initiation is a recommendation. It is not final. Cure is guaranteed under the treatment of a good doctor. But if as a patient you don't care to accept his guidance and secretly indulge in an evil diet, of what value is your doctor? When you have a good doctor your cure is almost guaranteed. But you have to follow him. And also it is possible that if you are becoming a little ill and your doctor comes to know that 'my patient has taken this bad diet' or 'he did not use my medicine'—then the doctor will again take up the case more seriously, and

he will cure you. We may receive such help from the *Guru* and Vaiṣṇava, but our free choice is never snatched away.

Real Taste for the Truth

Until and unless we find in our heart a real taste for the Truth, we are not safe. First, over the surface, spiritual life begins with *śraddhā*, faith, and underground with *sukṛti*, or special merit. Next is *sādhū-saṅga*, our company with the *sādhū*. Within that is our surrender to *Guru*. Then *bhajana*, our serving life in various forms such as *śravaṇa*, *kīrtana*, *prasāda-sevana*, or hearing, chanting, respecting the Lord's Remnants, etc., begins. Then *anartha-nivṛtti*—our attraction for objects other than Kṛṣṇa, objects other than God, diminishes. Then *niṣṭhā*—continued attempt for the Service, and not for otherwise. Then *ruci*, taste, will be created.

Real taste for the truth will be created, that is, awakened in our heart. We are safe then, but not before that. When spontaneous taste for the truth is awakened within us, we are safe. We can make fair progress from that time. Prior to that we must remain under the guardian. Taste will take me: "I have acquired the taste of sweetness, so automatically I shall run towards that which is very sweet." Until and unless we find that the Truth is

sweet, Kṛṣṇa is sweet, we are not safe in our approach towards Him. So many distractions may take us hither and thither.

The *Guru* Principle

Devotee: Mahārāj, is the *Guru* also under the law of *karma*?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: He is not under the law of *karma*. *Guru*, as I have mentioned before from the examples of the *sādhū*s and the Scriptures, is generally of three kinds: one comes from *Vaikuṅṭha*, or the land of wholesale truth. He comes here as an agent to take the souls up. Another *Guru* has one step here, another step there, and he carries persons from here to there. The last type of *Guru* has two feet here, but his eyes are fixed there, and he takes persons along with him to that Plane.

* * *

Chapter Nine

The Divine Agent

I have heard that there is one American scientist who is researching, and he says that if he can get one cell from the body of Napoleon, he can make many Napoleons. In a potato many sprouts may come, and if we cut them one sprout will produce a potato plant. So also in the human body there are many cells, and according to their scientific theory we can somehow create a man from one of the characteristic cells of his body. The mentality, the vigour, everything is contained in every particle of which the body is constructed.

Brāhmaṇas, śūdras and mlecchas

In a general sense, there is some importance in bodily or hereditary succession. In India, some recognition is given to the caste *Brāhmaṇas* (those born in *Brāhmaṇa* families). But there are exceptions. So a birth from a *śūdra* (labourer class) or *mleccha* (race devoid of Vedic culture) body is generally considered impure. From their

ancestors they do not observe particular rites or pure customs, and the impurity is there. Many of the *Smārta* section and Śāṅkarite interpreters, and some of the Madhva school also, hold that by chanting the Holy Name of the Lord, *Harināma*, the purification of the subtle body is effected, but the *karmma* which is destined to be suffered or enjoyed in this particular body cannot be purified by *Harināma* or anything else.

Karmma or the action that we have done in our previous life is classified:

अप्रारब्धफलं पापं कूटं बीजं फलेन्मुखम् ।
क्रमेणैव प्रलीयेत विष्णुभक्तिरतात्मनाम् ॥

aprārabdha-phalaṁ pāpaṁ kūṭaṁ bījaṁ phalonmukham
kramaṇaiva praliyeta viṣṇu-bhakti-ratātmanām

“The four types of sin known as *aprārabdha*, *kūṭa*, *bīja* and *phalonmukha* are gradually eradicated for persons exclusively attached to Devotion for the Supreme Lord Viṣṇu.”

Grades of *karmma*

Prārabdha is the *karmma* or action which has been attached to be enjoyed or suffered in this body; and *aprārabdha* is that which is deposited to be experienced

in the future. *Prārabdha* means ‘that which has already begun,’ and *aprārabdha* is ‘that which has been reserved for the future.’ The stages of progress from manifest to unmanifest are classified in three: *kūṭam*, *bījam*, *phalonmukham*.

We can find this discussed in detail by Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī, with various Scriptural quotations, in his *Śrī-Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*.

Kūṭam means ‘the undetectable portion of our past action.’ We cannot read the actions and results contained there, present in a microscopic way. They are undetectable to us.

We are told that in Japan they are preserving a library where the letters of the book cannot be read by the ordinary eye. The letters are so tiny that they cannot be read by the naked eye, but they must be magnified by a microscopic process. So *kūṭam* is that which is undetectable, like a plane of action, that will gradually manifest and demand its satisfaction.

Bījam or ‘seed’ means something which is more detectable, more clear. We can identify a particular seed and know which type of plant it will produce; and *phalonmukham* refers to actions that are waiting to achieve their realization very soon. They are demanding.

In the stage of *prārabdha*, the previous actions have

reached their satisfaction in this body. These are the divisions. The general Vedic scholars are of the opinion that *prārabdha* or that which has already begun to be experienced in this body cannot be changed. It is out of hand. And reactions that are reserved for the future may be finished by our good activity, and we may not have to undergo them.

Harer Nāmaiva Kevalam

But the *Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava* school says that this *prārabdha* can also be removed. What is already destined to be experienced in this body can also be removed by *Harināma*, and by no other means. Only *Kṛṣṇa-nāma*, *Harināma*, can purify one from that which is already begun to be experienced in this body. He may be purified.

A *śūdra* or *mleccha* properly taking *Harināma* may be converted to *Brāhmanism*. It is possible by *Harināma*. The *Gauḍīya* school has given quotations from different places, and by analysis of the meaning of those quotations it holds that one may be free from the *prārabdha-karma* which has already begun to be experienced in this life.

भक्त्याहमेकया ग्राह्यः श्रद्धयात्मा प्रियः सताम् ।

भक्तिः पुनाति मन्निष्ठा श्वपाकानपि सम्भवात् ॥

(भा: ११/१४/२१)

*bhaktiyāham ekayā grāhyaḥ śraddhayātmā priyaḥ satām
bhaktiḥ punāti man-niṣṭhā śvapākān api sambhavāt*

(Bhā: 11.14.21)

“I, the Supreme Lord and the most Beloved, am attainable by the pure saints, by virtue of the potency of their Exclusive Devotion born of faith (*śraddhā*). Exclusive Devotion in Me purifies even the lowest outcastes known as *Caṇḍālas*.

Śva means dog. Even the dog-eaters, that is, the lower section, can also be purified from their lower birth. Another verse in the same line of thought is this:

यन्नामधेयश्रवणानुकीर्तनात् यत्प्रह्वणाद् यत्स्मरणादपि क्वचित् ।
श्वदोऽपि सद्यः सवनाय कल्पते कुतः पुनस्ते भगवन्तु दर्शनात् ॥

(भा: ३/३३/६)

*yan-nāmadheya-śravaṇānukirttanāt
yat prahvaṇād yat smaraṇād api kvacit
śvādo 'pi sadyaḥ savanāya kalpate
kutaḥ punas te bhagavan nu darśanāt*

(Bhā: 3.33.6)

(Devahūti said,) “O Lord, if he just hears Your Name, then chants it, offer you obeisances and remembers You, even a person born as a dog-eating outcaste instantly

becomes eligible to perform the *Soma* sacrifice; to say nothing of the purification of those who see You directly.”

Those dog-eaters and lowest class of people can be immediately purified by taking the Name of the Lord. When the *prārabdha* has gone, the person becomes like Indra, but not Indra proper, a little less. *Savanāya kalpate* means *Indra-kalpa*. Now, please note very attentively Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī’s remark in his commentary.

Entrance to a higher family

Savanāya kalpate means ‘he becomes purified to such a standard that he can perform the sacrifice which is reserved only for the *Brāhmaṇas*.’ *Kalpate* means ‘a little difference.’ So here, Śrīla Jīva Goswāmī has given his own commentation. What is the little difference? When that person’s *prārabdha* has gone, he attains the position of a boy of a *Brāhmaṇa*.

But the boy is not allowed to perform the *Brāhmaṇa* *yajña* until and unless he is given the sacred thread. A *saṁskāra* (purificatory ceremony) is necessary. *Janmanā jāyate śūdraḥ*—by birth everyone is impure, but by *saṁskāra* they are purified. But who will be fit for the *saṁskāra*? Only the *Brāhmaṇa* boy. Now, he reaches the stage of the *Brāhmaṇa* boy, and not the *Brāhmaṇa*.

He may have come from any caste, but after taking

Harināma he should be considered to have reached the stage of a *Brāhmaṇa* boy; and again when that *Gāyatrī saṁskāra* or *Brāhmaṇa saṁskāra* is given, he gets the recognition of a bona fide *Brāhmaṇa* and he can perform the *yajña* and *Śālagrāmārccana* (worship of the Deity *Śālagrāma-sīlā*), etc.

So with the *Harināma*, taking the Name of the Lord—in a proper way, of course—the *karma* vanishes, and with body purified, he is considered to be a *Brāhmaṇa* boy; and when the sacred thread is conferred to him he will become eligible for all the Brahminical activities.

This is the scientific position. So *Pāñcarātrikī-dikṣā* may not be necessary. *Harināma* is sufficient. Still, the *Brāhmaṇa-saṁskāra*, the *Gāyatrī* or Vedic *saṁskāra* is given, and *Pāñcarātrikī-dikṣā* is also given to help him to a greater degree. For example, one may win a university scholarship, and there may also be a district scholarship that comes to help him. The student’s university scholarship is all-important, but some subservient appreciation also comes to somewhat enhance his position.

Circle within a circle

The *Harināma* circle is the purifying circle, and it is the greatest circle, extending in circumference from the

lowest to highest; and the *Pāncarātri*ka help is a circle within the circle—it will help the candidate in taking the Name and other important practices. But without it, one may also practice.

The Divine Dispensation of
Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī
Goswāmī Prabhupāda

But there are so many *Brāhmaṇas* and *Karma-kāṇḍīs* (fruitive religionists) who will offensively consider that the Vaiṣṇavas are inferior because they have not received the sacred thread; those *Brāhmaṇas*, etc., must be saved. Also, a person who is taking the Name may think that *Brāhmaṇas* are superior and the chanter of the Name holds a lesser position.

