

Śrīla Gurudeva

The Supreme Treasure

Volume 2

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Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu

Svāmī Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja

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Dedication



I am presenting this book as an offering of devotion to our dearly beloved *jagad-guru*, *om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa parivrājakācārya aṣṭottara-śata*

Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

who has mercifully shown us an unadulterated life of utter dedication and loving service to his beloved Guru Mahārāja, *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa parivrājakācārya aṣṭottara-śata* Śrī Śrīmad Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

This is an account of the most auspicious life, qualities and teachings of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

“Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja is expert in describing *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. He is endowed with the qualities of magnanimity and sweetness, and he is the best of great souls. Because he is always relishing Kṛṣṇa’s sweetness, he is able to freely distribute that sweetness to others. I bow down and place my head at his lotus feet.”

Because he loves to speak *hari-kathā* and relishes the sweet transcendental name, form, qualities and pastimes of the Supreme Lord, he is the most qualified to eradicate from ones heart the most dangerous enemy in the path of *bhakti*, the deceitful entrapping fallacy of impersonalism.

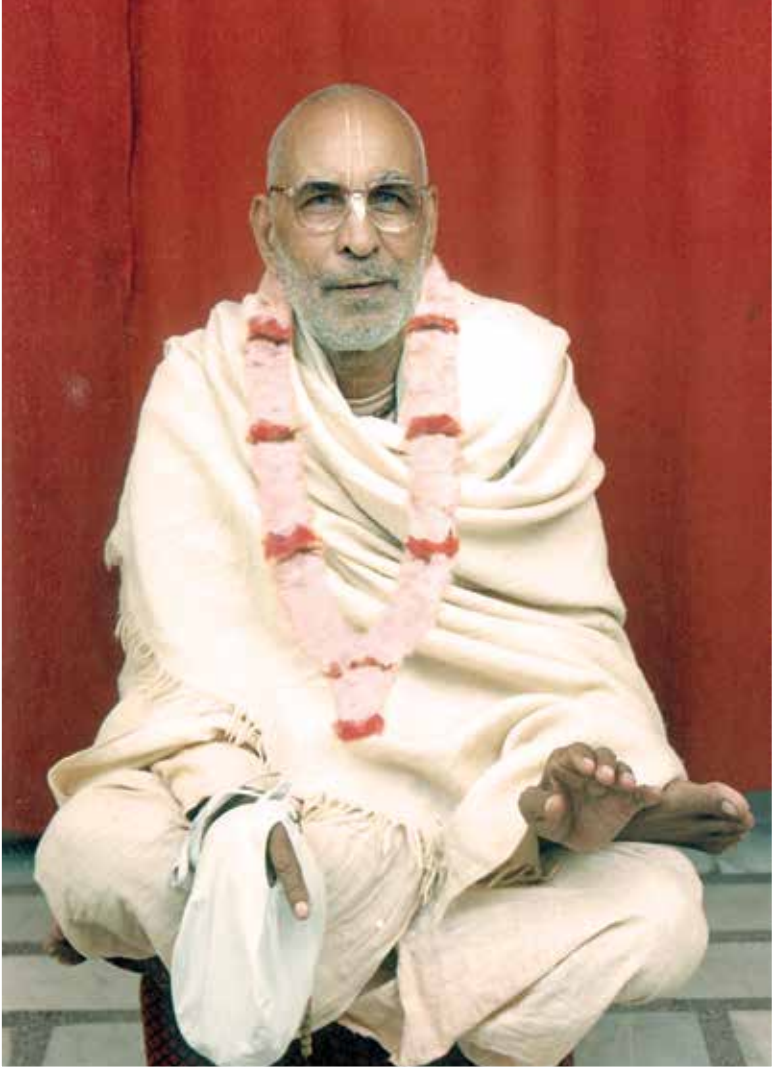
Tridaṇḍī-bhikṣu Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja

Guru-varga



The Three Pillars of Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja—

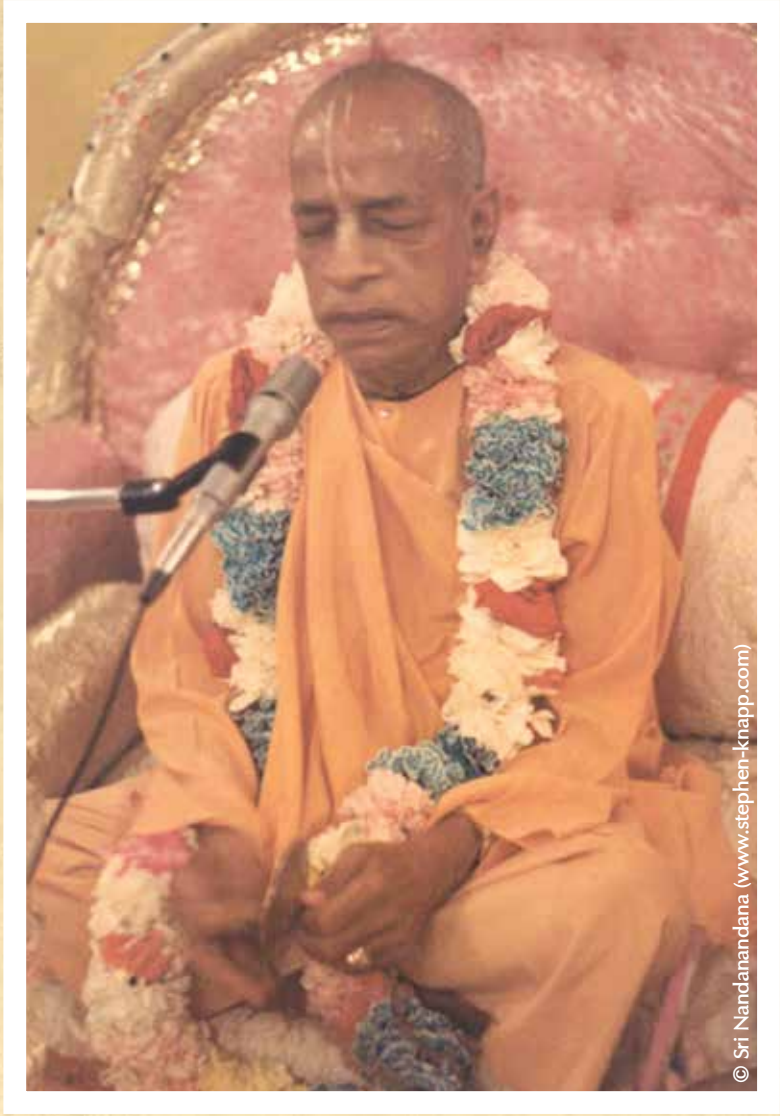
My *śikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, my *dikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and *param-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja



om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa parivrājakācārya
Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja

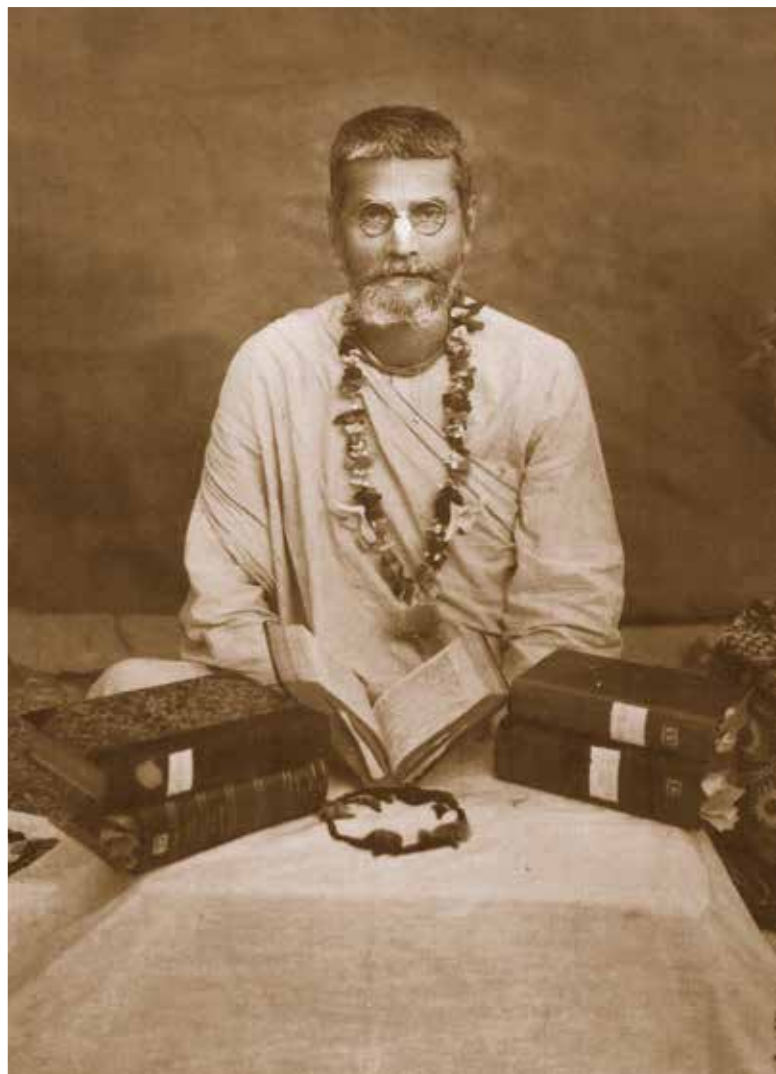


nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda
Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja



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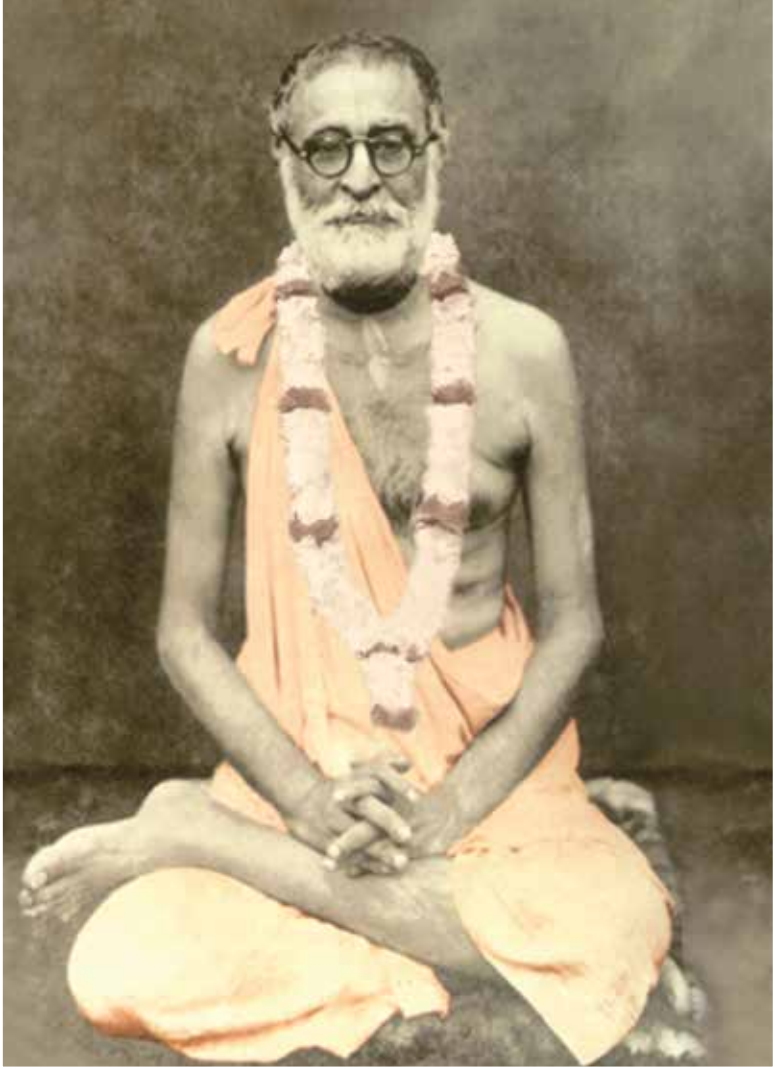
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Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja



nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda

Śrī Śrīmad

Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja



nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda
Śrī Śrīmad
Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Gosvāmī Prabhupāda



nitya-lilā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda
Śrī Śrīla
Gaurakiśora dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja



nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda
Saccidānanda
Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura



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Foreword

This book is about the extraordinary character and sublime teachings of our most revered holy master, *om viṣṇupāda paramahaṁsa parivrājakācārya aṣṭottara-śata Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja*, affectionately known as our beloved Śrīla Gurudeva. It is Śrīla Gurudeva's extraordinary mercy that he has revealed a glimpse of the spiritual world and awakened within us a taste for the supremely sweet pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīpāda 'Vidyālaṅkāra'¹ Mādhava Mahārāja is not writing just another book about some charismatic individual who is accepted by the general public as a *guru*. Nowadays the name *guru* has become quite fashionable. In the modern world we have financial *gurus*, management *gurus*, fashion *gurus* and so on, and it seems that any common man can be accepted as *guru* as long as he shows some expertise in his field. The approach of many so-called *gurus* may be of great appeal to the masses by making them feel good about the prospects of their material aspirations and the anticipated temporary pleasures of the mind and senses. One may receive some temporary upliftment from these self-styled *gurus*, but in the end, their encouragement for us to continuously chase after material happiness produces only a mental image of a possible future, but no ultimate satisfaction. That is because the material enjoyment they offer always ends in misery. This material enjoyment is just like a big fire; no matter how beautiful it is to look at, if you touch it, it will inevitably burn you and you will suffer tremendously. Similarly, harmful activities will make us suffer in the material world. People who are overpowered by the illusory material *māyā* of Kṛṣṇa feel happiness and suffering for many births under the influence of that illusory energy. Their happiness and sufferings are all the work of *māyā*, meaning 'forgetfulness of Kṛṣṇa'. There are many persons in this world who may appear or claim to be *guru*, but a bona fide *guru* follows Śrī Brahmā, the original *guru* and grandfather of the universe. Kṛṣṇa consciousness was propounded

.....
¹ Śrīla Gurudeva gave the title *Vidyālaṅkāra*, which means an ocean of knowledge, to Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja because of his expertise in his assisting Śrīla Gurudeva with his books.

by Śrī Brahmā aeons ago when the creation was still in its infancy. Only a bona fide *guru* representing his *guru* and the Lord can give one the essential help to attain real freedom.

Guru is a Sanskrit word and its original and intended meanings are explained in the Vedic literatures. *Gu* means ‘ignorance’ and *ru* means ‘dispeller’, so a real *guru* is someone who is in a disciplic succession of *gurus* that dispells our ignorance. Those in a material conception of life will teach others that they can and will become happy here, thus increasing their ignorance and boosting their false ego of bodily identification. A real *guru*, on the other hand, gives eternal results by initiating us on the path that activates and reveals our true spiritual identity. He mercifully gives instructions, convincing us of the many perfect philosophical conclusions of *bhakti*. Serving him and submissively hearing from him frees us from the ignorance that has been ingrained within our hearts since time without beginning. It gradually but firmly establishes within us a deep love for Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, the divine Youthful Couple and the soul’s function fully awakens. This is what a *guru* should give – our pristine intrinsic nature, our eternal *dharmā*. That’s what our Śrīla Gurudeva, the deliverer of the fallen, is giving to us.

Our eternal natural function, or *dharmā*, is *bhakti* or devotional service. As one cannot separate heat from fire, so similarly, the service nature of the living entities cannot be taken away from them. We have to serve someone or something. We serve either Kṛṣṇa or *māyā*. Unfortunately, during this age of quarrel and hypocrisy, the insincerity and hypocrisy is so widespread that those who have a desire to follow religion are oftentimes misled; consequently they are disheartened to pursue religion with strong determination or conviction.

All religions propagated in the world are either steps leading to *bhakti* or else distortions of it. This being a fact, we should focus on our own cultivation of devotion and not worry or criticize what others are doing. We should be favourable towards the followers of other religions and have no animosity towards them. All of us advance according to the time that is ripe for us. Any religion should be respected according to its proportionate degree of purity.

In order to pursue our particular path with great devotion, we have to understand that there are mixed, polluted and imaginary concepts of *bhakti* that are falsely presented in the name of pure *bhakti*. There are different

categories. One group may have a slight semblance of *bhakti* or a mixed devotion (mixed with fruitive action or speculative knowledge, etc.). These are gradations of *bhakti* but only unalloyed devotion (*śuddha-bhakti*) can give life's ultimate goal – the nectar of pure love (*prema*). Only that *śuddha-bhakti* can bestow the highest results. Yet, on the path of *bhakti*, many try to give the impression that they are practicing pure *bhakti*, though in actuality they practice only a reflection or a shadow of devotion. It is important to know that whoever you follow, you will only be able to attain what they have, not more than that. Whatever level of consciousness one's *guru* attains, the followers can advance up to that level, not higher than that. That is why the gift of the higher part, the transcendental realm, can only be obtained by the exclusive mercy of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, the *ācārya* of *ujjvala-rasa*, and his intimate associates. The original form of Bhagavān descended in this age as Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu to deliver all the living entities. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, who is *priya-svarūpa*, the very embodiment of everything dear to Him, is His foremost disciple in establishing the deepest wishes of His heart. Those who completely come under the guidance and care of the genuine followers of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī will attain realization and advance through each successive stage of *kṛṣṇa-prema*.

The realm of the Supreme Lord is naturally full of love and there is never any force. Here also, we are never forced to love, but this world is a place where the Supreme Lord examines us. Do we want only Him, or do we still want something of this world? The Lord will fulfill our desire, as much as we desire, not more than that. According to what we desire in life, we will get an appropriate *guru* or spiritual teacher. If we want transcendental vision, we can only get it by the special mercy of great devotees who see and perceive the Lord at all times and in all places. Only by their mercy will we excel in the examination, be able to recognize our true selves and begin to hanker for the only thing that will satisfy us – pure *bhakti*. One can only remember the Lord in all circumstances when the inclination to serve the Lord arises in one's heart by the sweet association and mercy of such a *sādhū*. Unless we have the opportunity to hear the pure nectar of their *hari-kathā*, we will always go back and absorb ourselves in sense gratification, even if we are inclined towards religious life. It is only by their merciful glance and the sharp words emanating from their lotus mouths that the hidden fantasies in the mind for gross and subtle sense gratification are finally eradicated from the heart forever.

If someone possesses only pretentious devotion (*chala-bhakti*), that is what their followers will get from them. Some, even in the name of *bhakti*, instruct others against the principles of *bhakti* and lead them on a path that is totally opposed to it. Therefore our previous *ācāryas* have clearly cautioned us to avoid mixed and polluted concepts of *bhakti*. Only then will our hearts be thoroughly cleansed, so that our activities can be most favourably executed for the pleasure of the Supreme Lord, Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Everyone is controlled by the desire for sense enjoyment, even when it comes to modern day religion. Most of the general public become attracted to follow certain religious teachings to get material boons from God in the form of economic development (*artha*) and sense gratification (*kāma*). They are misled to ask and search for material benedictions, rather than establishing their pure loving relationship with the Lord. Although their values are presented as the topmost and most relevant for God consciousness, they are in actuality a distortion of pure *bhakti* and the practitioner can only develop a little faith in God. Ultimately it is a deception and infinitely inferior to the flawless and completely pure *suddha-bhakti*. That is why we should always hear the perfect philosophical conclusions of *bhakti* (*bhakti-siddhānta*) from qualified persons. Unqualified persons with the four defects of human frailty² are unable to properly teach anything transcendental that is worth hearing. We need to seek help from those who are free from these very serious defects that prevent us from getting even a glimpse of transcendence. Methods of learning under the operation of the four-fold defects are useless in our progress toward the Absolute, for they can never free us from those defects.

What Śrīla Gurudeva has come to give is not a lower step on the staircase of mixed *bhakti*, but the topmost level of pure love. Like the *bhakti-rasācārya* Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, he has come to fulfill the innermost heart's desire (*mano 'bhiṣṭa*) of *Kali-yuga pāvana āvatārī* Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, to give us the service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā as Her confidential maidservant. If Śrīla Gurudeva had not come to make all these things accessible to us, we would have been grasping for straws, trying to understand these confidential pastimes with our mundane intellect, or we would have foolishly ignored these pastimes, because others had advised

.....
2 As described in *Śrī Tattva-sandarbha, Anuccheda* 9, the four defects of human frailty are: (1) a tendency to make mistakes, (2) the tendency become under the illusion of false ideas and beliefs, (3) the propensity to cheat and (4) imperfect senses.

us that they were inappropriate and would compromise our spiritual lives. The person to teach us the proper understanding and method to approach the Lord's amorous relationships without offence is a bona fide representative of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, whose pure heart is immersed in these loving pastimes. Only someone like Śrīla Gurudeva, who is absorbed in the moods of these pastimes with Śrī Rādhā, can plant the seed of pure devotion and nurture it without impediments. These most confidential pastimes are not at all subject to Sanskrit scholarship or artistic creative imagination, but are only revealed to someone who has pleased the Divine Couple and Their devotees with unmotivated, pure, loving service. The supreme treasure that the most munificent Lord Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu came to give personally would have certainly been lost from our vision unless Śrīla Gurudeva had mercifully unveiled it. Śrīla Gurudeva came to give the incomparable gift that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and all our *guru-varga* came to give, namely the *prema* of *unnatojjvala-rasa-sva-bhakti-śrīyam*.³ Our material desires and pride would have kept us away if Śrīla Gurudeva had not come into our lives and qualified us with his potent *hari-kathā*. Without him, the pure desire to render unalloyed devotional service in the mood of the Vrajavāsīs would perhaps never enter our hearts.

Śrīla Gurudeva is a vastly learned scholar and author who has written and translated more than one hundred books in Hindi, that have been translated into many languages around the world, with over seventy titles in English. Even though he is ninety-one years old, he is still producing more transcendental literatures every year. These books are relished and appreciated by all those who are serious to study the deep Kṛṣṇa conscious meanings of the rūpānuga *ācāryas*.

People are very much eager to learn more about this outstanding preacher of *kevalā-bhakti*, who has manifest with his pen such a vast array of Gauḍīya literature and who has spread this knowledge throughout the whole world. This book helps us to know more intimately the person responsible for all of those books and gives us a chance to become more acquainted with the essential truths that he came to speak. It shows how he protected the *siddhānta* whenever it was needed and how he is the guardian of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya*. Here the readers will not only know

³ The *prema* of *unnatojjvala-rasa-sva-bhakti-śrīyam* means the *mañjarī-bhāva* of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's maidservants. (Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 1.4)

about the greatness of Śrīla Gurudeva's accomplishments, but also his profound, internal purpose and moods. These things cannot be understood by outsiders, but Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja gives us a peek at the gravity and depth of his personality, which no other biographer – no matter how expert – can give.

Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja shows us in very simple language how Śrīla Gurudeva personally applies and demonstrates the instructions of his books in his own life, thereby instructing us how to ourselves act and advance in Kṛṣṇa consciousness. Śrīla Gurudeva perfectly exemplifies the conclusion of the Lord that one should teach by example. In this book you will see how Śrī Guru perfectly represents the *siddhānta* that is the very substance of the entirety of the Vedas. With logic and discrimination, Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja has described the name, fame, devotional activities and transcendental moods of Śrīla Gurudeva and he has strung this together in such a beautiful way, to show the very essence of the Absolute Truth.