His *abhimāna* or ego must also be helped to go higher: “Yes, I am said to be more than a *Brāhmaṇa*, so I shall have to become very careful about my movements, my eating and other practices.” This will help him to know that he must not go below the standard of an ordinary purificatory section. At the same time, society will also be warned to deal properly with these persons who are taking the Name of Hari, by conceiving that they are exclusively given to the chanting of the Name of Hari and are therefore superior to a *Brāhmaṇa*. This system

was introduced by our Guru Mahārāj. He conferred the sacred thread extensively.

That is to give the position of a *Brāhmaṇa*, outwardly. In calculation from the inner side, a Vaiṣṇava is above a *Brāhmaṇa*. But from the outer side also he created this particular society in which a Vaiṣṇava who is exclusively given to Kṛṣṇa consciousness must be recognized as not less, but more than a *Brāhmaṇa*. He reformed the society to establish the position of the Vaiṣṇava, thus also encouraging him: “You must not go down; you are taking the Name of Hari, exclusively given to Kṛṣṇa consciousness, and you must maintain your position in the external way so that even the *Brāhmaṇas* or the Vedic school will feel some reverence for the position you hold. You must be cautious in your dealings and in your practices; and also the society will think, ‘Don’t underestimate these persons who are exclusively given to Kṛṣṇa consciousness.’” In this way, he reformed society.

Although Mahāprabhu had not introduced this, our Guru Mahārāj, Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda, adjusted the society to bring Mahāprabhu’s Teachings to the world in a broad way.

Previously, Rūpa, Sanātana and followers did not care to take any sacred thread. Also, in the *sannyāsa* system of the *Varṇāśrama*, Śaṅkara and others give up the sacred

thread to the fire when they take *sannyāsa*, showing that they have no necessity of a sacred thread; they're above that, above *Brāhmaṇa*. Yet their creed is 'we are one with *Brahman*'—and here is the infinite difference. The higher a *Vaiṣṇava* is, the more he will say "I am the slave of *Kṛṣṇa*, and the slave of the slaves of the slave of *Kṛṣṇa*." But the *Māyāvādīs* identify themselves with the highest Entity. They have fallen prey to complete misconception of the Revealed Scriptures or *Veda*. This is the position.

In *Manu-saṁhitā* we find three classes of births:

मातृग्रेऽधिजननं द्वितीयं मौञ्जिबन्धने ।
तृतीयं यज्जदीक्षायां द्विजस्य श्रुति-चोदनात् ॥

(मनु २/२६०)

mātur agre 'dhijananam dvitīyam mauñji-bandhane
tritīyam yajña-dikṣāyām dvijasya śruti-codanāt

(Manu 2.260)

Mātur agre 'dhijananam: first we take our body from the mother, or the parents. *Dvitīyam mauñji-bandhane*: the second birth is by receiving sacred thread in a *Brāhmaṇa* family. *Tritīyam yajña-dikṣāyām*: again, the third is to take this *Pāñcarātrikī-dikṣā*, to help for further progress. This is in *Manu-saṁhitā*. A *Brāhmaṇa* man

has three births.

The second, *mauñji-bandhane* is *Gāyatrī* or Vedic *dikṣā*. It teaches us: 'try to have your reading from the example that has been set by the *Veda*. Don't believe what your experience tells you, but try to follow how the revealed truth wants you to read the environment.' Don't survey your environment with your own fleshy eye and ear, but with a more scientific education try to see things beyond that.

Of course, science is also generally mundane, but revealed truth tells us to see things in another way: nothing is for me, but everything is for the Supreme Authority. We are a particle of that. Try to read your environment in this way. Everything belongs to the centre and we are a part of that organic whole, and our duty must be ascertained accordingly.

This is the Vedic process of reading the environment. And ordinary vision is, 'I am monarch of all I survey.' We want to utilize everything for our purpose. This is mundane.

Initiation—the imparting of Divine Knowledge

दिव्यं ज्ञानं यतो दद्यात् कुर्यात्पापस्य संक्षयम् ।
तस्मादीक्षेति सा प्रोक्ता देशकैस्तत्त्वकोविदैः ॥

*divyaṃ jñānaṃ yato dadyāt kurryāt pāpasya saṅkṣayam
tasmād dikṣeti sā proktā deśikais tattva-kovidaiḥ*

What is the meaning of the word *dikṣā*? *Dikṣā* is the process by which *divya-jñāna* or transcendental knowledge is imparted to a person. *Upanayana* means that a new eye is given to the person: “The eye with which you now see cannot see correctly. But the eye is given from the *Vedas*, as *Gāyatrī*. From this time onwards try to learn your environment in a different way.”

Bhūḥ, Bhuvah, Svah, Mahah, Janah, Tapaḥ, Satya—these planes of the world of your experience evolve from consciousness. *Bhūḥ* means the world of this fleshy eye, ear, etc. *Bhuvah* means the mental aspect of the same. In this way, there are finer and finer conceptions of things. And what is the cause of such experience? Our consciousness—soul—the light within us. So only with the help of that can we can read things around us impartially.

Savitur vareṇyam—and there is another realm that is venerable to this gross world of conception. Another worshippable and finer realm is there. There is another plane—God with his entourage lives there; all serve Him, the centre, and that is the norm there. It is perfectly known to the members of that world that the centre is

all-in-all. We must obey the central authority, and there we can thrive. That is proper life.

There is another world in the subtlest area. Above our soul is the *supersoul* area. The *Gāyatrī mantra* comes to help us with all these things. It teaches us: “Don’t think what you read by the experience of your fleshy senses is all-in-all. There are other planes of life and you must recognize them, and prepare your life’s programme accordingly.

“You cannot divorce the possibility of these different planes of existence. Prepare yourself properly for the great task. Although at this moment you cannot have any experience of it, there is a super-experience world and you must prepare yourself for that, otherwise you will have to end your life in failure. You can attain good success in this life.”

This is the purpose of *dikṣā*. Transcendental knowledge, *divyaṃ jñānam*, is imparted to the man who would otherwise depend on his experienced knowledge or the knowledge drawn from his perception.

The *Harināma-dikṣā* is the most central and simple. There is one sound aspect of the Lord, and you may come in touch with that and go on cultivating the sound aspect of the Whole, in *Kṛṣṇa* consciousness. Only with the connection and cultivation of His sound aspect you

can go to the centre. That is *Harināma*; and in the case of the *mantra*, the Name is couched in a particular way to give the meaning, "I am casting myself unto Him, for His satisfaction."

The *mantra* is couched in such a way that we pray: "I am throwing myself for the satisfaction of my Supreme Lord." That helps us to take the Name with the proper attitude. *Sevonmukha*—we are dying for real life. Sacrifice means 'die to live.' It is to throw oneself. The process of surrender has been given in the *mantra*.

How should you advance in taking the Name? What is the process? You must throw yourself and your ego of experience to the fire. That will be destroyed and the inner ego will emerge, and that will be more beneficial for you to take the real Name and to approach the real plane where Kṛṣṇa, your Lord, is living; this is to go home. These are the points in *dīkṣā*.

Back to Home, back to Godhead

Devotee: Sometimes my *Dīkṣā-Guru* (initiating Spiritual Master) used to say that within this lifetime one can be perfected and then, at the end of this lifetime, go back home, back to Godhead.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: It is very rarely found that in this one life, in a single life from this plane one can reach

the highest life. But generally it requires lives together, if in a real process. There may also be setbacks. If one commits *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* or *Nāma-aparādha* (offence to the Vaiṣṇava or the Holy Name), he may be detained again and again. It is not such a cheap thing. Still, there is the possibility that when properly guided a proper soul may attain the highest position in a single life. It is not impossible.

Devotee: Sometimes he said that a devotee could take birth where Kṛṣṇa is having His pastimes within this material world, and he will be trained according to his given Service to Kṛṣṇa, and after that go to Goloka.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: What do you think? That is to live in *Vṛndāvana*. That must be helpful, but this *Nabadwip* is more helpful. There is the possibility of committing offences. We can be misled by taking lust as love. We can misidentify our enjoyment as Devotion or *Prema*. The possibility is there. In that case we would become *Sahajiyā*. They imitate everything. What is the value of only living in the land of what we see by our senses? It has been told that the *Dhāma* is *aprākṛta*, not material, not to be experienced by our senses. We must try to live in *that Dhāma*—the *cinmaya*, that is, the fully conscious area.

So if we really do not want to deceive ourselves we

must not ignore the steps by which we may go there. With proper help and inspiration we may know that *Ṛndāvana* is for the higher. We may get some inspiration. Caution is needed in attending *Kṛṣṇa-dhāma*, as much as it is required for attending *Kṛṣṇa-līlā*. But if we are not sincere we may commit offences, and that will hurl us down.

The Glory of Śrī Nabadwip Dhām

Rather, Nabadwip *Dhāma* is more accommodating. There also *aparādha* is possible, but it may be minimized. Nabadwip will help us, as *sādhakas* (aspirants) to feel, 'I am not so high; I am not holding such a high position as those of *Ṛndāvana*.' In chanting the Name or residing in the *Dhāma*—with everything there is consideration of offences; and less consideration of offences is found in Nabadwip *Dhāma*. It is more liberal. Still, the most important factor is *sādhū-saṅga*—the superior guide.

Śrīla Narottama Ṭhākura has written,

তীর্থযাত্রা পরিশ্রম, কেবল মনের ভ্রম,
সর্বসিদ্ধি গোবিন্দচরণ

tīrtha-yātrā pariśrama, *kevala manera bhrama,*
sarva-siddhi govinda-carāṇa

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has also written:

যে তীর্থে বৈষ্ণব নাই, সে তীর্থেতে নাহি যাই,
কি লাভ হাঁটিয়া দূরদেশ ।
যথায় বৈষ্ণবগণ, সেই স্থান বৃন্দাবন,
সেই স্থানে আনন্দ অশেষ ॥

ye tīrthe vaiṣṇava nāi, *se tīrthete nāhi yāi*
ki lābha hāṭiyā dūradeśa?
yathāya vaiṣṇava-gaṇa, *sei sthāna ṛndāvana,*
sei sthāne ānanda aśeṣa

The Divine Agent

Where is *Ṛndāvana*? We may only reach *Ṛndāvana* at the proper stage of realization. If we take *Ṛndāvana* in the physical sense, we will commit so many offences according to our habit and we shall have to mentally go downwards. So the illumination given by the *sādhū* and *śāstra* should be our guide. Only by that way can we go to *Ṛndāvana*, or anywhere and everywhere. But the guiding star must always be our *Guru*, to guide us and show us what is what. As long as my self is not rising to that stage, I am always in need of a guide to show me what is what, what is *Ṛndāvana*.

Ṛndāvana is not a physical eye-experience. It is not

in the world of our flesh experience. It is highest of the high. Through *śraddhā*, faith, we must begin our journey beyond the subjective, towards the supersubjective area. That is *Ṿṇḍāvāna* proper, where we can find *Kṛṣṇa* proper.

It is not to be found in any physical plane. He can come here: the higher plane can come in the gross, but it is not easy for those who are living in the gross plane to rise up to the higher. They can come, an agent can come, and they can take us there. But without the help of the agent it is not easy to go to that highest plane by our own experience. So our necessity is always *sādhusaṅga*. To go to *Ṿṇḍāvāna* we must have a guide. He will always caution us to see things with the proper angle of vision. A guide, *sādhusaṅga*, is the most important factor in the life of a bona fide seeker of the truth. And next is *śāstra*, Revealed Scriptures.

In *Bhagavad-gītā* there are classifications in three classes: *sattva*, *raja* and *tama*. The lowest kind of knowledge forcibly says that things are not what they are. This is *tamoguṇa*. Such as thinking, 'I am this body.' In *rajoguṇa* there is doubt, 'Oh, this may not be that. My conjecture and experience may not be perfect.' And *sattva*, the last, is of course to understand things properly as they are. So knowledge is of different stages.

To think that *Ṿṇḍāvāna* is in our mundane eye, ear and touch experience can never be *Ṿṇḍāvāna*. *Ṿṇḍāvāna* proper is in the *supersoul* area; and only our *ātmā*, soul, can go there; not this body, mind, etc. Otherwise what is the necessity of spiritual practices or *sādhana*, the means to the end?

Thus *dikṣā* is to throw oneself to the Vedic doctrine; to give up one's own knowledge of experience and invite the revealed estimation of the environment. It is to leave this world of mundane experience and to go to the transcendental world.

Somehow we must effect that journey. There is no short cut without that journey. Of course, with the help of proper guide we may have a short cut in the sense that we do not waste valuable time. Also, if we had some experience of the way in a previous life, that may help us to shorten the journey of this life.

Devotee: I went to an Āshram where they said that without directly receiving the *siddha-praṇālī* or revelation of one's internal identity as a *Gopī*, etc., spiritual perfection is incomplete.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Let them do so. They are representing the Sahajiyā school. Our Guru Mahārāj wrote several poems, one of which is *Prākṛta-rasa Śata-dūṣaṇī*—'a hundred defects in the Sahajiyā conception.' The defects

are innumerable, but our Guru Mahārāj put forward a hundred points of the defects in their process of 'advancement.' Mainly they are very easy purchasers. They are not prepared to pay the real price.

But the death blow to them is this:

উপজিয়া বাড়ে লতা 'ব্রহ্মাণ্ড' ভেদি' যায় ।

'বিরজা,' 'ব্রহ্মলোক' ভেদি' 'পরব্যোম' পায় ॥

তবে যায় তদুপরি 'গোলোক-বৃন্দাবন' ।

'কৃষ্ণচরণ'-কল্পবৃক্ষে করে আরোহন ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ মধ্য ১৯/১৫৩,৪)

upajiyā bāḍe latā 'brahmāṇḍa' bhedi' yāya
'virajā,' 'brahmaloka,' bhedi' 'paravyoma' pāya
tabe yāya tad upari 'goloka-vṛndāvana'
'kṛṣṇa-caraṇa'-kalpavṛkṣe kare ārohana

(C.c. Madhya 19.153,4)

One must first cross the different gross and subtle layers of the *Brahmāṇḍa* (mundane universe); then Virajā, the extremity of the jurisdiction of Māyā or misconception; then the *Brahman* conception, the halo of the real or transcendental world; then, Vaikuṅṭha, which is *Paravyoma*, a sphere of consciousness.

The *jīva* comes from *taṭasthaloka*, the marginal position or the abscissa, and he must go through higher

planes where the soil is more valuable than he himself. Can you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: *Vaikuṅṭhera pṛthivy adi sakala cinmaya.* What is Vaikuṅṭha? There the soil, earth, water—everything is of purer consciousness than the person who is going to enter there. Can you imagine it?

Devotee: In one of your books you mentioned a 'land of Gurus.'

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Yes. They are all *Guru*, they are all of superior value by nature; yet, we have to pass over them. I sometimes give an example that if it is necessary for the Service we may even put our foot on the throne of the Lord (for example, to place His crown on His head, etc.,) and afterwards come back down, offer our obeisance and then come out from the Deity room.

Entering the Land of *Gurus*

So we must enter and stay in a soil which is made of a stuff which is more valuable than our own selves. A slave when serving the emperor may come near the emperor's bed where even his near and dear cannot go or hesitate to go. He can, only for serving. So it is only for the Divine Service, for the necessity of the highest, that we can pass through that soil. It is not an easy

thing. It is inconceivable. The fools rush in where angels fear to tread.

Vaikunṭhēra pṛthivy ādi sakala cinmaya. We must understand the conception properly. The *jīva* has emerged from the *taṭasthā-śakti* or marginal potency. He is a part of the marginal potency, and *he* must enter into the higher plane. This gross world is of gross potency, *aparā-śakti*; the *jīva*, although marginal, is of a potency superior to this gross world, or *parā-śakti*; and above both is the Internal Potency or *antarāṅgā-śakti*. We have to enter into *antarāṅgā-śakti*. This marginal potency is to enter into *antarāṅgā-śakti*—and that is *Paravyoma*, and the highest quarter, *Vṛndāvana*, *Goloka*. It is not a light matter. It is the fact.

So we must serve. In this world there is exploitation and renunciation; beyond them is dedication. Dedication is the proper and normal world. There are gradations according to our inner tendency of serving a particular calling. We may be allowed to enter that plane where all around is reverential soil. We must go there. Apparently it is impossible, but it is possible by Grace, *kṛpā*. That is called *kṛpā*—His Grace, His free will. He is autocrat. Affection (*rāga*, *anurāga*) does not differentiate between great and small. It is very generous. Only through affection and love is it possible to expect to go

there one day. But it is not so easy. When one young devotee began to show so many (apparently devotional) sentiments, others came to me asking, “He is showing so many signs of higher *bhāva* (sentiments), are they real?” I said, “Never!”

“I have no love for Kṛṣṇa”

Mahāprabhu says “I am hankering for a drop of real *Prema*; I have not yet got that; still, I am weeping, shedding tears so much, crying ‘Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa’, but that is all hypocrisy, because the positive proof is here—without Him, I am living. I did not disappear, dissolve. I am living, I am eating, I am taking bath, I am sleeping. This is positive proof that I have no genuine love for Kṛṣṇa.” Mahāprabhu Himself says that. It is such a valuable thing and we think ourselves masters of it overnight! Fools, deceivers, self-deceivers! In the positive way it can *never* be attained. Only in the negative way we can have some conception. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura says,

বিচক্ষণ করি, দেখিতে চাহিলে,
হয় আঁখি-অগোচর ।

vicakṣaṇa kari, *dekhite cāhile haya*,
haya ākhi-agocara

“Suddenly a flash came, but when I tried to see that, it disappeared. It was withdrawn.” In this way, in a negative way, we can have some idea. Whimsically He may come, and suddenly I may feel, “Oh! some experience of the higher kind of knowledge and love—but if I try to cast my eye that side? Nothing . . .”

Sacrifice—wholesale dissolution of the
mundane experience

Do you want to die? Then come to live. We shall have to invite wholesale dissolution of everything in our experience. Hegel’s words help us: ‘die to live.’ What is generally considered a concrete, valuable thing must be cast into fire, for some hope which is ‘un-understandable,’ unknown and unknowable. Sacrifice means that. Sacrifice gives that suggestion. It may be thought that we pour such a valuable foodstuff, ghee, into fire; that ghee is burnt in the fire and smoke is produced, and that will create a healthier atmosphere, a kind of filtering that we invite for our benefit. Of course, to say such a thing is improper and ridiculous, yet the benefit from the unknown quarter is there. Unknown. Be disgusted with your known world, knowledge, pleasure—everything. Die to live. All risk, no gain. And when the destination has been reached to a certain extent—all gain, no risk.

Actually, what we risk is all concoction, the misunderstanding aspect. We only need to throw our misconception into fire to gain a proper conception of reality. When the unreal is put into fire, we gain the real. To die to live means this.

Here, in this world, we are habituated to think, “I am monarch of all I survey.” We want to become a monarch. Whether we are monarch or not, our tendency is to want to be monarch. All of us want to be monarch. And there is another reactionary school that says, “I do not want anything—I want nothing but dreamless sleep. Cessation is the most valuable thing in our experience—complete cessation of this life.”

Both these aspects of enjoyment, or exploitation, and renunciation, must be eliminated, and a third plane should be found to live in. That third plane is the life of a gentleman, the life of dedication. A life of duty, not to any part, but for the whole: “I live for the whole, and that whole is a part of Lord Kṛṣṇa.” This is to be a lover of the beautiful. In that way we have to understand, and march onward.

Infinity—a negligible aspect of the Lord

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञातेन तवाङ्गुन ।
विष्टभ्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥

*athavā bahunaitena kim jñātena tavārjjuna
viṣṭabhyāham idaṁ kṛtsnam ekāṁśena sthito jagat*

“Arjjuna, the infinite of your conception is in my one negligible part. I am so great that the infinite of your conception is contained in only a fraction of Me . . .”

Then what is our chance of approaching Him? We may think, “Kṛṣṇa is only a reflection of a picture in my mind. There is Kṛṣṇa. The whole forms His one part, and I am approaching Him? My only solace will be that I am going through His agent. He has sent His agent to recruit me, and that is my hope. He has sent His men to recruit me. He’s so kind and benevolent, and that will be my hope. I must be thankful for that, and not be a traitor to His agent.” We must be cautious to see that we do not play treachery with his agent for thereby we commit treachery against ourselves.

Om Viṣṇupāda Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda kī jaya! Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj kī jaya!

Divine Tribute

You are all his contribution. Swāmī Mahārāj* brought

*Informal, affectionate address of Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Prabhupāda.

you here, attracted you to this side, and I have been given some opportunity to serve you in this way (by speaking to you). Willingly or unwillingly, I am forced to do some service in that line.