He proves how Śrīla Gurudeva has an 'eternal' relationship with Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja 'based on spontaneous love' and how he is considered by him to be 'the real *guru-sevaka*', the real servant of Śrī Guru. Unscrupulous persons try to defame him in an attempt to establish their own superiority, but their attempts simply increase his transcendental fame and reputation.

Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja has done an amazing service in the form of this biography. Not only is Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja Śrīla Gurudeva's personal servant; Śrīla Gurudeva himself has said on many occasions that he is his 'mother, father, minister, doctor, dietician, cook and bosom friend'. He personally heard from many of the contemporaries of Śrīla Gurudeva, but mostly he noted down these incidents from hearing directly from Śrīla Gurudeva himself, whom he has served for more than thirty years. He was always by his side, attentively hearing his scriptural debates with opposing parties, his answers to diverse questions, and his personal dealings with all types of different personalities and situations. He gives intimate details of the transcendental qualities and characteristics of Śrīla Gurudeva and explains how they are similar to those of the Lord. He also shows how Śrīla Gurudeva changes people's hearts by delivering the pure transcendental name, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Hare Kṛṣṇa, Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa, Hare Hare, Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāma Hare Hare and by always describing the power, qualities and mercy of the holy name. The holy name,

which is identical with the Lord, has the power to free us and associate us with those spiritual beauties of the highest possible standards of excellence.

Śrīpāda Mādhava Mahārāja gives a detailed account of how in 1952, at the young age of thirty-one, Śrīla Gurudeva took *sannyāsa*, the renounced order. At that time he taught and presented scriptural quotes which brought about the proper chanting of this mahā-mantra when it was being chanted in reverse sequence by almost everyone in the holy places of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes in Vraja-maṇḍala. Śrīla Gurudeva would enthusiastically go to the pastime places of the Lord over and over again and describe the Lord's transcendental līlās that took place there, greatly inspiring all the devotees who came for pilgrimage. He also explains how Śrīla Gurudeva is constantly chanting the mahā-mantra under any circumstance. His presentation will astound even a stone-hearted person.

That mercy you get from the *rasika* Vaiṣṇava is perpetual. It goes on forever and will never stop. This is the supreme treasure. It is not something perishable, like all benedictions you receive from materialistic people. Spiritual greed (*lobha*) will increase when one associates with the *rāgānuga-rasika* Vaiṣṇava, hears from him, or hears about him. When a person hears from his lotus lips about the supremely blissful, sweet pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa – and especially the Lord's *mādhurya* pastimes with the *vraja-gopīs* – that genuine greed (*lobha*) enters the mind or the heart (*citta-vṛtti*).

This book is about the person who is a supreme treasure for the world and who gives the supreme treasure of *bhakti* to the world. People are looking everywhere in the world for treasures, but they fail to realize that the supreme treasure is right there in their heart. Unfortunately, they do not see this and are running after a mirage. Only Śrī Guru can dissolve the mirage, remove the ignorance and give us entrance into the kingdom of supreme, everlasting happiness. We want happiness, but for the most part, it escapes us. Even if we find temporary happiness in some superficial pleasures, it is short-lived and misery comes and takes its place. It is useless even to enter some kind of pseudo-religious movement and externally break our bad habits, if there is no lasting transformation. The speculations of the pseudo-religionists show that they are still completely bewildered by their material existence.

We were also painfully wallowing in total forgetfulness of the Lord, but Śrīla Gurudeva, who is the friend of the destitute and lowly, has

overlooked our disqualifications to give us that supreme treasure which is our real welfare.

Ultimately material life and sensual pleasure is a deception that entraps us, bewilders us, keeps us entangled and leaves us hurt. Due to all the suffering, we gain some power of discrimination and eventually we come to the point in our life... where we are exhausted... where we have had enough... where we are truly crying out to the Lord.

When we are truly destitute and deep in our hearts, desperate to have a connection only with God, the Lord hears our sincere longing and warms our hearts by sending His pure devotee, who is our only friend and shelter in this world. Although such association is extremely rare, the Lord will reveal to us His own eternal personal associate, the *bhakta-bhāgavata*. When we know how difficult that association is to attain, then we should sincerely pray for it without duplicity.

We cannot always get the association of living *sādhus*, so in the absence of the *bhakta-bhāgavata*, the Lord's devotee, we can take the association of the other all-auspicious type of *sādhū*, the *grantha-bhāgavata*, the *śāstra*. The *sādhus*, have with great endeavor meticulously written down the śāstras for our benefit and we can receive their association there. When we take shelter of these two *sādhus*, the *bhakta-bhāgavata* and the *grantha-bhāgavata*, they will make us qualified so that we will never give up Vrajendra-nandana Śrī Kṛṣṇa. When we always hear their *hari-kathā* laden with their potency, our intelligence will become firmly fixed in the proper philosophical conclusions.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the fountainhead of all *rasas* (*akhila-rasāmṛta-mūrti*) and we can offer Him our eternal loving service in the mood of deep friendship, maternal or fatherly love, or in amorous love. In the worship of other forms of the Lord, although we can completely surrender unto Him with unwavering faith and love which is fully satisfying, we are not able to offer such confidential service and unconditional love as His friends, parents or lovers.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who is Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself in the mood and complexion of Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, descended to this world to give love of God. Having reflected on the living entity's difficult and unfortunate situation, Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa personally appeared in Their combined form of Śrīman Mahāprabhu, who is an ocean of compassion for the fallen souls. Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja in this book is showing

how devotees all over the world are becoming happy and satisfied by hearing the pure message of Śrīman Mahāprabhu from Śrīla Gurudeva. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came some five hundred years ago to give us the topmost, all-auspicious spiritual knowledge and to show us how to practice it in pure love. He has now arranged to send His messenger Śrīla Gurudeva to us so that we can hear pure *hari-kathā* (topics in glorification of Lord Hari and His devotees) flowing constantly from his lotus mouth. If we have the extreme fortune to continually drink the ambrosial nectar that emanates from his lotus mouth and which flows from his pen, we shall never have to live again in misery, adverse to the Supreme Lord. While persons in this world are becoming more and more mad to enjoy their mundane senses, but are instead drowning in misery, searching for wealth, women and mundane reputation and fame, this book will help them to forget such fleeting happiness. Śrīla Gurudeva has never been in forgetfulness of the Lord and he can teach us how to live our life in such constant remembrance. He shows us how we can truly be happy by engaging in Kṛṣṇa's service. There is immense happiness in serving Him and a very relishable love and affection that is not found in material relationships. There are oceans of love and affection in Kṛṣṇa's transcendental abode.

Not only is Śrīla Gurudeva the supreme treasure; he is also giving us this invaluable treasure, namely the awakening and nurturing of our eternal loving personal relationship with the Divine Couple. He is not giving us a partially developed understanding, but is giving us the full and perfect philosophical conclusion (*siddhānta*) of the bona fide *gurus* (*ācāryas*) including Lord Caitanya Himself.

The book also talks about some controversial subjects, misunderstandings and slanderous statements. People are deceiving themselves if they do not properly respect a Vaiṣṇava and it is an offence to the holy name to disrespect and blaspheme the saintly devotees whose characters are spotless. Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja addresses many mistaken viewpoints and misguided mentalities and gives the facts of many incidents that were previously presented giving the wrong impression of Śrīla Gurudeva. He does this to protect the immaculate reputation of our most illustrious Śrīla Gurudeva and the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *sampradāya* that he represents. He presents it not as a challenge, but to acquaint the innocent with the real facts and dispel their doubts and to warn them about the seriousness of offending Vaiṣṇavas who are so very dear to the Lord.

A pure devotee has no hostile mentality, personal grudges or dissatisfaction with anyone. Thus anyone who takes initiation of the holy name must wholeheartedly reject any tendency to disregard or disrespect any Vaiṣṇava. Śrī Guru is our greatest well-wisher and best friend. There is no one more merciful than him in this world, but those who are adverse to him cannot see it. A person develops his or her mentality and body in accordance with the activities that they have performed in their previous birth. The Lord is bestowing the fruits of their action, whatever they may be, to enjoy and engage in further acts. Those who are adverse to the Lord will be impelled to act by the external, illusory energy (*māyā*) of the Lord, and those who are surrendered without duplicity will see all the virtues of the Vaiṣṇava revealed in their true features. They will see the Vaiṣṇava's extraordinary transcendental qualities and will not liken them to mundane qualities, whereas those who are impelled by *māyā* and who commit offences, will not.

The example has been given of a palace made entirely of gems. Those whose hearts are pure will see its splendor, whereas an ant or someone with an offensive mentality will only try to find the hole. If we see how Śrīla Gurudeva is always serving Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yugaḷa and how he is exclusively surrendered to Them, that will attract us and arouse in us an affection for him. And those who are not gentle and well-behaved towards him, will still unfortunately not be able to recognize the transcendental Vaiṣṇava, no matter how many virtues and material intelligence they may have developed by their *karmas*. They will not be able to judge his exclusive surrender to Their Lordships and will instead select a mundane personality.

Śrīla Gurudeva has brought with him the immaculate moods of the pure devotees and placed it right in the forefront of our consciousness. All we have to do is faithfully pay attention to him and we will benefit remarkably. He is not simply giving us an idea to ponder over like the armchair philosophers. Rather, he is showing us our exact spiritual identity and abode, and how to realize them. We should take advantage of this opportunity. This divine mercy comes only from a specially empowered personality who is overflowing with mercy from Lord Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. No matter how low we *jīvas* have fallen, a powerful *guru* like Śrīla Gurudeva can bring us to the highest spiritual position by nourishing us and awakening our real nature and intrinsic mood of pure love of God.

We invite the sincere readers to deliberate on this book fully and relish the nature of Śrīla Gurudeva's *śuddha-bhakti*, the ultimate goal of all scriptures. See for yourself how the nectar of the *kṛṣṇa-prema* that he came to give manifests in his life and actions. We sincerely pray that Śrīla Gurudeva, who is the personification of mercy and forgiveness, may transmit his potency into the core of our hearts, so that we can render some pleasing service to fulfill his inner heart's longing to give *prema-bhakti* to the world. If we remain aloof from adverse association, hear from the lotus lips of pure devotees and read their devotional literatures, we will receive the highest, most sublime revelation of all, the supreme treasure, service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Yuga.

I humbly beg your forgiveness for any mistakes,

Aspiring for the service of
Śrī Hari, Guru & Vaiṣṇavas
Rūpa-Raghunātha dāsa



Introduction



*om ajñāna-timirāndhasya jñānāñjana-salākayā
cakṣur unmīlitam yena tasmai śrī gurave namaḥ*

This book is about the most auspicious life and teachings of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. It is with great pleasure that we finally present this long anticipated book about Śrīla Gurudeva who is a treasure house of the most ecstatic form of pure love of God. Those who are fortunate will take advantage of this book. This is more than an historical timeline of events, for this book wonderfully summarizes the entire Kṛṣṇa conscious philosophy and *siddhānta* as practised by an unalloyed, pure devotee of the Lord.

Hearing about a pure devotee is very auspicious, as it eradicates all doubts, misconceptions, misunderstandings and confusions on the path of pure devotional service. Those who are seriously looking for happiness in Kṛṣṇa consciousness must certainly give up all preconceived assumptions and transcend all sectarian designations, so that they can read this book with an open mind and get the real benefit of association with a fully realized Vaiṣṇava.

Śrī guru is the personification of Kṛṣṇa's mercy in this world. He comes to deliver the conditioned souls by enlightening them on the constitutional nature and eternal function of the soul. Gradually he reveals our eternal relationship and intimate service to the Lord. When we sincerely offer our life and soul to his lotus feet, our good fortune arises and in this way śrī guru opens the way to boundless peace and happiness for the conditioned soul.

Everyone tries to remove their suffering and increase their happiness. Some try to achieve this by hard labour and following moral principles, while others take drugs, have illicit relationships, steal and such in an attempt to improve the material conditions of their life. However, we see that all these attempts are baffled and happiness still remains elusive.

Whatever happiness we find in this world is meager and not everlasting. For example, one gains some pleasure by eating food, but if one keeps on eating, the same food that gives one pleasure will cause suffering. One does not want old age, diseases and death to come; yet they come. Any sane person will ponder over this problem and try to find a solution.

The scriptures tell us that we are not our bodies; rather we are souls, eternal parts and parcels of the supreme personality of Godhead, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. The soul's eternal constitutional function (*dharmā*) is eternal service and obedience to Kṛṣṇa. When the soul forgets his true identity as an eternal servant of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and instead identifies himself with the body, he is subjected to the tyranny of the illusory potency of the Lord (*māyā*) and his eternal constitutional function becomes perverted.

In an attempt to enjoy, the soul wanders in the material world taking one material body after another. However, all of his efforts to enjoy are obstructed by the external potency of the Lord. The material body is subjected to various types of suffering such as birth, old age, disease and death. The embodied living entity is always subject to the three types of miseries, namely, miseries caused by the mind, miseries caused by other living entities and miseries due to natural disturbances. However, the purpose of suffering is simply so that the living entities can realize that this suffering is unwanted and that this material world is not their home. The living entities can then strive for something everlasting or eternal.

The only way to achieve everlasting happiness is by performing devotional service to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who is infinitely merciful, sends his eternal associates to teach us this process, so a seeker of everlasting happiness must necessarily take shelter of such people and learn this process from them. Such a teacher who can give us this supreme treasure is called a *guru*.

Service to *guru* is the backbone of devotional absorption (*bhajana*). Whoever wants to enter into the realm of *bhajana*, must first dedicate his life to the service of a bona fide *guru*. Such a *guru* will never consider the disciple to be his own property. Rather, he will consider the disciple to belong to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Divine Couple, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The bona fide *guru* will transfer the disciple's attachment and dedication for himself (for *guru*) to Them. Although he is an expansion

(*aveśa*) of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, He never considers himself to be Śrī Kṛṣṇa; He always thinks that he is His eternal servant.

Our beloved Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, is such a *guru*. Whoever reads this work will have a clear conception of the subject of Śrīla Gurudeva and his teachings.

This book will be like a lighthouse that guides those aspirants who want to progress in Kṛṣṇa consciousness to reach spiritual perfection.

Just as Śrīla Vyāsadeva got inspiration by hearing the life history of his Gurudeva, Śrī Nārada Ṛṣi, one can get inspiration from hearing the biography of Śrīla Gurudeva. Without hearing about and serving *śrī guru*, no one can advance in Kṛṣṇa Consciousness either now, or in the future.

The mercy of *śrī guru* and Vaiṣṇavas is causeless, as it is independent of any material cause or piety. It is only by such causeless mercy that the *jīva* can obtain the merciful, sidelong glance of the eternally youthful couple of Vraja Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa and join Them in Their eternal loving pastimes.

Therefore, without the mercy of real *sādhus* and *śrī guru*, pure spiritual desires for perfection will never awaken and fructify.

In describing the bona fide *guru*, it is never enough to just describe his external pastimes – what he was wearing, where, when, what foods he likes, etc. To properly glorify him, one must explain his teachings and his *siddhānta*. Unless one understands the teachings of the spiritual master, one cannot understand his mood, and if one does not understand his mood, one will not understand what his mission is all about. By understanding his mood, one can properly execute his mission. The mission of the bona fide *guru* is not independent of the previous *ācāryas*; it is the continuation of the mission that Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī established on behalf of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī understood the inner mood of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and thus wrote many transcendental books on pure *bhakti* to establish His mission. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give *vraja-prema* through *nāma*, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*.

In the same way, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmīpāda is giving the same *vraja-prema* through *nāma*. The same mood and objective is being carried out by the pure devotees in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line such as Śrīla Kṛṣṇa dāsa

Kavirāja Gosvāmī, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Baladeva Vidyābhūṣana, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Svāmī Mahārāja.

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja is similarly continuing this powerful wave of pure *bhakti* – *bhakti* that is without a tinge of speculation, mundane *jñāna* or *karma*.

Śrī *guru* and his mission are thus never independent. The entire disciplic succession (*guru-varga*) is always with him. Śrī *guru* teaches lucidly and systematically all that he received from his spiritual master – the a,b,c, the x,y,z, and everything in between. Without securing his guiding grace, one will not be able to understand the deep meaning of his message.

People with ambitions other than to humbly serve śrī *guru* and Śrī Kṛṣṇa are led astray by their own mind. Such unfortunate persons create enmity by finding faults in pure devotees and are unable to reconcile the apparent differences in the pure teachings of Vaiṣṇavas. We should not hear from such persons who are the cause of their own misfortune. To understand the spiritual meaning of the pure devotee's words, one has to serve the pure devotee favourably and intimately and thus by the grace of śrī *guru*, everything will be revealed in the heart. We will then be able to appreciate and understand the uncompromised quality of the *siddhānta* of śrī *guru*.

There is no confusion as to what is pure *bhakti* but as long as our heart is torn with material desires we will not be single pointed in our desire to serve purely.

Unless we are ready and willing to accept pure *bhakti* in our heart, we will not be able to recognize or fully appreciate a pure devotee. Our intelligence will be polluted and we will lose this rare opportunity which has been made accessible to humanity by the most munificent Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has clearly explained that the greatest opposition in the path of *bhakti* is the impersonal *māyāvāda* philosophy. This impersonalism comes in many forms and keeps us deeply entrenched in illusion, such as the hollow pride of empirical ignorance, which makes its way into the heart of immature devotees, who under such influence regard certain Vaiṣṇavas as enemies.

All devotees of the Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya should take shelter in His eternal spiritual community and unite to fight against such impersonalism and voidism.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa alone is the Supreme Personality of Godhead. This is declared by all authorities and throughout the Vedas. Every living entity is His eternal servant. Our mind and senses are meant to be engaged in His service and only by such engagement will we be truly happy. This engagement is only given by a pure devotee. Śrī Kṛṣṇa reveals Himself to His pure devotee. To the non-devotees, Kṛṣṇa appears in His deluding feature. When the conditioned soul associates with the non-devotee, the Lord does not reveal Himself. Therefore the association of living pure devotees is most essential.

One's nature is determined and shaped by the company one keeps. Such association shapes one's character. The fruitive activities we performed in our past life and our past associations have moulded our nature in this current life.

By association with the living pure devotees and by understanding the Vaiṣṇava books, under their guidance, our lower nature will be transformed into good character.

The example is described in the Vedic scripture of a clear quartz crystal. It assumes the colour of any object in its proximity. Similarly, a person will acquire the qualities of whomever they join company with. Therefore association with saintly persons (*sādhū-saṅga*) is recommended throughout all revealed scriptures.

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam (3.23.55) clearly affirms:

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

By associating with worldly-minded materialists, a person is bound to undergo severe suffering in material existence. He will certainly have to bear the consequences of his association, even if he cannot distinguish between good and bad. By associating with saintly persons, however, a person attains complete freedom from worldly attachments (*niḥsaṅgatva*).

Besides earnestly engaging in good association (*sādhū-saṅga*), it is also essential to give up unfavourable association, as recommended in Śrīmad Bhāgavatam (3.31.33–34):

*satyaṁ śaucaṁ dayā maunaṁ buddhibḥ śrīr hrīr yaśaḥ kṣamā
śamo damo bhagaś ceti yat-saṅgād yāti saṅkṣayam
teṣv aśānteṣu mūḍheṣu khaṇḍitātmasv aśādbuṣu
saṅgaṁ na kuryāc chocyēṣu yoṣit-krīḍā-mrgeṣu ca*

Worldly association destroys all of one's virtues like truthfulness, cleanliness, mercy, gravity, intelligence, shyness, prosperity, reputation, forgiveness, control of the mind, control of the senses, good fortune and opulence. One should utterly reject the company of a person who is not a *sādhū*, considering such association to be extremely miserable, for such a wicked and restless fool is but a dancing dog in the hands of a woman and is thereby simply bent on annihilating himself.

This book describes the necessity of association of saintly persons (*sādhū-saṅga*) and explains who is a bona fide *guru*, what are the rarely understood symptoms of a genuine *sādhū* and especially, how to attain the desired goal of life. The pastimes of Śrīla Gurudeva have been presented here so as to enable the devotees to associate with him.

When I joined the Gauḍīya Maṭha, my revered *dikṣā-guru* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja specifically put me under the loving care of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja and ordered me to serve him. Consequently, I received the opportunity to associate closely with both of these divine personalities. They were Godbrothers, dear disciples of Parama-gurudeva Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja and the respect and intimacy they shared was unparalleled. For many years my *dikṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja was the *ācārya* and initiating *guru* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Samiti.

At that time Śrīla Gurudeva was not initiating disciples, but was always guiding and instructing devotees. He taught all of us in the *maṭha* by his personal example, always emphasizing the *trṇād-āpi sunīcena* verse by Lord Caitanya, which states that one should be humbler than a

blade of grass and more forbearing than a tree, and that one should offer respect to everyone without desiring respect from others. His unique quality was that he was always speaking *hari-kathā* and telling us that in order to get Śrī Kṛṣṇa's mercy, we should constantly pray for the mercy of His beloved Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. In his *bhājana* he was never proud, but on the contrary was always tolerant, merciful and a well-wisher of all. If there were any issues or disagreements between any devotees, whichever way Śrīla Gurudeva decided to handle the matter was always fully backed by my *dīkṣā-guru*, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Therefore, whatever Śrīla Gurudeva ordered was the mandate for everyone in the Samiti.

The Vedic scriptures and the writings of the Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* direct the sincere seeker of the truth to the pure devotee of Kṛṣṇa. By submissive hearing with an open mind to the transcendental sound appearing on the lips of a pure devotee, one learns about Kṛṣṇa who is the Absolute Truth.

The conditioned soul cannot directly hear Śrī Kṛṣṇa on his own strength. His words have to be heard from the lips of a pure devotee. If one does not seek help from the pure devotee, one will surely be deluded. Śrī Kṛṣṇa appears in the heart of the pure devotee and only when the conditioned soul hears the holy name and pastimes of the Lord from the lips of such a *sādhū* can he perceive the Lord who is identical with His transcendental name, His divine form, qualities, activities and paraphernalia.

To properly understand the teachings of the great Vaiṣṇavas, one requires a service attitude that is free from mundane desires, mundane knowledge and speculation. The divine message is not transmitted by scholars interested in displaying erudition and minor details of technical knowledge. One will only be in a position to receive the divine message – that same message that was received by the *guru* in *paramparā* – when the *guru* is pleased.

One cannot approach the Lord without adhering to the method He has Himself prescribed. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself created the *guru-paramparā* system in order to receive transcendental knowledge. Thus the living pure devotee is the perfect medium for the appearance of the Lord to the conditioned souls. Otherwise, the Lord will remain covered and the

teachings of the great Vaiṣṇavas will also be grossly misunderstood. This is the bona fide way to understand and attain Śrī Kṛṣṇa that He Himself has given. There is no other way. Any other speculative and unauthorized methods to attain Kṛṣṇa are simply manifestations of impersonalism.