It was so wonderfully and tremendously done by Swāmī Mahārāj, his preaching to the foreign countries is an inconceivable thing—so I say *Śaktyāveśāvatāra*: some supernatural transcendental power, the Grace of Nityānanda, entered into him, and as an instrument, he has done for his Lord a tremendous work to attract your attention towards the culture of Mahāprabhu Chaitanya-dev. Śrī Gaurāṅga’s gift attracted your attention. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur could see this, and our Guru Mahārāj began in his mild way.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākur saw it as self-evident that the intelligentsia could not but be attracted by such a plain, simple and dignified gift—the gift of Mahāprabhu, the conception of Mahāprabhu. Such a magnanimous conception of their position, as foretold by Mahāprabhu, could not but be accepted by the sincere intelligentsia of the world. He could see this general truth. Guru Mahārāj began, and Swāmī Mahārāj successfully completed that work. After all, the Divine Will was fulfilled. It is not in the jurisdiction of the lower agents of this world, the subordinate gods or agents.

We are attracted by this—die to live, reality is for itself. We are to sacrifice everything ‘for Himself.’ We are ‘for Himself.’ Our prospect is in His Service. All our prospect is in His Service, but in the highest degree it is loving service—service of affection, without any calculation of loss and gain. It is above that, in the area of love and affection, beauty and charm. We are members there. Our prospect is there. It is offered to us. Above justice, above knowledge (*jñāna-śūnyā-bhakti*).

Śrī Chaitanyadev—inconceivable Self-forgetfulness

Even if Chaitanyadev is considered as a human being, we have never seen in any history of the world such intense affinity for the highest as was seen in Him; such an intensified mentality towards the highest conception of Absolute; such self-forgetfulness. There is self-forgetfulness in Socrates, and the Christians also speak of self-sacrifice in Christ. But the degree of self-forgetfulness that was shown in the life of Śrī Chaitanyadev was never to be conceived of or seen before, even if we think of Him as a human.

Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura mentioned in his autobiography, “When I first came to study *Bhāgavata* and Śrī Chaitanyadev, I thought, why did an exceptional scholar like Śrī Chaitanyadev support the debauchery of the Supreme

Lord in Vṛndāvana as the highest end of life? What is the reason? He was one of the highest and greatest scholars, and He ultimately supported the debauchery, stealing, etc., of the Absolute, as being the highest conception. How was this possible? Then I began to pray to the Lord to reveal the fact to me. I couldn’t follow it.”

Then he said that the flash came; and with that, it also came to him that Chaitanyadev is Kṛṣṇa Himself. He is revealing Himself, giving the clue to the scientific position of His own Identity as Kṛṣṇa. Why? In the highest sense He’s Autocrat, above law. He’s the owner of the whole, above law. He’s absolute good.

We must not forget that He is absolute good, with everything belonging to Him. We put forth that we have claim over the environment or over ourselves. ‘I belong to me’—this is false. I am not an independent factor in this world. I am a part and a parcel. I belong to someone, I have got my master. Everything belongs to Him, and without any condition. Unconditionally every atom belongs to the controlling centre. And that is love and goodness. Where is the objection? Where is the cause for objection? No cause for objection can evidently stand if we can really find what is the real position and nature of the Cause—Absolute Good, Love.

To Love is to give

The essence of love lives by distribution; not by absorption, but by distribution. That is love. *Prema* is that which exists by its tendency of distribution, and that is the highest. If a mother forcibly takes her child to her breast, is it bad? The child is crying for milk, but he does not know how to mitigate the pain of hunger in his belly. So is it force, or affection?

We are labouring under so much suspicion; so engrossed in and oppressed by *Māyā*, misunderstanding, the misrepresented part of the world, that we cannot even think of the conception of truth and goodness. We are so far from the standard of goodness and truth, we cannot understand what should be the real symptom of higher existence. So fallen. Satan says, "It is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." That is generally the outcome of our life of experience here. We want to reign in hell rather than serve in heaven. But just the opposite will be really helpful to us. Die to live.

দীক্ষাকালে ভক্ত করে আত্মসমর্পণ ।

সেই কালে কৃষ্ণ তাকে করে আত্মসম ॥

সেই দেহ করে তার চিদানন্দময় ।

অপ্রাকৃত-দেহে তাঁর চরণ ভজয় ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ অঙ্ক ৪/১৯২,১৯৩)

dikṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa
sei kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama
sei deha kare tāra cidānanda-maya
aprākṛta-dehe tāra caraṇa bhajaya

(C.c. Antya 4.192,193)

Previously I said that *dikṣā* was the process by which Divine Knowledge is imparted, the knowledge of the infinite world is imparted, to the finite. What is that process? *Dikṣā-kāle bhakta kare ātma-samarpaṇa*: the candidate must fully surrender to a knowledge that is coming down and being imparted to him.

Sei kāle kṛṣṇa tāre kare ātma-sama: Kṛṣṇa accepts him as His own. It is necessary for him to give up all his knowledge of experience, fully, perfectly, and clean-handed. Naked, he will be prepared to accept the higher knowledge, and the higher knowledge will absorb him as his own.

Sei deha kare tāra cidānandamaya: from that time, he gets a conception of another body, not this body of flesh and blood or the mind. His ego becomes coloured by the higher knowledge. He hopes for another personification of his own. And *aprākṛta-dehe kṛṣṇa-caraṇa bhajaya*: in that body he can serve Kṛṣṇa, not this body of flesh or the mental body which is drawn from the experience

of this world. These are unfit. Only the new body, the inner body that comes in contact with that Divinity—that body or ego, can enter there and serve; and this is by the Grace, always by the Grace, and not as a matter of right; still, the Grace is so lenient that a servitor may think, “it is my right.” Really, in *taṭastha-vicāra* (impartial judgement), if from our relative position we venture to tackle the absolute conception, we can only think that we are unfit. Only through Grace can we attain a position there.

Absolute and Relative in the Divine

Apparently Yaśodā is whipping Kṛṣṇa. Her position is superior to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa is under her control. This is the relative position. But from the absolute position Yaśodā is none but a servitor of Kṛṣṇa. Yet, by Grace, in the relative position she is superior. The fact is not so different, because the potency is His own.

Sometimes He, Himself, is controlled by that fine potency of pleasure. He says in the story of Ambariṣa, *aham bhakta-parādhīno hy asvatantra iva dvija*: “I am dependent upon my devotees, as if I have got no independence.”

Iva means ‘as if.’ That is His posing. Devotion is such. His Potency, peculiar particular Potency, Devotion, is so

powerful that sometimes it works beyond His own Will. But that is Devotion to *Him*. Submission to the master is so intense that the master becomes subservient to the servant—through affection: “At My beck and call he can give his life. So how should I deal with him?” Automatically, the master’s heart goes to him. That is Love, *Prema*.

Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī wrote: *śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā*. The highest and most excellent capacity and qualification of Devotion can forcibly draw Kṛṣṇa towards the devotee, though He is absolutely independent. *Bhakti* or self-sacrifice to the extreme, sacrifice for serving—Loving Service—is so powerful that the Lord becomes a friend and in different ways he comes to meet His devotees.

Asvatantra iva dvija: “Although I am free, I depend on my devotee as though I am not. Sometimes I feel like that.”

This is independence proper. Absolute means this. Absolute does not mean that mercilessly He is bruising everything under His feet. There is love. Embracing. All-interest is represented there. He has love. He is the Lord of Love. So our fortune, our luck, is represented there in Him, the transaction of love and affection is so great. Hare Kṛṣṇa.

Chapter Ten

Supersubjective Reality

Devotee: It was very nice at your birthplace; I enjoyed that very much—

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: —enjoyed?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: That is not to be enjoyed. We should not use that expression 'to enjoy' about any place of reverence. We should try to see with only a serving attitude. Higher existence is to be tackled only with awe, reverence, and serving attitude. Otherwise, we shall be anthropomorphists; we shall take one thing for another. *Marttya-buddhi*—*aparādha*. It will be offence.

Whenever we shall approach the higher subjective realm, we should feel that "I am not seeing; I am not the subject, but *that is seeing me*." Do you follow?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: That is the supersubjective element. For example, when we stand before the *Śrī-Mūrtti*, the Deity, our attitude should be, "I am not seeing Him, *He*

is seeing me.” He’s the seer. We have to approach the transcendental world not as a seer, but as we are being seen by Him. We are being bathed, cleansed by the ray of His vision. Can you understand this?

Devotee: Yes, yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: Our whole approach should be like this, otherwise we shall see mundane things and imagine them to be spiritual. We won’t come practically in connection with that reality.

The reality is supersubjective. Taking this world as the object, we are a subject. But when I am going to have a touch of the Supersubjective, I must know that He is all-seer, all-feeler, all-hearer. The very basis of spiritual life is like this.

Then we shall come in contact with the higher reality; otherwise we shall go on plodding in the mud of imagination. The attitude should be to want to be utilized by Him, and try for any chance of serving Him: “I have come here to serve, and not to enjoy the scenery.” Can you feel this?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: This will take us to connection with the higher substance—subjective, super-subjective, super- super- super- super-subjective—the very fine, finer, finest—in this way, in the sphere of consciousness.

So *jñāna-sūnyā*—one should surrender himself: “How can I be utilized by Him?” This is the way. Otherwise, what is the use of sight-seeing? Enjoy the scenery—that is offensive.

Devotee: When the environment comes to attack us, how can we see that as Kṛṣṇa?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: When the environment is unfavourable?

Devotee: Yes.

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: We shall try to find out the Supreme Will there. We should feel, “I have done something wrong, so this is coming to control me and to exact the reaction for my offences. *Tat te ’nukampām susamīkṣamāṇo*. In the perfect vision, we are not to quarrel with the environment. “Not even a straw can move without the Supreme Will, without the order of the Supreme Will. So, whatever is coming to attack me is my necessity. Just that is necessary for me, to correct me.”

Just as when the mother is punishing the child, she does so only with the good will to correct the child. Similarly, the Absolute has got no vindictive nature to punish me, but His dealings are only for my correction. We shall have to see and approach in that way.

Tat te ’nukampām susmīkṣamāṇo bhujāna evātma-kr̥tam vipākam: “Whatever undesirable I find here is the

result of my previous *karma*, and by the good will of the Supreme, that previous *karma* is going to be finished. I will be relieved. I will be made fit for higher service to Him, so this has come.” That is the advice in *Bhāgavatam*. Don’t quarrel with the environment. Try to be adjusted with it; correct your own ego. Everything is alright.

Your ego is demanding some sort of comfort from the environment. That is the cause of this hitch. There’s no hitch in the outside, no ailment; but within, your ego creates the problem. That false ego should be dissolved, and the liquid nectar will flow and place you within the highest plane, the plane where there is no complaint. The smooth movement, affectionate movement of the most fundamental plane: your soul will find yourself standing and walking in that plane. And the false friends—the circumstances we think to be friends but which are really all false—those false friends will be withdrawn.