Lord Śiva once said to his consort Pārvatī:

"O Bhagavatī, among thousands upon thousands of persons desiring salvation, perhaps one exhibits the characteristics of a liberated soul. Among thousands upon thousands of such persons, maybe one actually achieves spiritual realisation and perfection. And among millions and millions of perfected and liberated souls, perhaps one, on the strength of his past virtuous activities (*sukṛti*) and good association (*sat-saṅga*), is devoted to Lord Nārāyaṇa. Just see, the devotees of Lord Nārāyaṇa are self-satisfied and therefore they are extremely rare. But look here. If the pure devotee who serves Lord Nārāyaṇa in the mood of servitorship (*dāsyā-rasa*) is so rare, how much more uncommon is he who serves Śrī Kṛṣṇa in the mood of amorous love (*mādhurya-rasa*)."

May this glorification of Śrīla Gurudeva, who is very dear to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, bring great happiness to the hearts of all the Vaiṣṇavas.

Completed on the occasion of Śrī Annakūṭa,
Śrī Gaurabda 524, 7 November, 2010

Tridaṇḍi-bhikṣu Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja
(Dr. N. K. Brahmācārī, Ph.D.)



Introduction (Continued) and Entering Aprakāṣa-līlā

The above first part of this introduction was written in the presence of our beloved Śrīla Gurudeva. When I presented an advance copy of Volume I of this biography in Govardhana to Śrīla Gurudeva, he became very happy. He asked me later in Jagannātha Purī, “How many volumes will you do?”

I told him, “Minimum four.” Gurudeva said, “Minimum four? You can do so many?” I said, “Yes. By your grace I could do more, but I will do a minimum of four.”

This second volume is being presented after Śrīla Gurudeva’s transcendental disappearance and return to Lord Kṛṣṇa’s eternal abode. I am therefore adding this entry to my original introduction for this volume.

Śrīla Gurudeva entered the *aparakāṣa-līlā*, the eternal pastimes of Śrī Śrī Ramaṇa Bihārījī, on the 29th of December, 2010. This specific day is very auspicious for all in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava community. That particular day was also the appearance day of my Guru Mahārāja, Nitya-līlā Praviṣṭa Om Viṣṇupāda Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī. As Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s and His pure representative’s appearance and disappearance are all spiritual, why did Śrīla Gurudeva choose this very day for his departure? There are so many reasons behind this which include:

- 1) When Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrīla B.V. Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja came to Navadvīpa *dhāma* at midnight, my Guru Mahārāja Śrīla B.V. Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja received him at the railway station of Navadvīpa and brought him to Devānanda Gauḍīya Māṭha in Navadvīpa, Nadia. My Guru Mahārāja took Śrīla Gurudeva inside the realm of the Divine Couple, under the guidance of *parama-gurudeva* Śrīla Bhakti Prajnana Keśava Mahārāja whose eternal constitutional form is Śrī Vinoda Māñjarī in the service of Rādhā-kṛṣṇa. To show that Śrīla Gurudeva is going to his Gurudeva along with his elder brother, Śrīla Gurudeva chose the auspicious occasion of my Guru Mahārāja’s Vyāsa-pūjā (appearance day). Just as Śrīla Gurudeva

came to *param-gurudeva* with his dearmost elder god-brother, similarly, he now entered into *nitya-līlā* choosing the appearance day of his elder god-brother who is so near to *param-gurudeva*.

- 2) Their intimacy has no bound and has no limit. During Śrīla Gurudeva's sickness pastimes at Govardhana, all devotees were thinking that Śrīla Gurudeva would enter into *nitya-līlā* on the disappearance day of my Guru Mahārāja Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and the disappearance day (exactly two years earlier) of one of my prominent *śikṣā gurus*, who is also their near and dear godbrother Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Hence, all devotees were very scared and extremely alert, thinking that Śrīla Gurudeva may depart on that day. The devotees were doing *kīrtana* and *bhajana* throughout the day and night, constantly praying to Śrī Girirāja Mahārāja and Śrī Narasiṃha-deva. Knowing the devotee's hearts, Śrīla Gurudeva decided not to depart on that very auspicious day in Kārtika. Later on, Gurudeva chose the date of my Guru Mahārāja's appearance day. In Jagannātha Purī, Gurudeva was always absorbed in the mood of separation, manifesting various symptoms. Sometimes he would get the hiccups non-stop, sometimes tears would flow from his eyes incessantly trickling down his face and sometimes his body would shake and foam would come from his mouth. All these were ecstatic symptoms of *prema*. Due to our foolishness we could not recognize all these ecstatic symptoms. Whoever has seen these manifestations of Śrīla Gurudeva is extremely fortunate; of this, there is no doubt. None of the devotees attending him informed Śrīla Gurudeva of the day of the appearance of my Guru Mahārāja. How Śrīla Gurudeva knew that very day and chose it to depart for his final journey is a mystery for those in general. This is inconceivable and is evidence that their intimacy has no limit. Surely there are many more causes for his final journey! Certainly there are many more explanations, but these reasons I've listed above are primary.

The special attraction of this book is the eternal identity of our most beloved Śrīla Gurudeva who expertly explained the spontaneous devotional moods of the residents of Vraja like no one else did at this time and is therefore naturally the most prominent *rāgānuga-rasika-ācārya* of our time.

The *siddha-deba* or constitutional form of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, our most beloved Śrīla Gurudeva is Śrī Raman Māñjarī, an eternal associate of Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Her eternal *sevā* (loving transcendental service) is performed in the *nikuñja-līlā* of the Divine Couple, under the guidance of Śrī Rūpa Māñjarī and others. Fortunate are those who follow and receive the mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva.

I wrote *Śrī Ramaṇa-māñjarī-aṣṭakam*, a poem of eight verses in Sanskrit in 1992 and presented it to Śrīla Gurudeva much later, in 2008. Śrīla Gurudeva became very much pleased when I read it to him. He kept his merciful hand on my head and on my back. He blessed me to render ever-increasing devotional service under his guidance. Those devotees who are eager for *vraja-prema* and thirsty for *bhakti* will relish the explanation of this *aṣṭakam*.

Śrīla Gurudeva is a pure, *rasika* devotee and for those wanting to serve in the mood of the residents of Vraja and wanting qualification to practice *rāgānugā-bhakti*, he gives the qualification.

The main attraction and source of inspiration for this book is *parama-ārādhyatama* Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, by whose mercy all things are possible. Many others have kindly encouraged me throughout the years to write and were also great sources of inspiration. There are far too many to mention here, but I would like to thank all of them. I particularly want to give special credit to Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Tirtha Mahārāja, Śrīman Premānanda Prabhu, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Parivrājaka Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Vana Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Padmanābha Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Sajjana Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Siddhānti Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Dāmodara Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Govinda Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Harijana Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Nāraśimha Mahārāja, Śrīpāda Bhaktivedānta Paramahansa Mahārāja, Śrīman Brajanātha Prabhu, Śrīman Mādhava-priya Prabhu, Śrīman Amala Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, Śrīman Vijaya Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, Śrīman Dvija Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, Śrīman Rāmacandra Prabhu, Śrīman Rohiṇī-nandana Prabhu, Śrīman Hare Kṛṣṇa Prabhu, Śrīman Balarāma Prabhu, Śrīman Sanjay Prabhu, Śrīman Mahābuddhi Prabhu, and Śrīmatī Vṛndā-devī Dāsī.

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There are many more and I would like to extend my thanks to all of them, especially to the Chief of the Financial Board, Śrīman Nandar Prabhu and Śrīmatī Sāvitrī didi.

Apology

By the causeless mercy of Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrī Guru Paramparā and all the Vaiṣṇavas, I have tried my level best to present to the readers the teachings and biography of Śrīla Gurudeva. I beg forgiveness for not putting all the events in regular historical sequence. I have recorded many of these pastimes from memories that came first in my mind, in the style of Śrīla

Jagadānanda Paṇḍita who wrote the pastimes of the Lord in his *Prema-vivarta* according to his loving remembrances and not according to the standard sequential order. This book is therefore by no means an attempt to narrate the pastimes of Śrīla Gurudeva in chronological sequence. By talking with Śrīla Gurudeva, researching my personal notes and hearing the tape recordings, I have, from time to time, added extra details.

This biographical style may not appeal to every reader; indeed to write a biography approved by all readers is not possible at all. Still this book may be considered as an authentic biography full of bona fide *siddhānta* rather than an analytical study of a great person.

Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja has written in his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, *Madhya-līlā* 2.85:

*prabhura yei ācaraṇa, sei kari varṇana,
sarva-citta nāri ārādhite*

Some may complain I have been unduly harsh and perhaps others may object that I am overly mild. I am only trying to describe the true facts as they are without unduly trying to satisfy everyone.

I think the *sāragrāhī* Vaiṣṇavas will understand these teachings by overlooking the faults and accepting the good qualities.

*sakala vaiṣṇava gōsāi doyā koro more
dante tṛṇa dhoṛi' kabe e dīna pāmāre*

I offer my humble obeisances at the lotus feet of all Vaiṣṇavas and taking a blade of straw between my teeth, I humbly beg for their mercy,

Tridaṇḍī-bhikṣu Bhaktivedānta Mādhava Mahārāja,
Ph.D – Philosophy, Ph.D – Vaiṣṇava Philosophy



Maṅgalācaraṇa



*vande 'ham śrī-guroḥ śrī-yuta-pada-kamalaṁ śrī-gurūn vaiṣṇavāṁś ca
śrī-rūpaṁ sāgrajātaṁ saba-gaṇa-raghunāthānviṭaṁ taṁ sa-jīvam
sādvaitaṁ sāvadhūtaṁ parijana-sabitaṁ kṛṣṇa-caitanya-devaṁ
śrī-rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pādān saba-gaṇa-lalitā-śrī-viśākhānviṭāś ca*

I offer praṇāmas to the lotus feet of *śrī gurudeva* (both *dīkṣā* and *bhajana-śikṣā-gurus*); to our entire disciplic succession (*guru-varga*) and all other Vaiṣṇavas; to Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, and his elder brother Śrī Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī, accompanied by Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī and their associates; to Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates headed by Śrī Advaita Prabhu, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu; and to the lotus feet of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, who are accompanied by Śrī Lalitā, Śrī Viśākhā and all the other *sakbīs*.

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

O Śrīla Gurudeva, you are so merciful. With the torchlight of divine knowledge, you have opened my eyes, which were blinded by the darkness of ignorance. Praying from the core of my heart, I humbly offer my deep *praṇāma* at your lotus feet.

*vande śrī pādpadmāḥ śrī vāmana-nārayaṇa-trivikramāḥ
yeṣāṁ kṛpā prasādaib vraja bhakti hr̥di prakāṣṭiyati*

I worship the lotus feet of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārayaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja. By their causeless mercy, *bhakti* will manifest in the hearts of those who follow them.

*śrī thākuraṇī priya dayitāya kṛpādbhaye
tattva-traya pradānāya vāmanāya namo namaḥ*

I offer my obeisances to the lotus feet of *nitya-lilā praviṣṭha om viṣṇupāda* Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who always used to

address Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī as Ṭhakurānī; who is very near and dear to Her; who is an ocean of mercy; and who gives the conditioned souls transcendental knowledge of the three *tattvas*, namely, *sambandha*, *abbidheya* and *prayojana*.

*śrī-nityānanda-abhināya gaura-kāmaika-carine
rūpānugā-pravarāya 'śrī-rāga' iti svarūpini*

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

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya rādhikāya priyātmane
śrī-śrīmad-bhaktivedānta-nārāyaṇa iti nāmine*

I offer *praṇāma* to *om viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja*, who is very dear to Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-lilā kathāne sudakṣam audārya-mādburya guṇais ca yuktam
varam varenyam puruṣam mahāntam nārāyaṇam tvam śirasā namāmi*

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja is expert in describing *kṛṣṇa-lilā*. He is endowed with the qualities of magnanimity and sweetness, and he is the best of the great souls. He is able to freely distribute Kṛṣṇa's sweetness to others because he is always relishing that sweetness himself. I bow down and place my head at his lotus feet.

*yugācārya prabhum vande nārāyaṇa karuṇalayam
rādhā-dāsyē lobham dattvā tārayati bhuvana trayam*

I worship Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja who was awarded the title of *yugācārya* and who is the abode of mercy. He shows the path of *rāgānugā-bhakti* and thus delivers the three worlds.¹

1 Śrīla Gurudeva was awarded the title of *yugācārya* by Śrīman Dipak Bhaṭṭa, the *guru* and *mahānta* (spiritual leader) of Śrī Varṣana Temple (Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī's father's royal palace) in Vraja, India. The most benevolent Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu delivered pure

*nama om viṣṇu-pādāya kṛṣṇa-preṣṭhāya bhūtale
śrimate bhaktivedānta svāmin iti nāmine
namas te sārāsvate deve gaura-vānī-pracāriṇe
nirviśeṣa-śūnyavādi-pāścātya-deśa-tāriṇe*

I offer my respectful obeisances to the lotus feet of *nitya-līlā-praviṣṭa om viṣṇupāda Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Svāmī* who is very dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Our respectful obeisances are unto you, O dear servant of Sarasvatī Gosvāmī. You are kindly preaching the message of Lord Gaurasundara and delivering the Western countries which are filled with impersonalism and voidism.

*vāñchā-kalpa-tarubyas ca kṛpā-sindhubhya eva ca
patitānām pāvanebhyo vaiṣṇavebhyo namo namaḥ*

I offer praṇāmas unto all the Vaiṣṇavas, who are just like wish-fulfilling desire trees, who are an ocean of mercy and who deliver the fallen, conditioned souls.

*śrī-kṛṣṇa-caitanya pracbhu nityānanda
śrī-advaita gadādhara śrīvāsādi-gaura-bhakta-vṛnda*

I offer my respectful obeisances to the most munificent Supreme Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya who is known as Gaura because of His golden complexion. I offer my respectful obeisances to His immediate expansion, Śrī Nityānanda Prabhu; to His incarnation, Śrī Advaita Ācārya; to His internal potency, Śrī Gadādhara Paṇḍita; to His great pure devotee, Śrīvāsa Paṇḍita; and to all the devotees who follow Him.

*hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare
hare rāma hare rāma rāma rāma hare hare*

.....
bhakti to the three worlds and Śrīla Gurudeva continues to deliver that same pure *bhakti* in a similar way.



Śrī Guru Tattva and Śrī Guru-sevaka



The Glory of Gauḍīya Guru-paramparā

The first and general understanding of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *tattva* is that the *jīva* or soul is the eternal servant of Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, *jīvera 'svarūpa' bhāya-kṛṣṇera nitya-dāsa* (*Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Madhya-līlā, 20.108*).

When attachment and desire to serve Śrī Rādhā becomes more powerful than attachment to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, then *aiśvarya* (the Lord's majestic opulence) becomes covered.

The majestic *aiśvarya* mood of great awe and reverence is not manifest in the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Śrīla Bhaktivinode Ṭhākura explains in his *Bhajana-rahasya, 5.10*:

rādhā-pāda vīṇā kabhu kṛṣṇa nabi mile

Without taking shelter of the lotus feet of Rādhā, one can never meet Kṛṣṇa.

rādhikā dāsīra kṛṣṇa sarva-vede bole

The Vedic scriptures declare that Kṛṣṇa is the property of the *māñjarīs*, the maidservants of Śrī Rādhā.

The glorious position of Śrī Rādhā is revealed by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī:

jagat-mohana kṛṣṇa, tāñhāra mohinī

Caitanya Caritamṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.95

That very Śrī Kṛṣṇa, who attracts the entire universe with His beauty, qualities, pastimes, nature, opulence, sweetness, and other aspects, is Himself attracted and rendered helpless by the unparalleled and unsurpassed love of Vṛṣabhānu-nandini Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

govindānandini rādhā, govinda-mobinī
govinda-sarvasva, sarva-kāntā-śiromaṇi

Caitanya-caritāmṛta, Ādi-līlā 4.82

Śrī Rādhā is the one who gives pleasure to Govinda. The world is enchanted by Govinda but Govinda Himself is enchanted by Śrī Rādhā. Śrī Rādhā is everything for Govinda and She is the crest jewel of all His beautiful consorts.

The pleasure-giving potency of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's internal energy is called the *hlādinī-śakti*. The purest and most complete manifestation of the *hlādinī-śakti* is displayed by the Vraja *gopīs*, among whom Śrī Rādhā is the topmost crest jewel.

The essence of this pleasure giving potency or *hlādinī* is love of God, *prema*. The essence of *prema* or love of God is called *bhāva*. The ultimate manifestation of *bhāva* is *mahābhāva*. The embodiment of that exalted *mahābhāva* is Śrīmatī Rādhikā as is stated in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* [Ādi-līlā 4.69], *mahābhāva-svarūpa śrī rādhā ṭhākurānī*.

Of all the loving devotees and eternal intimate associates of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, Śrī Rādhā's transcendental loving service to Her beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the highest.

Therefore to become a maidservant, a *kiṅkarī* of Śrī Rādhā is the topmost cherished goal of all the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. This is the speciality and glory of our line, *sva-priya-carāṇa-kinkarim kuru* (Śrī Rādhā-Prārthanā 2).

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja reveals - Śrī Kīṣorī's maidservants (kinkaris) are always devoted to Her service. The word *kainkarya* expresses a mood of being ardent to serve and it means *kim karomi*, "What may I do? What service can I do?"

This mood of pure *rādhā-dāsyā* is called *māñjarī-bhāva*. *Sva-priya-carāṇa-kinkarim kuru*, please make me a *kiṅkarī* at the lotus feet of Śrī Vṛṣabhānu-nandinī birth after birth.

By the causeless mercy of the maidservants of Vraja, and by the causeless mercy of Śrī Guru, that *māñjarī bhāva svarūpa*, the mood of a *māñjarī*, is revealed in the heart of a sober *sādhaka*.

These topics should be understood soberly by a *śiṣya* (servant of Śrī Guru) who fully controls their senses.

In the practice of *rāgānuga bhakti*, the *mādhurya* feature of the Lord covers His *aiśvarya* feature. The *sādhaka* tastes the unlimited sweetness of Śrī Kṛṣṇa's name, form, qualities and pastimes. In this way, the *sādhaka* realizes Śrī Guru as a confidential associate of Śrī Rādhikā.

In *vaidhī-bhakti*, a disciple's relationship with Śrī Guru is dominated by awe and reverence; he understands Śrī Guru is *sākṣād-bhari*, non-different from Śrī Bhagavān.

*sākṣād-dharitvena samasta-sāstrair
uktas tathā bhāvayata eva sadbhir*

Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam 7

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes that all the scriptures and all the saints proclaim Śrī Guru to be *sākṣād-bhari*, one who is endowed with the potency of Śrī Hari and is His direct representative. Many of the same qualities of the Lord automatically reside in Śrī Guru. This understanding of Śrī Guru is in *vaidhī-bhakti*.

*kintu prabhor yah priya eva tasya
vande guroh śrī caraṇāravinda*

Śrī Gurvaṣṭakam 7

Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura further reveals that Śrī Guru is very dear to the Lord because he is a very confidential *servitor* of the Lord. Śrī Guru is thus simultaneously different and non-different from Śrī Hari, *acintya-bhedābheda-prakāśa-vigraha*.

Such a personality is therefore most worshipable and I offer prayers unto his lotus feet.

Understanding Śrī Guru as a very dear and confidential servitor is a manifestation of *rāgānuga-bhakti*.

Following in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, a *rāgānuga bhakta's* realization of Śrī Guru is as *mukunda-preṣṭha*, the nearest and dearest of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. His relationship with Śrī Guru will be marked by intimate service and friendship.

Śrīla Raghunātha Gosvāmī reveals in his *Manab Śīkṣā* verse 2:

*na dharmam nādharmam śruti-gaṇa-niruktaṁ kila kuru
vraje rādhā-kṛṣṇa-pracura-paricaryām ibha tanu
śacī-sūnuṁ nandīśvara-pati-sutatve guru-varaṁ
mukunda-preṣṭhatve smara param ajasraṁ nanu manab*

O my dear mind! Please do not perform either the *dharm*a or *adharm*a mentioned in the śrutis or Vedas. Rather, you should render profuse loving service to Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-Yugala here in Vraja, for the śrutis have ascertained Them to be the highest principle of supreme worship and the Supreme Absolute Truth. Always meditate on Śācīnandana Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, richly endowed with the complexion and sentiments of Śrīmatī Rādhikā, as non-different from Śrī Nandanandana and always remember Śrīla Gurudeva as most dear to Śrī Mukunda.

Śrī Guru is *mukunda preṣṭha*, the nearest and dearest of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Mukunda means that personality who refutes the happiness of *mukti* (impersonal liberation) and gives *premānanda* to His dear devotee. It also means *Mu*, jubilant; *mukha-padmaṁ kuṇḍa*, whose face is like a *kuṇḍa* or lotus flower.

The *rāga-bhakti sādhaka* sees his *guru*, not as *sākṣād-bhā*, but as an intimate friend of the Lord. The highest limit of friendship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa is manifest in the mood of the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

In *Bṛhat-bhakti-tattva-sāra*, it is said,

*rādhā-sanmukha-saṁsaktiṁ sakbī-saṅga-nivāsinīm
tām abam satataṁ vande guru-rūpāṁ parāṁ sachem*

I forever worship my *guru*, who in his form as an exalted *sakbī*, is happily immersed in the company of Śrīmatī Rādhikā and the other *sakbīs*.

It is described here that Gurudeva is a *priya-sakbī*, maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī previously described Śrī Guru as *mukunda preṣṭha*, as most dear to Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa has unlimited relationships

with the Vrajavāsīs such as with Raktrak and Patrak who are servants of Nanda Bābā, in *dāsya-rasa*; with Subhal and Madhumaṅgal in *sakhya-rasa*, with Nanda and Yaśodā in *vātsalya-rasa* and with the *sakhīs* in *mādburya-rasa* such as Lalitā, Viśākhā, Campakalata and so on. Amongst them all, Śrīmatī Rādhikā is most near and dear to Kṛṣṇa. Of all the *gopīs* in Vraja who have *madhura* (loving service and devotion in the conjugal mood), Śrīmatī Rādhikā's *madhura-rasa* is of the highest limit.

Śrī Rādhikā has five types of *sakhīs* or dear friends. Among them, the *prāṇa sakhīs* and *nitya sakhīs* are very near and dear to Śrīmatī Rādhikā. These dear friends are called “*māñjarīs*”. The position of the *māñjarīs* or young friends of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is given in *Śrī Caitanya Caritāmṛta*:

rādhāra svarūpa—kṛṣṇa-prema-kalpalatā
sakhī-gaṇa haya tāra puṣpa-pātā

Caitanya-caritāmṛta Madhya-līlā 8.209

By nature Śrī Rādhā is like a creeper of *kṛṣṇa-prema* and the *sakhīs* (*māñjarīs*) are the leaves, flowers and twigs of that creeper. When the nectar of Kṛṣṇa's pastimes is sprinkled on that creeper, the leaves, flowers and twigs experience a happiness millions times greater than if they were to be directly sprinkled with this nectar. The *māñjarīs* have much greater affection towards Rādhikā than towards Kṛṣṇa (*bhāva-ullāsa-rati, tat-tad bhāva icchāmāyī*); thus they are known as *Rādhā-sneha-adhika*, and because Śrīmatī Rādhikā loves them so much, they are also very near and dear to Kṛṣṇa.

yat-kiṅkarīṣu babuśah khalu kaku-vāñī,
nityam parasya puruṣasya śikhaṇḍa-mauleh

Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi 8

Śrīla Prabhodhānanda Sarasvatī, another great *rasika ācārya* in our line, has mercifully revealed in the above verse, how Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Supreme Enjoyer who wears a peacock feather in His hair, who is the source of all incarnations, falls at the feet of Śrī Rādhikā's young maidservants, the *māñjarīs*, begging them to allow Him to meet with Śrī Rādhikā.

Thus Śrī Guru is celebrated as *mukunda preṣṭha*, one very dear to Mukunda (Kṛṣṇa), by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī.

The realization that Śrī Guru is a maidservant of Śrīmatī Rādhikā is essential for the *rāgānuga sādhaka*. Under the guidance of his *guru-sakhī* or *guru-māñjarī*, at the appropriate time, Śrī Guru reveals that *māñjarī-bhāva* in the heart of his qualified disciple. The *sādhaka* thus remembers the *aṣṭa-kāliya-līlā* or eight-fold daily pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, meditating on his Gurudeva as a *māñjarī* serving in those pastimes under the affectionate guidance of Śrīla Rūpa Māñjarī.

There is no room for mental speculation, imagination or fantasy in this factual bona fide process of *rāga-mārga*.

When the *sādhaka* achieves qualification, the manifest *guru* will accordingly instruct him on his service to the Divine Couple in his spiritual body.

The *rāgānuga sādhaka* while remaining in this world meditates internally on the service given to him by Śrī Gurudeva; as Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura prayed in his Gīta Mālā:

*barane tadit, basa taravali,
kamalā māñjarī nāma
sade bara barsa, bayasa satata,
svananda-sukhada-dhāma*

My color will be lightning, my garments a host of stars, my name Kamalā Māñjarī, my age eternally twelve and a half years, my home Svānanda-sukhada.

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura is revealing his own *siddha svarūpa* as Kamalā Māñjarī and her eternal service, which is, among other services, to supply camphor and betel nuts to the Divine Couple. In the same way, meditating on his eternal form and service, the *sādhaka* will receive the mercy of Yogamāyā Devī and one day enters into the eternal pastimes of the Divine Couple. In due course of time, these will be revealed in the pure heart of the disciple, by the causeless mercy of Śrī Guru.

Śrī Guru is manifest here with us in this world and simultaneously in the spiritual realm is serving Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa. One may question how can Śrī Guru be present in this world and also be serving in the spiritual world? All this

is possible by the execution of the inconceivable potency and mercy of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, the unified form of the Divine Couple. Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura explains in his *Jaiva Dharma* that when a soul is performing *sādhana* in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu in this exceptionally fortunate *Kālī-yuga*, at the time of achieving perfection, that soul will attain two *svarūpas*, that is two eternal forms - one will be eternally present in the pastimes of Mahāprabhu and one will serve in the *nitya-līlā* of the Divine Couple Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa. In the same way, Śrīla Gurudeva can be present in the material world in one *svarūpa* and simultaneously be serving in the pastimes of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa conjugal.

When the *sādhaka* of *rāgānuṅga bhakti* is absorbed in his internal meditation, a state of *samādhī* or trance is attained. In his internal spiritual body, he enters into the eternal pastimes of the spiritual realm while still situated in his manifest form in the material world. This is the speciality of one totally immersed in *rāgānuṅga bhakti*. This cannot be achieved by one who is still a prisoner of his material mind and senses. If a homeless person who is sleeping on a torn mattress, dreams that he is the president of a country, does that make him the president? No, as this is just a dream of a conditioned soul. One should be very careful not to think and mistake the meditation or spiritual trance of a fully liberated devotee, who is not under the influence of the material modes of nature, to be an illusion, a dream or an imagination. By the mercy of Śrī Guru, the qualified devotee meditates on his eternal, spiritual form situated in a grove or *kuñja* in Vraja and serves the Divine Couple under the guidance of his *guru-sakhī*. This topmost reality is not a wishful fantasy, a dream or an illusion in the realm of the mundane world. Pure, spontaneous devotional service is eternal and transcendental in nature. The pure spiritual desires of the *sādhaka* become an eternal reality by the mercy of Śrī Guru and Śrī Guru-*paramparā* .

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja explains that Śrī Guru is like a desire-tree. By his causeless mercy, Śrī Guru causes the spiritual *svarūpa* or identity of the disciple to appear within the disciple's heart. Having full faith in Śrī Guru's words, the *sādhaka* whole-heartedly performs *bhajana* (devotional service) with firm *niṣṭhā* (steadiness), and by the mercy of the *blādinī-śakti* (the spiritual pleasure potency), he

fully realizes his ultimate *svarūpa* or identity. The *sādhaka* then intently engages in the service of his most cherished Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the skillful enjoyer of pastimes. Śrī Guru will instruct everything necessary to the cent-percent surrendered disciple, truly rewarding him spiritually, far beyond any expectations.

By his unalloyed sincere service to his Gurudeva, the devotee can understand how Śrī Guru is simultaneously serving both in this world and in the spiritual world. He therefore assists Śrī Guru at all times. This uninterrupted selfless service or assistance to his Gurudeva is the natural cause of the auspicious manifestation of his spiritual *svarūpa* or form.

In the practice of *rāgānuga bhakti* the conception that Śrī Guru is Kṛṣṇa *rūpa* and *svarūpa*, the direct manifestation of Kṛṣṇa, will be covered.

The *sādhaka* will continuously serve Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in the groves, the *kuñjas* of Vṛndāvana under the guidance of his Gurudeva who is Mukunda *preṣṭha*, the dear maidservant of Rādhikā.

This conception is the essence and highest understanding of Śrī Guru Tattva and Śrī Guru-sevaka.

Śrīman Mahāprabhu's Greatest Donation

Śrīla Gurudeva has explained that Mahāprabhu came to give us the mood of maid-servitorship to Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

In *Kālī-yuga*, a qualified *sādhaka* in the line of Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī only needs to understand, by realization, that Gurudeva has an eternal form as a *māñjarī* in Vraja-līlā.

As revealed by Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī in Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta, there are two processes by which one may execute this *rāgānuga bhakti*, externally and internally. The self-realized, advanced devotee externally remains just like a *vaidhī-bhakta* and executes all the scriptural, *śāstric* injunctions especially hearing and chanting. However, internally as an eternal associate of the Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī, he always serves the Divine Couple in Vṛndāvana. In this way he serves Śrī Kṛṣṇa throughout the day and night.

In the physical and subtle body the *jīvātmā* is performing many activities (walking, talking, thinking, calculating, etc). These activities are only going on due to the presence of the soul. In the same way, the 'soul' of devotional service or *bhajana* is *śrī kṛṣṇa nāmā-saṅkīrtana*, the chanting of the holy names, without which the other limbs of *bhakti* cannot function.

Although in the practice of *rāgānuga sādhana*, *smaraṇa* or remembrance is prominent, it must be understood that this remembrance is a limb of *bhajana* or devotional service, as are the other practices of *bhakti* such as *arcana*, etc.

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give this extremely unique and astounding gift of maid-servitorship (*māñjarī bhāva*) to Śrī Rādhā through the glorious process of *nāma-saṅkīrtana*. This glorious appearance and matchless gift of Mahāprabhu is very exceptional as it happens only once in a day of Brahmā.

In answer to questions from Paṇḍita Śyāmasundara Cakravartī, a famous leader of the independence movement in India, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda said that others acts of kindness are defective because they are part of the *māyika* (illusory) energy. Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Prabhupāda explained, “The kindness that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has shown to *jīvas*, absolves them eternally from all wants, from all inconveniences and from all the distresses known as *tritāpa*. That kindness does not produce any evil and the *jīvas* who have got it will not be victims of the evils of the world; they will rather be swimming in the nectarian sea of Love, eternally enjoying its sweetness... Unlike other forms of kindness, His Lordship’s Grace is unproductive of evils... Kavirāja Gosvāmī Prabhu (the author of Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta) has asked us to make a comparative study between Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu’s Grace and all the so-called kindnesses that are incomplete and imperfect. Where there is not the gift of an eternal nature, there must be inadequacy, defect and deception...” (Quoted from Śrī *Sajjana-toṣani* – The Harmonist)

The Holy Name is the Best Process for Perfection

Śrīla Gurudeva explained again and again, “Chanting the Holy Name of Śrī Kṛṣṇa is the process for attaining perfection of *bhajana*”. The age of Kālī is considered the most wretched age, but this present *Kālī-yuga* is extremely fortunate and rare because of the appearance of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who personally comes to deliver the pure process of devotion. He comes in *Kālī-yuga*, but only *once* in a thousand cycles of *Kālī-yuga* or after billions of years. Śrī Caitanya-devā opens the heart of the sincere chanter of Hare Kṛṣṇa, to an intimate loving relationship with the most beautiful relisher of all relationships, Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Without His mercy and the mercy of the entire *Pañca-tattva*, Śrī Kṛṣṇa-Caitanya, Prabhu Nityānanda, Śrī Advaita, Śrī Gadādhara, Śrīvāsa and the *Gaura-bhaktas*, one cannot get the mercy of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. Śrīla Gurudeva continuously explained to us that the Holy Name, the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra*, Hare Kṛṣṇa Hare Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Kṛṣṇa Hare Hare Hare Rāma Hare Rāma Rāma Rāmā Hare Hare, is the embodiment of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

The loving intimacy with God that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is bestowing is not available or attainable by any other method or in any other religion or at any other time. This invaluable gift that Lord Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give is brought to us by the mercy of Śrī Guru. The pure Nāma given by Śrī Guru and his pure representatives contains and bestows all spiritual benedictions that can be achieved by following any other process in any of the four *yugas*.

Any type of *sādhana* or devotional practice, be it *rāgānuga* (spontaneous) or *vaidhī* (regulative) are rendered useless without the presence of Śrī Nāma-*saṅkīrtana*. This is confirmed by Śrīla Sanātana Gosvāmī in his *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta* 2.3.158:

*kr̥ṣṇasya nānā-vidha-kīrtaneṣu
tan-nāma-saṅkīrtanam eva mukhyam
tat-prema-saṁpaj-janane svayaṁ drāk
śaktam tatab śreṣṭhatamaṁ mātām tat*

Of the many ways to glorify Lord Kṛṣṇa, chanting His holy name is the first. Because it has the power to give the great wealth of pure love for Him, it is considered the best.

Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī has also written in his *Bhakti Sandarbha* 275:

nāma-saṅkīrtana aparit̥yāgena smaraṇam kuryāt

Without the performance of *kīrtana* one cannot do *smaraṇam*, meditation or remembrance.

Although there are fundamental differences in the path of *rāgānuga* and *vaidhī bhakti*, in the beginning both stages appear to be the same. Thus the development from faith or *śraddhā* to *prema* (love) is almost the same for the *vaidhī sādhabaka* as it is for the *rāgānuga sādhabaka*.

In the path of *vaidhī*, the *sādhabaka* or practitioner is following the injunctions of scripture in a regulated way and tries to perform devotional service or *bhajana*. His propensity toward *bhakti* (devotion) is based only on hearing the injunctions of *śāstra*.

The devotee in *rāgānuga bhakti* also meticulously follows the prescribed rules and regulations but internally cherishes an intense transcendental greed to hear the sweet pastimes of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, and thus he is attracted to serve and have a *rasa* or a relationship with Śrī Kṛṣṇa such as in *mādhurya-rasa*.

Such a *rāgānuga sādhaka* or devotee, while still in his *sādhaka*-deha (manifest body in the material world), will perform the nine limbs of *bhakti* or devotional service in his external body, and at the same time meditate internally on his eternal form. This form or *svarūpa* is not given prematurely and as mentioned previously it is revealed or gradually given by Śrī Guru when one comes to an advanced stage of uninterrupted favorable devotional service. This *svarūpa* is the devotee's real constitutional eternal spiritual form. By hearing this, one should develop strong faith in the process of devotional service, beginning with initiation by a bona fide *guru*.

Every Soul has a Particular Rasa

Śrīla Gurudeva has explained so many times that different devotees have different characteristics, desires or tendencies and will choose to follow a particular Vrajavāsī in order to attain the goal of service in their particular *rāsa*. In Vraja there are many *rasas* or relationships such as *sakhyā* (friendship), *vātsalya* (parental) and *mādhurya* (conjugal).

The *sādhaka* may meditate on Kṛṣṇa with His cowherd friends in *sakhyā rasa* and consider their Guru to be a *sakhā*; in the same way, by meditation upon parental love between Śrī Kṛṣṇa with His parents, Nanda Bābā and Mother Yaśodā, the *sādhaka* follows the mood of *vātsalya-rasa*.

The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas however, who are in our Guru Paramparā, the disciplic line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, follow Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī who in *Vraja-līlā*, is Śrī Rūpa Māñjarī, an eternal maidservant, confidentially assisting Śrīmatī Rādhikā in Her conjugal pastimes with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

By hearing such conjugal pastimes, someone may think, "If I were under the guidance of Rūpa Māñjarī, then I could serve Rādhikā and the Divine Couple in this way." A desire may arise in the *sādhaka* to serve Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in *mādhurya*. This is called *lobha* or spiritual greed to attain spontaneous devotion.

*tāmbūlārpaṇa-pāda-mardana-payodānābbisārādibhir
vṛndāraṇya-maheśvarīm priyatayā yās toṣayanti priyāb
prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhī-kulād āpi kilāsaṅkocitā bhūmikāb
kelī-bhūmiṣu rūpa-māñjarī-mukhās tā dāsikāb saṁśraye*

Stavāvalī, Vraja-vilāsa-stava 38

I take shelter of the maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhikā of whom Rūpa Māñjarī is prominent. Unlike the *prāṇa-preṣṭha-sakhīs*, they can perform any service without hesitation. They perpetually and affectionately satisfy Śrīmatī Rādhikā by their various services, such as offering *tāmbūla*, massaging Her lotus feet, bringing Her water and arranging for Her trysts with Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Remembering in *rāgānuga bhakti* happens after hearing the attractive pastimes of the Lord from a pure devotee. It is mentioned in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* that the prominence of *smaraṇa*, remembrance, is primary in the practice of *rāga-mārga sādhana*, nevertheless, this *smaraṇa* or remembrance is dependent on the performance of *kīrtana* or chanting of the holy names. Especially in *Kālī-yuga*, all the limbs of *bhakti* are dependent on *kīrtana*.

Now let us look at some astonishing transcendental pastimes that we have heard from Śrīla Gurudeva.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā being very pleased with Śrī Rūpa Māñjarī’s service said to her,

“Oh Rūpa Māñjarī, I am so happy with you. I want to reward you for your nice service. Please take one of my *sāris*.”

Śrīla Rūpa Māñjarī however said no and wouldn’t take the remnant sari of Śrī Rādhikā.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā was surprised, “All the *sakhīs* are hankering for my remnant cloth. Why won’t you accept it? Please, take it.”

But Śrīla Rūpa Māñjarī still refused. Śrīmatī Rādhikā then said, “Oh Rūpa Māñjarī, why have you become so proud?”

“No,” Śrīla Rūpa Māñjarī replied gently, “I haven’t become proud. If you want to reward me, then please give me one benediction. Please give me this benediction that when Kṛṣṇa comes to meet with you in the forest

grove, I would be the gatekeeper of that grove (*kuñja*). Kṛṣṇa will have to take permission from me, in order to enter the *kuñja*. If I allow, then Kṛṣṇa can enter to come and see you. Otherwise, He cannot enter.”

Śrīmatī Rādhikā's lotus face broke into a sweet smile and said “So be it.”

*yat-kiṅkarīṣu babuśab khalu kāku-vāñī,
nityam parasya puruṣasya śikhaṇḍa-mauleh
tasyāb kadā rasa-nidheh vṛṣabhānu-jāyās
tat-keli-kuñja-bhavanāṅgana-mārjanī syām*

Śrī Rādhā-rasa-sudhā-nidhi 8

O daughter of Vṛṣabhānu Mahārāja, O ocean of *rasa*! The supreme enjoyer, the source of all *avatārās* who wears a peacock feather in His hair, falls at the feet of Your maidservants and begs them with many humble and grief-stricken words, so as to be able to enter into Your *kuñja*. If only I could become one stick in the broom used by Your *sakbīs* to clean Your delightful *kuñja*, I would consider my life a success.

In this way, the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas fervently aspire to be the followers of this Rūpa Māñjarī.

How Lobha (Spiritual Greed) will Awaken in the Heart

Śrīla Gurudeva has told that it is only by hearing *hari-kathā* from a bona fide *guru* or pure devotee, that greediness will awake in our heart. But only hearing will not be enough, we also have to render devotional service and perform our own *sādhana-bhajana*.

One time Jaṭilā needed to go out of Jāvaṭa. Seeing this opportunity, one *sakbī* quickly informed Kṛṣṇa and arranged a meeting with Rādhikā. Then all of a sudden, without warning, Jaṭilā came back without going to the other village. Jaṭilā walked right in and caught Śrī Kṛṣṇa playing intimately with her daughter-in-law, Śrīmatī Rādhikā. Seeing this, Jaṭilā became very angry and pointed her finger threateningly at Kṛṣṇa.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa quickly said, “My dear lady, I vow that I did not even look at any yoghurt. Still, this girl, your daughter-in-law, she became suspicious of me,

and said that I took and ate some yogurt from one of her yoghurt pots. So, in order to confirm this, by force she was opening my mouth and smelling my breath. Please tell your daughter-in-law that I am a saintly person. She should not be doing this here and that she should not be so suspicious of me.”

Hearing this clever explanation from Kṛṣṇa, the other *sakhīs*, especially the messenger who had invited Kṛṣṇa to come and meet there, could not stop laughing.

By hearing such delightful pastimes from the mouth of a pure devotee, an eagerness or desire to serve the Lord in His sweet pastimes, starts to manifest in the heart.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s Reflection Pastime

Once, Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was deeply absorbed in his *bhajana* and saw another sweet pastime of Śrī Kṛṣṇa talking to His own reflection in Nandagrāma. Inspired by that pastime, he composed this verse in his *Śrī Upadeśāmṛta*:

*dadāti pratigrhṇāti
guhyam ākhyāti prcchati
bhunkte bhojayate caiva
śaḍ-vidharṇ prīti-lakṣaṇam*

Upadeśāmṛta 4

Offering gifts in charity and accepting charitable gifts, revealing one’s mind in confidence and inquiring confidentially, accepting *prasāda* and offering *prasāda* are the six symptoms of love shared between devotees.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī beautifully describes the pastime of Śrī Kṛṣṇa talking to His reflection as follows:

Early in the morning, in the beautiful village of Nandagrāma, Mother Yaśodā was busy churning yoghurt in her palace, Śrī Nanda-bhavana. She made some freshly churned butter and gave it to her son Kṛṣṇa. Kṛṣṇa took the soft butter in his hand and began eating it happily. Yaśodā told Kṛṣṇa to eat the butter while she is going to do other household duties.

In the palace of Nanda-bhavana there are eighty-four brilliant jewelled pillars. While Kṛṣṇa was playing by Himself, He saw His reflection in one of the shiny pillars. Seeing His own reflection, Kṛṣṇa became surprised and thought, ‘Who is this beautiful, attractive boy? I have never seen a boy like this in Vraja. I should make friends with him. Although Dāu *bhaiyā* (Baladeva) is here in Vraja and is my friend, he’s not always here to play with me. Sometimes he goes to my uncle Upananda’s house or sometimes he stays with mother Rohiṇī. I need one friend who will always be with me’. Śrī Kṛṣṇa’s pastimes in Vraja are characterized by the sweetness of His human-like activities. Although Kṛṣṇa is the Supreme Personality of Godhead and is all-omniscient, at the same time, due to the pastime-nurturing influence of His internal *yogamāyā* potency, He forgets His opulences. In this way, Śrī Kṛṣṇa is trying to make friends with this boy in this amazing pastime. He spoke to the reflection, ‘My mother has dressed me like this so nicely, because I am the son of a king. I have so many beautiful outfits. If you like I can give one to you and if you have anything, you can also give me a gift.’

Kṛṣṇa did not receive a reply from his new friend. He then spoke again, ‘Look! I know so many tricks and I am very expert at stealing butter with my friends.’

One time, in early morning, my mother got up from the bed. She gently put a soft pillow for me to embrace and quietly went out from her bed to attend to her other services. I pretended to be asleep and as soon as Mother left the room I quickly jumped down from the bed and without making any sound, I slipped out of the house to meet my friends who were waiting for Me outside.

We went to the house of another *gopī* and taking her son with us, we quietly entered inside her house to steal butter. Just then that *gopī* caught me red-handed. She said, ‘O Kanaiyā, so early in the morning, you are up to no good!’

I replied, ‘I thought this is my own house and you are my mother.’

The *gopī* didn’t listen to any excuses and said, ‘Whenever we catch you doing your mischievous activities and tell your mother, she never believes us, so today I will personally take you to your mother’s house.’ Taking Me by the hand, she covered her face with a shawl which also fell over my

head. She proceeded to Nanda-bhavana with all my *sakhās* and her son following behind.

By a hint from my eyes, I called that *gopī*'s son to my side and then pleaded with her, 'O mother, my body is tender, so delicate and fragile; you are holding my hand so tightly it is hurting. Can you please switch to my other hand?'

The *gopī* said, 'Yes, only if you give me your other hand first'. At that moment I gave her the hand of her own son and quickly ran behind without her noticing.

I ran to my house and lay on the bed pretending to be fast sleep.

The *gopī* arrived and knocked loudly on the door calling, 'O Yaśode! O Yaśode!'

Mother opened the door and asked what was going on. 'Why are you screaming so loud? You will disturb my son who's sleeping.'

The *gopī* said, 'Your son is not sleeping. He was stealing butter in my house!'

Mother replied how could that be, just a couple of minutes ago she had seen me on my bed.

At that moment with perfect timing, I came out of my room rubbing my eyes and weeping, 'O Maiyā I am hungry'.

The *gopī* quickly removed her veil. She looked down at the hand she was holding, and to her utter astonishment, she saw that it was her own son!

I said 'O Maiyā, just see! Your *sakhīs* are always making up false stories about me and this is the proof. They are so miserly they don't even feed their children. When they are hungry they steal from their own houses.'

Mother looked at that *gopī* who became extremely embarrassed and for quite some time, that *gopī* avoided Nanda-bhavana.'

Kṛṣṇa related this most confidential pastime to his reflection and asked him if he knew of any cunning tricks. In this way he opened his heart to his new friend and inquired about his heart. The reflection gave no reply.

Kṛṣṇa thought if I am to make friends with this boy, I must feed him some delicious milk products. He offered some fresh butter to his friend, 'Please eat this and then give me some tasty morsel in exchange.' As Kṛṣṇa offered the butter, the reflection imitated him. Kṛṣṇa became

angry, 'I am trying to make friend with this boy but now I can see he is not at all simple hearted; he is actually quite crooked'. Kṛṣṇa then bared his teeth like a monkey at the reflection.

Mother Yaśodā was watching how her son Kṛṣṇa was playing with his own reflection and unable to contain herself, she began to laugh in delight.

Kṛṣṇa then realized his new found friend was only a reflection and feeling instantly shy, hid himself in His mother's veil. Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, seeing this charming pastime, became inspired by the heartfelt interaction of Kṛṣṇa with his reflection and thus composed a beautiful verse in his *Upadeśamṛta*, describing the six loving exchanges between devotees.

Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī saw how Kṛṣṇa wanted to give and receive gifts, how He revealed his heart in confidence and wanted to hear his new friend's realizations, and how He offered *prasādam* and desired to taste the *prasādam* of his friend. When these types of loving exchanges are performed by devotees, especially between Śrī Guru and disciple, friendship develops.

Rūpa Gosvāmī instructed this is how devotees should associate together. However, if devotees associate in this way with materialistic persons, many unfavorable attachments will develop.

This pastime was taking place in Goloka Vṛndāvana and Rūpa Gosvāmī, who was present in this world doing his *bhājana* in his *sādhaka-śarīra*, was witnessing that pastime in his eternal spiritual form.

Madhumaṅgala Exchanges Clothes with Kṛṣṇa.

Another time, while Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī was absorbed in his *bhājana*, he saw Kṛṣṇa going cow grazing with His many friends such as His *sakhās* Sṛīdama, Sūdāma, Vasudhāma, Madhumaṅgala, Subala, Ujvalla, Vasanta, Kokila and many others.

Madhumaṅgala was telling Kṛṣṇa, 'You always brag that you did this and you did that, and the Vrajavāsīs are always giving you so many nice sweets, especially laḍḍūs. But you don't know why they give so māny sweets. Do you really want to know why?'

Kṛṣṇa wanted to know why. Madhumaṅgala said, 'It is only due to your peacock feather, your yellow *pītāmbara* cloth and your flute that makes everyone so impressed with you'.

‘I’m telling you Kṛṣṇa, if you give up these things, nobody will notice you and give you any sweets.’

Then Kṛṣṇa, desiring to please his beloved *sakhā*, suggested they should exchange clothes and paraphernalia. Madhumaṅgala happily agreed. After swapping clothes they continued to wander in the forest.

Meanwhile one demon named Keśī entered the forest. Assuming the form of a giant horse, he began searching to kill Kṛṣṇa on the order of the evil King Kaṁsa. King Kaṁsa had informed Keśī that Kṛṣṇa is dark complexioned, wears a peacock feather, has a yellow *pītāmbara* cloth and carries a flute.

And so, as Keśī was searching for Kṛṣṇa, he saw one cowherd boy walking happily with a peacock feather on his head, wearing a brilliant yellow *pītāmbara* cloth and carrying a flute.

Keśī thought that although this cowherd boy was not blackish, he must be wearing some kind of make up to make himself look fair. Convinced that he had found Kṛṣṇa, he immediately attacked Madhumaṅgala with his hind legs. By the grace of providence Keśī missed him, but the force of the wind from his kicking, knocked Madhumaṅgala to the ground some distance away. Shocked, Madhumaṅgala scrambled to his feet and shouted to Kṛṣṇa in great despair ‘Oh this cloth, this flute and this peacock feather of yours is the source of all danger, I don’t want it! I don’t want it anymore!’ He quickly gave back everything to Kṛṣṇa. The Keśī demon came again to attack but this time Kṛṣṇa caught him and effortlessly killed him.

Rūpa Gosvāmī observed this pastime or *lilā* in the spiritual world while being situated in his *sādhaka-deha* in this world.

A pure devotee present in this world in his *sādhaka śarīra* may at any time travel to the spiritual world and return according to his desire; this is the power of a devotee who is practicing *rāgānuga bhakti*. There are māny such examples in the scriptures and in the history of Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Finding Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī’s Nose Ring

Narottama dāsa Thākura, Śyāmānanda Prabhu and Śrīnivāsa Ācārya were great devotees who on the order of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī started distributing the books of the six Gosvāmīs all over India.

The King of Viṣṇupura had invited Śrīnivāsa Ācārya in his royal palace in West Bengal. While Śrīnivāsa Ācārya was staying there, he went into a deep *samādhi* for three to four days, causing his servants to think he had left this world. All became worried and started lamenting deeply.

The news reached Rāmacandra Kavirāja who was the nearest and dearest disciple of Śrīnivāsa. He immediately rushed to the King's palace in Viṣṇupura.

Seeing his spiritual master, he understood that he was in deep *samādhi*. Offering his obeisances, Rāmacandra quietly sat down next to Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and became absorbed in meditation. Understanding the inner mood of his *guru*, he entered into the pastimes of the Divine Couple.

He saw that everyone was busy searching for something. Rādhikā's nose ring had fallen into the water and everyone was busy trying to find it.

Śrīnivāsa Ācārya in his form as a *mañjarī*, under the guidance of his Guru Mañjārī, was also engaged in searching everywhere for the nose ring.

Rāmacandra Kavirāja had entered into the same *līlā* in his *mañjarī svarūpa* and also began searching. He quickly found the nose ring under a lotus leaf and offered it to his Guru Māñjārī who passed it through the chain of different *gopīs* and *mañjarīs* and finally into the hands of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Śrī Rādhā became overjoyed. She wanted to know who had found her nose ring. Her maidservants told her it was this new *gopī* who had located the nose ring.

Rādhikā became very pleased with Rāmacandra Kavirāja in his *mañjarī* form.

After some time, both Śrīnivāsa Ācārya and Rāmacandra Kavirāja came back into *bahir-dāsa* or external consciousness. All the assembled Vaiṣṇavas became very happy.

Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura prays:

*dayā kara śrī ācārya prabhu śrīnivāsa
rāmacandra-sanga māge narottama dāsa*

Śrī Kṛṣṇa Caitanya Prabhu Daya Karo More 6

Be merciful, O Prabhu Śrīnivāsa Acārya! Narottama dāsa begs for the company of Rāmacandra!



I Muṣṭ Do Bhajana



A pure devotee like Śrīla Gurudeva does not have to worry about the necessities of life, but in his *naravat-līlā*, human-like pastimes, he sets an example for us. Whatever he does, he does for the welfare of all. In Volume I of this biography, there is an amazing story which explains what triggered, in Śrīla Gurudeva's young adult life while working in the police department, his decision to renounce the material world. At that time Śrīla Gurudeva's real identity remained hidden and he was known as Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Prabhu, a householder working in the police department. Śrīla Gurudeva described this incident that happened several times to the devotees, saying that this is what made him renounce and devote his life to *bhajana*. Śrīla Gurudeva would sometimes relate this story when preaching to the devotees to do their *bhajana* with determination and Kṛṣṇa would maintain them. I will describe this episode more deeply now, for it is such a wonderful proof that Śrīla Gurudeva is a pure devotee, always protected by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. With remarkable consistency and humility, instead of using himself as the example, Śrīla Gurudeva usually described the occurrence as I narrated it in the first volume, but what happened to "his friend" in the police department is in fact, truly what happened to no one other than Śrīman Nārāyaṇa himself. The miraculous incident is as follows:

On that night, Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Prabhu was scheduled to work the late night shift, from 10 pm to 6 am. Earlier that day after his lunch, he was thinking, "My duty's time has still not come, so I can chant some rounds for some time, and then I can join the office in the evening".

But he became so absorbed in chanting *harināmā* that he forgot all about the time and his work duties until the wee hours of the next morning. Seeing that there was only half an hour left before the completion of his shift, he became very anxious and quite worried. He arrived at the station

and told his colleague, “Maybe my higher officer marked me red in the attendance book. Oh, and of course he must have been so much angry with me for being late and irregular”.

His fellow officers were surprised. “What are you saying, Mr. Tivariji? You have done so many activities since this evening. Your superior officer has become so much satisfied. Come on my friend, how can you say that you were not here? See here is where you signed in.”

Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Prabhu became astounded and said, “What! I have come here and joined the office today and was so busy in my work that my officer became happy!”

His friends looked at him and said, “Yes, therefore in the registration book, your officer has promoted you to a higher rank”.

Śrīman Nārāyaṇa Prabhu couldn’t believe what he was hearing. He checked the attendance book and saw that indeed his superior officer had written next his name “highly recommended for promotion”. He understood what had happened. The Lord Himself came, assumed his form and performed his duties so expertly that his superior was extremely pleased. Śrīman Nārāyaṇa realized how Kṛṣṇa was so merciful to him. He thought of the mercy that Kṛṣṇa bestowed on Pūtanā, giving her the position of a nurse in Goloka Vṛndāvana and he started crying. He remembered this verse:

*aho bakī yaṁ stana-kāla-kūṭaṁ
jighāṁsayāpāyayad apy asādhvī
lebhe gatim dhātry-ucitām tato ‘nyam
kaṁ vā dayāluṁ śaraṇaṁ vrajema*

Śrīmad-bhāgavatam 3.2.23)

Alas, how shall I take shelter of one more merciful than He who granted the position of mother to a she-demon [Pūtanā] although she was unfaithful and she prepared deadly poison to be sucked from her breast?

Śrīman Nārāyaṇa solemnly vowed in his mind, “Why waste my life? I will give up this job and will only do *bhajana* of the Lord.”

When Śrīman Nārāyaṇa revealed his mind to Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Prabhu, the latter said, “Tivārījī, it is true, there are so many examples in the scripture of Bhagavān Himself coming to serve His devotee.”

“Oh, Prabhu, can you please give me an example?”

Śrīpāda Narottamānanda Prabhu, enthused by the young man’s eagerness to hear the pastimes of Bhagavān and His devotees, quoted the verse 9.22 from *Bhagavad-gītā*:

*ananyāś cintayanto mām
ye janāḥ paryupāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhīyuktānām
yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy āham*

“However, for those who are always absorbed in thoughts of Me, and who worship Me with one-pointed devotion by every means, I Myself carry the necessities they lack and preserve what they have.”

“In connection with this verse,” said Śrīpāda Narottamānanda, “There is a true story of Śrī Bhagavān personally coming to serve His pure devotee, Ārjuna Miśra.

The Story of Ārjuna Miśra

Once there was a pure devotee named Ārjuna Miśra, who was a very poor *brāhmaṇa*. Every morning he would perform his *bhājana*, spend two hours writing a commentary on *Śrīmad Bhagavad-gītā*, and then go out to beg alms.

Ārjuna Miśra’s wife would prepare the food collected by her husband, offer it with love to their deity of Bhagavān, Śrī Gopīnātha, give the *mahāprasāda* to her husband with great attention, and later partake whatever *prasād* was left with great satisfaction. This was their constant mood, and they were fully satisfied in the consideration that their poverty was a gift from Śrī Bhagavān. So their time passed blissfully.

Nearly all their clothes were torn, and between them they possessed only one cloth - a *dbotī* - that was suitable to wear outside the house. When her husband was out begging alms, his wife wore a piece of ragged,

torn cloth. When he was at home and she needed to go out, she wore the *dbotī*.

One day, after his morning *bhajana*, Ārjuna Miśra sat down to write a commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā* verse 9.22:

*ananyās cintayanto mām
ye janāḥ paryuṣāsate
teṣāṁ nityābhiyuktānām
yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy āham*

“However, for those who are always absorbed in thoughts of Me, and who worship Me with one-pointed devotion by every means, I Myself carry the necessities they lack and preserve what they have.”

Pondering this, Ārjuna Miśra’s mind became perplexed with a grave doubt that he was unable to resolve. He thought, “Will that Person, Svayaṁ-Bhagavān, who is the only master of the whole universe, Himself carry the necessities they lack of those who are engaged in His single-pointed *bhajana*, and preserve what they have? No, this can’t be true, because why is my situation as it is? I am completely dependent on Him, and with exclusive devotion, have offered everything to His lotus feet. So why do I have to undergo this misery of poverty? The words in this verse, ‘I Myself carry the necessities of those engaged in My *bhajana*’¹, could not have been spoken by Bhagavān; someone must have changed it.”

Ārjuna Miśra tried to resolve this dilemma on the strength of his own intelligence but became increasingly doubtful and perplexed. Finally, he put three slash marks on this line with his red pen, and went out to beg alms.

Now, the most compassionate Bhagavān, who protects the surrendered souls, saw the doubt appear in the mind of His devotee. Taking the form of an extremely beautiful, tender, dark-complexioned boy, He filled two baskets with ample rice, *dāl*, vegetables, ghee and many other goods, and tying the baskets to the ends of a bamboo rod, He personally carried them on His shoulder to the house of Ārjuna Miśra.

Finding the door locked, He knocked several times, calling loudly, “Oh Mother, Oh Mother!”

1 *nityābhiyuktānām yoga-kṣemaṁ vahāmy āham*

The *brāhmaṇī* heard the calling, but being home alone and *wearing only her torn cloth, she felt she could not* answer the door. The knocking and calling continued, and finally finding no alternative, with head lowered shyly, she opened the door. Carrying the weight of the full baskets on the bamboo, the boy entered the courtyard, placed His load on the floor and stood to one side. Śrī Bhagavān in the guise of a boy, said, “Mother, Paṇḍitjī (the *brāhmaṇa*, Ārjuna Mīśra) has sent these supplies. Please take them inside.”

The *brāhmaṇī’s* face was lowered, but hearing the sweet words of the boy, she looked up and saw the two big baskets, filled with more vegetables and food grains than she had ever seen in her life, right there in the courtyard. Being repeatedly requested by the boy to take them, she finally carried them in a daze to the inner chamber of the house. Constantly gazing upon His beautiful face, she became completely happy.

Oh, how beautiful His face is! How can a person of such dark colour have such exquisite beauty? She had never even imagined such beauty. Awestruck, she stood transfixed. Then she noticed that on the boy’s chest were three bleeding slash marks. It looked as if someone had cut his chest with a sharp weapon. Her heart became deeply disturbed and she cried out, “Oh son! Which cruel person has made these cuts on Your chest? Alas! Alas! Even a stone heart would melt at the thought of hurting such a soft, tender body!”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa, in the guise of the boy, said, “Mother, while bringing you these foodstuffs, I was delayed, so your husband punished Me in this way.”

With her eyes filling with tears, the *brāhmaṇī* cried, “What! He made these cuts on your chest? When he comes home I’ll ask him how he could have done such a brutal thing! My son, don’t feel distressed. Stay here for some time, and I will prepare some of this food and You can accept the *prasāda* of Ṭhākurjī.”

Seating the boy in the courtyard, the *brāhmaṇī* went to the kitchen and started to prepare an offering. Kṛṣṇa then thought, the purpose for which I carried these food-stuffs has been completed. When the *brāhmaṇa* comes home, he will discover the authenticity of My words, and will never doubt them again. Thus having made arrangements to dispel the doubts of His devotee, Kṛṣṇa disappeared.

That day, despite great effort, the *brāhmaṇa* was unable to collect any alms. Losing all hope, he returned home, considering the situation to be the will of Ṭhākurjī, his deity. His wife opened the back door when he knocked, and since he knew there had been no supplies in the house, he was surprised to see her cooking, and inquired, “What are you cooking? How is it that you have some supplies?”

Now she was surprised, and said, “Well, you sent a six-month supply of food with that little boy. Why do you ask? And I never knew your heart was so hard like stone. How could you slash the tender body of that boy three times on His chest? Have you no mercy?”

The *brāhmaṇa* was astonished.

“What are you talking about? I didn’t send anything home... nor did I hurt any boy. Please explain!”

The *brāhmaṇī* showed her husband the huge pile of supplies brought by the boy. Then she took him to the courtyard to show him the boy and His cuts... but the boy was not there. She searched the whole house for Him. Where had He gone? The courtyard gate was closed, as it had been before the boy came. The couple looked at each other in surprise. The whole situation began to dawn on Ārjuna Miśra, and tears began to flow continuously from his eyes.

After washing his hands and feet he entered the deity room and opened his *Bhagavad-gītā*. The three red pen slashes he had made that morning on the line: “I Myself carry the necessities of those engaged in ²My *bhajana*”, were now gone. His doubt was completely dispelled, and overwhelmed with happiness, he came out of the deity room crying.

“My dear, you are so fortunate! Today you directly saw Śrī Gopīnātha! And He personally brought all these foodstuffs! How could I have possibly sent so much stock, just by begging?”

Then he explained to his wife, “This morning, while writing my *Bhagavad-gītā* commentary, I doubted one statement of Śrī Bhagavān, and slashed some words with three lines of red ink. That’s why the tender chest of the sweet young boy you saw, our Ṭhākurjī, Gopīnātha, was marked with three cuts. He is supremely compassionate, and went to

.....

2 *nityābhīyuktānām yoga-kṣemarān vahāmy āham*

considerable trouble to prove the authenticity of His statements, and to remove the doubts of an atheist like me.”

His throat choked up and he was unable to speak further. Overwhelmed with love, he cried out, “Oh Gopīnātha! Oh Gopīnātha!” and then fainted. Standing in front of their deity Śrī Gopīnātha, the *brāhmaṇī* was struck dumb, and her eyes filled with tears. Returning to external consciousness a while later, Ārjuna Miśra took his bath, did his daily duties, offered to Śrī Gopīnātha the meal that his wife had prepared, and with great love they both accepted His remnants. He continued writing the commentary on *Gītā* every day, immersed in love of God.

Our previous Ācārya, Seventh Gosvāmī Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Thākura writes in his commentary on the *Bhagavad-gītā*, quoting Śrī Kṛṣṇa as saying:

“You should not think that the three types of fruitive worshippers attain happiness, and that My devotees suffer. My *bhaktas* think of Me only, without deviation. For the maintenance of their bodies they accept anything that is favourable to My *bhakti* and reject all that is unfavourable. In this way, they are *nitya-abhiyukta*, or ever-united with Me by devotional love. Free from selfish desires, they offer everything exclusively to Me. I alone maintain them, providing all their wealth and other requirements. From an external viewpoint, there may appear to be a similarity between materially-motivated worshippers (*pratīka upāsakas*) and My *bhaktas*, who only accept that which is favourable to My service. However, there is a big difference between the two. I carry the *yoga* (progress) and *kṣema* (maintenance) of My *bhaktas* even if they have no mundane desires. The special benefit My *bhaktas* receive is that by My mercy they enjoy all sense objects in a dispassionate manner and finally they attain eternal bliss. The *pratīka upāsakas*, however, again return to the field of *karma* after enjoying sense pleasure. They do not attain eternal bliss. I am indifferent to all mundane occurrences, but out of affection for My *bhaktas*, I am delighted to help them in every respect. In My doing this, there is no offence on the part of My *bhaktas*, because they do not pray to Me for anything except My favour. I Myself personally supply their requirements.”

“There is another true story of Śrī Bhagavān personally coming to serve His pure devotee, said Śrīpāda Narottamānanda, “The story of Padmavati and Jayadeva”.

The Story of Padmavati and Jayadeva

Jayadeva was a Bengali poet from the Birbhum district in Bengal and was a great devotee of Their Lordships, Śrī Śrī Rādhā-mādhava. It's been recorded that Jayadeva was a court *paṇḍita* during the reign of Rāja Lakṣmaṇa Sena of Gauḍa. So many incidents took place in his life related to their pure devotion that the Lord became very fond of Jayadeva and his devotee wife Padmavati.

He was in Champahati when he wrote his eternal poetry, the *Gīta-govinda*. Always absorbed in the pastimes of Rādhā-kṛṣṇa, his attachment for Their Lordships increased more and more over time and thus floating on the waves of *Kṛṣṇa-prema* he composed this book of astonishing verses entitled *Gīta-govinda*. While Jayadeva was writing this book he described and revealed various *rasas* and *bbāvas* within his writings, yet it still lacked the touch of *khaṇḍita-madhura-rasa*. However, at one point he did not have the courage to depict Lord Kṛṣṇa, touching the feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

One day, while Jayadeva was out for his daily bath in the ocean, Lord Kṛṣṇa Himself, taking the form of Jayadeva, came into his room and wrote down the verse “*Dehi pada pallavam udaram*” in Jayadeva’s manuscript book.

Padmāvati, who was surprised to see that Jayadeva (Lord Kṛṣṇa) had returned so quickly from his bathing, said, “What is the matter? You just left a few minutes ago. How did you return so soon?”

Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the guise of Jayadeva said, “While on my way to the sea, a thought occurred to me, I didn’t want to forget it so I came back to note it down.”

Soon after Lord Kṛṣṇa had disappeared, Jayadeva returned from his bathing. Padmāvati was shocked to see Jayadeva return again so quickly and in her confusion said, “You went for your bath and soon came back to write something down in your book and left again just a few minutes ago. How could you finish your bath within such a short time and return home? I would like to know who that person that came here to write in your book and who is the person that is actually here now?”

Jayadeva, understanding the significance of the incident narrated by Padmāvati, at once went inside and quickly opened the book. The divine writing revealed the presence of his Lord Kṛṣṇa. He felt such ecstasy of love

that tears rolled down over his chest. He then called his wife and said, “You are the most fortunate person because you have attained the goal of your birth. You had the *darśana* of Lord Kṛṣṇa, and I am such a fallen soul that I have been deprived of the *darśana* of His manifested Self.”



The Uttamā Bhāgavata and Kṛpa-Pātra



Kṛpa-Pātra, The Reservoir of Mercy

Śrīla Gurudeva has been a cardio-patient in 1988, so there were very many restrictions made by doctors on his food intake. Nevertheless, in the beginning, if someone would bring some foodstuff for him, he would accept it and not consider whether it is good or bad for his heart. Later on, however, he would not immediately eat it. The devotees would be told to give it to Mādhava Mahārāja first. Then, when someone gave to me, I was very strict. If it was good for his health, I would give it to him; otherwise, not. People would later ask him, “Oh Gurudeva did you take what I sent for you?”

Śrīla Gurudeva would say, “What? When did you give? Oh, Mādhava Mahārāja is not giving to me, because he thinks it is not good for me. If milk will come, he will take the cream, and give me only the milk. If yoghurt will come, he will churn the yoghurt and give me the buttermilk, but he will keep the butter.”

Common people could not understand what Śrīla Gurudeva was saying. Gurudeva was saying that he is doing *bhajana* and such hard labour—whatever he has realised and what is proper *siddhānta*—the essence he’s giving to his sincere disciples and followers.

It is mentioned in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (10.13.3):

*śṛṇusvāvahito rājann
āpi guhyam vādāmi te
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya
guravo guhyam apy uta*

O King, kindly listen to me attentively. The activities of the Supreme Lord are very confidential, but I shall tell you about them, for the *guru* explains to a submissive disciple even topics that are very confidential and difficult to understand.

It is further stated in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* (1.1.8):

*vettba tvaṁ saumya tat sarvaṁ
tattvatas tad-anugrahāt
brūyuh snigdhasya śiṣyasya
guravo guhyam apy uta*

You are learned because your *gurus* have bestowed upon you all the confidential knowledge given to a polite and obedient disciple. Therefore you can tell us all you have learned from them.

Śrīla Gurudeva will tell all confidential things about *bhājana* to a disciple who is very polite, gentle and especially loyal to him. In the same way, Śrīla Gurudeva said that due to the kind of service we are doing, we are being given all these things (the cream of his teachings, the buttery nature of his personality and the real essence and spirit of his moods).

The pure devotee is *krpa-pātra*, the reservoir of *krpa*, mercy. The full mercy of Bhagavān comes through the devotee—it doesn't come from another direction or from another place. Our relationship with the Lord is arranged and established in this way. Without the devotee's mercy, you will not understand the Lord or get His mercy.

Three Stages of Uttamā Bhāgavata

Śrīla Gurudeva has explained the three stages of *uttamā bhāgavata* during his *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* classes in the mid-eighties, in Śrī Keshavji Gauḍīya Māṭha, Mathurā. One who is on the highest platform of spontaneous devotion or the *uttamā mahā bhāgavata* has three stages of spiritual absorption.