That is *nirguṇa*, the causeless flow of welfare, most fundamental in the Absolute Plane. That is *Bhakti* proper. *Bhakti* means *sevā*, service—Service Divine. That is a causeless wave. The deepest wave, the wave of the deepest plane. That is causeless and that is irresistible. That means no beginning, no end. Eternal flow.

And only my soul can take a stand in that plane and move in harmony with that plane.

Kathā gānaṁ naṭyaṁ gamanam. In *Brahma-saṁhitā* it is mentioned, “All the talks there are as sweet as song; all the walking there, movement, is as sweet as dancing.” In this way, everything is sweet. That is the harmonious movement plane. In *Vṛndāvana*. We have to go back to that home.

We have come out with the spirit of colonization in a foreign land, with the bad object of exploitation. For the purpose of exploitation we have come to colonize in this material world, and as a reaction we suffer. The whole cover must be eliminated, and our person within, the finest ego, must emerge. Within this gross mischievous ego there is the finer ego, soul; and that is the child of that soil. Do you understand?

Devotee: Yes. Sometimes I understand—

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: So, faultfinding will take us in the wrong direction. Finding fault in others is the negative side. We should feel, “Cent-per-cent I shall engage my attention to correct myself. My responsibility is there. My main responsibility is to correct myself.” ‘Physician cure thyself.’ That should be the principle of any bona fide student of this Kṛṣṇa consciousness. That is the positive side; and the negative side, indirect side, is to

judge others' practices and how to associate with them. We shall associate with the good and we shall avoid those who are not up to standard. But this is the negative side, and this is not as important as the positive side. We shall be optimistic to see good everywhere, and for ourselves we should think, "My knowledge and angle of vision is bad, so I can't see others properly." 'Physician cure thyself.'

If our *ācāra* or our own practices are well, only then can we have some qualification for preaching to others. How can one who is not in a normal position try to bring others to a normal position?

If we shall take the Divine Name, there are also many considerations. Mainly there are ten kinds of offences to avoid, which deny us proper conception. Proper conception will help proper dealing and positive attainment, which is how to get out of the negative side. *Māyā* means misconception, misunderstanding, misleading. We are misleading the environment.

The difficulty is all apparent and suicidal. Sometimes we want causeless mercy; at the same time we can't tolerate others in that same line. We go to judge in the case of others: "Why should he receive causeless mercy? He has got so many defects, so much anti-attitude and disqualification, why should he be accepted or given any

chance?" But for us—we want, "Don't come to judge me, otherwise I have no hope, my Lord."

Jñāna-śūnyā-bhakti. "If You come to judge, I have got no hope. Please grant grace, then I can hope to approach You, to offer myself to make progress towards You; if You become very lenient, not to find fault with me"; but if at the same time, in the same breath, we say, "Why should this disqualified man get any grace? Why should he get some mercy and affection?" that is hypocrisy in us, and that causes a great deal of difficulty within us. It is suicidal.

This is *Vaiṣṇava-nindā*, *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*—offence to the devotee. A devotee may be accepted by Him, and gradually he will be purified; but we are very eager to find fault in him. That is most dangerous for our own progress; it is suicidal. If in my case I want something higher, but in the case of others I can't tolerate the same behaviour of the Lord, that is a most difficult position.

Generally that is the basis of *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. When someone has been accepted by the Lord, and He is gradually purifying him, and we give particular attention to the remnants of impurities and difficulties in him, the result is that all those difficulties will be transferred to us. This is the actual experience. If I especially mark the fault of another devotee, that will be transferred

to me. It happens. In our experience and also in the *śāstra* we have seen this.

So, one must be very careful not to make any remark generally about the practices and activities of another Vaiṣṇava. It may be possible only in the case when one is empowered by the Supreme; just as in the case of his disciple. To correct his disciples, with a guardian's sympathetic eye, he can mark the defects, and he will help them to remove them. There must be some affectionate heart within. Not jealousy or anything of that type, but with good will; the affectionate guardian's want to remove the defects.

Either from the position of *Śikṣā-Guru* or *Dikṣā-Guru* one may detect the faults of the students of this line, and help them sincerely to get free from them. Otherwise, if we are attracted by those faults, they will come to us and we shall have to pay for it.

It is a practical thing; and also based on good reason and scriptural advices. We must be careful. It is also warned in the Vaiṣṇava literature that we must be careful about *Vaiṣṇava-aparādha* that comes from the jealous spirit of competition. That jealousy is very detrimental to our spiritual life.

So we all must be very careful to not be especially attracted by any defect. If some doubt about anyone

comes to our attention we may refer it to the higher authority. But if we make too much of it, either in opposition or in any other way, that will be transferred back. We must know, "I am devouring. My mind is coming in touch with that fault." That is being devoured as food, and the contamination is transferred to the critic; somehow it is entering into the mental system of the critic, and it must get its satisfaction there, as a reaction.

This is like a trade secret of our devotional line. You must be aware and very careful about these practical difficulties in the path of your life.

So we have been recommended, *tat te 'nukampāṁ susamīkṣmāṇo*: the faculty of judgement has been discouraged; your standard of measuring things won't stand there. *Jñāna-śūnyā-bhakti*. You have to learn a new alphabet here. In the devotional school you have to come in connection with a new alphabet. The old alphabet won't do. *Jñāna-śūnyā-bhakti*. Give up all the pride of your past experience. Your knowledge out of experience of the mortal world won't do here, won't be applied here. This is the position in the case of the Infinite Autocrat and Goodness.

In our mouth we pronounce all these big things—Absolute Good—Absolute Truth—but we do not know

about the characteristic of that. So we need His revelation. He reveals Himself. We must carefully note His nature.

So, *jñāna-śūnyā*—give up the pride of your old experience on the basis of which you will go to judge things. It is not like that. A new law is here, and we have to think of the land of Autocrat and Goodness. In *jñāna-śūnyā-bhakti* the first step will be to give up all the pride of our previous experience, and to begin a new life: “I shall accept the laws of the infinite, not the laws of this finite world that I acquired as a subject. I shall have to enter that domain as an object, of the subject. There, He is the subject and I am the object here, possessing only a particle of the space there; and that is also at His sweet will. At any time I may be dispossessed of it.” This is not in the democratic government, but in the mad monarchy—a kind of dictatorship. This is to live in the land of dictatorship, and not in the democracy and law. *Jñāne prayāsam udapāsyā namanta eva.*

Everywhere we shall try our best to find mercy, grace, kindness, pity. Because whatever the dictator is doing is all good. We have to be trained like that. He’s the highest dictator, without fault, so we may or may not understand, but whatever is commanded by the dictator must be helpful for us. There is no law on which we shall base

our judgement and give any remark. To remark is not only absolutely useless but it is faulty and injurious to ourselves. Such consciousness we have to acquire, and it is not unreasonable.

Newton said, “I am only collecting pebbles on the shore of the ocean of knowledge.” He was a man of this world, yet he had the sincerity and courage to make this statement. If such a statement is made in deference to the knowledge of only this world, what should be thought of the knowledge of the infinite unknown and unknowable? We must have courage, just as Columbus floated his ship to discover America. He had the courage. To float our little boat in the ocean of the unknown and unknowable, we must be cognizant that the laws will be of that type. The laws of the higher ocean may not be applied in the strait or local sea. A thoroughly new thing we have to study—the revealed truth. If we go to measure the infinite with the law of finite, it will be hopeless for us to go that side. We must invite and think purely of that land, that standard. The unknown world.

स्वयं समुत्तीर्य सुदुस्तरं द्युमन् भवार्णवं भीममदभ्रसौहृदाः ।
भवत्पदाश्वोरुहनावमत्र ते निधाय याताः सदनुग्रहो भवान् ॥

(भा: १०/२/३१)

*svayaṁ samuttīryya sudustaraṁ dyuman
bhavāṇavaṁ bhīmaṁ adabhra-sauḥṛdāḥ
bhavat-padāmbhoruha-nāvaṁ atra te
nidhāya yātāḥ sad anugraho bhavān*

(Bhā: 10.2.31)

“O Self-revealed One, You are *Bhakta-vānchākalpa-taru*, the wish-fulfilling tree of the devotee. The great devotees surrendered unto Your Lotus Feet, who have crossed over this ghastly insurmountable ocean of mundanity, have left the boat of Your Lotus Feet in this world (in the *Guru-paramparā* or in the line of Revealed Truth, *Śrauta-panthā*)—because, they are greatly affectionate to all beings.”

The *Devas* (Brahmā and Śiva) say in the *Bhāgavatam*, “The saints who by Your Grace have crossed that insurmountable ocean, that dreadful ocean, with dreadful waves and so many water animals—those saints again sent back the boat, which is compared with the Lotus Feet of the Lord. By the help of the Lotus Feet of You, the Infinite Absolute Lord, they cross this ocean, by the Grace of Your Holy Feet; and they again send that boat back here for others to cross the same ocean. They’re experienced about the ocean, and in which way they

crossed and what difficulty they faced, and where. Your devotees are so magnanimous that after using the boat of Your Holy Feet to cross, they again send them back for us. Because, their friendship for the people is very white, and pure. And You are always in favour of those devotees, so by their request you can’t refuse. You allow Your Lotus Feet again to come this side and take others across.”

* * *

Chapter Eleven

Loving Surrender

Knowledge is our enemy, because knowledge in this world is all misleading. Its very basis is misleading. However spacious it may be, it is the negligible part of the infinite. We have collected, gathered and pushed into our brain all misleading misrepresentation. Our brains are full of misleading Māyā, misunderstanding. So that is our enemy. We have to clear these things out and put in fresh things that are indented from the other world by pure sources. The theoretical is one thing, the practical another. Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī has quoted:

ज्ञानतः सुलभा मुक्तिर्भुक्तिर्यज्ञादिपुण्यतः ।

सेयं साधनसाहस्रैर्हरिभक्तिः सुदुर्लभा ॥

(सिन्धु पूर्व १/३६)

*jñānataḥ sulabhā muktir bhuktir yajñādi puṇyataḥ
seyam sādhanasāhasrair hari-bhaktiḥ sudurllabhā*

(B.r.s. Pūrva 1.36)

“(Mahādeva says,) ‘By practice of enlightenment, *jñāna*, liberation is attained easily enough. By pious work such as sacrifice, *yajña*, etc., worldly pleasure in the next life is attained easily enough. But Devotion for the Supreme Lord, *Hari-bhakti*, is very rarely attained.”