One is called *bāhya-dāśā* or external awareness in which he can be seen performing Harināma *sankīrtana* and all the limbs of *bhakti*. In that external state, the pure devotee follows all rules and regulations and appears to be a resident of this world.

The second stage is called *ardha-bāhya-dāśā* meaning half internal and half external consciousness. In this middle stage there may be signs such as incoherent speech or movement. Explaining this stage and Śrīla

Gurudeva gave the example of Śrī Mahāprabhu Himself. He said that the *uttamā-bhāgavatas* (topmost devotees) in our *guru-varga*, when they are speaking *hari-kathā*, they are said to be situated in the external stage, while being at the same time in the internal stage. Śrīman Mahāprabhu Himself exhibited this stage of *ardha-bāhya-dāsā*.

When Śrīman Mahāprabhu would be in the internal stage, at that time His lotus feet and hand would retract into His stomach and He would turn into a round shape resembling a pumpkin or like a tortoise with limbs retracted. Continuous foam would ooze from His lotus mouth, tears pouring from His lotus eyes, and hairs standing on end throughout His entire body. In this way He would appear to be externally inert, but internally fully relishing spiritual bliss. Sometimes his joints would dislocate and stretch several inches, making Him appear longer.

One night, a fisherman captured Him inside His fishing net in the ocean. When the devotees headed by Śrīla Svarūpa Dāmodara approached a raving mad fisherman asking him if he had seen Mahāprabhu, the shaken fisherman said, ‘No, what I’ve seen is a powerful ghost and he has possessed me. I have seen Mahāprabhu before so many times. This is not Him. I fish every night and to protect me, I always remember Lord Narasimhadeva; no ghost can ever haunt me, but this time, as much as I remember Narasimhadeva, the ghost keeps attacking me again and again.’

When Śrī Svarūpa Dāmodara and all the accompanying devotees came to place where the fisherman said the ghost was, they found Mahāprabhu in His internal stage. All of them quickly surrounded Mahāprabhu and started *hari-kīrtana*. As soon as Kṛṣṇa’s name was uttered in Mahāprabhu’s ear, He roared and jumped up. All His dislocated joints returned to their proper positions.

Upon seeing so many devotees there, Śrīman Mahāprabhu came into the half external stage. Mahāprabhu spoke to them, “Seeing the river Yamunā, I went to Vṛndāvana. There I saw Śrī Vrajendranandana Śyāmasundara doing water-sport pastimes along with *gopīs* headed by Śrīmatī Rādhā Ṭhākurānī. Being on the bank of the Yamunā with other *sakhīs*, I was watching these sporting pastimes. I was very happy there. Now, all of you made some noise and forcibly brought me here.”

Now we will explain about the third stage of *uttamā-bhāgavata* which is known as *antar-dāśā*. *Antar-dāśā* is the state of being internally absorbed in the pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, in the *uttamā-bhāgavata*'s eternal spiritual form (*siddha-śarīra*). In that internal stage there may be no signs of external activity such as speech or movement. Sometimes however symptoms of the activities in that *antar-dāśā* stage of the *siddha-śarīra* are visible or externally manifested on the body of the *uttamā-bhāgavata* (*sādhaka-śarīra*).

Examples of Occurrences of Siddha Śarīra Symptoms on the Sādhaka Śarīra

Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī starts his *Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* by this auspicious invocation:

*tvaṁ rūpa-māñjarī sakhi! prathitā pure 'smin
puṁsah parasya vadanam na hi paśyasīti
bimbādbare kṣatam anāgata-bhartrkāyā
yat te vyadhāyī kim u tac chuka-puṅgavena*

“My dear friend Rūpa Māñjarī! You are well known in Vraja for your chastity; you don't even look at the faces of other men. It is therefore surprising that although your husband is not at home, your lips, which are as beautiful as red bimba fruits, have been bitten. Has this perhaps been done by the best of parrots?”

Śrīla Gurudeva explains, “Before writing *Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali*, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī was thinking, ‘I should write a *mangalacaranam*, an auspicious invocation.’ As soon as he picked up his pen, he at once entered *ardha-bahya-dāsa* (half internal, half external consciousness), and then *antara-dāsa* (internal consciousness). In that inner state, in his form as Śrī Rūpa Māñjarī, he saw the smiling face of Śrī Rūpa Māñjarī and noticed some unnatural marks – bite marks – on her lips. Rūpa Māñjarī also began to smile...”

“In a joking manner he said as Rūpa Māñjarī, ‘You are famous in Vraja as a chaste lady. However, although your husband has been gone

four or five days and has not yet returned, I see that you have fresh cuts on your lips from a few hours ago, or maybe from last night. I think that perhaps a small parrot has come and mistaken them for a bimba fruit.’ Rūpa Māñjarī then glanced towards Rūpa Māñjarī and, being very pleased with her, smiled still further...”

“In this world we have a *guru* and we are his disciples, but in *rāgānuga-bhakti* (internally) the *guru* is like a friend. *Viśrambhena gurau sevā*. In the spiritual realm, there is no formal relation of *guru* and disciple as there is in this world. Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī used to address Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī as *guru*, and he respected him as such. Inwardly, however, he saw him as a *sakhī*, as Rūpa Māñjarī...”

All the verses of *Śrī Vilāpa-kusumāñjali* mercifully written by Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī are revelations of his confidential moods while he was deep in his internal stage of devotional trance.

The following are more examples of the manifestation of such divine symptoms on the body of the pure devotee. Many times I have also personally seen so many symptoms on Śrīla Gurudeva’s *sādhaka śarīra* but I never shared it with others. I instead used to joke with Śrīla Gurudeva due to our intimacy.

One time Śrīnivāsa Ācārya, being situated in his *sādhaka-śarīra* or his manifest body in this world, was meditating on the holi pastime (the colour festival) of the Divine Couple. In his *mañjarī* form Śrīnivāsa entered the joyful pastime and saw Śrī Radhā and Kṛṣṇa’s bodies, covered in a myriad of bright colours. Śrī Kṛṣṇa and His friends were in one party and Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Her *sakhīs* were in the opposite party. There were more *gopīs* than there were *gopas*. Both parties also had large syringes and were spraying many colors which were not easily removable. Everywhere, all the places and creatures also became reddish with the throwing of great quantities of red powder; the sky, trees, cows and everyone in Vraja became reddish at that time. As Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa were enthusiastically throwing colours at each other, Śrīnivāsa, under the guidance of his *guru-mañjarī* began to supply coloured dye to Rādhikā.

In *Bhakti-ratnākara*, it is explained how after the pastime was complete, Śrīnivāsa came to external consciousness and saw that his *sādhaka* body and clothes were covered in colour from the holi pastime.

Once, Śrīlā Narottama dāsa Thākura was seeing in his meditation the pastime of the Divine Couple in his internally spiritual form. Śrīmatī Rādhikā requested her maidservants to bring some food preparations. They came with many different delicious items. Narottama dāsa Thākura in his *mañjarī* form, under guidance of his *guru-mañjarī*, began to boil some milk. The milk began to boil over and being unable to find a cloth he removed the pot from the fire with his hand. His hand was burned but without caring about it, he gave the milk to his Guru who offered it to the Divine Couple. While Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa were eating, Narottama dāsa Thākura's meditation broke and he saw to his surprise, that his hand was bearing the burn mark from the hot milk pot.

Another example is given in *Śrīmad-bhāgavatam* where Uddhava was deeply immersed in the pastime of His dearest friend Dvārakāśī Kṛṣṇa. As he returned to external consciousness, he spoke gently to Vidura.

*śanakair bhagaval-lokān nṛlokaṁ punar āgataḥ
vimrjya netre viduraṁ prītyāboddhava utsmāyān*

Śrīmad-bhāgavatam 3.2.6

The great devotee Uddhava soon came back from the abode of the Lord to the human plane and wiping his eyes, he awakened his reminiscence of the past and spoke to Vidura in a pleasing mood.

Śrī Uddhava is a very special intimate associate of Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In all of Dvārakā, Śrī Kṛṣṇa only revealed to Uddhava, the agony of his separation from His beloved Vrajavāsīs. Kṛṣṇa wanted Uddhava to understand the superior nature of the love that the Vrajavāsīs have for Him, particularly that of the *gopīs*.

The sweetness and spontaneity of the love that the residents of Vraja have for Śrī Kṛṣṇa, brings Him immense happiness. This is confirmed in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* where it is said that the spontaneous loving dealings of the Vrajavāsīs causes Kṛṣṇa millions of times greater pleasure than dealings in awe and veneration. Therefore Kṛṣṇa sent Uddhava to learn and see for himself the exalted love of the *gopīs*, most particularly, that of Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

To absorb one's mind exclusively in Kṛṣṇa is called *man-manā bhavā*. Śrī Kṛṣṇa Himself has accepted the *gopīs* as the highest ideal of *man-manā*

bbāva devotees and expresses this to Uddhava in sweet words in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* 10.46.4-6:

Dear Uddhava, the minds of the *gopīs* are always absorbed in Me. I am their very life and their all-in-all. It is for My sake alone that they have relinquished everything, including their homes, husbands, sons, relatives, shyness, chastity, religious principles and so forth. They constantly remain absorbed in thoughts of Me alone. It is only by their trust in My statement that I will come back, that they are somehow or other, maintaining their lives in great difficulty and are waiting for Me.

This description of the *gopīs* who are feeling great anxiety in separation from Kṛṣṇa is the highest example of *man-manā bbāva*.

Śrīla Gurudeva, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja explains that Kṛṣṇa was also feeling unbearable separation, but no one knew that. The *gopīs* could share their suffering with each other, but Kṛṣṇa could not share His feelings with anyone. He wept alone. This is why He sent Uddhava to Vṛndāvana; He wanted Uddhava to be admitted into the school of the *gopīs*, so that he would learn the meaning of the word love, *prema*.

Kṛṣṇa considered, “When Uddhava understands the love of the *gopīs*, he will be qualified to realize My feelings of separation.”

Śrī Kṛṣṇa is always in Vraja

Uddhava had great love and affection for Kṛṣṇa, but when he arrived in Vraja, he realized that *vraja-prema* was totally new to him. He saw Kṛṣṇa playing with all His *sakhās*. Millions and millions of cows were hankering after Him, and milk was flowing from their bulging udders because of their spontaneous love. The very beautiful black and white calves were jumping here and there, and Nanda Bābā’s big bulls were fighting with each other.

As Uddhava saw that scene, beautiful ghee lamps flickered in the *gopīs*’ rooms, and the light from these lamps was soft and fragrant – not like the dead light from electric bulbs. Varieties of flowers spread their sweet

aroma in all directions, and the songs of the humming bumblebees were like the blowing of Cupid’s conchshell. Cuckoos and other birds were singing everywhere and peacocks were dancing about and calling, “Ke Kaw! Ke Kaw!”

All the *gopīs* were churning yogurt and singing, “Govinda Dāmodara Mādhaveti.” They were all very beautiful, and Mother Yaśodā was the most beautiful of all. How else could Kṛṣṇa have become so beautiful? He would only have been black otherwise; it was because of her that His beauty was like the luster of pearls.

Uddhava saw all this, but in a moment the scene changed completely, and now he saw that all the residents of Vṛndāvana were weeping for Kṛṣṇa: “O Kṛṣṇa, where are You? Where are You?” Cows were not going out to graze. They simply wept, keeping their heads and eyes toward Mathurā, and the calves were not drinking the milk from the udders of their mothers. The peacocks were not dancing; rather, they looked as if they were blind. Every person and creature was mad in separation from Kṛṣṇa.

It was now evening, and Uddhava found himself in Kṛṣṇa’s home, where he became astonished to see the love and affection of Mother Yaśodā and Nanda Bābā. He could never have imagined that such high-class love could exist, but now he was able to realize something of its elevated nature.

Śrīmatī Rādhikā is Always Absorbed in Pleasing Kṛṣṇa

Early the next morning, Uddhava wanted to relay Kṛṣṇa’s message to the *gopīs*. The *gopīs* brought him to Kadamba-kyārī where they respectfully offered him an āsana (seat). Uddhava, however, just offered his obeisances to the āsana. He then noticed what appeared to be a golden doll lying on a bed of flower petals, with sandalwood paste smeared on Her limbs. Seeing Rādhikā in such an intense state of separation, the *gopīs* like Lalitā, Viśākhā, Citrā, Campakalata, and the *māñjarīs* such as Rati Māñjarī, Rāga Māñjarī, Raman Māñjarī, headed by Rūpa Māñjarī were serving Her and trying to pacify Her; but who could actually pacify Rādhikā? She was in a state of total madness with no external awareness. The others were trying to pacify Her because their consciousness was still somewhat functional.

Their love is very high, millions of times greater than that of Uddhava, Satyabhāmā, and Rukmīṇī, and higher even than that of the other *sakhīs* of Vṛndāvana; but their love was not as high as Rādhikā's love. Among Kṛṣṇa's dear ones, She is the most dear. Rādhikā was motionless, lying on a bed of rose petals, which had become dried up by the touch of Her body, and all the *candana* (sandalwood pulp) that had been put on Her body to cool Her had completely dried up. All her friends were checking to see whether She was alive or not. She was in such a state that Her friends were completely distraught. When Uddhava saw the moods of Rādhikā, he became stunned like a wooden doll. Śrīmatī Rādhikā was engrossed in a mood in which She was feeling intense separation from Kṛṣṇa while He was in Mathurā. She was thinking, "Kṛṣṇa cannot live without women, and therefore He must be associating with the *Mathurā-rāmanīs*, the beautiful young damsels of Mathurā." Rādhikā was totally delirious in separation from Kṛṣṇa and began to experience *asūyā*, envy, towards these city girls.

A bumble bee was flying around Her feet, thinking Her feet were lotuses. Rādhikā saw the *madbukara*, the bumblebee; in Her high state of loving mood She thought that the bee was a messenger of Kṛṣṇa. In this elevated state of *divyonmada* (madness in separation), She scolded the bumblebee, "Don't touch me."

Seeing that bumblebee had come to Her in an intoxicated state, She said, "O Madhukara, it appears that My *kānta*, My beloved, has sent you to pacify Me because He feels guilty that He has committed sins and offences. He therefore wants to plead through you in humble submission.

O messenger of Kṛṣṇa, you are just like Him. He is a cunning cheater who deceives people of their wealth, and He is a cheater from all other points of view as well. And you are his bosom friend."

Śrīmatī Rādhikā never called Kṛṣṇa directly by His name, but She addressed Him indirectly by the use of other names. She told the bee, "You are the bosom friend of My *priya-bandhu* who is *dhūrta*, a cheater, and *dhṛsta*, stubborn."

As Uddhava witnessed Her talking to the bumblebee, he saw that actually Kṛṣṇa Himself had come to Vraja in the form of that bumblebee. He also saw how Rādhikā was very angry with Kṛṣṇa, criticizing and

abusing Him, and calling Him an ungrateful cheater. No one else could have spoken to Kṛṣṇa in this way, not Satyabhāmā and the other queens, and not even Mother Yaśodā and Nanda Bābā.

But Rādhikā told Him, “You are ungrateful, and you are like a six-legged bumblebee. Human beings have two legs and animals have four; but bumblebees have six legs, so they are more ignorant than any animal. We don’t want to have any relationship with that black person whose heart is as black as a bumblebee. Rāma was also black, and he cheated Sūrpanakhā and cut off her nose and ears.”

Before coming to Kadamba-kyārī, Uddhava had been with Nanda Bābā and he was very moved by his moods and amazed by his deep love. Mother Yaśodā had become blind from her separation to Kṛṣṇa. However, when Uddhava witnessed the transcendental ecstasies of *divyonmada* and *citrā-jalpa* (transcendental madness and anger in the mood of deep separation) in Śrī Rādhikā, he became stunned in helplessness.

Uddhava related His message, word by word, letter by letter. However, this only made the *gopīs* unhappy. Previously they had thought, “Kṛṣṇa has promised that He will come;” but after hearing the message, they thought, “Kṛṣṇa will never come,” and they felt even more separation. Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī began to weep:

*he nātha he ramā-nātha vraja-nāthārti-nāšana
magnam uddhara govinda gokulaṁ vṛjinārṇavāt*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.47.52

O master of My life, O master of the goddess of fortune, O master of Vraja! O destroyer of all suffering; O Govinda, please lift Your Gokula out of the ocean of distress in which it is drowning!

Śrīmatī Rādhikā said, “I am dying without Kṛṣṇa. My dear *sakbīs*, if Kṛṣṇa does not come, I will die; I will surely die. Take My body, place it at the base of a tamāla tree, and place My arms around that tree so that I may feel connected to Kṛṣṇa. I pray that the water in My body will mix with Pāvana-sarovara where Kṛṣṇa bathes, so that I may touch Him. Let the air in this body go to Nanda Bābā’s courtyard and touch Kṛṣṇa when He is being fanned. May the fire in this body become rays of sunshine in

Nanda Bābā's courtyard, and then My soul will be happy. Now I cannot see Kṛṣṇa, or touch Him.”

Śrī Rādhā was in a very pitiful condition, in a mood of deep separation.

This is why Kṛṣṇa had sent Uddhava to Vṛndāvana: to try to be admitted into the school of the *gopīs*. Kṛṣṇa had told him, “Be admitted into the school in which I studied. Then, when you return, we will be able to have some discussion about love and affection. First, go and become qualified.”

However, Uddhava was not qualified for admittance into the school of the *gopīs*. Uddhava therefore prayed:

*vande nanda-vraja-strīṅām
pāda-reṇum abbikṣṇaśaḥ
yāsām bari-kathodgītām
punāti bhuvana-trayam*

Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam 10.47.63

I repeatedly offer my respects to the dust from the feet of the women of Nanda Mahārāja's cowherd village. When these *gopīs* loudly chant the glories of Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the vibration purifies the three worlds.

Nanda-vraja-strīnam means the beloved *gopīs* of Kṛṣṇa. Uddhava prayed to them, “I want to offer myself unto the dust of your lotus feet. I want to keep even one particle of your foot-dust on my head, and if I can only get one particle of dust, it must be Śrīmatī Rādhikā's.” Neither Brahmā nor Saṅkara, nor even Satyabhāmā and the other Dvārakā queens, can attain this. Uddhava prayed, “If I cannot attain Rādhikā's lotus feet, then I will be satisfied with the dust particles from the feet of any of Her *sakhīs*. Only by taking the particle of dust or mood of the *gopīs* will I be able to please Kṛṣṇa”

When Uddhava returned from Vraja, he told Kṛṣṇa about the glories of the *gopīs* and their one-pointed love for Him.

“It is so very high that I could not touch it. I only saw that mountain of love from a great distance, but still it was so high that my hat fell off the back of my head as I looked up at it. I cannot imagine how glorious the *gopīs* are. I wanted to take the dust of their lotus feet, but now I am

hopeless. I am not qualified to touch their foot-dust, so I simply offer *praṇāma* to it from very far away.”

*āsām abo caraṇa-reṇu-juṣām abam̐ syām
vṛndāvane kim api gulma-latauṣadhīnām
yā dustyajam̐ sva-janam̐ ārya-paṭham̐ ca hitvā
bhejur mukunda-padavīm śrutibhir vimrgyām*

Śrīmad-Bhagavatam 10.47.61

The *gopīs* of Vṛndāvana have abandoned the association of their husbands, sons, and other family members who are very difficult to give up, and they have forsaken the path of chastity to take shelter of the lotus feet of Mukunda, Kṛṣṇa, who one should search for by Vedic knowledge. Oh, let me be fortunate enough to be one of the bushes, creepers, or herbs in Vṛndāvana, because the *gopīs* trample them and bless them with the dust of their lotus feet.

This is our goal, the dust of the lotus feet of Śrīmatī Rādhikā. She is always absorbed in pleasing Kṛṣṇa.

Paramārādhyā Gurudeva Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja has mercifully revealed these pastimes to us.

The Mercy of a Rasika Vaiṣṇava

Those who have greed for *vraja-bhāva* and worship Śrī Śrī Rādhā-kṛṣṇa by *rāgānuga-bhakti* under the guidance of a *rasika* Vrajavāsī will achieve *vraja-bhāva*. Those *bhaktas* that have greed but who follow *vaidhī-bhakti* will attain the abode of Dvārakā in *aiśvarya-jñāna*, where Kṛṣṇa manifests as Dvarakadish, Śrīmatī Rādhikā manifests as Satyabhāmā, Candrāvalī as Rukmīṇī, and their associates as the other queens of Dvaraka.

Therefore the greed for *vraja-bhāva* can only be received by the mercy of a *rasika* Vaiṣṇava who is immersed in *rāgānuga bhāva*. Such *rasika-gurus* themselves participate in the transcendental pastimes. It is only under the guidance of such a *rasika* Vrajavāsī that one can worship Rādhā-kṛṣṇa Conjugal by *rāgānuga-bhakti* and thus achieve that extremely rare treasure of *vraja-bhāva*.

These pastimes are the life and soul of devotees and they should be properly heard in *paramparā* from a bona fide *guru*. One should not worship Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa without pastimes or chant the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* without remembering Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's pastimes. This is also the advice of Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura. Rāsācārya Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī has similarly instructed that in order to attain *rasa*, the mellow taste of a relationship with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, one should chant Kṛṣṇa's name while remembering His sweet pastimes. An example is given that unless sugar and water are mixed, there will be no *rasa* or nectar to drink. Both must mix together; then it will be *rasa*. Without hearing properly from Śrī Guru and serving him pleasingly, one will not be able to chant with remembrance.

The *unnata-ujjala-rasa-māyā prema-bhakti* is practiced and preached by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and can be obtained only by his followers. If one is not following the guidelines and principles set by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, then he is considered a *sabajiyā*.

A *sabajiyā* has no internal realization of Śrī Kṛṣṇa *tattva* and is a servant of his various sensual and mental desires. Their duplicitous performance of *bhajana* is mainly to secure name and fame and indulge their senses. Such *sabajiyās* are called stone-hearted and have no interest in accepting the favorable directions for devotional service given by self-realized devotees; devoid of *kṛṣṇa prema*, devoid of *rāgānuga-bhakti* or even *vaidbhī-bhakti* like that of Śrī Prahlāda Mahārāja, the *sabajiyā* cheats himself and his followers.

One must therefore understand and realize what Śrī Guru is, what his qualities are and then learn how to discriminate. Śrīla Gurudeva made it very clear that: "Realization is the result of remembering *śrī gurudeva*; therefore we should always remember him. If we do not understand the mercy of *gurudeva*, we will not understand anything."

Without any fear, one must engage in the process given by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura and Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura. The teaching of our present *ācāryas* is the same wine in new bottles. The bottles are different colors, but the wine is the same. If you drink that wine, you will certainly become mad, but this madness is actually desirable.



Their Intimacy Could Not Have Been Greater

Parama-gurudeva, Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja had many disciples, and amongst them, the most prominent were my *dīkṣā-guru* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, my *śikṣā-guru* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja, and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja. These three shared tremendous intimacy; even if they had been born from the same parents, their intimacy could not have been greater. Śrīla Gurudeva used to say that, “though we are three different bodies, our soul is one.”