By cultivating our knowledge of soul, we can attain *mukti*, that is, emancipation or liberation from miscalculation relatively easily. Though it is not so easy, still, considering the wicked nature of the environment, in a general sense one can easily renounce everything; by elimination, elimination, elimination—all elimination, for reaching something like sound sleep. That is *mukti*. Permanent sound sleep.

And we can gather our things of enjoyment by *yajña*, altruistic action. If we take altruistic action, then as a reaction they will come back to us, for our satisfaction and pleasure.

But our real wealth, Devotion to Hari, is not so easily attained. *Sādhana-sāhasraiḥ*: despite thousands of practices by the aspirant, still it is *sudurllabhā*, it may or may not be acquired. Because, that is to acquire friendship with the Autocracy. Our enjoyment is ‘labour and live.’ If we loan some labour to another, that may come back to us. So, by the help of our labour, and by the distri-

bution of that labour, we can easily get future enjoyment. Also, by practising our sincere disgust with the present mortal environment, we can encourage our ego towards salvation. That is complete renunciation, cutting off all connection with the environment, *samādhi*, just like sound sleep. But to have affectionate connection with the Autocratic Infinite—that is hardly to be acquired.

Hari-bhakti-sudurllabhā. And the gradual process of how one is to acquire that is also traced in *Śrī-Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*:

क्लेशात्री शुभदा मोक्षलघुताकृत् सुदुर्लभा ।

सान्द्रानन्दविशेषात्मा श्रीकृष्णाकर्षिणी च सा ॥

(पूर्व १/१७)

kleśa-ghnī śubhadā mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt sudurllabhā

sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā śrī-kṛṣṇākārṣiṇī ca sā

(Pūrva 1.17)

Kleśa-ghnī: all the afflicting tendencies in your mind gradually diminish. So many things—the proposal of subtle finer mundane happiness may come to try and dissuade you from this path. They are obstacles, and your sincere negligence to them develops. *Śubhadā*: all auspiciousness is given to you. *Mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt*: the

third result is that you shall trace that *mukti*, the result of mere renunciation, that is, relief from the influence of the negative side, now appears to be a very small achievement. The consciousness will awaken in you that mere withdrawal from the negative side is a very insignificant achievement. *Mokṣa-laghutā-kṛt, sudurllabhā*: if you can only feel or experience that the goal of renunciation is insignificant, it is of a lower order, does that mean you will get *Bhakti*? No. There is no such guarantee. Even at that stage, *Bhakti* remains far away from you.

Sāndrānanda-viśeṣātmā: then if somehow by chance you come in connection with that reality, you will find some fundamental awakening that infinite happiness is approaching you. *Śrī-kṛṣṇākarṣiṇī ca sā*: and further, if you can continue your devotional activity in a proper line, you will find that He is coming to you as Kṛṣṇa Himself, in the conception of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. The Kṛṣṇa concept is coming to you as Kṛṣṇa Himself.

'Kṛṣṇa' means the full embodiment of all types of ecstasy. That is approaching, or you are being allowed to have His nearer conception, as the fulfillment of your devotional activities of life. In this way, things progress.

So die to live—dive deep into reality—*jñāna-sūnyā-bhakti*. The area of surrender is so high, noble, great and fulfilling. That can come. That can only take us in

the plane of love and affection. If we hope to see and to live in that plane of affection and love, not this mundane affection and love, but the love of the Absolute, then we must accept complete surrender at His disposal, at His mercy. The reaction comes as love. With your highest contribution of faith towards Him, He will be aroused and He will come to accept You on His lap.

So, no risk—no gain; and that is risk towards the whole: Devotion proper. It is not merely a sum total of some certain activities, or a type of study—never. Practically it is concerned with the soul, with the inner existence of us. Giving and taking must take place from the innermost part of our heart. It is not a game to play with! No superficial knowledge or bodily or mental labour can touch it. It is the dealing of the heart to heart. And that is wholesale.

Jñāne prayāsam udapāśya. In this world we are proud of our mania for knowledge and worldly energy; bodily or mental energy, and knowledge about so many falsified things. But He can withdraw everything. Scientists may have discovered a certain law, but if He withdraws, it will be nowhere. Nothing is possible unless backed by His will. 'Let there be water, there was water; let there be light, there was light.' If we can find some faith in this, then we shall perceive that everything is designed

and destined by Him. So what is the utility of some provisional incident? If He wishes, He may make or mar. The law may be reversed by His sweet will. The origin of the world is such. He is an independent designer, like a great master hypnotist.

* * *

Chapter Twelve

Earnestness

“If You kindly remove my blindness for a moment, I would like to see that great, noble figure of Yours that others have seen.”

“No, no, it’s not necessary for your blindness to be removed. If I just say ‘see!’ then you will see Me.”

By His will, by His order, Dhṛtarāṣṭra saw, without his blindness being removed. “Yes, being blind you can see me!” Despite being blind he could see, so what sort of sight is *He*? He can be seen only by His order. So, neither eyes nor our mental preparation backing the eye are indispensable to see Him. He ordered Dhṛtarāṣṭra, “See me!” and he could see—without eyes or without the mentality of sight. Dhṛtarāṣṭra was *janmāndha*, blind from birth; he had no idea of any colour or figure, but still he could see—by the Lord’s order. His position is such; so if we try to approach Him, what should our attitude be? How much earnestness should we have to approach that land?

It is easy—it is difficult. Easy, because it is our inborn tendency. It is home. But now, we are far from home. It is home, my own, so there is hope that I may reach there one day. It is my home and I won't find satisfaction anywhere else, so I must go there, but I am far away from that home comfort. There is the difficulty—I have lost that land.

Jñāne prayāsam udapāśya: scholarship is poison! Are you ready to admit this? All your learning is nonsense! You are plodding in the mud. All knowledge of misrepresentation—not a bag full of money, but a bag full of rocks. The brain is taxed and filled up with all misleading things. Are you ready to admit this? Not so soon! What do you say? Many of us boast of our knowledge. But the *Bhakti* school is striking a hammer on the head of knowledge or *jñāna*. Rather, ignorance is better than knowledge! Can you accept that? Knowledge is more dangerous than ignorance!!

Why? Because the so-called learned are proud by comparison. They are more confident that they are holding a higher position, and to remove them from that position is very difficult. Qualitatively, they are in a position above the ordinary labourer, so they are confident of their superiority. So to relieve them of that proud superiority is more difficult than to relieve an

ordinary labourer of his ignorance. That would be easy. It is easy to educate an uneducated person, but to educate an 'educated' person is more difficult. He has firmly entrenched himself in his superiority, so he won't budge an inch from that position.

এই দু'য়ের মধ্য বিষয়ী তবু ভাল ।

মায়াবাদী সঙ্গ নাহি মাগি কোন কাল ॥

(শরণাগতি)

ei du'yera madhye viṣayī tabu bhāla

māyāvādī saṅga nāhi māgi kona kāla

(Śaraṇāgati)

The company of ordinary persons, misguided souls in the ordinary street, is somewhat better than the company and influence of the so-called scholars. That sort of subtle poison is very dangerous and difficult to remove. They're proud, thinking, "I know. I hold a higher position than the ordinary mass." That sort of fine ego is very difficult to remove. Ordinary persons may think, "Yes, we are culprits." Also, the ego of the ordinary religious men is very difficult to remove. "Oh, I am a religious man." It is very difficult to cross his so-called faith and religion, to give him something higher. This is the prac-

tical experience, and it is also advised in *śāstra*.

বেদাশয় নাস্তিক্য - বাদ বৌদ্ধকে অধিক ॥

(চৈঃ চঃ মধ্য ৬/১৬৮)

vedāśraya nāstikya-vāda bauddhake adhika

(C.c. Madhya 6.168)

Half-truth is more dangerous than falsehood. As in Śankara's Māyāvāda, there is atheism in the garb of theism. They say so 'ham, "I am the highest substance." They take the authority or the law as non-differentiated like zero. It cannot assert. Therefore they cannot admit, "I am among the creation." They imagine it is possible for them to hold the higher position. There is no God. There is no such thing as God who automatically holds the highest power and all that be, because ultimately there is a region of unknown and unknowable substance, and wherever there is enlightenment as a human, a wise man, he holds the highest position. "We hold the highest position." But if we have to admit God, then we have nothing. If we are his created objects, play dolls, we have nothing. As soon as we have admitted God, then we are dispossessed of everything! So much renunciation is impossible. To hold that "I am the absolute authority"

means that I am nowhere. Such self-abnegation is not so cheap! Any questions?

Devotee: What can help an intellectual to develop *śāstric* (scriptural) vision?

Śrīla Guru Mahārāj: When the sleeping aspect will be awakened, the cover will vanish automatically. Intellectualism cannot be utilized, but that real causeless eternal wealth within should be awakened and strengthened; and this cover of proud intellectualism will evaporate. *Kamma* and *jñāna* are only foreign covers.

वासुदेवे भगवति भक्तियोगः प्रयोजितः ।

जनयत्याशु वैराग्यं ज्ञानञ्च यदहैतुकम् ॥

(भा: ১/২/৩)

vāsudeve bhagavati bhakti-yogaḥ prayojitaḥ

janayaty āśu vairāgyaṁ jñānaṁ ca yad ahaitukam

(Bhā: 1.2.7)

If somehow with the help of the Scriptures and His agents, the devotees or saints, we can develop our Devotion, *Bhakti*, then, the proper knowledge and proper apathy towards worldly substances will follow us. Healthy, proper knowledge and healthy energy will come to follow us if the reality within awakens and we become

adjusted by it.

This doesn't refer to the knowledge or energy found in this plane. This is entirely distinct. Energy is the capacity to work, to move. And knowledge is to have a conception. That will come in the retinue of Devotion.

Sambandha-jñāna—'what is what.' A new world will awaken within. Misleading ideas will evaporate and retire, and the proper reading will evolve from within. *Sambandha-jñāna*. "I am such and such to my Lord, and these are the Lord's friends, the Lord's lovers, etc.; and what sort of knowledge and movement should be mine in this new environment."

In that way, readjustment will come from within. The present type of knowledge and energizing will have to retire and be dispelled like darkness. Conceptions may be utilized only when proper conception awakens. When the professor will point out our misconceptions we can learn the proper conception. "In this way you are misconceiving things; your proper conception is this; but did you misconceive this thing for that?" "Yes sir, I thought like that. Now I see the real thing is this. This is not mine. Not to speak of mine, I also belong to Kṛṣṇa—my Lord."

"Everything belongs to Him; I am not a master, I am a slave. I don't hold the position of a master, not to

speak of possessing so many properties. Even I am property to another possessor." The calculation must begin from that plane, and a new land will be found. That aspiration and aggression to think one can conquer the whole world by the atomic energy is a false notion. It is suffering human intellect to think one has a position to challenge God: "God is only a superstition, an imaginary thing." We need this wholesale and radical cure: "I do not belong to me, I have my eternal master." We need slave mentality.