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja was the *acārya* of Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Śamīti and was also the one initiating disciples. At that time, Śrīla Gurudeva was not giving initiation. Although the management of Śrī Devānanda Gauḍīya Māṭha was headed by Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja who was offered all respect as the *acārya*, when we *brahmacārīs* or the *māṭhavāsīs* brought any issues or disagreements before him, he would always tell us, “Take the matter to Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja.” How he handled the matter, and whatever he decided to do was always fully backed by Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja; therefore, whatever Śrīla Gurudeva ordered was the mandate for everyone in the Śamīti.

This closeness and complete trust was also evident between Pujapada Trivikrama Mahārāja and Śrīla Gurudeva. In later years, when Śrīla Gurudeva started giving initiation, Pūjyapāda Trivikrama Mahārāja used to say, “I have no disciples, but all the disciples of Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja are my disciples”.

Additionally, when contemplating the intimacy that these three *gurus* shared, we should bear in mind they all accepted *sannyāsa* (the supermost position in human society) on the same day, from Param Gurudeva, Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Besides their unending preaching and services to their Guru Mahārāja, we should also consider the divine departure of these three *mahā-bhāgavatas*. They all disappeared from our external vision while residing in the Lord’s holy *dhāma*. Both Śrīla Bhaktivedānta

Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja left this world and entered *nitya-līlā*, the eternal *līlā* of the Lord on the same auspicious day (*tithī*), exactly two years apart (2004 and 2002 respectively). Śrīla Gurudeva said, “Following in the footsteps of my senior god-brother *prapūjya-carāṇa* Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja, I want to take shelter of the same *tithī* (exact day) to leave this world.” Instead of leaving on the disappearance day of Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, Śrīla Gurudeva left on his most auspicious appearance day at three in the morning. Although none of Śrīla Gurudeva’s *sevakas* attending him told him which Vaiṣṇava calander day it was, by his own internal, transcendental connection he left at the most auspicious time to join in the most intimate pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Once, just before Śrī Navadvīpa *parikramā*, my Guru Mahārāja Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja became very sick.

He decided to go to Siddha Bāḍi to recover—the same place where Anaṅga-mohana Brahmācārī had stayed when he was ill with tuberculosis. Just then Śrīla Gurudeva was coming from Mathurā for the Navadvīpa *parikramā*. When he heard the news, he immediately departed for Siddha Bāḍi with two *maṭha-vāsīs* and me. At that time I was Navīna Kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī. When we arrived at Siddha Bari, Śrīla Gurudeva offered *praṇāma* to my Guru Mahārāja, who immediately said jokingly, “Navīna, pack my things because a policeman has come to take me away. If I refuse him he will arrest me and take me to Navadīpa *māṭha*. I think it is better to surrender.”

When Śrīla Gurudeva heard that, he laughed and laughed. They both were always serious but at the same time their personalities had a playful side which really came out when they got together. That very evening, all of us left Siddha Bāḍi and arrived in Kolkata the following day.

At the Guest House

As we came to the Howrah Station in Kolkata, I saw Banwari Lāl Singhanīa together with a large group of his relatives, standing on the next platform. Mr. Banwari Lāl Singhanīa was there to pick his children and friends who had just come from Jagannātha Purī. At the same time that I saw them,

Mr. Singhanian's ten year old daughter spotted Śrīla Gurudeva and was excitedly pointing us out to her father. As some of us went to get a taxi from outside Howrah Railway Station, Mr. Singhanian walked towards us and asked us how we were doing. I replied that my Guru Mahārāja was sick and upon hearing this, Mr. Singhanian insisted to host us in his company's guest house which was close by.

Several cars that had come for Mr. Singhanian's family had already left, and only two cars remained for the rest of his group. Mr. Singhanian accommodated us by putting the remaining children in one car so that Śrīla Gurudeva, Guru Mahārāja and I could ride with him in the second car with his driver. Mr. Singhanian took me first to their residential house at 1 Pritoria Street, Kolkata, and dropped me there so I could start cooking, while Guru Mahārāja and Śrīla Gurudeva were driven to the guesthouse on Baligang Circular Road, a place which was normally reserved for his business. I was familiar with their home as I had been there many times with Śrīla Gurudeva. All the family members knew me very well since I was Śrīla Gurudeva's *brahmacārī* servant at that time. They said to me, "You go and cook for both of your Guru Mahārājas and our driver can drive you to the guest house later, when you finish cooking."

I always kept several days supply of dried breakfast food for Śrīla Gurudeva. We had come from Mathurā to Navadvīpa recently, so I had a lot of food in our luggage such as "*pera from Mathurā*". (Gurudeva used to love this milksweet very much, so we would also take it to the West when we started travelling there; Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja was also fond of this sweet and Śrīla Gurudeva used to send it to him regularly upon his request). I also had some roasted chickpeas and "*kburchan*", a type of dry sweet made of cream, "*petta*", another sweet made of a certain type of squash, puffed rice and other snacks. The locked bag also had Śrīla Gurudeva's plate, bowl and water thermos, so, before I left the car, I gave him the key. While both of them were at the guest house, without any *brahmachari* to serve them, they opened the bag, which was full of *prasādā*. They both became very happy. When the parents are not there then the children become very happy. No one is there to check them.

They were very hungry, so after Mr. Singhanian dropped them off, they opened the bag and ate many snacks and sweets—till their stomachs

were full. After cooking, when I arrived there, they saw me and began to laugh together. My Guru Mahārāja was making Śrīla Gurudeva laugh, and Śrīla Gurudeva was making Śrīla Guru Mahārāja laugh, and they were in stitches, laughing so much. It was as if they were teasing me. “What is the matter?” I asked. “Why are you laughing so much?”

Neither of them was saying anything. They were only looking at each other and laughing so much as if they were tickling each other.

Then my Guru Mahārāja said, “Your bag is empty. We were hungry. No one was there, so we both ate till our stomachs were full. We didn’t know when you would go to the market or when you would return, and so we ate to a full stomach. So if you would have returned two hours later, we would still be full.”

Then I said, “This bag is not for me but for the service of all of you: both of you and Pūjyapāda Trivikrama Mahārāja. By your causeless mercy my bag will always be full and never be empty again.” They became pleased with me.

Then my Guru Mahārāja and Gurudeva were speaking to each other. My Guru Mahārāja said that he will be the first to leave this world. Then Gurudeva said, “No, I will go from this world before you.”

My Guru Mahārāja said, “No, you have to do so much service. Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja has reserved some big service for you that no one else can do.”

Then Gurudeva said, “I am a cardio patient. What can I do? Nothing is possible by me in this life time.”

Śrīla Guru Mahārāja replied, “You cannot understand now. When the time will come after a few years you will understand.”

“But what does Guru Mahārāja want to do through me?”

My Guru Mahārāja said, “I will not tell you now. After a few years you will understand by your own. Then you will be surprised by what I am saying to you now.”

Then I said, “You are only speaking about who will go first from this world. What kind of discussion is this? There is no other discussion. I don’t like to hear this kind of discussion between you, especially in my presence.”

Guru Mahārāja said, “Yes, we should not discuss this in front of them. They are children. Their minds will be disturbed.” Then they stopped. This event happened around 1989.

So the first time Śrīla Gurudeva went out of India was in 1996. We were in Badger, California when I told Gurudeva, “Remember Guru Mahārāja had said that you would have to do a very big service that no one else can do, which Parama-gurudeva had reserved just for you?” As soon as I said this, Śrīla Gurudeva began to weep. “Yes, now I understand what Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja said. My Guru Mahārāja has kept this big preaching *sevā* reserved for me.” He said he now knows what Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja meant when he spoke those words so many years earlier at Mr. Singhanīa’s guesthouse.

Śrīla Gurudeva had so much affection for his Godbrothers. Whenever Gurudeva would go travelling, he would write to Śrīla Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja, to Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja and to Pūjyapāda Śānta Gosvāmī Mahārāja, to request their blessings.



Relationship with Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja



In the first volume I wrote some details about my spiritual master Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja and one of my *śikṣā gurus* Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikram Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Many times Gurudeva Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja used to comment that due to their deep intimacy, they were three different bodies but one soul. In the same way, there was deep intimacy between Śrīla Gurudeva and my spiritual grandsire Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja which was evident in their letters to each other. So to show the intimacy between them I am presenting something about Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja to the readers. I delineated in the first volume that, before his initiation, Śrī Gaura Nārāyaṇa (Śrīla Gurudeva) had met and associated with Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja several times. At that time Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja's name was Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu. Abhay Prabhu had great affection for his dear God-brother, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja.

In 1942 the Gauḍīya Vedānta Śamīti was established at Bose Parha Lane, in Calcutta (Kolkata) by Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Gosvāmī Mahārāja (at that time, Sajjana-sevaka Brahmācārī) and Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja (at that time, Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu), performed the ceremonial activities during the inauguration of Gauḍīya Vedānta Śamīti, and henceforth, they became its co-founders. As Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja himself wrote in 1968 to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Gosvāmī Mahārāja, in his native Bengali, "I have a very close connection with Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Śamīti. Yourself, and particularly Śrīpāda Vāmana Mahārāja know well that I am one of the three persons who founded Śrī Gauḍīya Vedānta Śamīti..."

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja took *sannyāsa* initiation from *Parama-gurudeva*, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja in 1959

at Śrī Kesaviji Gauḍīya Māṭha in Mathurā. Later he went to America and in New York, he established the International Society for Kṛṣṇa Consciousness.

When Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja first heard in October, 1968 that Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja had disappeared from this world and entered *nitya-līlā*, he told his assembled American disciples in Seattle, Washington, “So I am feeling now very much obliged to my Godbrother and *sannyāsa guru*, because he carried out the wish of my spiritual master and forced me to accept this *sannyāsa* order. This Godbrother, His Holiness Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, is no more. He has entered Kṛṣṇa’s abode... In my childhood, when I became ill, I was very stubborn. I would not accept any medicine and therefore my mother used to force it in my mouth with a spoon. So anyway, I similarly did not want to accept this *sannyāsa* order but this Godbrother forced me.

“You must.’ *Apayayan mam...* The Vaiṣṇavas and the spiritual master however, forcefully give the medicine. So my Godbrother, Bhaktiprajna Keśava Mahārāja is *krpambudhi*. He did this favor upon me because he was an ocean of mercy. So we offer our obeisances to the Vaiṣṇavas as *krpambudhi*... The Vaiṣṇavas, the representatives of the Lord, are so kind. They bring the ocean of mercy to distribute to the suffering humanity. *Krpambudhir yas tam āham prapadye*. So I am offering my respectful obeisances unto His Holiness, because he forcefully made me adopt this *sannyāsa* order. He is no more in this world. He has entered Kṛṣṇa’s abode. I am therefore offering my respectful obeisances along with my disciples... on that *sannyāsa* day, when there was a reception, I first of all spoke in English. It was all an arrangement of the higher authority of Kṛṣṇa.”³

The next day, October 22, Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja wrote a lengthy letter of condolence to Śrīpāda Trivikrama Mahārāja in Mathurā and in his postscript he again expressed that he wanted a life-size picture of Bhaktiprajñāna Keśava Mahārāja along with a picture of Śrīla [Bhaktisiddhānta] Prabhupāda placed in his prominent centers, “particularly New York, Hollywood, London and so forth.” Certainly this

3 Recorded 10/21/68. Quoted from THEIR LASTING RELATION: An Historical Account From lectures and letters by Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupāda and Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. (CC-BY-ND Gaudiya Vedanta Publications)

clearly expressed desire of the *mahā-bhāgavata* to have life-size pictures of his *dīkṣā* and *sannyāsa-gurus* placed in his prominent centers should create a duty in the minds of his devotees.

Fools Do Not Know How to Honour Vaiṣṇavas

Although all the prominent leaders of ISKCON were well aware of the close relationship between Śrīla Gurudeva and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja, still, when Śrīla Gurudevaa visited certain temples, many leaders did not give him proper respect and some even blasphemed him. According to Vaiṣṇava etiquette, when an elevated Vaiṣṇava comes, at least he is to be offered a seat, a drink of water and a flower garland to honour him.

The intimate connection and shared purpose of the two masters was evident; however, during his visit to the ISKCON temple in Los Angeles, despite the fact that disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja were present, Śrīla Gurudeva was not at all welcomed properly—not even offered a seat. Elsewhere Śrīla Gurudeva was treated honorably and with dignity but the lack of respect he received there was very blatant.

Returning immediately from LA ISKCON temple Śrīla Gurudeva told, “If my *śikṣā guru* (Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja) was physically present today, he would have most probably commented: fools do not know how to honour Vaiṣṇavas.”

Śrīla Gurudeva was subjected to such mistreatment from certain disciples of Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja but he always remained humble and tolerant.

Even thirty years before on December 15, 1966, Śrīla A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swāmī had written to him, “*I came to know that my disciple Chandrasekhara from Delhi wrote you a letter. Chandrasekhara sent me a copy of your reply to him. In that letter I came to know that foolish Chandrasekhara had blasphemed you. Fools do not know how to honour Vaiṣṇavas. By your greatness, please excuse him. I haven’t instructed him to do such a thing. I only told him to visit you. Anyway, excuse his aparādha. Chandrasekhara is a good man, but out of foolishness he used bad words to you. You please forgive him and me by your good qualities.*”

Compassion in LA

Despite this cold treatment at the Los Angeles Temple, Śrīla Gurudeva, out of his compassion, visited there again another year. Knowing that anyone who would see and listen to Śrīla Gurudeva would become attracted, the leaders must have told the devotees at the L.A. temple to stay away at that time; hardly any devotees were present when we came. At that time, a certain prominent ISKCON leader was giving class to a very few devotees in the temple. On seeing us they all remained seated. Although Śrīla Gurudeva was senior to everyone present there, none of them offered *praṇāma* to him. They did not even greet Gurudeva, or offer him a seat or garland. Śrīla Gurudeva respectfully offered his *praṇāma* to Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja and the Deities and quietly left.

Upananda Prabhu was the co-owner of Govinda's Bliss Bars, a very popular health bar in America at that time. Upananda Prabhu, (nowadays he is known as Śrīpad Bhaktivedānta Avadhūta Mahārāja,) arranged for accomadation in a hotel and scheduled classes at different places in LA to give people a chance to meet Śrīla Gurudeva and to hear his sweet *hari-kathā*. Such self-realized, high-class Vaiṣṇavas speak about the wonderful pastimes of Kṛṣṇa in such a beautiful way, thus bringing others to Kṛṣṇa. For such pure devotees, when they speak there is no ulterior motive, so we should sit and hear the nectar flowing from their mouths.

Our next stop was Washington DC. We were booked to fly out from the LA airport at 8:10 am, but somehow Gurudeva's secretary, Brajanātha Prabhu, thought the flight was at 10:08 am. Early that morning, we received a surprise visit from two of the prominent leaders of the ISKCON LA temple in our hotel room.

"Mahārāja, we will take you to our temple and you can take *darśana* and then we will drop you off at the airport for your flight." they said.

"Why so early?" I asked.

"It is because your flight is early."

Brajanātha Prabhu checked and discovered that the flight was indeed early. We then hurried to pack our luggage. It was still dark outside.

Śrīla Gurudeva was ready to go with them, but we said to him, "Please, you shouldn't go with them. Better to come with us."

“No, they are Vaiṣṇavas,” Śrīla Gurudeva replied innocently. “They came for me. I must go. I will take *darśana* and then they will drop me off at the airport.” His voice was content as always.

Although both these leaders had behaved so badly towards Śrīla Gurudeva two years earlier, one of them was a *sannyāsī* and other was a house-holder; now out of the blue they had come and Śrīla Gurudeva was ready to go take *darśana* of the dieties and then to go to the airport with them.



Both of them were emphatically insisting that Śrīla Gurudeva come alone. They didn’t even want me to accompany Śrīla Gurudeva. I wondered how they knew our flight schedule. These are the same people who publicly offended Śrīla Gurudeva for years and their sudden change of behavior was undoubtedly suspicious. We were very concerned and didn’t know what to do; we were in a dilemma. At this point, Brajanātha Prabhu, Puṇḍarīka Prabhu and I discussed in private whether or not we should let Śrīla Gurudeva go alone with them. Brajanātha Prabhu suggested I say something in Bengali to Śrīla Gurudeva—then no one except Śrīla Gurudeva would be able to understand.

So I said to Śrīla Gurudeva in Bengali: “When you went to their temple, how did they treat you? They don’t even fear *vaiṣṇava-aparādha*. They do not care for you. Even when a common person visits their temple, they will ask him, ‘Who are you? Where are you coming from? Please have a seat.’ But they did not treat you like this. Since 1996, they have been trying to spoil your programmes, but they have never had any success. So we’re worried that they’ll surely do some permanent harm to you. It may be possible that we will not be able to see you for the rest of our life if you do decide to go with them. What will be our destiny? We don’t want you to go with them. I fear what they may do to you. They are insisting that you go alone. Why? They are saying that there is no need for Navīna Kṛṣṇa, Puṇḍarīka or Brajanātha to go. Why are they insisting again and again that you go alone with them? It must be some conspiracy. I don’t like that you will go alone with them. Suppose they will take you and do some mischief. What will you do? You please judge again by your own mind and then decide what would be better. Also, in any event, even if we miss the flight, we are not going to let you go alone.”

Then Śrīla Gurudeva replied to me in Bengali, “Yes, as you are requesting, it is better that I don’t go with them alone.”

Śrīla Gurudeva was silent for a few seconds. Then he said to the leaders, “I will not go alone with you. I can go only if Navīna Kṛṣṇa Brahmācārī and Brajanātha also come. Without them, I will not go anywhere.” We were so relieved to hear this!

Later on, one of the favorable ISKCON leaders confided to Bhāgavata Prabhu (presently Śrīpāda Bhāgavata Mahārāja) and others what these certain ISKCON leaders said about that incident, “Navīna Kṛṣṇa is a big politician. Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja was ready to go with us, but after what Navīna Kṛṣṇa spoke to him in Bengali, he refused to go anywhere without them.” Bhāgavata Prabhu and other devotees told me this when we came the following year.



Śrīla Gurudeva and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta
Swāmī Mahārāja:
Narration by Śrīla Gurudeva⁴

Our First Meeting

In 1947, I was in Calcutta as the personal servant to my *gurudeva*, and one day there was a large assembly and many Vaiṣṇavas were present there. During the lecture given by Gurudeva, a *grhastha* devotee came in at the back door. Upon seeing him, Gurudeva stopped speaking and asked me to bring him forward. That devotee humbly hesitated to come forward, but my *gurudeva* ordered that he come all the way to the front.

Gurudeva showed great respect to him and insisted he sit next to him on the platform. I looked up at Gurudeva, silently questioning, “Who is this devotee?” It was very rare that he had done this with others. Afterwards he told me, “This is Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Bābu, my dear godbrother. He is a very special disciple of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupādā. He is very humble and qualified. You should take note of him, you should hear carefully from him, and you should serve him.”

At that time I would cook breakfast, lunch, and any other meal for Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu and many of the other senior Vaiṣṇavas. I would also wash their clothes and clean for them. He would watch me, and became pleased with me. He was happy to see my service for my *gurudeva* and asked me many questions about myself, like where I was from and where and how I had joined the *māṭha*. We spoke together, and he was satisfied with my replies. I was also very impressed with him, and attracted to him. This is when I began my service to him in my heart and in my work.

I am thinking now how very fortunate I was to have met him long ago, and to have served him. We had so much affection for each other

4 From the book *My Śikṣa-Guru and Priyā-Bandhu: Remembrances of Śrī Śrīmad A.C. Bhaktivedānta Swami Prabhupādā* compiled from selected interviews, lectures and writings of Śrī Śrīmad Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. (CC-BY-ND Gaudiya Vedanta Publications)

that I cannot explain my heart sufficiently. He stated in one of his letters to me that from the first time he saw me, there was affection between us and that we shared a transcendental relationship of spontaneous love. He wrote that, as his Śrīla Prabhupādā had great faith and love for him from the beginning, he similarly had love and well-wishing for me.

He was a powerful speaker, and his lectures were most influential. Discussing translations from *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* by first giving word-for-word meanings, he would then present thorough explanations; and what he spoke was beautiful. In those days there were many senior disciples of Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Prabhupāda, such as Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīla Tīrtha Mahārāja, Śrīla Śrauti Mahārāja, Śrīla Nemi

Mahārāja, Śrīla Yāyāvāra Mahārāja, Śrīla Auḍulomi Mahārāja, Śrīla Vaikāna Mahārāja, Śrīla Purī Mahārāja, Śrīla Gīri Mahārāja and Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja. All these disciples were like tigers and thunderbolts, being well-versed in *siddhānta*. They would often come to visit my *gurudeva*, and I was able to serve them. Though Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was then a *gr̥hastha* living outside any *māṭha*, he was considered by all to be extremely qualified.

He was very bold and never compromised with anyone regarding the established *siddhānta* – never. He defeated and convinced everyone by his realized preaching.

In those days I often saw him associating with his godbrothers, and he had many deep friendships in all the temples where they assembled – in Calcutta, Navadvīpa, Chinchura, and Delhi. He was often meeting with godbrothers he would show respect to them because he was a *gr̥hastha* at that time. And, even though he was married then, all the *sannyāsīs* and senior *brahmacārīs* highly regarded him because he was a learned scholar and a potent, brave preacher. He was known by all to be abhaya, fearless.

Editorial Sevā

Our magazines, *Gauḍīya Patrikā* and *Bhāgavata Patrikā*, were started in 1953. At that time, Gurudeva requested Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu, “I want to establish publications in Bengali and other languages, and I would especially like you to write articles for them.” Earlier he had written

articles for the *Harmonist*, and now he continued to write many wonderful essays, *Gītā* purports, etc. He wrote so marvelously that everyone praised him. He challenged all who were opposed to *pure bhakti* at that time, especially the ‘Mūrgī Mission’. He called the Rāmākṛishna Mission ‘the Mūrgī Mission’, because the members ate chicken. In fact, they ate flesh, eggs and many other abominable things.

Vivekananda and his Rāmākṛishna Mission were very prominent in those days. They were renowned by the public, who thought, “Oh, these are such high-class devotees. In all of India, only they are following the Vedas, and all others are not. The Gauḍīya Mission and others are not Vedāntic.” Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu wrote a two-part article about the Mūrgīs. He began with the first part; and when the second part was also printed, all but the Mūrgīs were astonished and convinced. Many requested him to write more articles like these, which called for the reform of religious institutions.

At that time the president of India was Dr. Rādhākṛishnan. He was very scholarly and his English was quite erudite, but he was world-famous as a very bold *māyāvādī*. He wrote an article in English saying that the soul in Kṛṣṇa’s body was God, but Kṛṣṇa’s body was not God. He said that, as with our body and soul, there was also a difference between Kṛṣṇa’s body and soul.

Guru Mahārāja was not here then, but Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was and wrote a very powerful article in response. He quoted many strong examples from *śāstra* and declared to the President, “Those who speak like this are rascals. In Kṛṣṇa there is no difference between *deha* and *dehī*, the body and its possessor. All His qualities, pastimes and names are transcendental. If one does not have a very pure and realized *guru*, he cannot understand this idea. You have no *guru*; you are reading *śāstra* yourself. Just as Gautama Buddha became *śūnyavādī*, so you are also just like that. At some time in South India you met with the very renowned Śaṅkarācārya’s teachings, but you have not read Śrī Rāmānuja, Śrī Mādhvācārya, Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī; and you have never read Baladeva Vidyābhūṣaṇa. You should try to know what is *acintyabhedābheda*. Do not be sectarian. You are authority in India, the President, but you are not an authority in religion. You will have to learn something from us.”

Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja appointed Śrīpād Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu to be the editor-in-chief of the Bengali *Gauḍīya Patrikā*, and I was also in the editorial board for the Hindi *Bhāgavata Patrikā*. He usually submitted his articles in Bengali, and sometimes, if he wrote an article in Hindi, I would edit and then submit it. This is because his mother language was not Hindi. Mostly he wrote his articles for our *Gauḍīya Patrikā* in Bengali. I then translated these into Hindi and printed them in the *Bhāgavata Patrikā*.

This was before the time of tape machines, and Prabhu was expert in the skill of stenography. During lectures of my *gurudeva* and other senior Vaiṣṇavas, he took shorthand perfectly and recorded those talks in his notebooks. His accurate transcriptions were also used for articles in the *Gauḍīya Patrikā* magazine. Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu continued writing for our magazines occasionally for many years, and some of those original editions are still preserved at our *māṭha*.

Residing in Śrī Keśavajī Gauḍīya Maṭha

My *gurudeva* and I were present on the day Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu came again to the Keśavajī Gauḍīya Māṭha in 1955. We embraced him and he embraced us. Before coming, he had been successful with his pharmaceutical business in Allahābāda, called Prayāga Pharmacy, and it was very famous.

Many important personalities of India, including the prime Minister family, were customers in his shop. Later on, however, he had to sell it. Then he traveled to all the important cities of North India, such as Delhi, Kānpura, Lucknow, Āgrā, Jhansi, Mathurā, and other towns to sell the medicines he had made from his own formulas. Kuñja-bihārī Prabhu, a senior disciple in the *māṭha*, was especially devoted to him during this time. He helped to carry his bags and also to bring him *prasādam* while he worked.

After a while this business also came to an end, and Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu gave up his household life and all its possessions in Calcutta. He again came to Mathurā, this time without belongings. He brought a medical formula for treating ringworm, which he distributed to the shopkeepers, store-to-store, but sales were not good. He was living in

a room he had rented by the Yamunā, in Hooli Wali Gully near Bengali-ghāta. He had been there three or four days when I went to see him. I told him, “Prabhu, why are you staying here?” He was very humble and didn’t want to impose himself upon us, so I forcibly took his luggage and told him, “I will not let you go anywhere else. We are here. We are your sons. You are our *gurudeva*’s Godbrother and are very dear to us. We want to care for you. I will not allow you to stay here, separate from us.” I brought the *brabmacārīs*, Kuñja-bihārī Prabhu, Śeṣasāyī Prabhu and some mothers, and we took what few utensils he had and brought him to live in our *māṭha*.

I requested him, “Please stay here with us, preaching *Bhagavad-gītā*, writing and so on. I know that no one is assisting you now. I want to personally serve you. Please live here forever; we never want you to leave.” He became so glad.

I gave him a room adjacent to mine. His room was there (pointing to the room one door from the kitchen), and my room was here. There were only two rooms then, his and mine. At that time there was no dome of the *mandīra* in our Keśavajī Gauḍīya Māṭha.

We had very little facility to offer him, because nothing was there in our *māṭha*. There was just one bathroom, but still we were very easily able to live peacefully and accomplish everything we had to accomplish. At that time he also had nothing to show to others: “This is mine.” He had only his body and *ātmā* – no *paīsā* at all. He only had some copies of his *Back to Godhead* magazine, his *Gītā*, and three or four volumes of a Bengali *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. He had no bedding, and no extra boxes or personal belongings.

We gave him one small room and many large books. Śrīpāda Nṛsimha Mahārāja (one of his godbrothers) and I donated some Sanskrit and Bengali books to him. There he began to write many English translations and articles. Day and night he would stay in his room and do this, and he also chanted a great deal of *harināma* and very beautifully sang *bhajanās*. We did not know when he ever took rest. He slept only a short time in the morning, because all during the night he was awake, and throughout the day also. He became so pleased with this arrangement of staying with us, and our Guru Mahārāja also became pleased when he was informed of this.

I would sometimes joke with him, saying, “Oh, you may try to be responsible for your children and your wife, but they are rejecting you.”

One of his sons was not very favorable, and another was somewhat favorable but not wanting to serve him. So I would say, “Prabhu, why not take more service from all of us? You should not go back there. I will beg from door to door and arrange to get you rice and any other items.”

When Prabhu first came to Mathurā to stay with us, he had an ailment which he humbly and silently tolerated. Because he was expert in medicines, he always used Ayurvedic or homeopathic remedies when necessary and avoided allopathic treatment. I was fortunate that he confided in me, saying, “I do not have faith in any doctors. If they demand to operate, I may die.” I told him that he could not die; he had too much important *sevā* to do. He agreed and said that he was very determined to fulfill his *gurudeva’s* order to preach all over the world. I said that I knew of a bona fide doctor here in Mathurā who had cured others. He let me take him there, and I stayed by his side during the entire operation. I hesitate to mention these details, because it may sound as if I was helping him. Actually, I know he was bestowing his mercy to allow me to perform intimate service.

We would often visit each other’s rooms, and sometimes we would joke together about various topics. He was very fond of joking, and when he would laugh it was very sweet. He joked in an especially delightful way, with a slightly playful smile. We also had many philosophical discussions together, speaking about such topics as *Prablāda-caritra* and Tenth Canto of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. We read many scriptures together, and he would deeply discuss the matters he wrote about in the *Gauḍīya Patrikā*. Sometimes he would have talks with one, two, three or five disciples of my *gurudeva* in my room. There were also some big officers and other important gentlemen who came to hear him speak, and they would say, “Oh, Abhaya Caraṇa Bābu is such a learned and advanced person!” Everybody would glorify him. Prabhu was very enthusiastic about cooking, and he often declared that all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas should be expert in cooking for Kṛṣṇa.

During the many months he stayed at Keśavajī Gauḍīya Māṭha, the two of us would perform *sandhyā-ārati* together each evening. He would always play the *mṛdaṅga* very expertly, and I would play the *kartālas* and sing. He liked my singing very much and always requested me to lead the *kīrtana*. Someone asked me, “Why doesn’t Prabhu also sing? He has a

beautiful voice as well.” I replied, “Yes, surely he does, but there are times he doesn’t sing because he is experiencing intense devotional feelings and weeping.” I have heard this also on some of his cassette recordings.

Accepting Sannyāsa

He had been the manager of Bengal Chemicals and was so expert that he had arranged another company himself. But there were problems. He had come to Allahābādā and managed a very big medical shop, but after some time that also had difficulty. He then engaged in a little more business, but Kṛṣṇa would not allow it to continue. Then he came here.

As we once talked together in 1959, sitting side-by-side, Prabhu said, “When I first met Śrīla Prabhu-pādā, and when he gave me initiation, he told me that I should preach in English in Western countries. He also told me this over twenty years ago in Calcutta.” He continued, “That which I feared has come on my head, and now I see that I cannot successfully remain in business.” I replied, “Do not try for this anymore. You are not a person to do anything associated with worldly business. Kṛṣṇa and your *gurudeva* want you to preach in Western countries. You have such important work to do, and you are so qualified.” We laughed together about this in a friendly way.

Guru Mahārāja and Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu were bosom friends – they had lived and served together. Both were intellectual giants and very erudite persons from high-class families. So I now encouraged him to accept *sannyāsa* from our *gurudeva* and then go to preach in Western countries. Then, when my *gurudeva* later arrived from Navadvīpa, I told him,

“Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu is your friend. He can obey you because you are elder.” *Gurudeva* was a *sannyāsī* and Prabhu was in *gr̥hastha-veṣa* (the dress of a householder).

Earlier, when I had written to *Gurudeva* that *pūjyapāda* Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu was staying here with us, he told me, “He is my bosom friend. Show him all respect and give him all facilities.” I had known him since 1947, and I realized how highly qualified he was. *Pūjyapāda* Śrīla Śrīdhara Mahārāja, Śrīla Śrauti Mahārāja, and Guru Mahārāja would always give him great respect, even though he was a householder.

At this time, therefore, I requested my *gurudeva* to apply some pressure so that he would take *sannyāsa*. Gurudeva then called him and said, “Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja and all the other boys are encouraging that you take *sannyāsa*. I also support this idea. Do not hesitate to take the renounced order. You are so qualified.

Please take *sannyāsa* now. It will be very beneficial.”

Abhaya Caraṇāravinda Prabhu thus agreed to accept *sannyāsa*, and the ceremony was held the very next day. That day was the auspicious Viśvarūpa-mahotsava. Prabhu asked me, “How should I prepare?” I told him, “Don’t worry, I will arrange everything.” I prepared *bāhira-veṣa* (*sannyāsa dhotī*), *uttariya* (*sannyāsa* upper cloth) and a *dāṇḍa* with my own hands. I taught him how to wear these, and then I performed the fire *yajña*. Akiñcanā Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja came, and Śeṣaśāyī Brahmācārī, Kuñja-vihārī Brahmācārī, Parijataka Mahārāja and many other persons were also present. Now, most of these devotees have departed.

Sanātana Prabhu took *sannyāsa* with him, after which he became Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja. He was ninety years old and had said to him, “If you agree to take *sannyāsa*, then so shall I.” He is also no longer here, having joined the eternal service of Kṛṣṇa.

I recited the *yajña-mantras* and performed the ceremony. Akiñcanā Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Prabhu’s intimate godbrother and friend, chanted Hare Kṛṣṇa continuously, from 8:00 A.M. until 3:00 P.M., in a most sweet and deep manner.

My *gurudeva* then gave Prabhu the *sannyāsa-mantra*. The *sannyāsa* name which he gave him is “Swāmī.” This is one of the bona fide *sannyāsa* names; it means “controller” and “master.”

The title “Bhaktivedānta” had already been awarded in Calcutta by some of his godbrothers, and “Mahārāja” is a formal ending for those in the renounced order.

This name “Swāmī” was just fitting because Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja became the controller of many, many *jīvas’* hearts, due to his being strong and faithful to his *gurudeva*. This is why we affectionately call him “Swāmīji,” not in any common way but showing the greatest respect.

After the ceremony, Gurudeva requested Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja to speak. He spoke in English, although almost everyone present

could not understand that language. He explained that just at this time he remembered his *gurudeva's* specific orders to preach in the English language. He said, "I feel fortunate to accept *sannyāsa* from my godbrother, Śrīla Bhakti Prajñāna Keśava Gosvāmī Mahārāja. I have known him for a long time and he is my close friend. He is a very bona fide disciple of our *jagad-guru* Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura Prabhupāda. He has kindly given me this *sannyāsa* order, and Śrīla Nārāyaṇa

Mahārāja and Śrīla Muni Mahārāja have also given me inspiration to do this. The order of *sannyāsa* means to preach the mission of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and the mission of the *guru* everywhere. My *gurudeva* instructed me to preach in English, in Western countries, and that is why I am writing English articles and books. I am praying to Kṛṣṇa, Gurudeva and all the Vaiṣṇavas that they give me the power to preach this mission all over the world."

Excerpts from his speech and a description of the ceremony were printed in a news article in our *Bhāgavata Patrikā*. The well-known photograph of our *gurudeva* sitting between Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Muni Mahārāja was taken on that day. Kuñja-bihārī Brahmācārī was formerly a wealthy devotee and had previously helped build our *māṭha* financially; so now he gladly donated the five *paisā* he had saved for a photographer's snapshot. Thus, today, we can all honor this *sannyāsa* portrait.

It was a special privilege for us to participate in assisting Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Swāmī Mahārāja in accepting *sannyāsa*. For the next three days after the ceremony, Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja stayed together with him in his room. They were especially close and confidential with each other. After this, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja went to Āgrā to preach at a program he had arranged. He was always coming and going, engaged in *guru-sevā*. We kept his room open for him for so many years, and during that time he wrote some of his books, like *Easy Journey to Other Planets*, here. His three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* were not printed yet, so he continued writing and editing them here. The manuscripts were then given to the press in Delhi and gradually published. He was also writing *Back to Godhead* and other publications. He had done some translating before, in Calcutta and Allahābādā, but here he was easily able to concentrate and thus he accomplished so much.

Some persons don't consider the taking of *sannyāsa* to be very valuable or of much importance, but it is actually so important. I think that if Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja had not taken *sannyāsa*, perhaps he would not have done what he did in Western countries. Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja himself explains in his books that it is favorable to accept the renounced order for preaching. In India, everyone has honor for *sannyāsīs*. In *sannyāsa*, one gives up something but gains everything. As explained in *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam: mukunda sevana-vrata*. A *sannyāsī* thinks, "I only love Kṛṣṇa and Śrīmatī Rādhārāṇī. I don't know anything else."

The *sannyāsa-mantra* is very helpful in attaining the *kṛṣṇaprema* which Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and all the other Gosvāmīs have tried to give us, and this is superior to all supermost attainments. Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to give this type of *kṛṣṇaprema*, and therefore the taking of *sannyāsa* is very important. Don't think it is a minor point.

At Śrī Rādhā-Dāmodara Mandīra

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja and I are godbrothers in regards to *sannyāsa*. I had taken *sannyāsa* before him, in 1954, and he took *sannyāsa* in 1959. However, I always considered him my superior and behaved towards him as my *śikṣā-guru*, but Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja never treated me as a disciple. Rather, he always accepted me as a bosom friend. He had me sit on the same seat with him while we were chanting *japa*, performing *kīrtana*, and also sometimes making *capātīs* together. He would roll the *capātīs* and I would put them on the fire, and then we would offer them.

We would also sit on the same bed together. One time I came to visit and gave him my *cā dara*, because he had no *cā dara* to put on his bed. He had only one torn quilt there. The walls were crumbling, but he was too absorbed in his *bhājana* and *sevā* to care for that. He performed intense *tāpasya* and *sādhana* in that *kuṭīra*, in that most sacred *tīrtha*. I feel fortunate to have received his association there.

During those years at Rādhā-Dāmodara, he was consumed in the writing of his translations and purports of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam*. Whenever I visited him, I would try to offer him assistance. In those days I was

editing the *Patrikā*, which left me very little time. Still, we would often associate together there in his small *bhajana-kuṭīra*. Sometimes we took *prasādam* with the Rādhā-Dāmodara Gosvāmīs. He and I also performed *parikramā* of Rādhā-Dāmodara, walking together and paying respects at the *samādhis* of Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī, Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī, and especially Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Preparation and Departure for America

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja spent considerable time in Delhi before he went to America, because this is where he was printing and distributing his books. He published three volumes of *Śrīmad-Bhāgavatam* there. I went there several times to be with him, and we stayed together in his rooms at the Chippiwada Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple.

He preached vigorously in Delhi; wherever he went, he preached to the public. He spoke about Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa and Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission to everyone he met, and he also engaged me beside him. Then, when he was in America, he wrote and encouraged me to continue preaching to the people he had cultivated there.

When Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja was leaving to go to America, he described everything to me about his travel plans. He told me how, in Bombay, he had been given a ticket to travel across the Atlantic Ocean to Boston by freighter, and he described his route and his arrival there. He had great faith and a careful preaching strategy. His goal was to set up Vaiṣṇava institutes and dormitories there. Showing great confidence in the holy name, he said that even if at first the new students felt that they must take meat or wine, he would do what was necessary to begin their *bhakti*. He asked me to accompany him, and I begged him that I could not go without the permission of my *gurudeva*, who had ordered me to manage the *māṭha* in Mathurā.

One day he announced to me, "Now the time has come and I am going." He was leaving for the Port of Calcutta and was to visit Māyāpura also. I came and said good-bye, and I took his footdust and put it on my head. Before he left he requested me to keep a regular correspondence with him, which I did, and we wrote many letters to each other in those next

years. A few of these letters are printed in the pamphlet *Śrīla Prabhupāda's Letters from America*. Unfortunately, most of his other letters to me were loaned (to those in charge of publishing Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's biography on behalf of ISKCON) and have not yet been returned.

Later he wrote me to send him his books from his room in Mathurā, where many of his thick volumes were stored in his cabinet. His books were very dusty, and I cleaned and packed many boxes of them for an entire day. I then shipped those books by boat to New York. When we visited his rooms at the Los Angeles Temple in 1996, I was touched to see several of those same books still there in his bookshelves. I tried faithfully to perform all the services he requested.

Return to India

When he returned to India in 1967, I met him and his disciple, Kīrtanānanda dāsa, at the airport in Delhi. He had instructed me to do this in his telegram. When we met, he told me many wonderful accounts and details about his preaching in America, and how miraculous were the results. Humbly, he felt that all this was only the mercy of his *gurudeva*, and the desire of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and His associates. One special thing he told me was how he first chanted the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahā-mantra* in Tompkins Square Park in New York City. Chanting for several hours, he had kept his eyes closed, deeply hearing and depending completely on that mercy.

We stayed together in Delhi for seven days at the Chippiwada Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Temple. Because Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja was sometimes feeling ill, he would send me along with Kīrtanānanda dāsa to represent him in his preaching programs. He always encouraged us to preach very strongly. He wanted everyone to see his Western Vaiṣṇava, and so he took us to chant and preach to people he knew in Delhi.

After a few weeks, another of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's disciples, Acyutānanda dāsa, came to stay in Vṛndāvana. Because these two were Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's disciples, I sat together with them and honored the *mahā-prasāda* they had prepared.

All the caste Gosvāmīs, and almost all of Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's godbrothers, would never take any *prasāda* or even the water that

Kīrtanānanda dāsa and Acyutānanda dāsa offered them. The reason they refused was that those disciples were Westerners and had previously eaten flesh. I spoke out against this policy and encouraged others to accept Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's disciples as bona fide. I explained how Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's preaching to foreigners was completely authorized and directly in the line of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and our *guru-varga*. I think that most of the Indian Vaiṣṇavas have now accepted this.

During this first trip back to India in 1967, *parama-pūjyapāda* Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja came to visit my *gurudeva*, his *sannyāsa-guru*.

At that time, my *gurudeva* was in weak health and was confined to his bed in Calcutta. They had a confidential visit then, and this was their last time together in this world. My *gurudeva* was overjoyed at Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's devotional service to their Śrīla Prabhupādā. He expressed his appreciation and glorified his extensive preaching, and he pledged to cooperate in that preaching work. They also discussed my *gurudeva's* helping to arrange a donation of land for Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's future Māyāpura temple. Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Trivikrama Mahārāja and Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Vāmana Mahārāja were also present on that occasion.

After Śrīla Gurudeva departed from this world in 1968, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja, along with his disciples, sent us a telegram of condolence. He also sent a long letter to Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja in Navadvīpa. He also delivered a lecture about Śrīla Gurudeva in Seattle, Washington, and there he described the history of his awarding him *sannyāsa*. He spoke about the great appreciation and affection he had for him, and how he had now entered Kṛṣṇa's abode. We heard later from some of his disciples that he shed tears when he received the telegram telling of our *gurudeva's* entering *nityā-līlā*.

In his letter to Śrīla Trivikrama Mahārāja, Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja asked him to send a photo of Gurudeva, because he wanted to place it on his temple altars in the West. He also wrote and asked me to send a picture to him. I remember that in one letter he requested me, "Please send me a picture of your *gurudeva* so I can have a portrait painted for displaying with our disciplic succession in all of our temples."

Visiting Him in His Last Days

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja was becoming very ill, and our Sukhānanda Prabhu was offering him naturopathic massages with Ganges water. Before he went abroad to England, Sukhānanda Prabhu came to Vṛndāvana for two hours every morning and evening for fourteen days to massage him, and these massages helped him. We also sometimes visited and spoke with him then. Once we came at a time when he had hardly eaten or even taken water for many days. Still, he affectionately greeted us and, as he had always done with all, he lovingly offered us the opulent *mahā-prasādam* that had been prepared and offered by his disciples. He exclaimed how nicely his young students were trying to serve their *gurudeva* and Kṛṣṇa. Even though he himself had eaten nothing at all for so long, he made sure, in such a careful and affectionate way, that each of us took *prasāda* to our full satisfaction.

Some godbrothers and associates were paying visits to him in his room around this time. Akiñcana Kṛṣṇadāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bon Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Pramoda Purī Mahārāja, Śrīla Bhakti Vaibhava Purī Mahārāja, Indupati Prabhu (from Śrīla Mādhava Mahārāja's temple), Ānanda Prabhu, and many more devotees came to see him. We also came several times to be with him, along with our *brahmacārīs* like Śeṣāśāyī Prabhu, Śubhānanda Prabhu, Premānanda Prabhu, and sometimes others.

There are tape recordings of some of these conversations, but most of them were in Bengali or Hindi.

Just before Kārtika month in early October, when our annual Vraja Māṇḍala *parikramā* was about to begin, Parama-*pūjyapāda* Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja sent for me. He requested his senior *sannyāsīs* and many others, "I want to meet with Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja." A few of them then came by car and requested me, "Śrīla Prabhupāda wants you, so please come now." I was in the midst of giving evening discourse to our *parikramā* party, but I came immediately. When I arrived in his room at Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandīra, he was quite silent. Some boys were singing the Hare Kṛṣṇa *mahāmantra*, and some *sannyāsīs* and other disciples were silent.

After some time he opened his eyes and indicated with his eyes for me to come close. He was so enthusiastic before his death – not his death,

no – his entering *kr̥ṣṇa-līlā*. He was not speaking, but when he saw me he showed his happiness. The devotees were chanting Hare Kṛṣṇa very softly in Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja's special tune, and all could see that he was not speaking now.

I offered *praṇāma* to him, *śāntyā praṇāmā* (standing and silent), because I saw that there were many persons present and no space for me to offer full *praṇāmā*.

When he saw me he at once said, "Oh, Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja has come."

He wanted me to take a seat on his bed. He tried to sit up, but I put my hands on him and said, "Please lie down, and I will sit over here." He then motioned for me to come nearer to his bed and said, "I want to speak to you." He wanted me to sit closer to his ear, so he told some disciples, "Bring a chair," and I sat on it near to his ear.

First he began to weep; his heart was melted. From the core of his heart he told me, "Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, can you excuse me?"

I feel that there is cause for you to forgive me. For the sake of preaching I have told my disciples some things, which perhaps I should not have said. Also I spoke very strongly about my godbrothers in one letter, which was then sent to everyone. I said that we are preaching and others are not, that they are *kaniṣṭhaadbhikārīs* who don't preach but are idle. I said that none of the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas helped me – that they only take *mahāprasādam* and sleep."

At this time, many of his *sannyāsī* disciples were watching. His words and mood implied to me many things about how he had wanted to encourage his young students. As we are careful with babies, so he had sometimes instructed some of them not to mix with his godbrothers and the other Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas. To save his newcomers from becoming disturbed or confused, he sometimes told them not to visit anywhere else. One reason was that a few of his godbrothers had done some wrong things. Also, his disciples did not understand the Indian ways of indirect, subtle meanings. Also, he did not want them to lose heart due to criticism from any Indian Vaiṣṇavas who may not have understood their sensitivities and his style of training them.

Śrīla Swāmī Mahārāja had been a member of the Gauḍīya Māṭha for a very long time and he knew the regulations and *siddhānta* – but he could not teach all his disciples everything in just a few years. He had been