During the time of my Guru Mahārāj's preaching, one newspaper in Calcutta complained, "Gauḍiya Maṭh is spreading slave mentality to the country—this is most objectionable. This will destroy the military spirit of the land, so they can't be encouraged to spread slavery. They have no patriotism, what are they!" The atheists cannot tolerate the call to come hither and live in Vaikuṅṭha. They can't tolerate the spreading of this 'poison' within the country. And they hold that in *Bhagavad-gītā*, Kṛṣṇa supported war. But that was not from *their* standpoint.

Yadā yadā hi dharmmasya. . . The Lord says, "Sometimes the world is so thickly attacked by the atheistic influence that I have to come down again to re-establish the religious environment here. The enemies are vanquished and the good thinkers are given certain relief

in their lives. I have to come.”

* * *

শ্রীশ্রীগুরুগৌরাস্তৌ জয়তঃ

All Glory to the Divine Master
and the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Chaitanya

শ্রীগুরু-আরতি-স্তুতি

Śrī Guru Ārati-stuti

Ārati Prayer to Śrīla Guru Mahārāj

*

composed by

The Present President-Ācāryya

Om Viṣṇupāda Tridaṇḍi Swāmī

Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

জয় 'গুরু-মহারাজ' যতিরাজেশ্বর ।

শ্রীভক্তিরক্ষক দেব-গোস্বামী শ্রীধর ॥১॥

পতিতপাবন-লীলা বিস্তারি' ভুবনে ।

নিস্তারিলা দীনহীন আপামর জনে ॥২॥

তোমার করুণাঘন মুরতি হেরিয়া ।
 প্রেমে ভাগ্যবান জীব পড়ে মুরছিয়া ॥৩॥
 সুদীর্ঘ সুপীব্য দেহ দিব্য-ভাবাশ্রয় ।
 দিব্যজ্ঞান-দীপ্তনেত্র দিব্যজ্যোতির্ময় ॥৪॥
 সুবর্ণ-সূরজ-কান্তি অরুণ-বসন ।
 তিলক তুলসীমালা, চন্দন-ভূষণ ॥৫॥
 অপূর্ব শ্রীঅঙ্গশোভা করে বলমল ।
 ঔদ্যার্য-উন্নতভাব মাধুর্য-উজ্জ্বল ॥৬॥
 অচিন্ত্যপ্রতিভা, স্নিগ্ধ, গম্ভীর, উদার ।
 জড়জ্ঞান-গিরিবজ্র দিব্য-দীক্ষাধার ॥৭॥
 গৌর-সংকীৰ্ত্তন-রাস-রসের আশ্রয় ।
 “দয়াল নিতাই” নামে নিত্য প্রেমময় ॥৮॥
 সাক্ষোপাঙ্গে গৌরধামে নিত্য-পরকাশ ।
 গুপ্ত-গোবর্দ্ধনে দিব্য-লীলার বিলাস ॥৯॥
 গৌড়ীয়-আচার্য্য-গোষ্ঠী-গৌরব-ভাজন ।
 গৌড়ীয়-সিদ্ধাস্তমণি কণ্ঠ-বিভূষণ ॥১০॥
 গৌর-সরস্বতী-স্বর্গ সিদ্ধান্তের খনি ।
 আবিষ্কৃত গায়ত্রীর অর্থ-চিন্তামণি ॥১১॥
 একতত্ত্ব বর্ণনেতে নিত্য-নবভাব ।
 সুসঙ্গতি, সামঞ্জস্য, এসব প্রভাব ॥১২॥
 তোমার সতীর্থবর্গ সবে একমতে ।
 রূপ-সরস্বতী ধারা দেখেন তোমাতে ॥১৩॥

তুলসীমালিকা হস্তে শ্রীনাম-গ্রহণ ।
 দেখি' সকলের হয় 'প্রভু' উদ্দীপন ॥১৪॥
 কোটিচন্দ্র-সুশীতল ওপদ ভরসা ।
 গান্ধর্ব্বা-গোবিন্দলীলামৃত-লাভ-আশা ॥১৫॥
 অবিচিন্ত্য-ভেদাভেদ-সিদ্ধাস্ত-প্রকাশ !
 সানন্দে আরতি স্তুতি করে দীন দাস ॥১৬॥

—শ্রীল শ্রীভক্তিসুন্দর গোবিন্দ মহারাজ ।

Śrī-Guru-Ārati-stuti

jaya 'guru-mahārāja' yatirājeśvara
 śrī-bhakti-rakṣaka deva-goswāmī śrīdhara [1]
 patita-pāvana-lilā vistāri' bhuvane
 nistārīlā dīnahīna āpāmara jane [2]
 tomāra karuṇāghana mūrati heriyā
 preme bhāgyvāna jīva paḍe murachiyā [3]
 sudīrgha supībya deha divya-bhāvāśraya
 divya-jñāna-dīpta-netra divya-jyotirmaya [4]
 suvarṇa-sūraja-kānti aruṇa-vasana
 tilaka tulasīmālā, candana-bhūṣaṇa [5]
 apūrvva śrī-aṅga-śobhā kare jhalamala
 audāryya-unnata-bhāva mādhyaya-ujjvala [6]

acintya-pratibhā, snigdha, gambhīra, udāra
 jaḍa-jñāna-giri-vajra divya-dikṣādhāra [7]
 gaura-saṅkirttana-rāsa-rasera āśraya
 “dayāla nitāi” nāme nitya premamaya [8]
 sāṅgopāṅge gaura-dhāme nitya-parakāśa
 gupta-govaraddhane divya-līlāra vilāsa [9]
 gauḍīya-ācāryya-goṣṭhī-gaurava-bhājana
 gauḍīya-siddhānta-maṇi kaṅṭha-vibhūṣaṇa [10]
 gaura-sarasvatī-sphūrtta siddhāntera khani
 āviṣkṛta gayatrīra artha-cintāmaṇi [11]
 eka-tattva varṇanete nitya-nava-bhāva
 susaṅgati, sāmāñjasya, e saba prabhāva [12]
 tomāra satīrtha-varga sabe eka-mate
 rūpa-sarasvatī dhārā dekhena tomāte [13]
 tulasī-mālikā haste śrī-nāma-grahaṇa
 dekhi’ sakalera haya ‘prabhu’ uddīpana [14]
 koṭīcandra-suśītala o pada bharasā
 gāndharvā-govinda-līlāmṛta-lābha-āśā [15]
 avicintya-bhedābheda-siddhānta-prakāśa!
 sānande ārati stuti kare dina dāsa [16]

—Śrīla Śrī Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

All glory to you, ‘Guru Mahārāj,’
 Of *sannyāsī* kings, the Emperor:
 The glorious Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak
 Dev-Goswāmī Śrīdhar.
 Extending in this world your pastimes
 As saviour of the fallen,
 You delivered all the suffering souls,
 Including the most forsaken.
 Beholding your holy form
 Of concentrated mercy,
 The fortunate souls fall in a swoon
 Of Divine Love’s ecstasy.
 Your lofty form of Divine Emotion
 Is nectar for our eyes;
 With Divine Knowledge and shining eyes,
 Your effulgence fills the skies.
 A golden sun resplendent,
 In robes of saffron dressed;
 Adorned with *tilak*, Tulasī beads,
 And with sandal fragrance blessed.
 The matchless beauty of your holy form,
 Dazzling in its brightness;
 Your benevolence of most noble heart,
 In the glow of Pure Love’s Sweetness.

Inconceivable genius, affection,
 Gravity, magnanimity—
 A thunderbolt crushing mundane knowledge,
 The reservoir bestowing Divinity.
 In the Golden Lord's *Sankīrtan* Dance,
 You revel ecstatically;
 "Dayāl Nitāi, Dayāl Nitāi!"
 You ever call so lovingly.
 Eternally present in Nabadwip Dhām
 With your associates, by your sweet will,
 You enjoy your holy pastimes
 On hidden Govarddhan Hill.
 You're the fit recipient of your dignity
 In the *Gauḍīya Ācāryya* assembly,
 The jewel of the *Gauḍīya-siddhānta*
 Adorning your chest so nobly.
 You're the living message of Śrī Gaura,
 You're the mine of perfect conclusions;
 You revealed the Gāyatrī's inner purport:
 The gem fulfilling all aspirations.
 When you speak, one subject alone
 Is revealed in ever-new light;
 Proper adjustment, and harmony—
 All these are your spiritual might.

All your dear Godbrothers
 Declare unanimously
 They see within your Holiness
 The line of Rūpa-Saraswatī.
 Seeing you take the Holy Name,
 With Tulasī beads in hand,
 Awakens the thought of the Lord*
 In everybody's mind.
 Your feet, cooling like ten million moons—
 In their Service all faith do I place;
 The nectar of Rādhā-Govinda's pastimes
 One day we may drink, by your grace.
 O personification of perfect conclusions
 Inconceivably one, yet different!
 I sing this prayer at your *ārati*,
 With joy—your humble servant.

[Translation: Śrī B.A. Sāgar]

*'Prabhu' in the original—may also read: Awakens the thought of Prabhupād, or, Mahāprabhu, or, 'Gurudev.'

Praṇāma-mantra

to Om Viṣṇupād Aṣṭottara-śata-Śrī-
Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj

श्रीस्वरूप-राय-रूप-जीव-भाव-सम्भरं
वर्णधर्म-निर्व्विशेष-सर्व्वलोकनिस्तरम् ।
श्रीसरस्वती-प्रियञ्च भक्तिसुन्दराश्रयं
श्रीधरं नमामि भक्तिरक्षकं जगद्गुरुम् ॥

सिन्धु-चन्द्र-पर्व्वतेन्दु-शाक-जन्मलीलनं
शुद्ध-दीप्त-राग-भक्ति-गौरवानुशीलनम् ।
बिन्दु-चन्द्र-रत्न-सोम-शाक-लोचनान्तरं
श्रीधरं नमामि भक्तिरक्षकं जगद्गुरुम् ॥

śrī-svarūpa-rāya-rūpa-jīva-bhāva-sambharam
varṇa-dharmma-nirvviśeṣa-sarvvaloka-nīstaram
śrī-sarasvatī-priyañ ca bhakti-sundarāśrayam
śrīdharam namāmi bhakti-rakṣakam jagad-gurum
sindhu-candra-parvvatendu-śāka-janma-līlanam
śuddha-dīpta-rāga-bhakti-gauravānuśīlanam
bindu-candra-ratna-soma-śāka-locanāntaram
śrīdharam namāmi bhakti-rakṣakam jagad-gurum

—Śrīla Śrī Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj

I offer my humble obeisances unto the *Guru* of the entire world, Om Viṣṇupād Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, who carries the conception of Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara, Śrī Rāmānanda Rāya, Śrī Rūpa Goswāmī and Śrī Jīva Goswāmī; who delivers everyone irrespective caste or creed; who is the most beloved of Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Sarasvatī Goswāmī Prabhupāda; and who is the abode of Transcendental Loving Service [the only shelter of Śrī Bhakti Sundar Govinda].

I offer my humble obeisances unto the *Guru* of the entire world, Om Viṣṇupād Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, who revealed the Pastimes of his Holy Advent in the world in the year 1817 Śaka era [1895 A.D.]; who constantly practises the wealth of Pure Loving Devotion in Divine Consorhood; and who disappeared from our eyes in the year 1910 Śaka era [1988 A.D.].

[Translation: Śrī B.A. Sāgar]

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श्रीश्रीगुरुगौराङ्गे जयतः

The Guardian of Devotion and His Divine Servitor

by Tridaṇḍi Bhikṣu Śrī Bhakti Ānanda Sāgar

गुर्वाभीष्ट-सुपूरकं गुरुगणैराशीष-सम्भूषितं
चिन्त्याचिन्त्य-समस्तवेद-निपुणं श्रीरूपपन्थानुगम् ।
गोविन्दाभिधमुज्ज्वलं वरतनुं भक्त्यन्वितं सुन्दरं
वन्दे विश्वगुरुञ्च दिव्यभगवत्प्रेम्णो हि बीजप्रदम् ॥
नौमि श्रीगुरुपादाब्जं यतिराजेश्वरेश्वरं
श्रीभक्तिरक्षकं श्रील-श्रीधर-स्वामिनं सदा ॥

Bhakti means 'Devotion,' and *Rakṣaka* means 'guardian.' Situated within the Holy province known by the devotees as 'Gauḍa-maṇḍal,' the humble village of Hāpāniyā has now become a cherished place of pilgrimage for theistic scholars and pilgrims the world over. Small wonder, since it is the Holy Place of Advent of Om Viṣṇupād Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhara Dev-Goswāmī Mahārāj, the Great Grandfather of all the faithful Vaiṣṇava *Tridaṇḍi Sannyāsins*, the Grand Preceptor of the Divine Nectarine Message of Śrī Gaurāṅgadev. This great saintly personage made his

glorious Advent at Śrīpāṭ Hāpāniyā of Rāḍh-desh, in 1895* of the Christian calendar. The formidable scholar Śrīyukta Upendra Chandra Bhaṭṭāchāryya Vidyāratna Mahodoy and Śrīmatī Gaurīdevī, were both unalloyed pure souls imbued with righteousness and devotion for the Supreme Lord Hari. At the fitting auspicious moment, Śrīla Guṛu Mahārāj made his Advent, choosing them as his father and mother, and revealing the advent of his Divine Pastimes to the world. They named their beloved son Śrī Rāmendra Chandra Bhaṭṭāchāryya.

In 1923 he was attracted by the Grace of Śrī Śrīla Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī, and at the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh situated at No.1 Ulṭāḍīngi Junction Road, Calcutta, he heard Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda's Holy Talks of the Supreme Lord. Not long after that, in December of 1926, with full surrender he joined Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭh. The natural attraction for the *Nāma-saṅkīrtana* of Śrī Chaitanyadev that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had felt since his very childhood now bloomed into the resplendent personality of *Tridaṇḍī Sannyāsīn* Śrī Bhakti Rakṣak Śrīdhar Mahārāj, at the behest of Śrī Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī. Śrīla Prabhupāda conferred this Holy Order, Name and Title upon Śrīla Śrīdhar

Mahārāj in the year 1930, having marked his profound expertise and depth of divine realization in the Holy Scriptural Theistic Conclusions, thus recognizing him as a veritable 'Guardian of Devotion.' Śrīla Prabhupāda further solidified this recognition upon hearing Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj's Sanskrit composition *Śrī-Bhakti-vinoda-viraha-daśakam*, when he endorsed the Holy Poem as a direct inspiration of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākur.

Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj took a prominent part in the founding, organizing and preaching of many of the Śrī Gauḍīya Maṭhs of Śrīla Prabhupāda Bhakti Siddhānta Saraswatī Goswāmī all over India. As a climax to his Divine Affection and Blessings to Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj, during the last days of Śrīla Prabhupāda's manifest Divine Pastimes in this world, he especially selected Śrīla Śrīdhar Mahārāj to sing *Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī-pada* for him, which is well-known as the most venerated and adored Prayer of the entire Gauḍīya *Sampradāya*; by this action we can know Śrīla Prabhupāda's indomitable confidence in his 'Guardian of Devotion' as the future Captain of the *Śrī-Rūpānuga Sampradāya* or Divine Succession of Faithful Followers of Śrī Chaitanyadev in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Goswāmī. And who could doubt this? The nectarine river of Sanskrit and Bengali compo-

*Previously published incorrectly as 1894.

sitions that flowed from his pen stand as great monuments in the line of Śrī Chaitanyadev. In his latter years some hundreds of disciples of the late World Preacher, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj, flocked to Śrī Nabadwip Dhām to hear the holy informal talks and advices of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj, and from tape-recordings of those talks many English publications reached to the Western public, scholars and devotees. The wholehearted acceptance of his Divine Delivery and those Transcendental Works by the genuine devotees is irrevocable, not only by dint of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāj's openly avowed acceptance of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj as his *Śikṣā-Guru*, but simply by the strength of their own spiritual merit. Therefore great numbers of sincere seekers from all over the world also flocked to the Lotus Feet of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj to become surrendered disciples of the Guardian of Devotion.

His Divine Servitor

Om Viṣṇupāda Aṣṭottara-śata-śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj made his Appearance in this world on 17th December, 1929, at Brāhmanpārḥā, District Burdwan, only about six miles from Śrīpāṭ Hāpāniyā where his beloved *Gurudev* made his Advent, also situ-

ated in the Holy Area of Gauḍa-maṇḍal. Revealing his Pastimes to the conditioned souls of this worldly plane, at the tender age of only seventeen years Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj manifest his coming to the Lotus Feet of his *Gurudev* Śrī Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj in April 1947 on the Holy Appearance Day of Śrī Nṛsimhadev (*Nṛsimha-caturdāśī*).

If any of the dear readers of this short account may have, or have had, the opportunity of hearing directly from other stalwart veteran disciples of Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāj (an opportunity the humble writer has fortunately had on many occasions), such as Śrīpād Bhakti Prasūn Araṇya Mahārāj, Śrīpād Hari Charaṇ Brahma-chārī Sevā Ketan Prabhu, Śrīyuktā Kṛṣṇamayī Devī, Śrīyuktā Ramārāṇī Devī, and Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's own revered brothers and disciples Śrīyukta Satyendra Chandra Bhaṭṭāchāryya, Śrīyukta Amarendranāth Bhaṭṭāchāryya and others—any fortunate soul will be able to trace the unbroken line of continuous unalloyed Divine Affection that Śrīla Guru Mahārāj bestowed upon Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, and continues to eternally bestow from his Holy Abode in the *Nitya-līlā* (Eternal Divine Pastimes).

On the *Amāvasyā* (dark-moon day) of 12th August, 1988, when Śrīla Guru Mahārāj silently took his Form

of Holy *Samādhi* at his beloved place of *Bhajan*, Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh, Nabadwip Dhām, at that time all the devotees felt that the Exalted Moon had disappeared from their vision; yet, by his Divine Grace, Śrī Guru Mahārāj had already forseen the devotees' need for uninterrupted light, for the smooth continuation of their Devotional Services; and therefore three years before he conferred the Holy Order of *Tridaṇḍa-sannyāsa* upon Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, naming him as his Illustrious Successor, as the guiding light to perfectly ensure that no darkness could enter into his *Sampradāya* (Divine Succession).

The illustrious *Ācāryyas* or Divine Preceptors have often been described to be as brilliant as the sun. Their Divine Dispensation of *Harikathā* and *Harikirtana* are as the life-giving rays of the supreme sun, giving life and warmth to all creatures, moving and stationary. They are the merciful bestowers of the very kernel of Love Divine for the Supreme Lord which is the Absolute Life of all that lives (*divya-bhagavat-premṇo hi bīja-pradam*). In this way, it was no surprise that the faithful loving devotees of Śrīla Guru Mahārāj could only receive with great transcendental joy the appearance in the Gauḍīya firmament of *Jagad-Guru Gauḍīya-Bhāskarācāryya* Śrīla Śrī Bhakti Sundar Govinda Mahārāj. In the Personage

of his Dearest Divine Servitor, Śrīla Guru Mahārāj had long before selected our future Guardian.

Highly learned in Sanskrit and Bengali, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj has, as did his Illustrious *Gurudev*, given us many Divine Prayers and Songs most valuable for the cultivation of our spiritual life; his valuable natural talent coupled with his fine delivery of *Harikathā* (Holy Talks of the Supreme Lord and His Pastimes), and, on the practical side of Devotional Life, his untiring Services to his Śrīla Guru Mahārāj in nurturing and upholding Śrīla Guru Mahārāj's India-wide and world-wide Mission from the very beginning to the present—it was none other than he who designed and supervised the building of Śrī Chaitanya Sāraswat Maṭh—have, as we have seen with our own eyes, ever fulfilled the Divine Desires of Śrī *Gurudev* (*guruvābhīṣṭa-supūrakam*).

By his Grace we have been able to continue our spiritual life and do some service to bring out this transcendental series of Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion. Gradually it will come into all languages of the world. May Guru Mahārāj and his Divine Godbrother Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāj Prabhupāda, and the most beloved Divine Servitor of them both, Śrīla Govinda Mahārāj, cast their merciful glance upon us and our company, the fallen souls of the mundane world; with this prayer

I beg to offer my humble *sāṣṭāṅga dandabat praṇām* unto the Lotus Feet of them all.

Abbreviations

गीता—श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता

चै: च:—श्रीचैतन्यचरितामृत

भा:—श्रीमद्भागवतम्

मनु—मनुसंहिता

सिन्धु—श्रीभक्तिरसामृतसिन्धुः

छे: छ:—श्रीछैतन्याचरितामृत

B.r.s.—*Śrī Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhuḥ*

Bg.—*Śrīmad-Bhagavad-gītā*

Bhā:—*Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*

C.c.—*Śrī Caitanya-Caritāmṛta*

Manu—*Manu-Saṁhitā*